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The hour of populism

Since the euro crisis, the continent has been quarreling over the distribution of refugees – and the demagogues are having a field day | By Peter H. Koepf and Lutz Lichtenberger

The latest wave of agitation to spread over Germany was triggered this week by a Green Party mayor. A professor – a member of his party – said to him: "I have two blonde daughters, and I worry if 60 Arab men are living now only 200 meters away."

It is less the fear of Syrian or Iraqi men, and more a matter of votes that has induced parts of Europe's political establishment to voice words formerly reserved exclusively for populists and Islamophobes.

In Germany the political movement for malcontents is called Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). In March the party managed double-digit results in regional elections in Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saxony-Anhalt. They are attracting fearful, anxious voters with populist slogans like "The boat is full," "Tighten the borders" and "Rapid repatriation," while offering a thick helping of cynicism: "Syrian men should stay in their own country to fight IS."

Those on the campaign trail while already in government know very well that there are no easy solutions, large or small, to the refugee distribution crisis. Migration policy requires tough negotiations, which may entail only baby steps of progress and compromises that are not always so elegant.

And how is it acceptable to block Syrians and Iraqis in their attempt to trade violence, war and despotism for democracy and a chance at life? Neither the European Convention on Human Rights nor the Geneva Refugee Convention allows for people to be sent back to countries in which they were persecuted or treated inhumanely.

The crudest form of pandering to the ire of the people can currently be found in the US presidential race. Donald Trump is all too eager to agitate against Muslims and Mexicans, wants to build fences and walls and claims he would allow not one Syrian refugee to enter the country. All the while, the billionaire presents himself as the advocate of the common man against the excesses of global capitalism.

And here he strikes a tone that also resonates in Europe, where adherents to right-wing populist politicians feel neglected, unfairly treated and not taken seriously for their genuine concerns.

There are people who fear globalism in its current form, have already been victimized by it, or at least feel they have; people who see that the rich are becoming richer, and the poor are becoming poorer; that countries are engaged in a divisive and unsustainable race to



Regarding the pain of others: The Chinese artist Ai Weiwei created a temporary memorial to the drowned refugees. Thousands of life vests from the Greek island of Lesbos are draped around the columns of Berlin's Konzerthaus.

ruin by offering tax havens to international corporations; that banks, which were bailed out with taxpayer money, are raking in profits with the same old business models and are allowed to keep them; that they are footing

the bill for the wild parties of yesterday with their unemployment and plummeting wages. They believe politicians to be the lackeys of the long-since uncontrollable business conglomerates and to have more or less abdicated

their responsibility to protect the people from them.

The bottom line: the representatives of the people no longer have the situation under control. And to cap it all off, here come hundreds of thousands of young men

The right-wing populist party was founded in 2013 in reaction to German Chancellor Angela Merkel's efforts to save the euro. The party was formed predominantly by economics professors, whose criticisms were wonky at best. Yet more important was that, for the first time, Germany had a

What is the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)?

fraction of the AfD has successfully exploited the refugee crisis to take over the party. The AfD has since sharpened its rhetoric, which, according to all public opinion polls, has paid off handsomely.

somewhat serious party to the right of Merkel's Christian Democrats. Over the last year a shrewd populist faction of the AfD has successfully exploited the refugee crisis to take over the party. The AfD has since sharpened its rhetoric, which, according to all public opinion polls, has paid off handsomely.

from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, people from different cultures with different religions and different value systems, who will compete – or so some believe – for our jobs, housing and social benefits.

And this is not only in Germany. In France, where elections are set for spring 2017, the right-wing populist Marine Le Pen is preying on people's fear of the Islamization of Europe. Denmark's extreme-right Liberal Party government has passed a law – evidently as a deterrent to migration – requiring incoming refugees to surrender money and valuables, which has long been the case in Switzerland. Croatia's conservative HDZ won parliamentary elections in November with promises of using the military to curb the number of asylum-seekers. And in Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland, where, as in Slovakia, hardly anyone is seeking asylum, politicians are fomenting an atmosphere hostile to refugees and the EU. The Social Democrat Robert Fico is campaigning to remain prime minister with the slogan: "We protect Slovakia." He is promising to "make no decision on a voluntary basis that would allow for the emergence of a Muslim community in Slovakia."

Does this stir up anger or is the anger already there from the mere 169 asylum requests in 2015, and the additional 149 Christians who were flown in from an Iraqi refugee camp in December. "2016 will be the year in which the EU either brings the refugee crisis under control or breaks into pieces."

But on what concrete basis would the EU threaten to crumble? The crisis is not the number of refugees. "A continent of 500 million citizens cannot fold under 1.5 to 2 million refugees!" said Germany's Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen at the Munich Security Conference, in a passionate defense of Europe rarely seen today. Europe could crumble, however, if country after country closes ranks and erects fences. And it was no sign of solidarity or other European values when the more centrally located countries of Greece and Italy, along with Turkey, had to go it alone and the UN was forced literally to reduce rations to the Syrian refugees because rich donor countries have become stingy.

The EU would not crumble, but rather grow both morally and politically if every country took in its fair share of refugees. If all member states gathered to finally (and again) give Syria's neighbors enough funds to care for the cold and hungry. If all coun-

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The bleakest possible picture

The Munich Security Conference revealed the wide chasm between Russia and the West

Wolfgang Ischinger sent the visitors of the Munich Security Conference home with his wish that they bear not the image of a "continuation of the bleakest possible picture," but rather one with "a glimmer of hope." A few hours earlier he had made his point clear; to those who had the feeling that this conference delivered nothing but bad news, he countered: "I attended some meetings where the tone and direction were much less confrontational."

But the debates in Munich laid bare the multiple failures of

conflict resolution and prevention. Security and cooperation in Europe are in sorry shape. Where there was once an Iron Curtain, a wide chasm now separates Russia and the West. Deep disagreements and manifold misinterpretations persist, above all in defining and combating terrorists in Syria and regarding the question of Ukraine; in the corridors of Hotel Bayerischer Hof, the talk was repeatedly of lost trust, and even mutual suspicion.

Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko aired one misinterpretation: "Mr. Putin, this is not a civil war in Ukraine, this is your

aggression." His Polish counterpart, Andrzej Duda, voiced mistrust concerning imprecisely formulated "Russian ambitions." Lithuania's Dalia Grybauskaitė

perceived no great difference between Russia's bombardments of Aleppo and IS terrorism. German Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen offered: "It was unbearable how the people in Aleppo were covered with a

carpet of bombs while, at the same time, trust was supposed to be built in the Vienna talks." As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg summed it up: "Russia is destabilizing the European security order."

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev was defiant: "We are rapidly rolling into a period of a new cold war," he said. "Russia has been presented as well-nigh the biggest threat to NATO." And later: "Is this 2016 or 1962?"

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov would also complain of a "tendency to Russophobia in certain countries." He

went on to explain that "today, the level of interaction between Euro-Atlantic organizations and Russia in certain spheres is even lower than during the Cold War period."

But even the EU is discordant, particularly due to the refugee distribution crisis. In Munich, Prime Minister Manuel Valls of France laid out the limits of French tolerance: his country will accept no more than 30,000 refugees. In the past year, Germany took in more than one million refugees. The number of allies

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Read more about the MSC on pages 6/7.

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The hour of populism

tries were to recalibrate their actions around this question of common values: solidarity, human rights, humanistic thinking, liberalism, rule of law, the welfare state, cooperation, democracy and the dissolution of all old hostilities.

It was Germany's great sociologist of the early 20th century, Max Weber, who coined the famous dictum that "politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards." No great feat is required – not the leadership of a great man or great woman – but rather a steady course of specific steps. Sure, confronting the causes of migration is essential; this has indeed been the case for years. But that would have been easier in peacetime than during this year of hard heartedness and dwindling empathy. Confronting the causes of migration is a heavy load: help-



ing restore the economy so that the people have schools, work and enough food. But where to get the money? Stronger taxation of higher incomes, capital gains and inheritance along with international agreements against profit shifting within global corporations would be a few options. These would require a self-proclaimed socialist – or, in reality and in the original sense of the term, social democratic – candidate, even in the US, a possibility that cannot entirely be ruled out considering Bernie Sanders' surprising success early on in America's Democratic Party primaries.

However, solutions based on solidarity face the panic of the fearful and the tendency of many politicians to exploit it. Subduing the refugee crisis takes time, as was the case with the step-by-step approach to the euro crisis. Negotiating solutions requires calm, not clamor, composure, not panic – as Chancellor Merkel has shown, despite tremendous pressure and plummeting poll numbers. Europe will not crack from immigration, provided that sensible regulations accompany it; the EU could crack if the retreat behind national borders continues and if fundamental European values are betrayed, particularly now as they face their greatest test in decades. Egoism and Europe are a poor match. ■

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Not on the same page

An OSCE report explains why Russia and the West do not see eye to eye

Starting with the negotiations on German unification, the West systematically took advantage of Russia's weakness. The West never acted in the spirit of the Charter of Paris, in which the indivisibility of security was a key concept. The West never tried to address security with Russia, only without it, or against it. The United States instead seized the opportunity to dominate international affairs, especially in Europe.

The "common European home" failed because the West was unwilling to build new, open security architecture – and to fulfil its promises. The West talked of cooperation and expected cooperation from Moscow, but believed in Russia's perennial aggressiveness, weakness or both.

tional and humanitarian law and the first breach of the Helsinki principles in post-war Europe – and unfortunately not the last. Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was another illustration of the hollowness of the "partnership" between the West and Russia. It was a subversion of international law and the OSCE principles. Russia sat at the table, but, in the end, the West made the decisions, and made them against Russian interests and Helsinki principles. Kosovo's separation from Serbia took place without a referendum.

In the first years of the new millennium, the international legal order and global stability were further undermined by the United States with few protests from Europe. Russia was also frequently lectured on democracy

partnership. Why would anyone put up with such a charade?"

In spite of this ongoing charade, Russia played its part in the "reset," taking the initiative to prepare a new European Security Treaty, the objective of which was to make legally binding the principle of the indivisibility of security. Russia also proposed creation of a common economic and humanitarian space from Vladivostok to Lisbon. All initiatives came to nothing. Russia's willingness to cooperate on Libya was exploited by the West, again for its agenda of regime change, ending in profound destabilization, civil war and refugee flow. The West continued to pursue a "Versailles policy in velvet gloves," constantly enlarging its sphere of interest and control.

Russia made its views known on all these subjects but no one

Russia repeatedly expressed understanding for those protesters in Kiev who demonstrated against corruption, bad government and poverty. But those who forced the elected president of Ukraine to flee had a different agenda: they wanted to seize power and resorted to terror and murder. Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites were behind this coup. And it was openly supported by Western officials.

Russia responded in the only language that draws Western attention.

People all over Ukraine realized what was

Russia tried many times to prevent Western expansion but was not listened to. Positive alternatives were ignored and ridiculed. Europe has failed to capitalize on the opportunity offered by the end of the Cold War – to build a sustainable and fair system of security and cooperation.

Western interventions in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya, the rupture of Kosovo, poor performance in Afghanistan and open support for the



listened.

Instead, a negative propaganda campaign was launched against Russia, especially in 2012-2013, and Western leaders boycotted the Sochi Olympics. Moscow came to the conclusion that the West was starting a new containment policy. Russia had to preempt this and had to teach its partners to respect its vital interests.

All the elements came together in Ukraine: first the promise of NATO membership at the NATO Summit in Bucharest – a threat to Russia – then the attempt by the EU to increase its own economic space at the expense of Russia, and finally the open Western support for the Maidan regime-change movement.

The EU's neighborhood policies and its Eastern Partnership had created a situation in which several of Russia's closest neighbors were faced with an artificial choice: either they were with the West, or against it. Only in such an atmosphere of polarization and forced choices could the events that led to the coup d'état against President Viktor Yanukovich unfold.

happening. The people of Crimea overwhelmingly favored its reunification with Russia in a referendum. Russia, unlike the West in many cases, did not use force in Crimea; it only assured that others would not use it. Eastern Ukrainians also made it clear they would not accept the power grab of the new government in Kiev. Russia is not a party to the conflict, but it has sympathies for the goals of the self-defense forces. The sanctions against Russia are unjustified, counterproductive and another blatant violation of international law, as they were imposed without a decision of the UN Security Council.

Arab Spring has damaged the most important principles of international security and stability: state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. It is the West's actions that pose threats to international peace and security. The West has irresponsibly destabilized the international system: stable political orders are upended and replaced with nothing but chaos. Russia has lost not only trust in the West's words, but also respect for the West's competence. ■

Why is it that, at least for now, Russia and the West misunderstand one another on all fronts?

With a focus on Ukraine, a "Panel of Eminent Persons" commissioned by the OSCE investigated this question and presented its results at the Munich Security Conference. The answer can be packaged under two headings: "lack of trust" and "diametrically opposed narratives."

The meetings of the 15 panel members must have seen some heated debates. "Our disagreements were numerous," writes Chairperson Wolfgang Ischinger in his foreword. That prompted the Russian representative, Sergey A. Karaganov, to write a letter of disagreement that can be found in the brochure under the title "Back to dialogue."

Jean-Marie Guéhenno, president and CEO of International Crisis Group, bemoaned in Munich "the badly damaged relations in Europe." OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier saw "many monologues, little dialogue."

Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, former president of Latvia, detected "different interpretations" and "mutual suspicion."

The meetings of the 15 panel members must have seen some heated debates. "Our disagreements were numerous," writes Chairperson Wolfgang Ischinger in his foreword. That prompted the Russian representative, Sergey A. Karaganov, to write a letter of disagreement that can be found in the brochure under the title "Back to dialogue."

Yet the panelists still managed to formulate how "a new start for Ukraine" can be achieved. In Munich, Gernot Erler, special representative of the government for Germany's OSCE Chairmanship in 2016, called the full implementation of the Minsk agreements "essential." Until this is achieved, "we have no chance of moving forward." In essence this would mean a cease fire, the reverse of heavy weaponry and effective border control by Russia.

The panel recommends "more effective measures to reduce the risk of military accidents or incidents," "the reactivation of the NATO-Russia Council" to improve communication, "a resumption of military-to-military contacts,"

The Cold War ended with the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. Numerous European states as well as countries that had been incorporated into the Soviet empire were liberated from Soviet domination. These states and their tens of millions of citizens now had the freedom to determine their own future, including their alliance memberships. This was

not integration in, these Western institutions. With this in mind, the West proposed the NATO-Russia Founding Act and later the NATO-Russia Council. NATO's first round of enlargement in 1999 was realized after intensive discussions, including with Russia. Russia has also benefited from the improved security environment enlargement created: inclusion in NATO meant that the states in Central and Eastern Europe did not have to seek solely national ways of providing for their defense.

The end of the Cold War made possible the creation of a Europe that was whole and free, democratic and at peace. Key to this was the willingness of the countries themselves to make the hard decisions to enable their transformation. Their wish to reaffirm their Western and European identity meant

include close cooperation with, if not integration in, these Western institutions. With this in mind, the West proposed the NATO-Russia Founding Act and later the NATO-Russia Council. NATO's first round of enlargement in 1999 was realized after intensive discussions, including with Russia. Russia has also benefited from the improved security environment enlargement created: inclusion in NATO meant that the states in Central and Eastern Europe did not have to seek solely national ways of providing for their defense.

EU policy also was to take relations with Russia forward in parallel with those of its other neighbors. The 1999 Common Strategy on Russia preceded the EU's decision on enlargement; the "four common spaces" initiative was in parallel with the Euro-

pean Neighborhood Policy (ENP); and negotiations for the new bilateral agreement with Russia started before the Eastern Partnership, which was designed to take cooperation beyond the level of cooperation with ENP countries.

The claim that the EU took over Russia's markets is unfounded. When Russia adopted free market policies, the idea of captive markets became a thing of the past. If Russia lost market share, this was a result of the normal operation of open international markets. Russia's reluctance to modernize its economy may also have played a part.

THE VIEW FROM THE WEST:

We invited Russia to work with us

they acted. On the question of Kosovo's status, many diplomatic avenues were pursued. Only after eight years, when it had proved impossible to find a solution acceptable to all parties, did Kosovo declare itself independent (accepting initial limitations on its sovereignty). Most countries of the West decided to recognize it as an independent state, and the majority of the international community has since joined them.

In the cases of the unresolved conflicts in post-Soviet states, the international community had recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. But for more than two decades Russia has now worked to support separatists in these countries, significantly weakening the states concerned.

When popular protests occurred in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005), conflict between Russia and the West grew. These so-called color revolutions were the result of legitimately popular movements protesting against fraudulent elections and corrupt elites; they led to peaceful transitions of power. But Moscow was increasingly afraid that such changes could spread to Russia, as well as jeopardize its supposed interests in its "near abroad."

The question of further enlargement of NATO was hotly debated by its member states; they considered the concerns expressed by Russia about its security, yet in 2004 NATO was enlarged again on the demand and insistence of the candidate countries. The new members included former republics of the USSR as well as other Central and Eastern European states. This was consistent with their sovereign right to choose their own alliances.

At the 2008 Bucharest Summit in April 2008, requests by Georgia and Ukraine for Membership Action Plans were rejected. NATO instead decided that Georgia and Ukraine would become

members of NATO but did not say how or when.

