The Security Times

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All smiles before the G-7 meeting at Elmau: David Cameron, Angela Merkel, Barack Obama, Stephen Harper, Donald Tusk, Shinzo Abe, François Hollande, Matteo Renzi and Jean-Claude Juncker.

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With or without Russia

The task: Resolving the Ukraine crisis

By Wolfgang Ischinger

The focus on the annexation of Crimea and the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine, on the conflict with Russia, has tended to obscure the view of the second, equally great or greater danger for Ukrainian stability, namely that of economic collapse. Ukraine is facing a twofold strategic challenge: that of partition, and that of bankruptcy.

The hard truth is that neither Ukraine's territorial integrity and political and military security, nor its long-term economic rehabilitation can be realized while the country is involved in a sustained conflict with its big neighbor Russia. The case of Ukraine demonstrates the need for a more sustainable and more comprehensive security architecture in Europe – not against Russia, but with Russia. At the same time, defending against possible aggression from Russia happens to be high on the agenda of many in the current crisis.

What needs to happen to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity and to consolidate the security architecture of the whole continent?

I propose a dual strategy, combining military strength and security and NATO reassurance policies on the one hand, with offers of comprehensive cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic region on the other – much as the original German Ostpolitik did in the 1970s.

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MSC

Firstly, a clear military message remains essential. Russia's annexation of Crimea and ongoing Russian support – both open and clandestine – for separatists in eastern Ukraine have lead to very serious security concerns in Europe, particularly among our easternmost NATO partners, the Baltic States and Poland.

NATO has rightly responded with a program of political and military reassurance. NATO's external borders are inviolable and must remain so. And just as our NATO partners demonstrated their solidarity with West Germany for more than four decades, we must now demonstrate our solidarity with our Eastern allies.

This program needs to be backed up by a reversal in the downward trend in the defense budgets of many NATO partners. The 2 percent goal endorsed at the 2014 NATO summit in Wales should be taken seriously. Equally important are steps towards a more credible and more capable EU security and defense policy. When, if not now, has the time come to introduce the principle of integration, of synergies, to defense and armaments? That would not only strengthen the EU's ability to act effectively, it would also send an unmistakable signal to Moscow.

Secondly – what about delivering arms to the Ukrainian military? Military support for Kiev, supporting the rehabilitation and democratization of the Ukrainian armed forces would need to be part of a comprehensively coordinated political process – because no one will benefit from renewed escalation of the conflict. On the other hand, we should not make a taboo out of military aid to Ukraine – a defenseless Ukraine could also present a threat to European security.

Thirdly, the EU must advance the energy union, with the aim of greater diversification of oil and gas imports – and a strategic reduction of dependence on Russian fuel.

Fourthly, Ukraine needs much greater financial and economic help and backup. The aid that has been agreed on with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will not be enough. George Soros has lent his voice to the chorus pointing this out, and has rightly stressed that more aid from the West is of existential importance for Ukraine – far more important than punishing Russia with sanctions.

The "Draghi model" can help here. Just as the European central Bank (ECB) president was able to calm the markets with a single sentence, so the EU could make it clear that it will do everything it can to support Ukraine on its path to economic recovery. Such a public statement would create new confidence in Ukraine. But that alone would not suffice. If actions are to follow the words, it will cost money – a lot of money – which given the debate over Greece is not likely to be a popular suggestion anywhere in the EU.

But what is the alternative? Wouldn't the follow-up costs – political, military and financial – of a collapse of Ukraine, the EU's biggest eastern neighbor, be potentially far greater?

Of course, no such aid project can be permitted to let the Ukrainian government off the hook regarding the reform agenda, particularly in the area of fighting corruption. On the contrary, the project would need to be tied to clear progress in this area. A kind of "Troika" in Kiev, including an EU special envoy, could play an important role in this – and in the implementation of the Association Agreement (DCFTA).