In August 2008, following a series of provocations and escalating exchanges of fire, Georgia fell into what, in retrospect, looks like a Russian trap and moved against a town in South Ossetia (this region of Georgia, like neighboring Abkhazia, had been under control of Russian-backed separatists since the early 1990s). The Georgian army was overwhelmed by a larger Russian force.

After the end of the fighting, in violation of both a cease-fire agreement and international law, Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and kept its troops in these regions. Many interpreted these actions as a pre-emptive Russian move against Georgian membership in NATO.

the extreme right. The rhetoric employed by Russia, depicting Ukraine's youth and reformers as Nazis and murderers, is crude and hate-mongering language, an unacceptable return to the worst practices of a bygone era.

Nothing in the events in Ukraine can justify Russia's seizure by force of Crimea, in breach of international law, the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and many other agreements. The claim that this was an act of self-determination would be more convincing if Russian forces had not been involved, if the procedures had complied with the Ukrainian constitution and if the referendum had taken place following an open debate and with proper international monitoring.

Unlike Kosovo, which Russia cites as a precedent, this declaration of independence did not follow

a decade of diplomatic negotiation and deliberation within the international community.

Nor is there any justification at all for Russia's armed intervention in eastern Ukraine, a further breach of basic principles of international law. This conflict has been sustained by Russian arms and by Russian forces.

Russia made no attempt at all to resolve the issues it may have had about Ukraine, including Crimea, peacefully or legally. It also dealt a blow to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destructions, violating the security guarantees Ukraine received in the Budapest Memorandum for giving up its nuclear weapons. As a result of Russia's intervention, other countries may think twice before trusting a similar guarantee in the future.

Russia's policies in Ukraine follow the pattern of its relations with other former Soviet republics, where it has fostered (and then frozen) ethnic conflicts. Putin's stated conviction that Russia has the right to act to protect Russian-speakers – no matter where they are – potentially sows the seeds of future interventions to protect Russian "kin." It also violates numerous agreements Russia has signed, as well as the UN Charter.

Russia has decided to give up on any pretense of cooperating with, let alone integrating in, the West. It has abandoned any pretense of playing by the rules, including respect for the political independence of sovereign states and the principle of not using force to change borders. As a result, Russia's definition of its security today means insecurity for its neighbors.

Due to its own choices, Russia is now a very different country than it was in the 1990s and early 2000s. Instead of focusing on domestic modernization, Russia is pursuing a revisionist and unpredictable foreign policy, manufacturing and actively seeking conflicts abroad to control the fate of its neighbors. ■

Renew dialogue, rebuild trust and restore security

Germany's goals for its OSCE chairmanship
By Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier

More than any other event in recent history, the current refugee crisis has illustrated that the world has walked through our front door – mostly without knocking first. The effect of a civil war 3,000 kilometers away is on display in German schools, gyms and on the streets. And it sheds a clear light on our responsibilities for Europe and abroad.

Two years ago at the Munich Security Conference, we discussed how shouldering international responsibility starts at home. This insight has become a reality to an extent I would not have imagined then. In 2015, Germany received over one million refugees fleeing war and violence in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts. We have lived up to our responsibility, 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 sealing off our borders will not help, nor will defining an upper limit on the number of refugees that we will take on board.

Instead we need a strong and decisive Europe. Focusing on national solutions to this global challenge might seem tempting, yet it is nothing but an illusion. And more than that: terminating

the principle of European solidarity puts the European idea as a whole at risk.

In view of a divided Europe, right-wing populism is on the rise again. Freedom of movement within the Schengen area – a major achievement of our integration process – is in danger.

We cannot allow ourselves to stand on the sideline of this conflict. We have built this continent for over half a century; we have put enormous efforts, power and strength into achieving a truly united Europe. Together we have managed to overcome huge challenges in the past and present. And yet again, we are facing truly historic tasks: to offer shelter to the truly needy, to integrate men, women and children into our societies, but also to reduce and control the steady influx of migrants to Europe.

However difficult this might seem, it also holds a good chance for success: We have already taken steps towards a European

solution, the European Commission has already put forward the outlines of a broader mandate for Frontex, and we are working hard to implement the far-reaching agreement with Turkey in order to reduce and manage the flow of refugees. Clearly, we will not achieve a solution overnight. But we are already in the process of implementing a bundle of measures that will help us tackle the crisis.

I admit: this is not going to be an easy road, but it is the only one which will not lead into a dead end. Ultimately, however, we will not be able to bring the influx of refugees back down to manageable levels unless we address its root causes – most importantly by defusing the violent conflicts and crises that have been destabilizing Europe's southern and eastern neighborhood.

These are trying times for the European Union. Striking a balance between the common European interest in maintaining an

effective and humane refugee policy on the one hand and the need to build and maintain political majorities in member states will remain a key challenge.

On the international stage, Germany has stepped up its efforts to contribute to political and diplomatic solutions. This is more often than not a painstaking process, requiring persistence and patience, but we have recently made important progress. The nuclear accord with Iran shows that it was possible to negotiate a solution for a proliferation crisis that had an immediate potential to become a hot war. And it may yet turn out to be a crucial milestone on the way to resolving other violent conflicts in the region.

In the case of Syria, we have managed for the first time to bring to the negotiating table all the crucial international and regional actors needed for a political solution. More importantly, these actors have agreed

on a road map for a political solution – including a ceasefire and the outlines of a transition process – which was endorsed by a resolution of the Security Council. There is still a very long way to go, and none of the steps ahead will be easy – the recent escalation between Saudi Arabia and Iran bears witness to that. But crises like these can and must be alleviated by diplomacy. Our message to Riyadh and Tehran is clear: Both countries bear a broader responsibility for the stability of the region.

In Eastern Europe we have also made some real progress since we last met at the Munich Security Conference. The situation in Ukraine is far from perfect. Yet compared to the situation we had last summer, when we were almost running into an open war, Ukraine and the whole of Europe are much better off today. The Minsk process has delivered a marked reduction in violence and casualties.

Without any doubt, there is still a lot of work ahead of us: Frequent violations of the ceasefire must stop. Every shot that is fired is still one too many. At the same time, a constitutional reform for decentralization in Ukraine and the elaboration of a special status law for certain areas in eastern Ukraine remain decisive for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Russia's annexation of Crimea and its intervention in Ukraine have stirred many concerns and fears, especially among our Eastern European NATO allies. That is why Germany has politically supported and militarily contributed to the alliance's reassurance and adaptation measures.

At the same time we need to complement reassurance with a reinvigoration of our dialogue with Russia: I am speaking of a dialogue that should identify areas of common interest but also clearly spell out where we have sharp differences. The core principles of European security, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, are not up for negotiation. Reaffirming them is exactly what Germany will strive for during our OSCE Chairmanship. Our guiding motives for this chairmanship are renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring security.

In all of these endeavors – be it in the Middle East or in Eastern Europe – our transatlantic relationship is of critical importance. The diplomatic punch and the

security guarantee of the United States remain indispensable. It is in this context that Germany actively contributes to conflict resolution, be it in the context of the E3+3 or the Vienna talks on Syria.

Germany wants to be a facilitator, enabling dialogue and supporting negotiation processes. We have stepped up our commitment of both diplomatic energy and resources to civilian stabilization and reconstruction, efforts that are essential to pave the way towards longer-term peace

in conflict areas. A case in point is Iraq, where we are helping to quickly rebuild public services and critical infrastructure in areas liberated from ISIS. We are convinced that these measures are essential in order to restore the confidence of the Iraqi people in their public institutions. In Tigris, this stabilization operation has allowed more than 150,000 internally displaced persons to return to their homes, and we are preparing to deliver the same support in Sinjar, Ramadi and elsewhere.

Relying on diplomacy, crisis prevention and stabilization does not rule out military engagement if and where it is a necessary component of a peace effort. We all know that a group like ISIS, which is not interested in negotiating solutions or peace accords, will not be defeated without military means.

Germany has decided to contribute reconnaissance assets, logistical support and protection to the fight against ISIS, as well as providing training and equipment to the Kurdish Pesh-

merga, who are fighting ISIS on the ground. Germany is also contributing, alongside its NATO allies and other partners, to international missions in Afghanistan, Sudan and Mali.

In sum, Germany's international responsibility has many facets – domestically, on the European level and with regard to global peace efforts. We must use the full spectrum of our foreign policy and security toolbox in an effective and coherent way, from conflict prevention to post-conflict stabilization. The

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The bleakest possible picture

on whom she can still rely is shrinking fast.

The solid reasoning of the German delegation fell on deaf ears. Defense Minister von der Leyen cannot understand why 1.5 to 2 million refugees should pose a threat to an EU comprising 500 million people. This crisis is "moral in nature; the solidarity among EU member states is threatening to erode. 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." If the Europeans find no solution, "we are shifting the dilemma to countries with external borders: security or human rights! That is a betrayal of European values."

Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, said: "Desolidarization is the biggest crisis in the EU. We are wiping out our common agreements." Chief of the German Chancellery Peter Altmeier exclaimed: "Locking doors is not the solution," and later, "we will not accept national solutions." Wolfgang Ischinger admonished: "Rationalization will make things worse, not better." We need more EU, full stop." Fear has never been a good advisor, he added.

US Secretary of State John Kerry listed off all the crises, but then offered: "I have absolutely no doubt whatsoever we're going to get through this moment, and we're going to build the prosperity and the security and the stability that every single one of us wants. We are going to do just fine." PHK



Leader of the pack: Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany's foreign minister and new chairman of the OSCE for 2016, with the ambassadors of the member states in Vienna's Hofburg Palace in January.

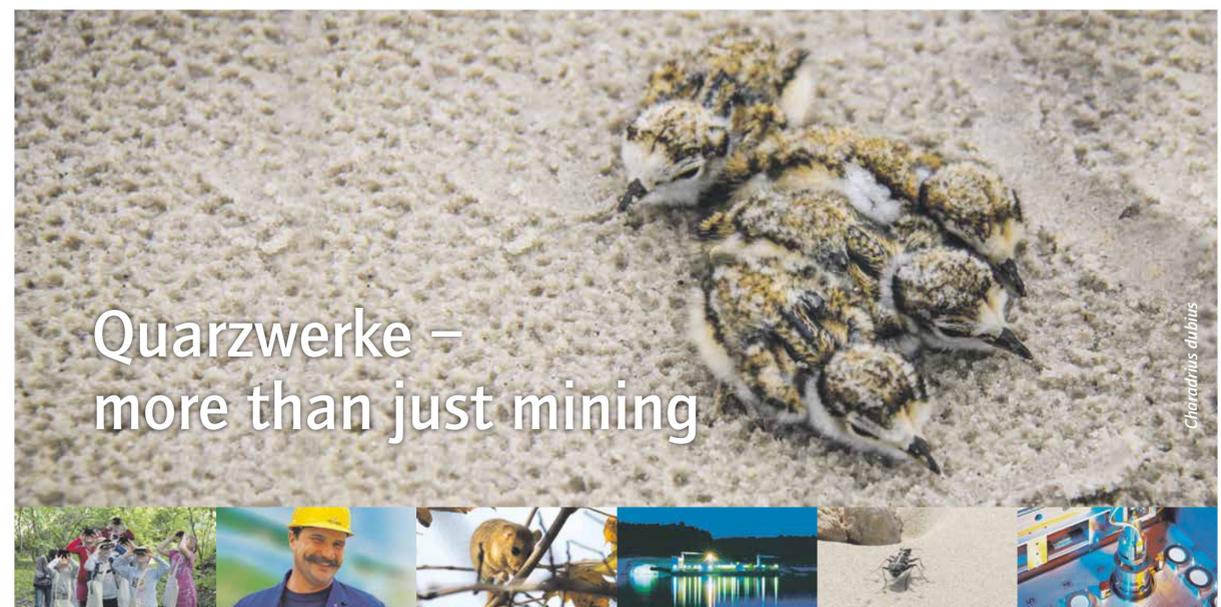
political processes to solve conflicts and crises will always be at center stage, involving persistent efforts and patience. The conclusion of the nuclear agreement with Iran and the beginning of its implementation is a heartening example that such efforts can indeed be successful. ■

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov: "We should not demonize Assad. We should not demonize anyone in Syria except the terrorists."

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."

Munich talks

World leaders gathered at the MSC. Here's what they had to say:



MSC Chairman Wolfgang Ischinger: "Renationalization will make things worse, not better. We need more EU, full stop."



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



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."



Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė: "We are giving in aggression. We are allowing Russia to behave that way in Ukraine, in Syria."



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



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 Dmitri Medvedev: "Restoring trust is a challenging task. It's difficult to say how long it would take."



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."



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



Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al Abadi: "We intend to make this year the final year of Daesh's existence in Iraq."



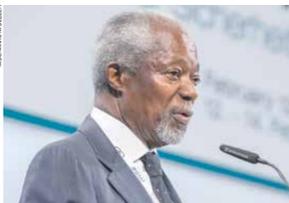
German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen: "The future Europe promised over the past 70 years, as the model for freedom and common values, threatens to be consumed by xenophobia and nationalism."



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 Khawaraj, or outlaws of Islam. This is a war to protect our religion, our values and the future of our people."



President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz: "Desolidarization is the biggest crisis in the EU. We are wiping out our common agreements."



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



Polish President Andrzej Duda: "My dream is to have a good relation with all neighbors."



Munich reads

The Security Times Press Lounge at the MSC

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 commenced in the Balkans." Neither the euro crisis nor the financial crisis nor the refugee crisis. "Your migrants are coming to us. They're stranded in Serbia," he said. "How long will we be the victims of your incapacity?" Why so direct, Mr. Minister? Serbia is due for elections in April.



Fresh off the press: Wolfgang Ischinger, chairman of the MSC presented the new issue of The Security Times to the guests at Hotel Bayerischer Hof in Munich. The Security Times is a special edition of Times Media's Atlantic Times, issued at the Munich Security Conference since 2009.



Candid answers: Security Times Executive Editor Theo Sommer interviews Jean Asselborn (left) and Ivica Dačić (below left).

Vigorous debate (from left to right): Security Times Executive Editor Theo Sommer, Jackson Janes, AICGS, and Detlef Prinz, publisher of The Security Times (below right).

Deep in conversation: Christiane Meier, correspondent for the ARD news network (below lower left).

Silence please: First readers of The Security Times (below lower right).



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Jens Stoltenberg: The best defense against extremism is unity

Today, we are facing greater challenges to our security than we have experienced for a generation," said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (picture) in an article for *Newsweek* in late January.



Stoltenberg calls out Russia for "illegally annexing Crimea," making it "the first European country to take part of another by force since World War II."

Russia has now entered the war in Syria on the side of President Bashar al-Assad, complicating matters still further. "I would like to see Russia playing a constructive role in the fight against ISIS, our common enemy," Stoltenberg said. The secretary general considers the challenges the world faces to be complex and multifaceted and sees the transatlantic alliance playing a key role in trying to resolve them.

Stoltenberg wants NATO to strengthen its collective defense. The organization, he writes, has increased its military presence in Central and Eastern Europe. It has more than doubled the size of the NATO Response Force to over 40,000 troops: "NATO is doing what is necessary to stay strong and keep its people safe. There is no contradiction between having a strong defense and being open to

dialogue. Being strong means being more able to engage in dialogue with countries such as Russia."

Stoltenberg considers NATO to be at the forefront of the fight against international terrorism. The aim of the organization's biggest-ever operation has been to deny safe haven to international terrorists in Afghanistan.

The former prime minister of Norway also mentioned NATO's efforts in training Iraqi officers in areas such as countering roadside bombs, de-mining, cyberdefense and military field medicine. NATO was working with Tunisian intelligence and the country's special forces to fight terrorism, and stood ready to support Libya should the situation have called for it.

The organization also helped Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to better defend themselves. In Iraq and Syria, all NATO allies took part "in the global coalition to degrade and destroy ISIS," Stoltenberg said. "They have agreed to additional assurance measures for Turkey, and NATO will continue to enhance Turkey's own air defenses. NATO fully supports all efforts to find a political solution to the conflict in Syria, including a political transition and democratic elections."

Doing the possible

In today's woebegone state of the world, de-escalatory diplomacy and compartmentalized cooperation are the order of the day | By Theo Sommer

Leonardo DiCaprio's frontiersman Hugh Glass is not the only revenant in 2016. Geopolitics and realpolitik are back; spheres of interest and influence are once more contested by the great powers; nationalism is again rearing its ugly head; globalization seems to be backpedaling; concepts like deterrence and containment are making a comeback; thoughts of war, even nuclear war, weigh anew on the minds of global leaders.

To describe the lamentable state of the present-day world one can hardly do better than to quote William Butler Yeats' 1919 poem "The Second Coming":

"Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned.

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity."

These lines were written in the wake of World War I, yet there is no better description of today's woebegone state of the world. Even the title – "The Second Coming" – fits our era of revenants.

Crises have become the new normal. "We live in a time of extraordinary change," US President Barack Obama declared in his last State of the Union address. "We are living in a world that in many ways is falling apart," said World Economic Forum founder Klaus Schwab last

month in Davos. Global business leaders are worried that nations are drifting apart rather than growing together.