Fifthly, this is about far more than getting Ukraine back on its financial

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The limits of summitry

Is the G-7 still fit for purpose in a changing geo-political landscape? | By Theo Sommer

The world is out of joint, and there is nobody to set it right. Under the violent impact of Islamism, state structures in the Middle East and North Africa are unraveling. Wars of religion shake up parts of Black Africa. Perilous confrontations are building up in the Asia-Pacific region. And 25 years after the end of the Cold War in Europe, armed conflict has returned to the Old World – hybrid, not total war, but violent nevertheless.

Old certainties have evaporated in the process: that Europe is irrevocably on the way to an ever closer union; that the security of Europe is central to US strategy; that Russia no longer poses a threat to Western nations; that the rise of Asia, especially of China, would play out in the economic field but would not have any geopolitical and geostrategic ramifications.

Challenges, crises and conflicts spawn conferences. The year 2015 has a surfeit of them. Three big UN summits will make headlines in the next six months: on financing development (Addis Ababa in July), on the follow-up to the Millennium Goals (New York in September), and on climate change (Paris in December).

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All of these subjects figured on the agenda of the G-7 conference at Elmau. Protected by 20,000 police and cordoned off from the world by a 16-kilometer steel fence, the leaders of the world's seven leading industrial nations, spent 27 hours talking with each other. There was hardly a topic they ignored: Their "sherpas" had formulated detailed draft recommendations and action plans: for climate change and ridding the oceans of plastic waste, resistance to antibiotics, women's empowerment and work standards in developing countries. In "outreach" sessions they focused on the Islamic arc of crisis, on trade and aid, on the lessons to be learned from the Ebola epidemic.

But Elmau was an amazingly depoliticized summit, dealing, as it did, chiefly with societal problems and issues of global governance rather than with geo-economic, geostrategic and geopolitical bones of contention. Inevitably, Ukraine, Chinese assertiveness, Greece cropped up in informal talks, but officially foreign affairs were relegated to conversations around the dinner table.

The mountain in the Bavarian Alps went into labor and gave birth to a mouse. The final communiqué is about as verbose as all of its predecessors – and probably equally inconsequential. Was the outcome worth the effort, the €130 million cost – not to mention the annoying disturbance of public order? Wouldn't it have been less trouble if the leaders had met on a battleship (like Roosevelt and Churchill, or Reagan and Gorbachev) or on a cruiseliner far out in the ocean? The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper dubbed the G-7 summit a "superfluous ritual" and asked: "What is the point of all this unnecessary nonsense?"

Summit meetings like Elmau won't change the world. First of all, they are gatherings of the like-minded. The troublemakers are not there – which makes proceedings less irksome but also less effective. Russia's President Vladimir Putin should, of course, have been present; disinviting him deprived Western leaders of an opportunity to reason with him or, alternatively, to read him the riot act. Second, these meetings are far too short for the principals to really master their brief on such a vast array of issues. Third, the summit agendas are enormously overloaded; they lack focus.

Different formats are required to reinstall diplomacy in its rightful place. Since glamorous and time-consuming get-togethers like the Congress of Vienna 1814/15 (nine months of negotiations) or the Berlin Congress of 1878 (four weeks) are unsuitable instruments in our age of acceleration, setting up permanent ambassadorial conferences for the settlement of special problems might be the best way to mitigate and minimize the political conflicts which are pitting the powers against each other in Ukraine, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region.

In the pre-atomic age, diplomacy had three tools: persuasion, compromise and threat of force. The latter must be ruled out in a world in containing a stockpile of around 70,000 nuclear weapons. For the mitigation and minimization of conflicts the powers are thrown back to persuasion and compromise. This means three things. First of all: deal with the world as it is instead of dreaming about what it should be. Then, while guarding your interests, leave no stone unturned to discover complementary interests that facilitate accommodation. Finally, heed Jean Monnet's advice – if a problem seems insoluble, widen the context of your deliberations.

For the Ukrainian crisis this means that while it is indeed important to implement the Minsk II agreement, it is just as crucial to attain a basic understanding with Putin on the future relationship between Moscow and the

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Strong ties between Germany and the US

NSA spying in Germany, quarrels over the trade agreement (TTIP) and (somewhat) opposing views on how to deal with the Ukraine crisis – there is plenty of potential for conflict in US-German relations. However, strong majorities in both countries consider themselves reliable allies.

The PEW Research Center and the German Bertelsmann Foundation conducted a survey to assess the state of relations between the US and Germany, published in May.

Roughly seven-in-ten Americans consider Germany as a reliable ally, about six-in-ten Germans have trust in the US. Some 57 percent of Germans say their country's ties to the US are more important than its ties to Russia (15 percent). However, 59 percent of Americans believe the EU is not tough enough with Russia on Ukraine while only 26 percent of Germans believe the EU should be more forceful. These numbers correlate with the positions concerning Germany playing a more active military role. 54 percent support the notion in the US, while only 25 percent of Germans want their country to assert itself more.

Germans have a higher opinion of both President Barack Obama and Chancellor Angela Merkel dealing with US-German relations. 59 percent like Obama, 71 percent agree with Merkel. In the US only 40 percent approve of Obama's handling of the relationship and 38 percent of Merkel's role.

Both countries share a rather comfortable view on TTIP, 36 percent of Germans are not in favor of an agreement, 21 percent of Americans do not like it. The countries however, disagree in their disagreement. In the US, people mostly fear job losses and lower wages (50 percent), while Germans are chiefly concerned with lower food, auto and environmental safety standards (61 percent).

The two countries have a different take on important events in US-German relations in the last 75 years. 47 percent of Americans consider World War II and the Holocaust to be the most important event. Only 20 percent of Germans think so. The Fall of the Berlin Wall (34 percent) is the most important event in their view. Another 20 percent of Germans think highly of the Marshall Plan, only 3 percent of Americans share that view. The monitoring of Angela Merkel's cellphone is considered to be an important event by 7 percent in the US and 12 percent in Germany.

Equally, 50 percent in the US and Germany believe their countries should concentrate on domestic rather than foreign problems. *LL*

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Statue of Lenin outside the parliament building in Tiraspol, the capital of Transnistria: "the Russian-protected mini-state could be squeezed hard by Ukraine…"

Harsh realities in Ukraine

Standoff between the West and Russia as Minsk II stalls | By Dmitri Trenin

Four months after the Minsk II accords, the Ukraine crisis continues to simmer, with occasional violent eruptions. The ceasefire in Donbass has not prevented some 1,000 people from losing their lives since February, adding to the previous fatality count of more than 5,000. Some of the heavy weapons that both sides should have pulled back from the line of contact are still positioned close to that line, and are active.

Despite some technical contacts with the participation of both Kiev and Donbass, political dialogue on the "modalities" of local elections has not started. Kiev has balked at issuing pardon and amnesty to those it still terms "terrorists." Exchanges of prisoners and hostages have taken place, but some are definitely still being held against their will. Some humanitarian supplies are managing to get through to the region but no convoys are allowed to cross the ceasefire lines. "Full restoration of social and economic transfers," including pensions and taxes, has not happened. The reality is more of a tightening economic blockade.

The restoration of Kiev's control of the Ukrainian-Russian border, which was supposed to begin right after the local elections and be completed after the "full political regulation" of the situation in Donbass by the end of 2015, has been blocked by complete lack of progress on the political front. There has been no evidence of a pullout of foreign forces and weapons and disarmament of illegal groups. Russia's support for the "people's republics" is unwavering. Constitutional reform in Ukraine aimed at drawing up a new basic law for the country by the end of 2015, even if it proceeds, will go on without Donbass.

This is a dismal record by any standard, but compared to the numerous and highly authoritative recent predictions from Kiev, picked up in Brussels and Washington, of an imminent Russian invasion, the situation is less bad than feared by many. Moreover, the month of May has seen some diplomatic activity between the West and Russia, including the visits by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Moscow and by US Secretary of State John Kerry to Sochi.

For the first time in many months, Russian President Vladimir Putin was engaged face-to-face by a senior member of the Obama administration. These conversations, particularly Kerry's, have provoked speculations about a climb-down from the 15-months-old confrontation between Russia and the West over Ukraine.