Wolfgang Ischinger, chairman of the Munich Security Conference, deems our global security situation "the most dangerous since the end of the Cold War." Former US Secretary of Defense William Perry reasons that the danger of a nuclear confrontation is higher today than at any time since the termination of the East-West conflict.

The Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists finds the state of the world "so threatening that the minute hand of the Doomsday Clock must remain at three minutes to midnight, the closest it has been to catastrophe since the early days of above-ground hydrogen bomb testing."

Two facts compound the problems emanating from this portentous development. First: All major powers and power groupings are in a state of transition. Second: The time is out of joint, but there is no one to single-handedly set it right.

The political system of the US is polarized and paralyzed to the point of dysfunctionality. Its politicians have lost the ability to get things done constructively through rational dialogue and pragmatic compromise. The question of who will stand on the steps of the US Capitol to deliver his or her inaugural address on Jan. 20, 2016, agitates both friend and foe. A Trump presidency is a particularly worrisome prospect for America's allies. Their plea is like that of *New York Times* columnist David Brooks: "Stay sane America, please!"

At the same time, the trials and tribulations of the refugee crisis strike at the heart of the European project. For the first time in half a century, one can no longer preclude that the EU, battered by economic malaise, the migrant emergency and terrorism, will collapse and splinter. The crisis has revealed fundamental differences between the member states about the nature, purpose and destination of their union.

A trend toward renationalization threatens to tear the EU into several blocs. In Eastern Europe, a lack of solidarity and, as in Hungary and Poland, a proclivity toward illiberalism gnaws at the foundations of the European project. In Scandinavia, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and even Germany, the burgeoning right wing continues to denigrate the European idea. Their aim: not only exodus from the Brussels community but exit from the EU.

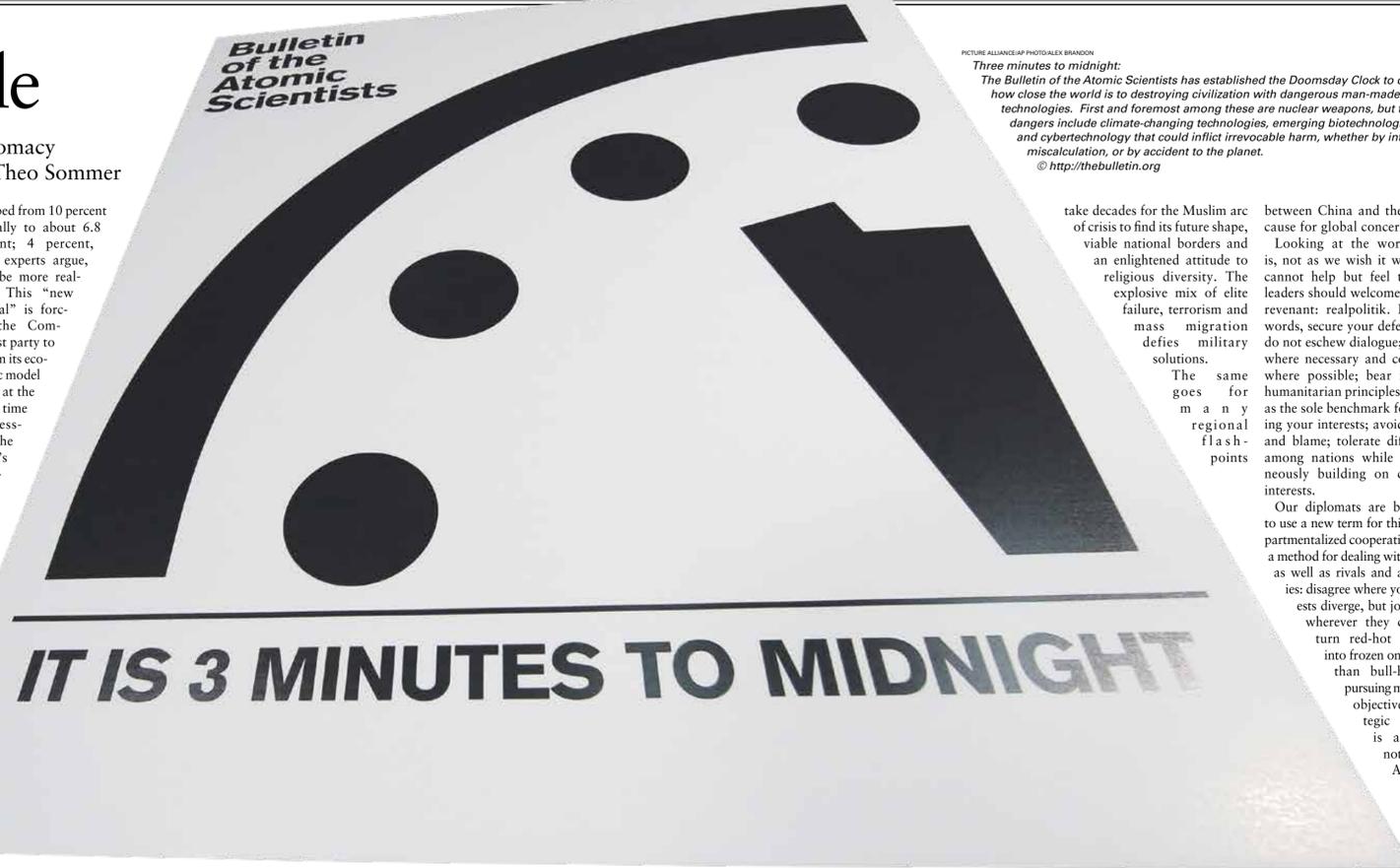
Russia, too, is a country in transition. The question is whether the country's dire economic freefall will make Putin more amenable to seek the cooperation of the West, or whether dwindling GDP will incite him to look for foreign scapegoats. His Syrian intervention has returned the Kremlin leader to the top table of world politics; that must soothe his ego. It is obvious, however, that at best he can be a spoiler, not a shaper – unless he opts for accommodation and conciliation.

China is also in the throes of fundamental change. Growth has

dropped from 10 percent annually to about 6.8 percent; 4 percent, some experts argue, may be more realistic. This "new normal" is forcing the Communist party to reform its economic model while at the same time buttressing the party's leadership.

position – a highly risky experiment. While we cannot expect Beijing to mollify its aggressive policies in the South China and East China Seas, its "One Belt, One Road" is likely to remain a grandiose scheme with little substance.

International politics has become a "G-zero world" with no shared values, standards or priorities (Ian Bremmer). Global hegemony is no longer possible. While Washington will remain preeminent for decades, it will no longer predominate. Nor can



PICTURE ALLIANCE/PHOTOALEX BRANSON
Three minutes to midnight: The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has established the Doomsday Clock to convey how close the world is to destroying civilization with dangerous man-made technologies. First and foremost among these are nuclear weapons, but the dangers include climate-changing technologies, emerging biotechnologies, and cybertechnology that could inflict irrevocable harm, whether by intention, miscalculation, or by accident to the planet.
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take decades for the Muslim arc of crisis to find its future shape, viable national borders and an enlightened attitude to religious diversity. The explosive mix of elite failure, terrorism and mass migration defies military solutions.

The same goes for many regional flash-points

between China and the US are cause for global concern.

Looking at the world as it is, not as we wish it were, one cannot help but feel that our leaders should welcome another revenant: realpolitik. In other words, secure your defenses but do not eschew dialogue; contain where necessary and cooperate where possible; bear in mind humanitarian principles, but not as the sole benchmark for securing your interests; avoid bluster and blame; tolerate differences among nations while simultaneously building on common interests.

Our diplomats are beginning to use a new term for this: "compartmentalized cooperation." It is a method for dealing with friends as well as rivals and adversaries; disagree where your interests diverge, but join hands wherever they coincide; turn red-hot conflicts into frozen ones rather than bull-headedly pursuing maximum objectives. Strategic patience is a virtue, not a vice. Avoiding disasters must be

PICTURE ALLIANCE/PHOTOALEX BRANSON

another nation don the cap of world policeman.

The Middle East is experiencing an extraordinary level of violent turmoil. The state system is fraying in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya. Except in Tunisia, the Arab Spring has ended in dictatorial winter. The self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) is imposing its writ on Mesopotamia. Saudi Arabia and Iran are engaged in intense proxy warfare. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, although no longer central to the region, continues to fester;

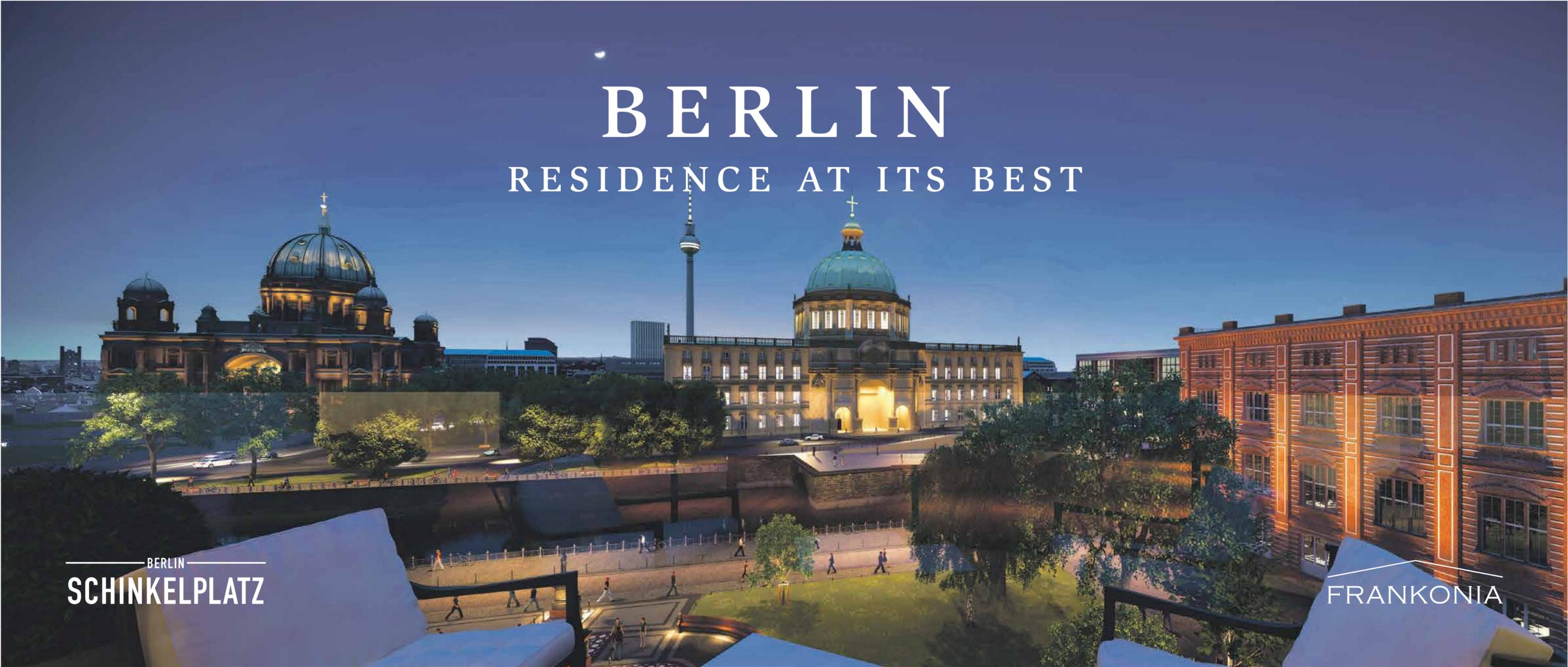
another intifada seems more likely than any diplomatic settlement, two-state or otherwise. Afghanistan's future after ISAF is parlous at best.

The Levant stands before a long phase of turbulence. It will

in Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, the smoldering conflict between India and Pakistan, the Chinese-Chinese tug-of-war over Taiwan, the dangerous Korean tinderbox and steadily increasing tensions

accorded absolute priority. De-escalatory diplomacy is the order of the day.

Theo Sommer is the executive editor of *The German Times* and former editor of the German weekly *Die Zeit*.





Monitoring mission: The OSCE special commission confirms weapons withdrawal from the contact line in the Donetsk People's Republic.

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

Approaching its one-year anniversary, the February 2015 Minsk II agreement to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine's Donbass region is not faring well. All of its provisions were to have been implemented by Dec. 31, 2015. Few were. Yet Minsk II remains the only settlement arrangement on offer and continues to command at least rhetorical support in Kiev and Moscow. For the foreseeable future, however, it appears that Donbass is destined to occupy a place on the list of frozen (or not-so-frozen) conflicts dotting the post-Soviet space.

Following Russia's military seizure of Crimea, an armed separatist conflict broke out in eastern Ukraine in April 2014. Moscow gave the separatists significant support: leadership, funding and heavy weapons as well as political backing. When the Ukrainian military appeared on the verge of retaking the Donbass in August 2014, regular units of the Russian army intervened.

A ceasefire was hastily brokered in Minsk in September 2014, but it never seriously took hold. Fighting continued while discussions in the trilateral contact group – chaired by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and involving representatives of the Ukrainian government, separatists and Russian government – made little headway. In February 2015, with a looming possibility of a resumption of full-scale conflict, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President François Hollande brokered the Minsk II agreement between Russian President Vladimir Putin and President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine.

Minsk II provided for a ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons from the line of contact within two weeks' time. Other provisions laid out the terms for a political settlement, including the release of prisoners, a special status for Donbass, local elections, consti-

tutional reform to provide for the decentralization of authority to local governments and the restoration of full Ukrainian control over its border with Russia.

Implementation of Minsk II got off to a poor start. Separatist and Russian forces ignored the ceasefire and instead launched a major attack at the key rail center in Debaltsevo. While the line of contact separating the two sides subsequently stabilized, the sides continued to exchange fire. In August 2015 the Ukrainians reported as many as 200 ceasefire violations per day.

Things improved somewhat in autumn. The ceasefire took better hold in September and the sides withdrew much of their heavy weaponry, though not all fighting came to end. In October Poroshenko, Putin, Merkel and Hollande met in Paris and agreed that local elections in the separatist-occupied parts of Donbass should be postponed until they could be organized in accordance with Ukrainian law and under OSCE observation, as provided for by Minsk II. The separatists, under some pressure from Moscow, agreed to the postponement.

Kiev and the separatists have yet to agree on terms for holding the elections. The separatists demand that Donbass receive special status before the elections are held, while the Ukrainian government demands that the elections should be held first and then certified by OSCE to have met democratic standards. In another possible complication, a separatist leader has said that pro-government political parties would not be allowed to compete in the local elections.

Furthermore, Ukrainian officials argue that the separatists and Russians have failed to meet key Minsk II provisions, including the withdrawal of foreign forces and military equipment from Ukraine, full access for OSCE to the Donbass, the release of all illegally detained persons and the restoration of Ukrainian control over the

border. The separatists claim that Kiev has not yet granted amnesty and has not enacted constitutional reforms to provide for decentralization.

Concerning decentralization, on Aug. 31, 2015, the Rada (Ukraine's parliament) passed a constitutional amendment on first reading with 265 votes. The vote generated controversy as opponents criticized it for rewarding the separatists. The Radical Party, one of five that constitutes the pro-government coalition, left the vote in protest. The amendment must pass on second reading with a constitutional majority of 300 votes. In a new twist, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk suggested on Jan.

a financial burden, and most analysts believe that Donbass would impose an even heavier burden. The Kremlin appears to regard Donbass as a means to destabilize Kiev and to make it more difficult for the central government to proceed with needed reforms and implementation of the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement.

Moscow's apparent support for ratcheting down the violence in Donbass and for postponing local elections there, coupled with the appointment of Boris Gryzlov, a Kremlin insider, as Russia's point-person for the conflict, have led some to suggest that Russian policy may be changing.

“ 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. ”

24 that the amendment instead be put to a referendum.

Most disturbingly, perhaps, leaders of the “People's Republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk have repeatedly stated that they will not accept a restoration of Ukrainian sovereignty, which is, of course, the ultimate objective of Minsk II. All the agreement's provisions were to have been implemented by the end of 2015. In a Dec. 30 phone conversation, Poroshenko, Putin, Merkel and Hollande agreed to extend the deadline into 2016, but did not fix a specific date.

While Russia moved promptly to annex Crimea in March 2014, it has given no indication of similar intentions regarding Donbass. Crimea has historical significance for Moscow and hosts the Black Sea Fleet. Moreover, it is proving

They argue that Kremlin policy has hit a dead end in Donbass, that Moscow has now turned its attention to Syria, and that the Russian economy is in more difficult straits than anticipated. The economy contracted by 4 percent in 2015 and, faced with the low price of oil and Western economic sanctions, is expected to contract further in 2016.

Kremlin policy may be changing. But it is also possible that Moscow has concluded that, at this point in time, no further destabilization is necessary. Politics in Kiev has become more difficult over the past half-year. In addition to the Radical Party's departure from the pro-government coalition, rifts have reportedly broken out between Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk while public approval ratings for both

leaders and the government's performance have plunged.