This, unfortunately, is wishful thinking. The most that has been achieved in Sochi is a degree of understanding between Washington and Moscow about the dangers of allowing the conflict to boil over and potentially to widen. Both the Russians and the Americans sought assurances from the other party that they are not pursuing a military solution. The Obama Administration, focusing on the president's foreign policy legacy, was also interested in getting Russia's continued cooperation on the Iranian nuclear issue, and possibly also Syria and the Islamic State (IS).

The last thing Obama needs is a conflict in Ukraine getting out of control, confronting his administration with the risk of deeper and more direct US involvement. The Kremlin, for its part, having protected the rebel-held enclave in Donbass, is preparing now to sit and watch economic hardship in Ukraine lead to social tensions and ultimately to political upheavals overthrowing the Maidan-installed leadership in Kiev. Freezing the conflict for now looks like the best option for both the United States and Russia.

A frozen conflict in Donbass is not what the European Union wants. Europe insists on full implementation of the Minsk accords. However, it needs to face up to the harsh realities. Donbass rebels want a confederal status within Ukraine, complete with a veto on the country's potential NATO membership. Kiev wants to crush the rebellion, punish its leaders and activists, and end Russian interference in Ukraine. No compromise between the two seems possible. Minsk II is definitely headed for a train wreck. Its likely failure, however, must not be allowed to lead to a resumption of the large-scale hostilities that we saw last summer and winter.

To avert looming disaster, the parties to the Minsk agreement and the United States need to focus on those elements of it which can be implemented: stabilizing the ceasefire; pulling back heavy weapons; and exchanging prisoners. This means in practice much tighter control of the forces physically confronting each other across the line of contact.

Russia, of course, will have to support Donbass economically and financially, but that burden will be light compared to the burden that others will have to carry to support Ukraine and avert its meltdown. As for the rest of Minsk II, the agreement should be converted into an open-ended diplomatic process, which might come in handy when and if conditions on the ground change.

Four decades after Helsinki and a quarter-century after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe has entered a new period of insecurity. This is not just one crisis, however acute, which can be resolved in short order, so that the situation returns to "normal." Things will not be fixed quickly. Behind the Ukraine crisis looms the Russia problem, which despite a number of attempts, was not solved by means of the country's inclusion into the Euro-Atlantic security system.

Ironically, the problem can hardly be solved by means of Russia's exclusion from the rest of Europe; this is a recipe for a continued standoff. No "grand bargain" between Russia and the West is even conceivable at this point. European security is at an impasse.

While no new "end state" of European security is visible at this time, things will likely have to play themselves out. The Baltic States and Poland should feel safe: Russia is not after them.

New crises, however, are possible elsewhere – for example in Transnistria, where the Russian-protected mini-state may be squeezed hard by Ukraine and Moldova. In the bigger scheme of things, Ukraine's domestic evolution will be of prime importance. Will the country finally be able to reform itself or will the country's elites, which have not changed much since the Maidan revolution, use the conflict in Donbass as an excuse not to?

Finally, US concerns about alleged Russian violations of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) might return US missiles to Europe, so that they can target Russian strategic assets at close range. Should that happen, a new Euromissile crisis will be inevitable.

It may be that things will get worse before they get better. If so, then rather than thinking about some grand architecture for the future, it would make more sense now to think about stepping away from the brink.

Pathways leading toward safer ground include stabilizing the situation in Donbass; preventing a new crisis in Transnistria; using confidence-building measures and direct lines of communication to prevent accidents and avoid miscalculation. For the United States, Russia is now Europe's problem to deal with. The Europeans need to rise to the challenge and come up with a strategy of conflict management, prevention and eventually resolution. Their own security depends on it. ■

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The limits of summitry

West. Clearly Europe and the US must ward off further Russian encroachments – "Thus far and no further!" – must be the guideline. President Putin has lied through his teeth in the face of his Western interlocutors, no doubt about that. Still I think that our leaders should beware of what Edmund Burke called the "total want of consideration of what others naturally hope or fear."