Absent a more serious effort by Moscow to implement the Minsk II provisions, all indicators point to the conclusion that 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 most likely state in which Donbass will remain into the foreseeable future is thus a frozen (or not-so-frozen) conflict, where there is no major fighting yet no complete ceasefire, and where negotiations on implementing Minsk II continue yet show scant real progress. That would allow the Kremlin to ratchet up the conflict at a later point if it desired to further pressure Kiev.

The Ukrainian government, while regularly reiterating its desire to implement Minsk II and restore sovereignty over all of Donbass, may consider a frozen conflict acceptable for the near to medium term. Kiev is not in a position to assume economic responsibility for Donbass, which would require significant humanitarian assistance and reconstruction funds to repair the heavy damage caused by nearly two years of fighting. Some privately question whether Ukraine should seek the return of Donbass or just let it go. It is not apparent, however, that letting Donbass go would settle matters with Russia, particularly as Moscow appears to use Donbass as leverage to pressure Kiev, rather than pursue securing the territory as part of Russia.

The EU and US should continue pressing all parties to implement the Minsk II provisions, even if full implementation seems unlikely. That means urging Kiev to do its share. If, or when, it is concluded that Minsk II has failed, the Ukrainian government should be in a position to say that it did everything in its power to honor the agreement, so that the blame will rest squarely with Russia and the separatists.

The key to settling the conflict continues to lie in Moscow, which has decisive influence on the separatists. Western policy should aim to change the calculation of costs and benefits underlying the Kremlin's policy toward Ukraine.

The West should continue to give Kiev political support and – provided that the government accelerates economic and anti-corruption reforms – additional financial assistance, with the aim of bolstering Ukraine's resilience. Additional military assistance should be provided with the objective of driving up the costs of any renewed offensive by separatist and Russian forces.

The West should make clear to Moscow that a return to more normal relations will depend on the Kremlin changing its policy toward Ukraine. In particular, the EU and US should hold to their position that sanctions will be eased only after Minsk II is fully implemented. As for the separate issue of Crimea, Kiev has wisely said it should be addressed in the longer term. Western sanctions linked to Crimea should continue to apply.

Above and beyond Ukraine, the West must take into account the broader implications of Moscow's use of military force against Ukraine. While the likelihood of Russian military action against a NATO member state is low, it cannot be entirely discounted. NATO should take steps to bolster its conventional forces and deterrent capabilities in the Baltic States and Poland.

In many quarters of the West there is interest in engaging Russia, which should certainly be a part of the EU and US approach. But the West should recognize that the more effectively it bolsters Ukraine and demonstrates NATO's readiness to deter other Russian provocations, the more likely it will be that engagement will prove fruitful.

Steven Pifer is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former US ambassador to Ukraine.

Russia's Syria gambit

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

By Dmitri Trenin



Toasting the future: Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Four-plus months into Russia's military operations in Syria, it is time to look at the results it has produced thus far, the objectives 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 screens the picture of a stalemate in Donbass with one of Russian Air Force prowess 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 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 extremists' 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 Russia's support in the air, Assad's military was able to stabilize the situation on the battlefield and gain some ground, at the expense of other jihadi groups more than of IS itself.

Putin's longer-term objective was to have as many jihadists killed in Syria as possible, particularly those hailing from Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union. Russian forces intervened in the Middle East to avoid having to fight at home. It is still too early to assess the success of this strategy. A month into the Syria campaign, terror-

ism has been a threat to Russians for over two decades, but Moscow has only now gone abroad to address the problem militarily at its source.

Yet, Putin's overriding goal in the Syrian war is not Syria, or even defeating terrorism, but changing the world order, and elevating Russia's position within it. The Russian leader had consistently aimed at a sustainable arrangement in which all major global security decisions would be made by a committee of more or less co-equal great powers, with Russia as a permanent member of the group.

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This result is of course anything but assured, and the gambit itself is not without risks. The Middle East is not only a graveyard of historical empires; more recently it has been littered with the debris of numerous peace efforts. On the political front, Russia faces huge difficulties with the notoriously fractured Syrian opposition, much of which is hostile to Moscow – as a result of recent Russian bombardments – and overly dependent on outside sponsors. Nor is Russia having a particularly easy time with its nominal ally, Bashar al-Assad. Having saved his regime with its airstrikes, Moscow feels positioned to demand more flexibility from Damascus, but Assad is not always amenable, and often requires Putin to perform heavy lifting to get what he wants.

Putin has also faced difficulties from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, who are eager for the end of the Assad regime. The Kremlin leader was unpleasantly surprised by Turk-

ish President Tayyip Erdogan, a longtime partner who ordered the downing of a Russian warplane near the Turkish-Syrian border. The two men killed in the incident remain the only Russian military casualties of the Syria campaign. The Russo-Turkish relationship, strategically important and economically productive, has suffered a serious blow. Moscow has also had to downplay the image of Russia siding with the Shia regimes in Tehran, Baghdad and Damascus in a region bitterly divided between the minority Shia and the majority Sunni sects. The combined effect of these factors places huge demands on Russian diplomacy.

Within a few months after the fact, Russia has become an indispensable power in matters of war and peace in Syria. Putin's offer to Washington, first made in 2013, to engineer a peace settlement in Syria brokered by Russia and the US – a sort of “Dayton-à-deux” for the Middle East – has finally found takers in the Obama administration. If successful, the military-diplomatic gambit in Syria would give the Kremlin what it craves most in the international arena: America's recognition of Russia's role as a great power in the post-Cold War world.

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Challenging NATO: Russian forces prepare a Tupolev Tu-22M3 for combat over Syria.

The use of military force to redraw national boundaries on Europe's borders was a stark reminder to NATO that relations with Russia could deteriorate as well as develop. The alliance began to craft a response to Moscow's aggression at its 2014 Summit, and the credibility of this response will be measured at NATO's Warsaw Summit this July.

It was no surprise that Russia's actions in 2014 – annexing Crimea and supporting separatist forces in eastern Ukraine – caused considerable concern in NATO capitals, particularly in its eastern member states. As leaders agreed in the Wales Declaration at the end of the 2014 Summit, "Russia's aggressive actions against

Ukraine have fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace." The capabilities Russia has recently employed highlight that despite budgetary concerns, Russia's armed forces have benefited from significant technical and financial investment. And these

capabilities are being used. In Syria Russia has recently demonstrated its advanced guided weapons, launched from both air and sea, and continues to mount large-scale military exercises with tens of thousands of troops. An assertive Moscow, however, is not the only challenge con-

fronting NATO. The actions of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) along with the continuing fragility and failure of states on Europe's southern and southeastern periphery have had growing impact at home – notably as a cause of the 2015 refugee crisis – and have reminded Europe's

defence planners of the complex security challenges they face. With vulnerabilities on its southern and its eastern flank clearly on display, NATO is trying to improve its military readiness, reinforce its collective defense posture and speed up alliance decision-making. The

Wales Summit ushered in another phase of strategic adaptation for NATO. It saw member states agree on a new Readiness Action Plan (RAP) to reassure NATO's eastern members regarding solidarity and the collective defense commitment, and adapt NATO's forces to better respond not just to the renewed challenge from Moscow, but also to instability in Europe's south and southeast. There was an accompanying ambition, for those then spending under 2 percent of GDP on defense, to "aim to move towards the 2 percent guideline within a decade," i.e. by 2024.

Since 2014 NATO's exercise activity has developed both in frequency and scope, in line with the "assurance" side of the RAP. Of the roughly 270 exercises planned

NATO's next strategic adaptation

The alliance must improve military readiness, reinforce its collective defense posture and accelerate decision-making | By James Hackett

for 2015, approximately half took place in NATO's eastern territories. Most significant were those exercises designed to test new structures under the RAP, such as Noble Jump in Poland in June and Trident Juncture in October and November, which tested rapid deployment capacity and interoperability. Trident Juncture was NATO's largest exercise in over a decade, but was still relatively modest compared to some of Russia's exercises.

The other key strand in NATO's response is "adaptation." On Sep. 1, 2015, the first NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) were inaugurated in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. They are expected to be fully operational in advance of the Warsaw Summit. Others are planned for Hungary and Slovakia. Numbering about 40-50 personnel, these are intended to aid rapid deployment of NATO forces.

In particular, NATO is trying to enhance the NATO Response Force (NRF), increasing it from 13,000 to 40,000 troops. NATO has also set up a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) to operate as the spearhead of the NRF. The VJTF is scheduled to be deployable in 2016; the concept was tested during the Noble Jump and Trident Juncture exercises in 2015. However, one lesson learned was that in peacetime – which might well be the condition in which the VJTF is deployed – bureaucratic measures can cause the movement of munitions, weapons and equipment across European borders to take upwards of 14-30 days.

Member state forces are also changing. US European Command, its leaders acknowledge, has been focused since 2002 on counterinsurgency training for other nations. In October 2015, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) said that "our force level in Europe now is not adequate to the larger Russian task that we see," though he

acknowledged that "our current permanent force structure" is unlikely to change. As such, the US is relying on pre-positioning equipment: a heavy brigade set of army equipment (the European Activity Set) has been distributed to maintenance bases in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria – all due to be operational in 2016 – and is ready to be drawn on by US forces rotating through these

concerning the details of some of these plans, the upward trajectory is clear. In Norway – already one of the few states to have increased spending since 2008 – the government has proposed a 9.8 percent real-term defense budget increase for 2016.

Questions have been raised over Finland and Sweden's relationships with NATO. Increased cooperation is the likely trajectory, but both are examining their

particular those hit hardest by the effects of the financial crisis, the economic situation will complicate attempts to meet the target of 2 percent.

Furthermore, while responses to Russia's actions have given NATO renewed purpose – only a few years after its post-Afghanistan relevance was called into question – member states must now reckon with more crises in more places, and these crises may

developing a cohesive perception of European security concerns in order to develop and maintain a system of unified response.

The military assurance and adaptation measures agreed in Wales are important capability developments, but more remains to be done. As an example, some observers may consider recently established forces and facilities, such as NATO Force Integration

and actions, short of military attack, should invoke an Article 5 response. With deployment of the NRF (and VJTF) still subject to North Atlantic Council (NAC) approval, adversaries could create or exploit seams between allies, which has the potential to affect deployment decisions.

But in the Eastern European context, the assumption remains that after a decision to deploy, NATO is indeed rapidly able to reinforce its allies. In the past few years, Russia has deployed capabilities in its Western Military District, including the movement of Iskander missiles into Kaliningrad, the Bastion coastal defense missile system and advanced combat aircraft and air-defense systems. These deployments could impede access to the region and constrain freedom of action in the Baltic Sea. Anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) had been previously mentioned, mainly in the context of the Asia-Pacific; now it concerns NATO in Europe.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in January 2016 that "NATO does not have the luxury of choosing between either responding to challenges stemming from the south or the east, we have to do both at the same time." Progress has been rapid towards meeting the goals agreed in Wales, but with challenges only multiplying, the process of change for NATO is likely to be a more fundamental and time-consuming exercise than observers initially realized. While the Wales Summit ushered in a phase of strategic adaptation for NATO, there will be pressure in Warsaw to continue this process, and to decide how and in which ways NATO must further transform itself to address the range of security threats facing the alliance. ■

Units (NFIU), to be a triprive for triggering NATO involvement in the event of an attack, while some allies in the East are calling for a more permanent NATO presence in their territories.

Furthermore, although the RAP has addressed NATO decision-making structures – long seen as a possible hindrance to potential rapid reaction – and SACEUR has been given the authority to prepare NRF troops for deployment up to the point of issuing an activation command, the type of crisis states may face could complicate decision-making. For instance, regional states may face non-military or "hybrid" threats as well as military challenges, and there remains debate on which threats

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More crises in more places: With an assertive Moscow, IS and vulnerabilities on its southern and eastern flanks, NATO is improving its military readiness, reinforcing its collective defense posture and accelerating decision-making. Above: the results of a bombing attack by Russian Sukhoi Su-30 aircraft in Damascus, Jan. 31, 2016; and French soldiers during a NATO exercise in Poland, May 29, 2015.

countries on exercises. Separately, the US has been working to establish two Aegis Ashore sites in Poland and Romania as part of NATO's Ballistic Missile Defense.

In the three Baltic States, Lithuania reintroduced conscription in 2015. All are procuring artillery, armored vehicles as well as anti-armor and air defense systems. Poland is also boosting its budget and there are proposals to acquire Patriot air defense systems, AGM-158 air-launched cruise missiles and a range of maritime systems that include new submarines, possibly with the capability of carrying cruise missiles as well. Though the change in government late in the year has raised questions

capabilities and plan to bolster bilateral cooperation.

However, maintaining the common purpose shown by NATO since 2014 and resourcing future defense plans may be challenging. In 22 of Europe's 26 NATO states, the average share of GDP spent on defense in 2015 was 1.1 percent. Figures provided in the IISS Military Balance 2016 indicate that if all of Europe's NATO states had met the 2 percent target, spending as a whole would have risen by nearly 45 percent. Allocations have increased in Northern and Eastern European member states most concerned about Russia's actions, but among some Southern European NATO states, in

not resonate to the same degree in all countries. For example, many southern member states are directly affected by instability in the Middle East and North Africa, resulting in an increased flow of refugees. In response, Italy allocated significant military assets to its Operation Mare Nostrum before it was replaced by the EU's Operation Triton in 2014.

In 2015 France suffered two major terrorist attacks and as a result significantly boosted defense outlays. While it has taken an active role in NATO's assurance measures, France's principal military focus is now on domestic security and tackling IS, as well as on its existing commitments in Africa. These examples indi-



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Game of thrones

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 Rühle



How to play the Ukraine card? The board game Risk was originally released in 1957 and has been reissued many times. It allows for all kinds of strategic alliances and unofficial treaties.

Russia's annexation of Crimea and its ongoing undeclared war with Ukraine have created a radically new situation for NATO. Two major premises upon which the alliance's post-Cold War reform was based – that Russia's evolution would remain benign and the enlargement of Western institutions could 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 casus belli for Moscow, the security of Europe's post-Cold War order, which includes the right of countries to freely choose their alignments, has experienced a major setback.

Worse, with its military intervention in Syria, Russia has now become part of the IS conundrum at NATO's southeastern borders. The West, notably the United States, has been forced to realize that any vacuum it allows to develop in the Middle East will be filled by other actors.

These developments have sparked NATO's largest political and military reorientation since the end of the Cold War. But the Allies must also consider the policy they want to pursue towards Russia. As Russia will be an important factor in shaping political and military developments in both the eastern and southern reaches of NATO, allies must do more than simply lament the failure of earlier hopes for a stable European order.

NATO's initial reaction to the Russia-Ukraine crisis was swift and clear: it increased its military presence and activities in the east. However, transforming these initial reflexes into a posture that is both militarily coherent and politically acceptable will be more demanding.

This has already become evident with regard to the centerpiece of NATO's military response, the

Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which emphasizes the rapid delivery of reinforcements 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 behavior has pulled the rug out from under these assurances, NATO has thus far sought to avoid irreversible steps that could undermine a new rapprochement with Russia. To put it bluntly, RAP was meant to assure Russia as much as NATO's eastern allies.

However, given the steady improvement of Russia's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, such as the deployment of modern air defense and anti-ship missiles in Kaliningrad, some are calling for a shift from "reassurance" to "deterrence." They envisage a posture focused less on reinforcements and more on standing, in-theater military capabilities. This should deny Russia the opportunity to use its regional military superiority to create a fait accompli, for example through a limited incursion into a Baltic State.

NATO need not hold changes to its strategy or posture hostage to Russian (mis)perceptions; however, it must carefully ponder the messages such a shift would send to Russia as well as to its member states. What may deter Russia may not necessarily deter all NATO states. Thus, while NATO's reinforcement paradigm is likely to be augmented by equipment pre-positioning or similar measures, it is unlikely to morph into posturing reminiscent of the Cold War's substantial military deployments.

A similar logic pertains to the nuclear dimension of deterrence. Russia's nuclear saber-rattling has provided a new rationale for nuclear deterrence as a basis of defense, but any revisiting of NATO's nuclear policy will not

result in a mirroring of Russian doctrinal and rhetorical excesses. Here, too, reassuring NATO's own members is as important as deterring Russia.

NATO's southern states, where security is determined less by Russia than by instability in North Africa and the Middle East, must also be reassured

that NATO remains their best insurance policy. While southern member states have less specific defense requirements than those in the east, their concern about a perceived overemphasis of NATO's eastern dimension is palpable. For NATO to avoid a bifurcation into two regional groupings with different security

concerns, it must maintain its ability to conduct expeditionary missions in full, whenever and wherever necessary. The fight by many member states against IS demonstrates as much.

The debate in Europe over the flow of refugees from the Middle East has further bolstered the rationale for addressing the crisis in the region. While the Russia challenge is mainly a matter of deterrence, IS is an immediate threat requiring an immediate military response.

Adapting NATO's military posture is a major challenge, yet developing a new policy towards Russia will be equally difficult; not only have various member states traditionally held different views on Russia, but Russia itself has changed in such a way that a reliable analysis is both necessary and daunting.

Most observers agree that Putin's 2012 return to the office of president has shifted the issue of maintaining power to center stage. Russia's military doctrine strongly reflects the fear of "color revolutions" like those in Georgia and Ukraine, as well as the Arab Spring.