In an interview that Vladimir Putin gave to the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* on the eve of the Elmau summit, he made a number of statements that should be taken seriously. He considers Minsk II the only way to resolve the Ukrainian crisis, and he will do everything in his power to influence the "self-proclaimed republics Donezk and Lugansk" – the "separatists," in Western parlance. He denies any intention to recreate the Soviet empire, let alone of attacking NATO – "No one has to be afraid of Russia." And he put in a plug for the cooperation of the European Union and his own Eurasian Economic Union in the vast space between Lisbon and Vladivostok. He may be lying again, but the West had better probe his sincerity. Let's take him at his word.

In a surprising remark about arms control, nuclear weapons proliferation and international terrorism, Putin called himself an "ally" of the United States. Actually it is hard to imagine how the turbulences in the Middle East could be ended without Russian support. The West has no promising military option in its fight with the Islamic State (IS). Containment of the threat emanating from the violent fragmentation of both Syria and Iraq requires Russia's assistance – and not only Russia's. Other regional and global actors will have to get involved in the effort to crush radical jihadism, amongst them Turkey and Iran, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the gulf states.

Most consequential in this context would be a rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, both currently fueling proxy wars between Sunni and Shia from Mesopotamia to Yemen. As long as their rivalry for regional hegemony runs on unabated, the Middle East will remain a crucible of violence.

The Asia-Pacific region is a different story again. Under President Xi Jinping, Beijing has begun to translate its economic weight into geopolitical clout. The objective of its "One Belt, One Road" initiative is to develop the old Silk Road to the Middle East and Europe and the new "Maritime Silk Road" to the West into intercontinental trade routes. Massive Chinese investments in the infrastructure of the countries along these two trade corridors have worrisome ramifications, however – for India, but in the longer term also for Russia.

At the same time, China's claim to about 1 million square kilometers in the waters of the South China Sea keeps tensions rising in the region. Many of the islets, atolls, reefs, shoals and sandbars inside the "nine-dash line" are also claimed by Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines. Beijing has now started to turn seven of these reefs into artificial islands, thereby gaining 1,500 acres of new land alone this year. It is building runways for military aircraft, harbor facilities for its navy, and according to some reports has deployed artillery. Already the Chinese navy has begun to warn off US surveillance planes overflying the Spratly Islands. The escalatory potential of these actions – which the Chinese call "fair, reasonable and lawful" – is quite frightening.

In the East China Sea, where China claims the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands administered by Japan, the US has already made it clear that it will come to Tokyo's aid in case of conflict. Regarding the South China Sea, the US has not yet given a similar promise, but the risks of confrontation keep growing.

The problem is that no security architecture exists in the region comparable to the one in Europe. Beijing expects the other littoral countries to defer to its perspective; yet those countries increasingly seek protection under the US umbrella. Creating a platform on which the Asian-Pacific nations could tackle the region's problems would seem to be the first task of diplomacy; a security framework, that can establish rules of the road, a code of conduct for all and ensure compliance to boot. The Arctic Council provides the model of a forum where all coastal states, claimants or not, can address the issues of common concern.

The world would be a better place, if true diplomacy would once again replace grandstanding; if accommodation were not reflexively be denigrated as appeasement; and if foreign policy were driven by hope rather than fear. As Winston Churchill once put it: "Fear must never be allowed to cast out hope." ■

Putin's game: Russian revanche

The Kremlin captain is playing a long game by his own rules: new order or no order

By Michael Stürmer

Just playing around: Vladimir Putin in an ice hockey game in Sochi, May 16, 2015.

IMAGO/ITAR-TASS

New order – or no order: This is how the participants of the annual Valdai Club meeting, high above the warm breezes of Sochi, were greeted by their Russian hosts in late October last year. It was a note reminiscent of the worst days of the Cold War.

The message to this annual meeting of diplomats, scholars, and ex-spooks from the US and Europe was clear. The Russians understand the annexation of Crimea and its aftermath as a turning point from weakness to strength, from an American-led world system to a new competition for global power, and from cooperation to confrontation whenever it suits the Kremlin. Announcing the great alliance with China is their version of the US "pivot" to the Pacific.

Never mind the hardship that Western sanctions inflict on the Russian people at a time of low oil prices or the strategic brinkmanship the Russian commander in chief puts on display – Russia under Vladimir Putin, for better or for worse, has decided to turn the conflict over Ukraine's future into a defining moment in the history of the world. In an act of global one-upmanship Putin wants to go back to time-honored rules of geopolitics – balance of power, spheres of influence, compensation for losses incurred – with a controlling stake for Russia.