Putin's aim is thus not an elusive reconstruction of the Soviet Union, but rather to maintain the regime and prevent any further waning of Russia's political clout. With Russia's territorial amputations in countries it considers to be within its traditional sphere of influence, Moscow is creating a string of "frozen conflicts" to prevent these countries from joining Western institutions.

At the same time, Russia is propping up Syria, its last ally in the Middle East. Whether it's improvised activism or part of a master plan, most observers agree that this policy is here to stay.

Given this backdrop, attempts to resurrect the overhyped NATO-Russia Strategic Partnership seem futile. However, notions that NATO could remain in wait-and-see mode or that it must build up more military

muscle 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 beyond 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 incident.

However, an even more important reason for engagement is the unresolved issue of Russia's future role in European security. The current focus on military balances obscures the fact that the real issue at stake is a geopolitical one: Russia's place in Europe. The West's twin strategy of enlarging NATO and the EU while forging an ever-closer relationship with Russia was contingent on a cooperative environment, i.e. on Russia's acquiescence. Now that Russia has demonstrated that it will violently oppose the further expansion of NATO and the EU into its sphere of interest, the game has changed.

Convincing Russia of the benign nature of NATO and EU enlargement appears a lost cause. Europe needs security arrangements that take legitimate Russian interests into account without relegating certain NATO and EU aspirants to a permanent zone of limited sovereignty. Developing such arrangements will be difficult, particularly as Russia's behavior has all but destroyed its credibility as a guarantor of agreed norms. For the tragedy of a wayward Russia not to become a tragedy for all of Europe, the previous focus on institutions and memberships must be supplemented by policies prioritizing functional cooperation over formal affiliation. More years of hard work are still required for Europe to become truly "whole and free."

Michael Rühle heads the Energy Security Section in NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division. The opinions he expresses are solely his own.

Polar opposites

Towards a new equilibrium between NATO and Russia

By Łukasz Kulesa

Since the Russian annexation of Crimea, and quite unexpectedly for Western audiences, pictures of military hardware and troops exercising in Central Europe have begun to make regular appearances in the evening news. On their own TV screens, Russian viewers have seen an intensification of hostile, anti-NATO propaganda and even more images of mass drills and parades of modern Russian weaponry. And the escalation of tensions has found physical expression as well; there has been a notable increase in dangerous encounters between the Russian military and those of NATO members. In November 2015, the Turkish Air Force shot down a Russian Su-24 bomber, killing one of its crew members.

In the coming months an even more dangerous military reality may emerge on both sides of the NATO-Russia border, from the High North to the Black Sea. It could include the deployment of additional military forces and new categories of weapons into the area – along with nuclear warheads – and even more frequent exercises. Another incident would increase chances of NATO-Russian tensions spiraling into a graver crisis.

NATO's response to the crisis has thus far focused on strengthening its collective defense capabilities. A number of allies have argued that, given Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its assertive behavior elsewhere, NATO must update its thinking on deterrence and establish clear "red lines" against Moscow's adventurism. If a credible NATO military presence in border areas

can be established through deployments and exercises, so the argument runs, Russia would be deterred from initiating aggressive actions against the area protected by NATO.

For its part, Moscow seems happy to perpetuate a confrontational mode of relations with the alliance and to use NATO's increased military activity as a pretext for more military spending and for beefing up its own forces; the Russian Ministry of Defense recently announced that three new armored divisions will be created in its western region "in response" to NATO's actions. It is high time to chart a way out of the current cycle of military actions and counteractions. Unfortunately, pushing a "reset" button and simply returning to a pre-2014 state of relations between NATO and Russia is not an option. It must be assumed that the relationship will continue to be adversarial and a return to business as usual is impossible.

Our efforts should focus on establishing a new set of rules for managing the NATO-Russian confrontation at lower political and financial costs, and with a reduced chance of a military crisis or escalation. The aim should be to establish a new military equilibrium, which is understood as a situation where each side avoids introducing military measures that can be interpreted by the other side as provocative or escalatory, but is satisfied that its military posture is adequately robust to deter an armed attack or an attempt at military coercion. Initial plans should avoid seeking a grand bargain between Russia and NATO or far-reaching

arms control agreements, but rather focus on relatively simple confidence-building mechanisms and adjustments to deployment and policy.

The key to establishing a sustainable equilibrium lies in introducing restraint concerning deployments of conventional military forces by Russia and NATO in the border areas. In the run-up to the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, it is understandable that the question of possibly permanent deployments of NATO forces in Central and Eastern Europe attracts most of the attention.

However, it would be a mistake to call on NATO to show restraint while turning a blind eye to Russian military activities. In order to stabilize the Russian-NATO relationship, both sides must signal their willingness to decrease tensions.

For Russia, that could include refraining from the deployment of major new units and the establishment of new military bases in the border areas – including Crimea – and abstaining from the addition of more military forces in Belarus. In response, NATO should agree in Warsaw to keep its "persistent" presence in the Baltic States and Poland limited and within the confines of previous pledges of no permanent stationing of "substantial combat forces" in the East.

Second, we need more warning of military exercises, particularly those held in the border regions. Similar to the NATO practice of publishing an advance exercise schedule, a list of major Russian exercises planned for 2016



Source: NATO and Russia.

could be made available by the Russian Ministry of Defense. One particular source of NATO anxiety are Russian "snap exercises," which often involve the sudden mobilization of substantial military forces and their deployment close to NATO-protected territory. As a confidence-building measure, Moscow could voluntarily decide to reduce the frequency and size of such exercises.

Third, NATO and Russia should resume substantive dialogue on their military doctrines and postures. Russia has concerns about the "aggressive" scenarios of NATO exercises in Central and Eastern Europe and the purpose of developing a territorial missile defense in Romania and Poland. In NATO, many experts worry about the threat of hybrid warfare against the Baltic States and about Moscow's apparent readiness to use its nuclear weapons at an early phase of a

crisis, in line with its concept of a "de-escalatory nuclear strike." European security will be served well if these concerns are openly discussed by experts from both sides, with the inclusion of the military establishment.

Finally, both sides should refrain from increasing the role of nuclear weapons as more central tools for confrontation. It can be argued that nuclear weapons are already a background element of the current crisis. Russian nuclear saber-rattling has prompted calls for NATO to re-emphasize its own reliance on nuclear deterrence.

However, the absence of restraint could have dire effects. Many in NATO would see certain Russian actions – such as the deployment of nuclear weapons in Crimea, their redeployment to Kaliningrad or withdrawal from

the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty – as a serious escalation of the crisis, which would increase pressure on NATO to beef up its nuclear posture, leading to a possible deployment of nuclear weapons closer to Russia.

Taken together, the implementation of the steps suggested above can form a basis for stabilizing the relationship between Russia and NATO in a state of manageable confrontation and minimize the chances of the relationship sliding deeper into hostility. While still a far cry from the lofty visions of a NATO-Russian partnership based on mutual respect, the most likely alternative to managed confrontation is an endless crisis, peppered with the occasional outburst of military threats and dangerous incidents. Such is a future that – hopefully – no one in Europe wants.

Łukasz Kulesa is research director at the European Leadership Network, London.

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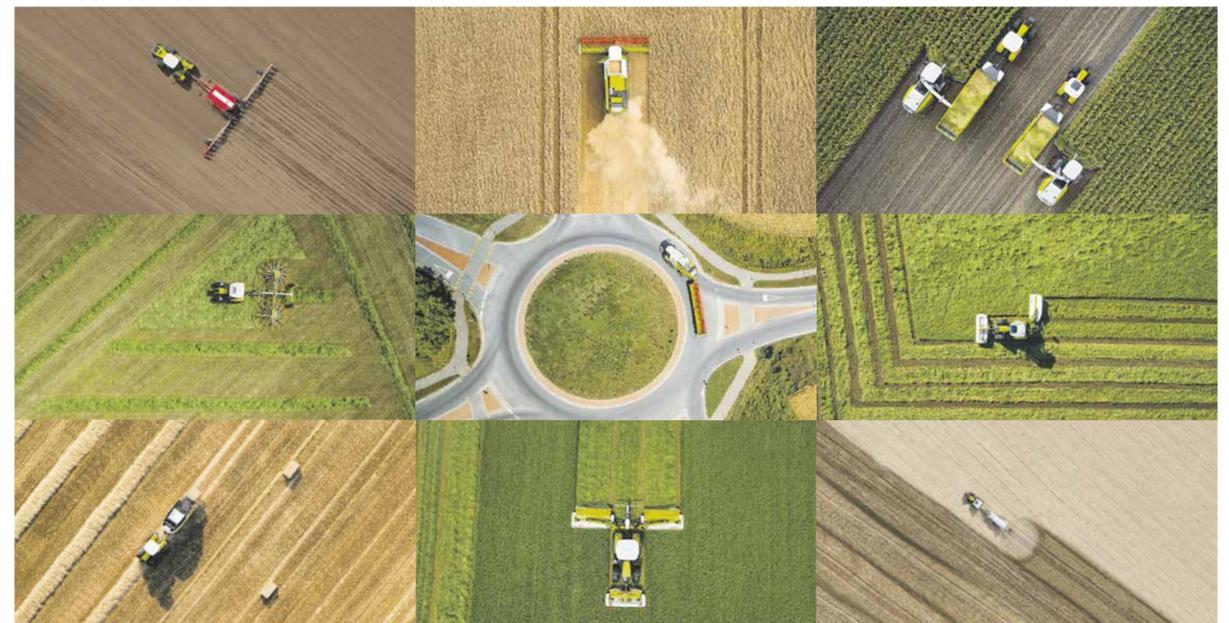
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On the sidelines no more

Two years into Germany's "new" foreign policy

By Volker Perthes

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 applaud what they see in terms of leadership; and still others worry about the way Germany leads 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 *machtvergesessen*, 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 war; terrorist attacks in Europe; and an unprecedented influx of refugees.

While the European Union has only received some 3 percent or less of all refugees worldwide, the number of arrivals has significantly strained the capacities of states at the EU's external borders as well as of major recipient countries. The stream of refugees has triggered tensions within the EU and has furthered right-wing populist movements almost everywhere on the continent. More generally, Germans and Europeans are increasingly coming to realize that their idea of institutionalized multilateralism and multilateral decision-making is not shared by most of their partners in the rest of the world. They have had to accept that the United States is no longer prepared to take the lead in any crisis at any time, while rising or re-emerging powers, notably China, India and Brazil, seem yet unprepared to contribute effectively to the global order. As a result, regional orders have

been threatened, not only in the neighborhood of Europe, but in Europe itself. At the same time, dividing lines between the domestic and international spheres have all but disappeared. The refugee crisis, for example, demands policy approaches that span diplomacy, defense, development, European integration, homeland security and social policy. Crises that have impact on German and European security are no longer sepa-

“Refugees, Syria, Russia, terrorism and EU problem-solving capacity have merged into one single crisis landscape.”

rable from one another: Refugees, Syria, Russia, terrorism and EU problem-solving capacity have merged into one single crisis landscape.

Germans and other Europeans have had to learn that conflicts on their periphery will not simply burn out and may not be containable. They were also forced to acknowledge that major crises in their vicinity will not be resolved, at least not in the short term, but will need to be managed over extended periods.

This changing environment has certainly helped German policy makers develop their country's international profile. Germany has taken the diplomatic lead in the crisis of Russia's presence in Ukraine; it was a key participant in the nuclear negotiations with Iran; it is involved, as a member of the International Syria Support Group, in recent efforts to find a political solution to the Syrian war; and it has accepted the OSCE presidency for 2016. Moreover, Berlin has beefed up its contribution to NATO reassurance measures in the Baltic region and Central Europe. It is also increasingly prepared to contribute military forces to crisis interventions outside NATO's area: as part of UN efforts in Mali, as one of the countries prolonging their military engagement in Afghanistan, with arms deliveries and training activities in Northern Iraq, and more recently with reconnaissance flights over Syria and other measures to support France and the US-led coalition against the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS).

Policymakers in Berlin are aware that their European and international partners expect this new level of international co-leadership to become a regular feature of German policies, not just an accidental one. Berlin no longer sees this as a challenge. Rather, these expectations are matched by a growing interest in sustaining the influence Germany has won, not least in diplomatic formats where, despite not being a permanent member of the Security Council, it figures

prominently, such as the P5+1 on Iran and the "Normandy Quartet" to address the crisis in Ukraine.

German policy preferences are relatively stable. Even with an increased preparedness to use military force in UN, NATO or EU operations, Germany does not see itself as a military power. Influence can also be won by political and economic means, indeed, in the view of the German elite, much more effectively.

Germany will remain a promoter of a rules-based international order – both in the pan-European realm and globally – and still prefers to act and, where appropriate, lead in association with partners such as France, rather than alone. German policy makers may yet have to learn that it is not always enough to do what is "right" when partners who may even share Berlin's objectives don't feel sufficiently consulted. Ironically, perhaps, the more Germany assumes leadership

posture, along with the way Washington and Beijing manage their strategic relationship, will affect German and European efforts to promote multilateral solutions for global challenges such as climate change and cybersecurity.

For all these reasons, we should expect Germany to increase its resources available for foreign and security policy over the next few years. Berlin neither meets NATO's 2-percent-of-GDP target for defense nor the 0.7 percent Official Development Assistance (ODA) quota; however, unlike some of its partners it has not slashed its defense budget and has substantially increased funding for diplomacy. Berlin is likely to further develop its diplomatic toolbox, focusing on the opportunities of digital diplomacy and on a more networked national and European foreign policy that takes the activities and possible contributions of non-state actors into consideration. Also expect Germany to become more conscious and transparent about its national interests.

Given the high level of international connectivity not only of the German economy, Germany is vulnerable even to geographically distant developments. As a middle power, however, it cannot be present everywhere with the same level of involvement.

The freedom of the seas in general and more specifically the prevention of military conflict in the South China Sea constitute obvious and fundamental German interests. An aggressive Chinese pursuit of hegemonic aspirations would not only threaten regional stability, but also undermine the international order at large, which Germany and Europe see as vital for their security and well-being.

For Berlin, the solution is not to reduce its engagement in and with China. Rather, Germany is in the process of politicizing its approach to Asia: i.e., engaging in a more open political debate with Chinese leaders while simultaneously increasing its cooperation in all policy fields with like-minded countries in the Pacific Rim, such as Australia or South Korea.

At the same time, there is little doubt that the main focus of Germany's foreign and security policies will be on the eastern and southern vicinities of the EU and on Europe itself. After all, geography remains a critical factor. Immediate security risks tend to emanate from nearby rather than from distant regions; societies are more closely linked; and the capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, stabilize countries and support economic and political transformation will be more effective in their immediate environment than in other parts of the world.

The EU will certainly remain Germany's main framework of action. Given the turbulence in the world around us, Germany has a fundamental interest in strengthening the foreign policy and security policy dimensions of the EU. It is one thing for German policy makers to enjoy the heightened global demand for German contributions to international politics and privileged relations with Germany. But they must also do more to explain at home that without the EU, Germany – like France and the UK – would be a much less relevant, less secure and less prosperous international actor.

Volker Perthes is director of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin.

Germany's new level of international co-leadership: Angela Merkel engaged in joint crisis management with David Cameron, François Hollande and Arseniy Yatsenyuk (from left).

The freedom of the seas in general and more specifically the prevention of military conflict in the South China Sea constitute obvious and fundamental German interests. An aggressive Chinese pursuit of hegemonic aspirations would not only threaten regional stability, but also undermine the international order at large, which Germany and Europe see as vital for their security and well-being.

For Berlin, the solution is not to reduce its engagement in and with China. Rather, Germany is in the process of politicizing its approach to Asia: i.e., engaging in a more open political debate with Chinese leaders while simultaneously increasing its cooperation in all policy fields with like-minded countries in the Pacific Rim, such as Australia or South Korea.

At the same time, there is little doubt that the main focus of Germany's foreign and security policies will be on the eastern and southern vicinities of the EU and on Europe itself. After all, geography remains a critical factor. Immediate security risks tend to emanate from nearby rather than from distant regions; societies are more closely linked; and the capabilities Germany and the EU can muster to manage conflicts, stabilize countries and support economic and political transformation will be more effective in their immediate environment than in other parts of the world.

The EU will certainly remain Germany's main framework of action. Given the turbulence in the world around us, Germany has a fundamental interest in strengthening the foreign policy and security policy dimensions of the EU. It is one thing for German policy makers to enjoy the heightened global demand for German contributions to international politics and privileged relations with Germany. But they must also do more to explain at home that without the EU, Germany – like France and the UK – would be a much less relevant, less secure and less prosperous international actor.

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Security Challenges

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Soon back in Assad's hands? The ruins of Aleppo.

In early September 2015 the picture of three-year-old Alan Kurdi shook the world. The photo of the dead boy, having drowned after a boat holding Syrian refugees capsized on the Turkish coast, caused an international outcry. Heads of state expressed their shock, French President François Hollande demanded a shared European refugee policy and other politicians called for new efforts to end the war in Syria.

Five months later Syrians continue to die in Syria and in the Mediterranean, many of them children. The images of their bodies no longer cause a stir. They barely even make it into the news. It is early February 2016 and the world wishes the war in Syria would simply go away. The new round of peace talks in Geneva is aimed at making that happen.