Putin, as he made unmistakably clear in his combative pronouncement in Sochi, broadcast in full the next day on Russian state television, is willing to let Russia and the Russian people pay the price, no matter what. Even more so, blaming the new hardship on the West and Western sanctions allows him to rally patriotic support for his regime at a time of austerity.

This challenge will not soon go away. It will force Western countries into a new mode of realpolitik, a sizeable strengthening of their defenses both military and non-military, and a coherent effort, not unlike the policies of containment inaugurated when the World War Two transited into the Cold War. Much as George F. Kennan, 70 years ago, argued for a patient and firm response to Soviet expansionism, until one day Soviet policy would mellow, the time has come to understand that the Russian leader is playing a long game. What is at stake is not a brief moment of discomfort but a long and strenuous contest between the transatlantic way of life and the Russian claim to set the rules.

In this new situation the questions to guide future policies are three:

- How did we get into the present troubled state of affairs?
- What is at stake, and what are the options?
- And where do we go from here?

1. The crisis of our time

Some time before the standoff over Ukraine began and confrontation ensued, George Shultz, secretary of state under US President Ronald Reagan, addressed a meeting of the American Academy in Berlin with a warning concerning the future of Russia. Russia, this seasoned diplomat remarked, was like a badly wounded grizzly bear: Strong, unpredictable, resentful, and driven by a long memory. Shultz, who could never be accused of having too much sympathy for Russia and its rulers, was, like Henry Kissinger, a practitioner of realpolitik who would not forget that Russia is never as strong as it looks and never as weak, and that its strategies and policies are inspired by stars different from those used for guidance in the West, especially in the US.

In the misery days of Yeltsin, the early 1990s, educated Russians could be heard describing their nation's state of mind in terms of Weimar and Versailles. Russia, it seemed, was doomed, the half-hearted attempt at democracy associated with poverty and weakness, not much of a future was left for the heirs of the once mighty Soviet Union. Anyone in a position to abandon the sinking ship did in fact leave.

First to depart were the Baltic states who, after 50 years of occupation, declared independence. But that was still only a marginal loss. The real break up of the Soviet Union happened on the last day of that annus horribilis 1991 when all the constituent parts declared independence, notwithstanding their political, financial, economic links to what had been the Russian center of power.

The most important standard bearer in this exodus was Ukraine, with a fair share of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" running right across the country. Once the Soviet Union was gone, the Warsaw Pact followed suit. There was neither ability in Russia to negotiate a new security system, nor any willingness among the countries coming in from the cold to ask the Russians for permission.

In the West, and especially in Washington, Russia was seen as a basket case. The more than 15,000 nuclear warheads of the Soviet arsenal became the chief object of concern; hundreds of them deployed in Ukraine. Nuclear arms control continued, up to a point. It took a new, cooperative mode with the Nunn/Lugar amendment for joint nuclear deactivation and, even more importantly, the Budapest protocol guaranteeing Ukraine's territorial integrity in return for giving up each and every nuclear warhead stationed on Ukrainian territory – with the notable exception of the Russian-leased, Ukrainian-owned port of Sevastopol.

It seemed that a lasting settlement on the new map of Eastern Europe was under way. The West proceeded with eastern enlargement of NATO while the Russians reminded Western politicians that during the "Two plus Four" negotiations on German unity they were given to understand that in the foreseeable future the new status quo would not be challenged. „Not an inch" – as Secretary of State James Baker had assured his Soviet counterpart – would change hands and loyalty.

Notwithstanding serious differences, Moscow accepted the eastward movement of NATO and was compensated through the NATO-Russia Founding Act. While the Russians had assumed that they would have a droit de regard, something akin to a veto over NATO policy, the view in Brussels was different. When communication was most needed over Kosovo and NATO's war against Serbia in 1999, the telephone lines fell silent.