According to the framework agreed upon in Vienna last November, the negotiations in Geneva will lead to a ceasefire and a national transitional government by mid-2016. By the end of 2017 the Syrian people will vote on a new constitution and a new president. By then the first refugees will have returned home and plans for rebuilding the country will be on the table.

Some may call this schedule overly optimistic, but the timeframe is not the main problem. The events on the ground in Syria are threatening this new peace process before it has even begun.

The terror attacks by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) in Paris last November lent diplomatic efforts a new urgency and an initial sense of optimism. All foreign governments intervening in Syria finally seemed to realize that battling the IS is futile 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, while the US finally granted Vladimir Putin what he had craved: America's acknowledgment that Russia is not a "regional power," as US President Barack Obama once condescendingly called it, but a geo-strategic heavyweight currently ruling the airspace over Syria. In turn, Russia signaled that it could imagine a Syria without Bashar al-Assad, possibly by 2017. Washington responded with a thumbs-up.

Saudi Arabia probably pulled off the biggest success in the run-up to Geneva. At a conference in Riyadh in December the

Saudi government, with some help from Ankara, forced the notoriously divided Syrian opposition to agree on a negotiation committee and a list of basic goals, which is surprisingly free of Islamist zealotry. The main points are: the integrity of Syrian territory; preserving state institutions while reforming the military and the security apparatus; free and fair elections; a rejection of any form of terrorism and any presence of foreign fighters; and Assad's removal from power once the transitional process begins.

The fact that one of the most powerful rebel commanders, the Saudi-backed Zahran Allouh, signed on to the Riyadh agreement gave the negotiation committee some badly needed credibility among Syrians. It also provided the opportunity to draw a clearer line between Islamist forces that can be part of a political process and those that have and will have to be fought with military means, such as IS and the Nusra Front.

However, a few days after the Riyadh conference Allouh had blocked their inclusion in the "Riyadh list." Syrian civil society, on the other hand, has had no real voice in any negotiation process up to now. Its members, who run local councils, schools and hospitals in cities and villages outside the control of the regime or IS, and who document crimes by all armed parties, have been systematically shut out.

So it comes as no surprise that the initial sense of optimism 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 unity, independence, territorial integrity and secular character are fundamental.
2. State institutions will remain intact.
3. The rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination, must be protected.
4. It is imperative to accelerate all diplomatic efforts to end the war.
5. Humanitarian access will be ensured throughout the territory of Syria, and

Overly optimistic?

The new Syria peace process is in peril before it has even begun | By Andrea Böhm

quickly evaporated. As this article goes to print, Geneva III, which had already been rhetorically demoted to "proximity talks," has been suspended after only two days until the end of February. The UN special envoy Stefan de Mistura had successfully defused the arguments about who would participate. But the relentless onslaught of Russian airplanes and pro-Assad troops on



Once optimistic: US Secretary of State John Kerry and UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura at the Syria conference in Vienna on Nov. 14. As of Feb. 3, the Syria peace talks have been "temporarily paused."

Turkish-Kurdish PKK, Ankara had blocked their inclusion in the "Riyadh list." Syrian civil society, on the other hand, has had no real voice in any negotiation process up to now. Its members, who run local councils, schools and hospitals in cities and villages outside the control of the regime or IS, and who document crimes by all armed parties, have been systematically shut out.

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the ground in Syria, along with the continuation of sieges and barrel bombing against civilian areas, have rendered obsolete any chances for talks. It confirmed the opposition's fears that this round of talks will play out as simply the diplomatic stage of Russia's Syria script: Help the Syrian army and its Lebanese and Iranian allies regain as much opposition territory as possible while at the same time push for a political "transition" that will

be administered under UN supervision to the satisfaction of the governance and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability. They must also be free and fair, with all Syrians, including the diaspora, eligible to participate.

6. Daesh and other terrorist groups – as designated by the UN Security Council, and further, as agreed by the participants – must be defeated.
7. Pursuant to the 2012 Geneva Communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution 2118, the participants invited the UN to convene representatives of the Government of Syria and the Syrian opposition for a political process leading to credible, inclusive, non-sectarian governance, followed by a new constitution and elections. These elections must

keep the Alawite security apparatus in power. It is a script that Western countries appear to have accepted. While Western governments insist that IS in Iraq can only be defeated if the Sunni population is given adequate political representation, no such reasoning applies in Syria.

Even the concession of Assad at some point stepping aside seems to be off the table for now. According to a recent report in the *Financial Times*, Assad reacted with an angry "No way!" when a high-ranking envoy of Putin tried to convince him in December that his days as president should come to an end. De Mistura bravely insists that the "proximity talks" have not failed and will resume, but this seems highly unlikely.

It may be useful to remember what is at stake; in the fifth year of the war the statistics of suffering in Syria have numbed the international community: more than 250,000 people killed; half of the population either internally displaced or forced to flee the country; more than 16 million in need of humanitarian assistance; about half a million besieged, mostly by pro-regime forces, but also by rebel groups; cities barrel-bombed by Assad's airplanes on a daily basis; Raqqa currently being terrorized by IS; chemical weapons still being used by the regime as well as IS.

But not only is a whole country being destroyed. The war in Syria and the international community's inability to end or at least

suspend it has shredded decades of progress in humanitarian law. The UN Security Council has regressed to its worst levels of ideological trench-digging since the Cold War. And the EU has shifted into full panic mode in the face of its refugee crisis. Above all of this hovers the threat of another Paris-style terror attack. Against this background it was tempting to stem the tide of bad news with reports of progress in Geneva. Both Washington and Moscow have invested too much diplomatic capital to let the process falter before it has even begun. US Secretary of State John Kerry had all but dragged the opposition's delegation to the table despite its repeated precondition that the shelling and sieges of civilians stop.

But keeping up appearances will be no substitute for substance. The flow of refugees will only continue if the barrel-bomb attacks, sieges and shelling proceed and corridors for humanitarian aid are not established. Western countries, but above all Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, have the leverage to restrain all anti-Assad forces that want to be part of the negotiating process. But the Syrian regime is by far the biggest perpetrator of crimes against its own population.

Russia and Iran have the leverage to restrain Assad, which would require considerable self-restraint. According to Syrian and international human rights organizations, Russian airstrikes have targeted hospitals, schools and rescue workers in territory controlled by opposition forces. More than 1,000 civilians have been killed by Russian bombs and missiles since the beginning of Moscow's intervention.

For the time being the new round of talks in Geneva have become another "toxic icing on a half-baked diplomatic cake," as Frederic C. Hof, Barack Obama's former Syria advisor, described Geneva II. Unless Putin realizes that he needs more than just the semblance of a political process, and that his intervention might well experience mission creep, the war will go on. This may be in Moscow's short-term interest. Should the talks indeed resume by the end of February, the regime could be in a position to not have to compromise on anything. And Syrians will continue fleeing to Europe.

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Wrath of the people: Iranian protests against Saudi Arabia after the execution of Baqir al-Nimr, Jan. 4, 2016.

Whenever the topic is the Middle East, its oil, overt or covert civil wars, Islamist terrorism or Islam itself, we keep hearing a well-worn bit of wisdom from Western diplomats, policy makers and the business community: No one can afford the luxury of alienating Saudi Arabia.

That's true. The Arabian Desert kingdom is an oil super-heavyweight, the leading Arab power in the Gulf as well as the global lead nation of Islam.

However, even before the international nuclear agreement with Iran was signed and sealed in July 2015, a second insight challenging the old doctrine began gaining currency: that today, no one can safely ignore the Islamic Republic of Iran, a rising petro power aspiring towards regional hegemony, a growth market of the future and the most important voice for Shiite Muslims, not least within the Arab world.

The problem with this bilateral configuration on the Persian Gulf is not only that, even for the most hard-boiled policy makers, both states set unattractive examples with respect to their treatment of civil and human rights, democracy and rule of law. The two regimes are world leaders in their use of the death penalty; both in part employ Sharia law; both suppress any real opposition.

In Saudi Arabia, except for one experiment at the local level and – unlike Iran with its highly restricted yet thoroughly active parliament – there's no voting at all. Women's rights are a grim matter not only among the Saudis, but in many respects the Iranians as well.

The view is no more upbeat concerning direct or indirect support for terrorist groups, militias or resistance movements as extended policy arms. Whether it's Tehran's backing of Hezbollah in Lebanon, other Shiite militias in Syria's civil war or the fighting in Iraq, or the Saudi patronage of Syrian rebels and parts of the anti-government forces in Iraq, both countries are extremely problematic and often dubious allies – but also deep-pocketed business partners and indispensable regional actors.

Even more explosive for pragmatically inclined Western politicians is the fact that the two predominant Gulf powers, Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran, have been deeply hostile for decades. That makes relations with these states at the Straits of Hormuz – through which a quarter of the world's traded oil passes – an enormously delicate matter. The Saudi-Iranian conflict, after escalating for months, has by now taken on the dimensions of a Middle East cold war.

The struggle that began three and a half decades ago in 1979 with the Iranian Revolution in Tehran is now being conducted through proxy wars and thinly veiled political conflicts throughout the Middle East. Saudi and Iranian interests collide and clash mercilessly in the wars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. They each have a barely concealed hand in Lebanon and Palestine. Even the global petroleum market is a theater in this conflict. Saudi Arabia is waging a pricing war on the global oil market. The price of a barrel of crude oil has

Standoff in the Gulf

Saudi Arabia and Iran: an escalating struggle for hegemony in the Middle East | By Tomas Avenarius

fallen dramatically during the past year. Energy analysts think the market could go to as low as \$20 per barrel, with only a medium-term rebound on the horizon.

Saudi Arabia's ever-higher output is flooding the global market with cheap oil – much to the detriment of its own revenue, which is all but completely dependent on oil. This tactic is no longer aimed chiefly at the US and its rising production levels thanks to fracking. It's also targeting Iran, which is set to return to the oil market now that its sanctions have been lifted as part of the newly forged nuclear agreement.

In the multiple conflicts in the region, loose ends almost always lead back to the two Gulf rivals, and therefore to an institutionalized competition presenting itself increasingly as an intra-Muslim sectarian conflict between the majority Sunni and minority Shiite communities.

At its heart, however, this is a politically driven conflict of interests between two states over hegemony in this strategically vital region. When all is said and done, the catch phrases "Sunnis against Shiites" and "Arabs against Persians" can no longer veil the fundamental conflict between the archconservative Saudi kingdom and the physically and ideologically aging revolutionary Shiite clerics in Iran.

The conflict finally broke out into the open at the beginning of 2016. "The battle of the beards" was the headline of one German mass-market newspaper on the sudden Saudi-Iranian escalation. Enraged at Saudi Arabia's execution of a dissident Shiite cleric, Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, as part of a mass execution of 47 Saudis in early January, Iran's Supreme

Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatened the Saudis with "divine retribution" for the death of Nimr. A mob that seemed just waiting to be activated then attacked and set fire to the Saudi embassy in Tehran.

Incensed at this gross violation of diplomatic standards and international protocol, Riyadh broke off relations with its neighbor and pressured other Arab states to follow suit. Bahrain, Kuwait, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates withdrew their diplomats from Tehran, the Arab League sent a bellicose letter of protest to Tehran over the embassy attack, and the Royal Saudi Air Force resumed its bombing campaign in Yemen, its war-torn southern neighbor, breaking a ceasefire that had been negotiated just a few weeks earlier.

Once again, the front now clearly follows the borders of the Sunni-ruled Arab states under Saudi leadership. At least for the time being, Iran can rely on its allies in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, which are all Shiite-dominated in one way or another and form part of the Shiite arc by which Tehran – much to the dismay of the Gulf's Sunni regimes, along with Egypt and Jordan – exerts its influence throughout the Arab world.

Just how much of a threat Riyadh regards its neighbor, both before and after the nuclear agreement, was made clear in a remark by Saudi King Abdullah, who died last year. In a leaked diplomatic cable, he told the US government: It's time to "cut off the snake's head."

Abdullah was overtly urging Saudi Arabia's American ally to bomb Iran's nuclear installations – something the

US, as we know, did not do. Instead, President Barack Obama pushed forward with the nuclear deal with Iran, which was concluded in July 2015. It allowed the Saudis' arch-enemy 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 Saudis felt betrayed by the Americans, who had once been their closest ally.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with its population of 30 million, has neither a constitution nor a legal code that encompasses all areas of law. The basis for parts of its jurisprudence remains the Koran and Sharia law. Unlike Iran, Saudi Arabia – where the state religion is a rigid interpretation of Sunni Islam called Wahhabism – is not a clerical state and not a theocracy. Since the establishment of modern Saudi Arabia in 1932, the foundation of the monarchy, which regards and legitimizes itself as the custodian of all Islam's holy sites of Mecca and Medina, has been an iron pact between the Saud dynasty and Wahhabi Muslim scholars. From the beginning, this alliance has severely restricted the monarchy's capacity to reform.

For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with a population of almost 80 million, was created in a revolution against a secular monarch. The fall of the Shah led to the proclamation of a firmly Shiite republic that has both a president and a parliament. Strategic policy and de facto leadership, however, lie in the hands of a "spiritual leader" appointed by a council of experts, mainly clerics. The Vilayat-e Faqih devised by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini means "rule by the supreme

The Iranians need to catch up in numerous sectors: automobiles, rail transport, machine tools, health care, agriculture and much more. During Rouhani's visit to Rome, his Italian hosts not only showed respect for their Muslim guest by serving fruit juice instead of wine (not an uncommon gesture for Muslim state visits), they also covered up the nude sculptures at the Capitoline Museum (an exceedingly unusual gesture, even for Muslim guests). The president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a nation highly sensitive to more than just this issue, was treated to a shock-free reception for thoroughly profane reasons. Rouhani was on a shopping spree. After the lifting of international sanctions Iran has gained access again to some 100 million euros in frozen assets. In this case, respect for the sensitivities of others should pay off.

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Tomas Avenarius is an editor for the Munich-based Süddeutsche Zeitung. He served as the paper's Cairo correspondent until 2015.



Adversaries: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (left), and Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, King and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia.

Turkey stumbles

Erdogan's recklessness has jeopardized his country's future

By Michael Thumann

Turkey's relations 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 party to the region's treacherous Sunni-Shiite divide. Nobody was able to predict such devastating developments when the Arab uprisings began five years ago.

In early 2011 Turkey was a widely respected country comfortably situated between the EU, oil-rich Russia and a relatively peaceful Middle East. The Turkish economic powerhouse granted visa-free travel to many visitors while entertaining 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 stems from some drastic miscalculations by President Tayyip Erdogan as much as from the country's changing environment. Erdogan's quest for absolute power has divided Turkey while the war in Syria has greatly destabilized regions just beyond its borders. The country is neighbor to a civil war of indefi-

a leader in the Arab world? Was a successful Turkey not in a position to lead the revolutionized Sunni Arab states through their transition?

Step by step Erdogan distanced himself from the autocratic Arab rulers, yet his fallout with Bashar al-Assad in 2011 proved to have the biggest impact – on both Turkey and the Arab world.

When Assad began waging war against his own population with hopes of saving his rule, Erdogan became his enemy. Even if Turkish forces were not directly involved in the fighting, Turkey supported rebel groups such as the Free Syrian Army and various Islamist groups. Jihadist IS fighters received treatment in Turkish hospitals while enjoying freedom of movement between Turkey and Syria.

These measures were aimed at a quick downfall for Assad; they were to help create a new Syrian government that would be dependent on Turkish guardianship and support. Such was Erdogan's plan of action, which thus far at least has not been successful.

Bashar al-Assad's survival derailed Erdogan's Middle East strategy. Assad has prevailed due to strong support from Iran and Russia and the absence of a concise American strategy for Syria. By 2014 Erdogan had to have real-



In mourning: Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (center) lays flowers at the scene of the car bomb in Ankara on Feb. 19.

nite duration and unforeseeable consequences; some 2.3 million refugees had settled in Turkey by the beginning of this year. IS terrorists recently targeted German tourists in the heart of old Istanbul and Turkey's tourism sector is sure to suffer dire repercussions as a result.

The IS threat has proved far from easy to contain. Turkey's border with Syria cannot be sealed entirely as refugees cross into Turkey on a daily basis. As the Turkish government has tolerated the movement of IS fighters into Syria in the past, the country is still home to IS cells, particularly in towns close to the border. It will take years of meticulous work by police and secret service agencies to root out these cells operating on Turkish soil.

What has landed Turkey in this precarious situation and what conclusions has the Turkish government drawn thus far?

The current situation cannot be understood without first considering Erdogan's missteps over the past five years. When Egyptian masses began to revolt against President Hosni Mubarak in January 2011, Erdogan, then prime minister, was caught by surprise. Two months earlier he had been awarded the Muezzin Award by the Human Rights Award by Libya's eccentric ruler; Erdogan enjoyed cordial relations with many dictators in the Middle East, including Gaddafi and Syria's Bashar al-Assad. Turkey had been pursuing a balanced foreign policy, with an emphasis on sound economic relations, while avoiding to take sides in quarrels between Syria and Iraq or Iran and Saudi Arabia. This posture of non-alignment was one reason for Turkey's economic success.

However, things began to change as Mubarak's fall caused Erdogan to rethink his position. Was he not one of the very few democratically elected leaders in the region? Was he not a pious Muslim with great popularity as

paid against the Kurds along its southern border.

To make matters worse, Turkey has recently made new allies that may cause it even more trouble. Erdogan has teamed up with Sunni powers in the region; during the Arab uprising Erdogan sometimes acted as if he were the undecleared leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Arab countries. Moreover, after King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud assumed power in Riyadh in early 2015, Erdogan established a close relationship with the new ruler. Turkey and Saudi Arabia cooperate in Syria, have converging views on the treacherous roles of Russia and Iran, engage in close business relations, and both have their problems with Barack Obama's cautious approach in Syria and his reluctance to commit US troops to the common fight against Bashar al-Assad.

Erdogan and the Saudis have found common ground over their sectarian agendas, but not over their particular religious affiliations. Erdogan, although very conservative, embraces Sunni Islam, a far cry from the Wahhabism practiced in Saudi Arabia. Yet their shared opposition to Shiites and Alawites has been a powerful factor in uniting the aims of Erdogan and King Salman.

While the past year has seen the emergence of a Saudi-Turkish alliance, more striking is the recent warming of Turkish-Israeli relations. Israel shares the Saudi view on Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood and other regional issues. Now, against the backdrop of the Syrian war and the Sunni-Shiite rift, even Erdogan and Netanyahu are seeming to find common ground.

At the same time, Turkey is becoming more involved in the Gulf region. Along with Qatar, Turkey has agreed to build a military base on the peninsula, not far from the Iranian shores of the gulf and in the middle of a huge underwater gas field shared by Qatar and Iran. Erdogan's family and friends enjoy close business ties with Qatar, the site of much new infrastructure as the country prepares to host the 2022 soccer World Cup.

Erdogan had visited Saudi Arabia shortly before its execution of the Shiite cleric Nimr Baqir al-Nimr and the subsequent destruction of the Saudi embassy in Tehran in early January 2016. After the collapse of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Turkey's conspicuous silence can be read as tacit support for Riyadh rather than for Tehran.

In its struggle for regional supremacy with Iran, Saudi Arabia is increasingly asking its Sunni neighbors for their loyalty in the conflict. Along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Sudan have severed diplomatic ties with Iran, while the United Arab Emirates has recalled its ambassador from Tehran.

As of now, Turkey has not openly sided with Saudi Arabia on issues involving Iran. If the Sunni-Shiite divide deepens, however, Erdogan may align his country even more strongly with the Saudi-led Sunni camp against the Persian power. Turkey and Iran are already at odds over Syria and the Shia-dominated government in Baghdad.

With the lifting of international sanctions, Iran is entering regional markets as a new competitor, offering a range of industrial goods similar to those from Turkey. The economies of Turkey and Iran have been in competition for quite some time. Should this rivalry be extended to the geopolitical and military arena, Turkey's foreign policy would suffer yet another severe blow. The border between Turkey and Iran has gone almost unchanged for five centuries. The last thing Turkey needs now is more trouble at its eastern edge.

Michael Thumann is Middle East correspondent of the Hamburg-based weekly Die Zeit.

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US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter prophesied in mid-January that the self-proclaimed Islamic State's hold on the northern Iraqi city of Mosul would soon be broken and that preparations were under way for an advance on Raqqa in Syria, with US special forces on the verge of deployment to support local militias.

Troops answering to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi have controlled Raqqa for nearly three years. Re-taking the city on the Euphrates could be the beginning of the end of IS rule over large tracts of northern Syria.

The key to military success in both Syria and Iraq appears to be Kurdish forces. Without 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 Peshmerga, it will not be possible to drive IS out of its proto-capitals. Carter pointed out that the aim was 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 a very high, exquisite level so that they can be enablers for the entire unit."

On the Syrian-Kurdish front, as on the hard-fought border between the Iraqi part of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphate and the autonomous Kurdish region run by President Masoud Barzani, this strategy appears to be working. His Peshmerga forces are barely more than 30 kilometers from Mosul, the capital of Nineveh Province. Peshmerga units, armed with MILAN anti-tank missiles and M-36 assault rifles provided by the German army, have advanced this far since the successful campaigns by IS in mid-2014; in November they conquered what was until recently a center of Yazidi society, the Sinjar Mountains west of Mosul.

Politicians from countries in the US-led anti-IS alliance saw the re-taking of the strategically important mountains in the Syrian-Iraqi border region as a sign that Iraq's second-biggest city would soon be liberated. But officials in Erbil continue to warn that any offensive on Mosul would have to be organized by the central government in Baghdad. The main attack would have to be conducted by government troops coming from the south, Kurdish officials say – and Pentagon boss Carter agrees. However, the areas to the south of Mosul remain under IS control.

So it could be 2017 before any attack is launched on Mosul. The Iraqi army is weak – it only just managed to free the western Iraqi provincial capital of Ramadi from IS – and then only with massive destruction. Kurdish troops marching into Mosul – whose inhabitants are mostly Sunni Arabs – would also increase the ethnic tensions already threatening to tear the Iraqi state apart.

A further problem is that Turkey is also involved in training Peshmerga fighters. In late 2015 that caused an outrage in Baghdad, where it was regarded as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty; Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi called on the UN Security Council.

One victory in the war against IS does not take Iraq any closer to national unity. On the contrary – there are too many forces with diverging interests on both sides of the border, which itself is a product of the colonial era and was drawn up one hundred years ago in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The border runs right through the middle of the IS caliphate. And the proxy war being fought between Iran and the US ever since the 2003 US invasion of Iraq is now being fought in Syria as well. Once more, the Kurdish forces don't fit with either side. They are led by the YPG on the ground

Kurds vs. Kurds

Rivalry between the Syrian arm of the PKK and the Kurdish autonomous government in Erbil is undermining the fight against IS | By Markus Bickel



Relations between Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the PKK are worse now than they have been for years. When they liberated Sinjar in November, the two sides quarreled over who had played a greater role in the battle.

and are represented politically by the Democratic Union Party (PYD) led by Saleh Muslim. The party has neither positioned itself clearly on the side of the Sunni-

Russia's entry into the war last September – something Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is bitterly opposed to. The YPG is one of the groups benefiting from Russian airstrikes on Islamist positions in the provinces bordering Turkey. The advance they began in December from Kobani westwards brings a contiguous Kurdish region within the realm of possibility. For this reason, too, US military support for the YPG is a thorn in Turkey's side.

That also explains Erdogan's strategic partnership with the president of Iraq's Kurdish region, Masoud Barzani. Unlike in northern Syria, where the Turkish president fears the PYD autonomous region of Rojava could become the core of an independent Kurdish state, Erdogan supports the Kurdish autonomous region in Iraq (KRG) with all his might. Fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) are holed up in the Qandil Mountains on the edge of the Iraqi Kurdish region. They have been the focus of renewed airstrikes by Turkey since the middle of last year.

Barzani gave Erdogan the green light for the military strikes, a move very much against Washington's will, as President Barack Obama sees the YPG People's Defense Units – the Syrian arm of the PKK – as the most important ground forces against IS after the Peshmerga.

With the help of US airstrikes, YPG fighters have even been able to drive IS out of some of its positions along the Euphrates and to re-take the Tishrin Dam. And with the liberation of Monbij near the Turkish border, they interdicted one of the supply lines via which the Islamist militants obtained supplies from Turkey until the end of 2015. In the middle of 2015, the YPG took back the border town of Tell Abyad, drawing sharp criticism from Ankara; the Turkish government accused YPG units of

carrying out ethnic cleansing against the Arab and Turkmen populations in the region. In mid-January, Amnesty International accused Barzani's government of destroying thousands of homes of Arab former inhabitants in the areas it liberated from IS.

After being all too friendly towards the terrorist movement, Turkey is now coming down harder on IS – after IS terrorists carried out bombings with many casualties in Ankara in October and in Istanbul in January. But for Erdogan, more important than hitting IS is preventing a Kurdish-controlled territory on Turkey's southern flank, stretching from Qamishli close to the Iraqi border, almost to Aleppo in northwestern Syria. Once a key trade center in Syria, Aleppo is now regarded by Ankara as part of its sphere of influence.

Gone are the days in which Erdogan allowed Iraqi-Kurdish Peshmerga units to cross Turkish territory to help the YPG fighters encircled by IS in Kobani. Twelve months later, each side is eyeing the other distrustfully; the brief historic alliance among Kurds is already history. Relations between Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the PKK are worse now than they have been for years. When they liberated Sinjar in November, the two sides quarreled over who had played a greater role in the battle.

Rivalry between the Kurdish groups may yet cause problems for the anti-IS alliance, as the Sinjar Mountains are of strategic importance for both Iraq and Syria. The oil-rich districts of Syria's Hasakah and Deir ez-Zor provinces can be reached from there just as easily as from the lands west of Mosul – still controlled by IS.

Markus Bickel is the Cairo correspondent of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and the author of "Der vergessene Nahostkonflikt" (The Forgotten Conflict in the Middle East, 2011).



The Balkans: no war in sight

But the migrant crisis can create further obstacles to the integration process | By Ivan Vejvoda

The Balkans have been making headlines again since last year's escalation of the refugee crisis. Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking recently to her fellow party members, warned that a closing of borders in Europe, specifically between Germany and Austria, could lead to conflict and war in the Balkans. This statement had multiple addressees: the German public as well as coalition partners, who were being warned what a collapse of the Schengen open-border regime could bring about internally as well as in the immediate European neighborhood. Her speech was also a warning to the leaders and states in the Balkans to cooperate rather than fall prey to mutual recriminations.

In concert with the EU, Germany is muddling through this crisis. For the moment there is a worrisome lack of a much needed, unified strategic approach to everything from asylum policies and relocation schemes to enhanced external EU border controls.

The Western Balkans constitute only one piece of this complex puzzle. The clear and immediate goal is to stem the flow of refugees and migrants and to keep them in the vicinity of the countries from where they have fled, be they in the Middle East or Africa. The eradication of the root cause in the Middle East is badly needed but nowhere in sight.

Geography and geopolitics matter. The Balkans are not the periphery, as is sometimes said; they are the inner courtyard of the European Union, surrounded by EU and NATO member-states. This Southeastern European peninsula – the Western Balkans – remains the last non-integrated part of Europe. This is unfinished business for the EU and a serious test for its credibility. If the EU is unable to help spur the enlargement process to the Western Balkans, it is hard to grasp how capable it is in dealing with other challenges.

The EU Summit in Thessaloniki in June 2003 opened the pathway to full membership for the Balkan

countries. All have committed to both EU and NATO integration (except, at the moment, Serbia when it comes to NATO). Only Croatia has made it into both NATO and the EU; the others are moving toward this goal, some clearly with great difficulty – in particular Macedonia (largely due to its dispute with Greece over its name) and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Montenegro, Serbia and Albania have achieved candidate status and the first two are already negotiating their entry.

The challenges in the region are undoubtedly grave: very low economic growth, high unemployment rates and the stagnation or decline of living standards coupled with a continuing brain-drain and several unresolved regional issues.

However, war will not return to the Western Balkans. The conflict in 1990s, which ended with 78 days of bombing of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, is much too present in the minds of the political leaders and the societies that suffered and paid such a huge price. No one wants

to revisit such times, no matter how domestic political rhetoric may sound.

Even the migrant crisis will not lead to war, though it can clearly exacerbate tensions and create further obstacles to the integration process. In fact, compared to other parts of the world the Balkans are an oasis of peace. And there is a reason for this: the existence of the European Union and its enlargement policy.

This leads to a second observation: Notwithstanding the current crisis, the soft power of the EU is alive and well in the Western Balkans. The Belgrade-Pristina agreement signed by the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo under the aegis of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton in 2013, and now carried forward by her successor Federica Mogherini, testifies to the beneficial and soothing effects of the EU's soft power in the region.

Germany's initiative in the progression toward enlargement, the Berlin Process begun in August 2014, has been of utmost impor-

tance. At the same time the US firmly backs the Balkans' integration into the EU.

NATO is also a significant stability factor with its on-going mission in Kosovo and as guarantor for the Belgrade-Pristina agreement. Furthermore, the recent invitation to Montenegro to become a NATO member state sent a strong message to all actors in the region. The two-day visit to Serbia last November by the NATO secretary general was a notable event.

Moscow's new assertiveness was demonstrated by its actions in Ukraine. Russia's annexation of Crimea and its violation of Ukraine's sovereignty have been a serious cause of concern. Moscow has been trying to drive a wedge in the region between those who are opposed to Euro-Atlantic integration and those who see their future as lying firmly with the EU and NATO. Russia's key relationship with the region is based on its energy and gas exports.

The migration crisis has shown that, for all intents and pur-

Migrants crossing the border between Croatia and Serbia at Baapska, September 2015.

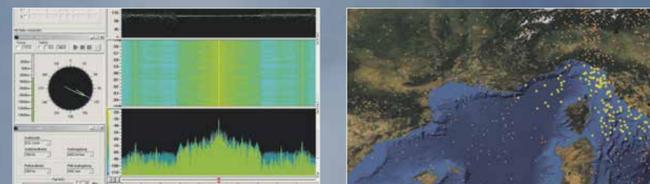
poses, the Western Balkans are a de facto member of the EU and more broadly of the Euro-Atlantic arena. The migrants enter an EU member state, Greece, then pass mostly through Macedonia and Serbia to enter another EU member state, Croatia. No concrete solution is possible without the full involvement of these countries.

War should never have occurred in Europe at the end of the 20th century. It did – and Yugoslavia disappeared in a self-inflicted, violent conflict that would ultimately result in its division into seven countries. The region of the Western Balkans and its citizens must find an accelerated path into the EU while respecting all its rigorous criteria for membership.

Ivan Vejvoda is senior vice president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

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Street art expressing disagreement with the terrorist attacks in Paris.

PICTURE: ALLIANCE/ARACAMA/REX/ALUROS

Terrorists of our own creation

Why we need a new strategy to destroy IS | By Elmar Thevessen

How about a dose of new realism in our fight against terrorism? Until we acknowledge our continuing naivety in dealing with this threat, we will fail to successfully contain and destroy the Islamist movement, which attracts thousands of young people from across Europe and has repeatedly struck fear into the hearts of societies across our continent. Nonetheless, we are still struggling to find the right measures to stop it.

We must admit that our approach since the devastating Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington has failed, largely due to our disregard of the plans and principles laid out so openly in propaganda disseminated by terrorist leaders. Among many examples is an audio message by Osama bin Laden from October 2002, calling on young Muslims the world over to become the “knights of the fight” and “heroes of the battle” to restore the dignity and power of Islam. The leader of al-Qaeda urged them to follow in his footsteps: “We men of mature age have laid down guideposts for the young people of the ummah on the way of jihad and have mapped out the path for them. Young people, you need not but follow this path.”

Bin Laden has been dead for nearly five years, but his words resonate louder than ever among young men and women longing to be “knights” and “heroes” in a fight the Islamists claim is a just war against the injustices of our world. This weak argument is bolstered by our failure to recognize that the unprecedented challenge posed by the Sept. 11 attacks called for the development of entirely new rules and structures.

Addressing the root causes of global terrorism could have eliminated the fertile ground that nourished the terrorist generation we now face. Instead, we orchestrated a war on terrorism executed solely by military forces, intelligence services and police. We failed almost entirely to battle for the hearts and minds of those who were watching our actions from within our societies. We sowed the seeds of radicalism by neglecting to spend money and effort towards prevention and de-

radicalization in neighborhoods that produce crime and extremism, the byproducts of a dearth of both individual perspectives on and convincing explanations for our actions abroad.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not excusing those who became terrorists. And I'm not suggesting we should have served our troubled youth a silver platter of bright, worryless futures and great jobs. But we could have shown them we care by creating more opportunities to succeed, promoting their engagement and strongly discouraging any display of disrespect for the rule of law. No support, no obligation, no penalty—a strong signal of indifference that made it very easy for jihad recruiters to promise the lost and disenfranchised a way to make a difference in a world of injustice.

It should come as no surprise that young adherents to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) tend to be the underprivileged in our societies, coming from criminal backgrounds, dysfunctional families and unsafe neighborhoods, mostly in big cities. There are also intellectuals, doctors and lawyers that have joined the jihad being waged in Syria and Iraq.

But they, too, are striving to become vanguards of a perceived justice. They are driven by the endless stream of videos showing war-zone atrocities that instill a feeling of powerlessness in both the intellectuals and the underprivileged, for whom IS provides a sense of power, belonging and self-esteem that they are unable to experience in Western societies.

This must be addressed—urgently; IS is not only using emotional appeal to draw fighters into the war in Syria and Iraq, but also to open new fronts in different parts of the world, especially Europe. The continuous rise of lone-wolf or single-cell attacks over the past two years is an indication of what to expect next. A blueprint for subversive action has been widely published on the Internet and, according to German investigators, enthusiastically read and disseminated by young Muslims in European countries.

“Muslim Gangs. The Future of Muslims in the West”—the first ebook in the Black Flag series—calls for the creation of armed gangs to confront police and establish no-go zones in bigger cities. According to the authors, the increasing tensions between

Muslims and non-Muslims will fuel the far-right movement: “The neo-Nazis are already trying to win over politicians, and influential people in society to their anti-Islamic cause. This division will become more clear in the coming years when more and more far-right political groupings (with neo-Nazi thugs as their militias) are elected and become rulers of cities and countries.” This polarization of society is then supposed to alienate and insulate Muslim communities, thereby providing fertile ground for the recruitment of new followers of the Islamist cause.

This strategy is still far from succeeding, but it has begun to show its impact. The perpetrators of the November Paris attacks are thought to have been led by Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who had formed an Islamist gang controlling part of the Molenbeek neighborhood in Brussels. In light of the exaggerated threat of imported terrorism via the great number of refugees arriving in Europe, the far-right anti-Islam movement is on the rise, and was recently fueled by the sexual attacks against women in several German cities this New Year's Eve. Although they seem to have been committed by gang-like

groups of migrants from North Africa, there is no indication of any connection between them and the young Islamists addressed by IS with its ebook series.

“Muslim Gangs” not only provides organizational guidance and bomb-making manuals, but also spells out the ultimate goal of uniting all Muslim communities in Europe for the final chapter of the IS strategy: “With European Muslims surrounding Italy from its West and North, the Balkan Muslims from its East, the Islamic State will enter into Italy from its South with its missiles and ships. And ‘you will attack Rome, and Allah will enable you to conquer it.’” The last sentence is a quote from the Prophet Muhammad's teachings about the end of time, which arguably form the most important reason for young Muslims in the West to join IS.

The expectation of the final and victorious battle between Muslims and their enemies lends their lives, by purpose they desperately seek. The IS propaganda machine has made its core argument—from frequent references in its daily reports from the front, to the countless articles emphasizing it on the terrorist organization's Internet magazine. The magazine is titled

Dabiq, after the small Syrian town where the apocalyptic battle is supposed to take place.

The self-proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is pursuing the same goals as Osama bin Laden a decade ago. In November 2001 the al-Qaeda leader said: “The day will come when the symbols of Islam will rise up and it will be similar to the early days of Al-Mujahideen and Al-Ansar. And victory to those who follow Allah.” Bin Laden was calling for the “the greatest jihad in the history of Islam,” but al-Baghdadi and his hordes have something to show for that he never accomplished: The mere existence of a Caliphate, one with its own territory, gives credence to the original claim and acts as a huge recruitment tool for the Islamist movement.

So, how do we counter all that? Let's put up a real fight, finally. Let's show IS and its followers the strength of our system—militarily, by fighting this war with whatever it takes in Syria and Iraq; politically, by using all diplomatic, economic and political means to end the conflict quickly; cooperatively, by sharing and using the information police and intelligence services have already gathered to discover, stop and punish extremists in our midst.

But these measures will fail unless we act socially as well, focusing on those whom the terrorists consider their prey: the young people who feel disenfranchised and betrayed by society. We must create opportunities, promote engagement and condemn any disrespect for the rule of law. The fact of hundreds of thousands of refugees arriving in Europe is the best testimony that the “just war” of IS—and Assad, perhaps—is nothing less than genocide.

But if we treat them with indifference as well, they, too, could fall victim to Islamist recruitment. We must set up guideposts, giving them perspectives, opportunities and hope. This sounds idealistic? I agree. But if we don't try, some of the young refugees will become the next generation of terrorists—of our own creation. ■

Elmar Thevessen is deputy editor-in-chief and head of news at the German public television channel ZDF. He has authored several books on international terrorism.

The security dimension of the challenge from climate change is unavoidable yet seems to be easily ignored. Failure to address this problem will render the security agenda unmanageable within 30 to 40 years.

2015 was the year of climate change. With the Paris Agreement, world politics crossed a threshold thanks to high levels of clarity and commitment. But the problem cannot be resolved in one go and, among other challenges, the security dimension needs close attention.

In April 2015 the foreign ministers of the G7 welcomed the findings of an independent report commissioned by the group's members. Titled “A New Climate for Peace,” the report addresses how climate change combines 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 Paris Agreement signed in December by COP 21 (21st Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) goes further than previous treaties: it enjoys the agreement of more states; its goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C (compared to pre-industrial figures) is more ambitious than the previous goal of 2°C; the text creates a firm link between reducing emissions, building resilience and supporting technological innovation; although much of it is non-binding, the agreement does bind each party to make plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to below current levels; and finally, it has an inbuilt self-improvement mechanism, committing the parties to making and implementing successive plans for reducing emissions, each more ambitious than the last.

This is a major achievement, yet the future of the security agenda is also shaped by the negative milestones of 2015. It was the warmest 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 warmer than in the pre-industrial age.

And it gets worse: a widely accepted estimate is that greenhouse gases, in addition to already having raised average world temperatures by 1°C, have amassed to such an extent that an additional temperature increase of 0.6°C is unavoidable over the next four decades. Thus, 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 three or four decades from now.

The significance of the 1.5° 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 still be possible for people to live

in these locations by mid-century? If not, where will they go? As conditions deteriorate, what will people demand of their states and how will states react? We know enough about the impact of climate variability to be able to discern some dark prospects.

The 2011 uprising in Egypt was driven in part by the rise in global food prices, which increased largely because of drought in China and forest fires in Russia the previous year. For a country like Egypt, where food prices are stabilized by government subsidies, it became impossible to prevent price increases, which large segments of the population could not afford. Anger over food prices intersected with and was compounded by anger over arbitrary and unaccountable authority with world-shaking results.

In Syria, before protests and the war began in 2011, there was a four-to-five year drought that drove at least a million people out of agricultural employment. They then migrated to the cities where many could barely survive. The government was unable and unwilling to address their deprivation.

When protests started over lack of free speech and redoubled as authorities responded violently, there was a deep well of anger, resentment and despair. The protests fed off this widespread discontent and militias had no problems finding willing recruits. The tragic results are the destruction of Syria and the exacerbation of political stability and social well-being in the region and beyond.

These are but 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, with more localized and less spectacular consequences, in pastoral areas of the Horn of Africa, in Nepal, Bangladesh, the Nile Basin, India and Mozambique. All are cited in last year's report to the G7.

In 2015 Europe underwent the largest flow of forced migration in decades and, in November, the terror attacks in Paris. It is helpful to consider that climate change played a role in each case. On the one hand, such consideration is

certain to stimulate motivation to implement the Paris Agreement and to make the most of its self-improvement mechanism. On the other hand, we need to improve our handling of the consequences, regardless of how successful our actions are in addressing the causes.

It is perhaps an irony that, whereas in most cases one criticizes the focus on symptoms of insecurity and conflict at the expense of treating their causes, in this case it is the other way round: the focus on causes is fine, but if we fail to treat the symptoms, we are lost.

Addressing the symptoms—i.e. the consequences of climate change—will require newfound resilience. There appear to be five main routes to this end, none of which has a military component. The military dimension is a last resort that should be explored only if resilience cannot be established and communities or even whole societies become victim to the effects of climate change.

This is a core area of security, but not in the first instance of defense policy or military strategy. First, we must improve risk management. The initial step is

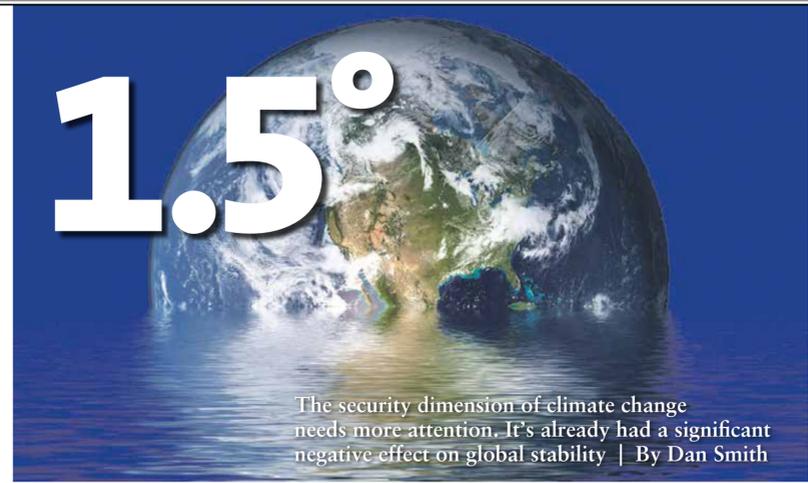
to deepen risk assessment. The risks of today and tomorrow are complex products of the interaction of climate change, poor governance, conflict legacy, inequality and underdevelopment—in varying combinations with varying consequences. For example, communities relying on rain-fed agriculture or on irrigation face risks of diminished water supply, which leads to food insecurity.

However, evidence shows that while water scarcity in rain-fed agriculture (as in much of Africa) tends to lead to conflicts over land, water scarcity in irrigation-based agriculture (as in Central Asia) is more likely to lead to disputes over water sources. Understanding the different types of conflict risk allows for the development of variously calibrated short- and medium-term responses.

Three further priorities are enhancing food security, improving disaster risk readiness and ensuring that current agreements on managing trans-boundary water resources—the shared use of lakes and rivers—are strong enough to withstand fluctuations in water volumes. Finally, building resilience must be prioritized throughout development aid policy and projects. Resilience is not only or even primarily a matter of dams and seawalls. It is also a matter of how individuals and communities build their homes, where they build them, what they farm and how the rivers are used and protected. For the security of all, a priority development goal must henceforth be the resilience of all.

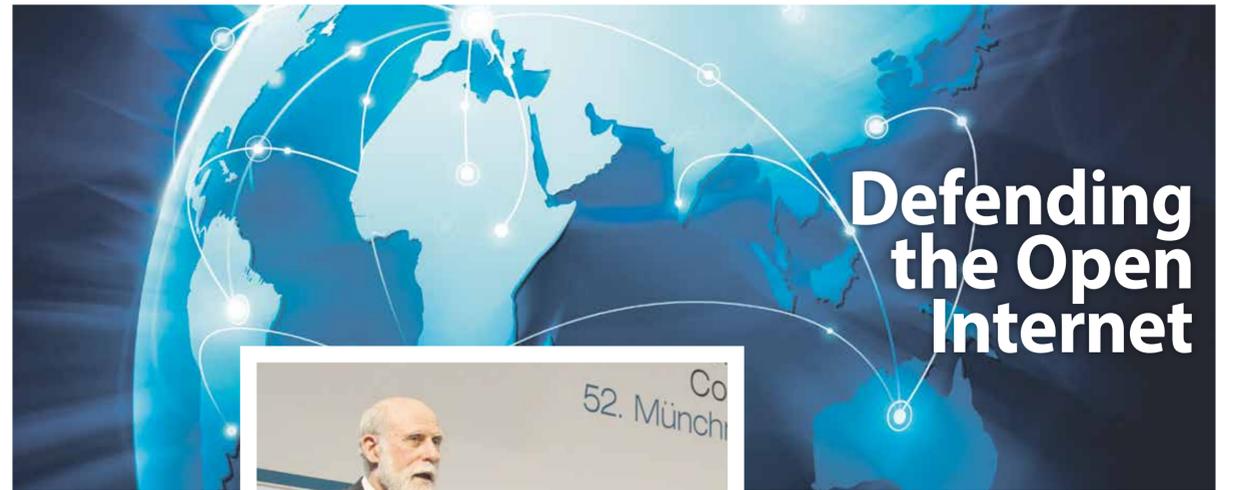
These approaches take security policy well beyond its traditional confines. Such is the nature of the challenge we face today if tomorrow's security agenda is to be at all manageable. ■

Dan Smith is director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). His latest publication is the atlas, “The State of the Middle East” (Penguin, New York; New Internationalist, Oxford, UK).



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

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



The Internet is many things, but fundamental to its design is openness to new technology and new applications. If its existing protocols are insufficient, developers are free to create new ones. For example, the World Wide Web and its technical protocols arrived 20 years after the Internet's initial design and ten years after the Internet's operational birth. Over the course of its 33-year operation, the Internet has grown dramatically, connecting billions of devices and people around the world and creating millions of jobs. As we have grown more dependent on the Internet, mechanisms for ensuring operational security, information integrity, safety and privacy have risen in importance. As one of the Internet's creators, I believe that fundamental human rights must be defended equally in the Internet's online virtual world and the offline “real” world.

Just as any invention can be abused, some people use the Internet in harmful ways. We see terrorists trying to spread their hateful messages on the Internet. We see cyber criminals attacking individuals, companies and governments. It is understandable that governments seek to protect citizens from harm and we see governments struggling to find an effective approach to deal with these new challenges.



Vinton G. Cerf is Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist, Google, Mountain View, CA.

In Summer 2013, when the public debate about mass government surveillance began in earnest, stronger encryption and limited access to data by governments seemed the right path forward. But the emergence of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) has led some governments to question encryption and call for increased data retention about our uses of the Internet. Some proposals threaten fragmentation of the Internet through creation of new artificial digital borders.

Where to go from here? We should seek a practical approach that preserves the Internet's benefits and respects the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We should restrict indiscriminate surveillance and protect

people's security and privacy but support legitimate law enforcement efforts.

Overreaction and misguided “corrective” efforts can harm the Internet's essential characteristics and thus its abundant promise. Our system architects and engineers should be encouraged to use strong security and cryptographic methods to protect privacy and assure integrity. Engineered vulnerabilities, such as backdoors, cannot be safely introduced into a supposedly secure system. Limits on encryption trade everyone's security for illusory protection against adversaries who have access to their own high quality technology.

We should encourage governments to cooperate internationally. We need

diplomatic arrangements between nations that can facilitate the protection of citizens, while respecting the rule of law. We should seek robust, principled, and transparent procedures for making lawful requests for data and investigative support across jurisdictions, such as improved, speedy and more efficient mutual legal assistance treaties.

Some argue that we need to impose regional or national boundaries on the Internet, ignoring the fact that fragmenting the Internet loses its most important value.

How to deal with terrorist organizations' use of Internet services and the effects of extremist content online? In addition to applying usage policies of individual platforms to reject non-compliant users, we need to harness the Internet as a vehicle to establish truth and understanding and to encourage critical thinking and the promotion of broader ideals. We need to foster and build communities that can provide strong and credible counter-narratives. We must show people that they have better options. These are steps we can undertake together—government, civil society and the private sector—to expose the calls to extremism for what they are. Broad bans to restrict freedom of speech and dragnets to conduct vast surveillance expeditions are incompatible

“The Internet has grown dramatically, connecting billions of devices and people around the world and creating millions of jobs.”

with democratic society nor have they proven effective in the past.

Our best tools for combating harm conducted through the Internet are education and technology to protect information integrity and security. Citizens must be provided with the tools for detecting and avoiding malicious practices. They should be able to exercise strong authentication when needed. They must be given the skills and freedom to apply critical thinking in their own defense. We must not allow our societies and the Internet's demonstrated and future benefits to be undermined by those who would even destroy themselves to achieve that end.



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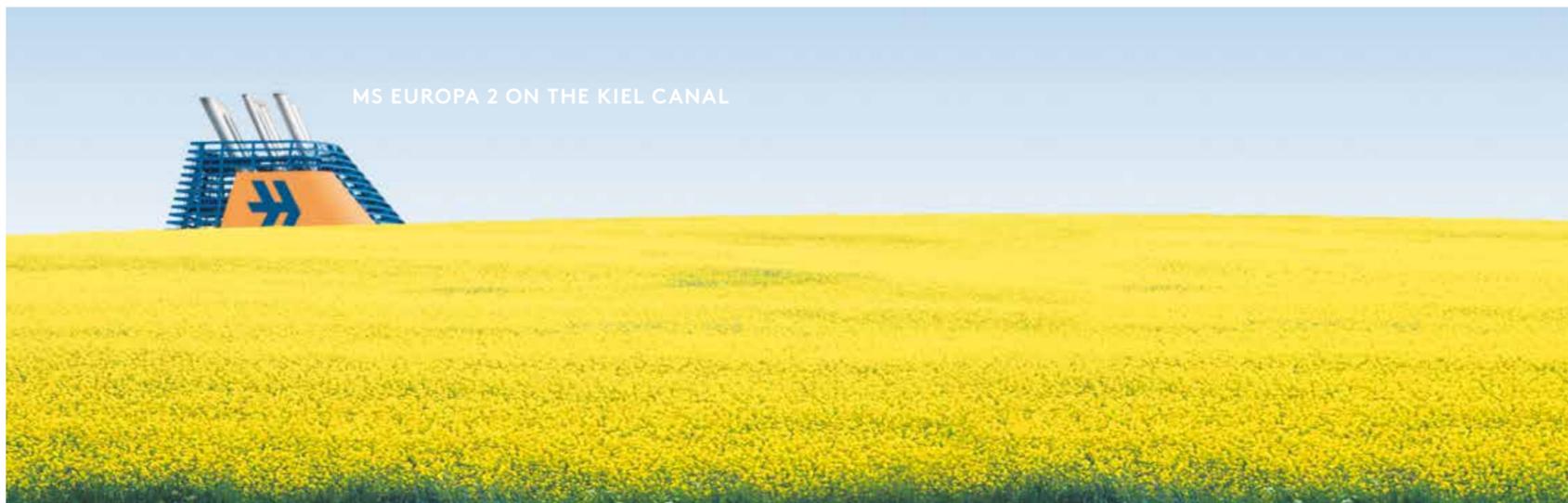
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