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M. DILGER

Ever since, while the oil price recovered from its historic low throughout the 1990s, Russia regained negotiating power and the potential to cause trouble. In 2007 Putin, in no uncertain terms, gave notice at the Munich Security Conference that the time of weakness was over and that the West had better recognize that Russia had serious grievances. Only one year later, after Georgia's suicidal excursion into disputed territory, Russia annexed South Ossetia and Abkhazia while the West looked the other way – preoccupied with drawing down its once mighty military wherewithal.

The shape of things to come was looming large. While the West celebrated the outbreak of democracy in Georgia and Ukraine, the Kremlin resented color-revolutions and feared contagion, never more so than in 2013 on Kiev's Maidan Square. In a preemptive action, Russia annexed the Crimea peninsula. Even worse than the breach of international law is the violation of the Budapest Protocol of 1994 and the challenge to accepted standards of behavior, all the way from military confidence and security building measures to well-established rules of civil aviation.

2. Only bad options

Ukraine is not a scenario that would activate Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. But it has the potential to split the Western alliance.

Any military solution via NATO has been excluded by the German chancellor. In contrast, the American concept of low level arms supply and deployment of military-technical advisors leads on a slippery slope. Any such action amounts to war by proxy and, once world power prestige is at stake, can escalate into more substantial military engagement, strategic misunderstanding and, ultimately, the threat of nuclear war.

To add fuel to the fire results only in more casualties, more bitterness, and more scars difficult to heal once the hurly-burly is over. For the time being the fighting over the Lugansk and Donetsk regions conforms to the Russian doctrine of hybrid or non-linear war. This is a war that Russia cannot lose and Ukraine cannot win.

As far as the Crimea file is concerned, it can only be added to the long list of frozen conflicts in the world, especially around Russia. The man in the Kremlin has invested so much political capital that he is by now the prisoner of his own actions.

The future of the rebel-regions in the Donbass remains much more of an open question. If they return under the jurisdiction of Kiev they will forever be a thorn in the side of Ukraine, a fifth column, incapacitating any authority in Kiev. But if they are not returned to Ukraine they set an ominous precedent and confirm the Russian claim that the Kremlin is the overlord of any former Soviet dominion. A statute of limited autonomy inside Ukraine, and generous help in the reconstruction of those provinces from he EU as well as Russia, plus an equitable settlement of energy supply looks like the only chance to pacify a war torn region.

The EU's countermeasures of choice are economic and financial sanctions directed towards the stalwarts of Putin's regime. But while they are effectively hurting the Russian economy, they don't seem to have any decisive impact on the powers that be.

Given the Russian potential for escalation both vertical and horizontal throughout the ill-defined "Near Abroad," the West has resorted to financial and economic sanctions. Sanctions are measures between war and peace. Therefore, time-honoured Clausewitzian rules should apply, first and foremost the imperative to keep strategy under the control of policy. Meanwhile, the problem for the West is twofold: The level of sanctions was raised as far as EU-unity – and economic well-being – would allow, but the impact on the Russian economy, while serious, failed to curb Russian policy. No further escalation will likely change the balance. It will only be in the way of cooperation where both antagonists need it most, such as non-proliferation, arms control, terrorism, drugs, human trafficking, organized crime – the world is still a dangerous place.

3. And where do we go from here?

The answer concerns both methodology and substance. The present dual track escalation, military and strategic by Russia, economic and financial by the West, is bound to end in huge losses to both sides, possibly catastrophe.

The demonization of Putin, Kissinger warns, is only an ersatz policy. Aiming for regime change through economic sanctions against Russia is a fantasy. "It's the economy, stupid" – is the American credo, Russia is different. When the oil price recovers – sooner or later this is bound to happen – this will give a tonic to Russia, weaken the oil-dependent West and deepen the misery of Ukraine. No time to loose.

Why not make use of formats and institutions that have proven their usefulness in overcoming the fault lines of the Cold War, such as the Helsinki Process or the OSCE? Conventional arms control is in urgent need of repair; so is nuclear arms control in the face of proliferators old and new. The NATO Russia Founding Act is still on the statute books and can be revived and put to good use.

The volume should be lowere, displays of military prowess reduced to a symbolic minimum. All kinds of grandstanding should be suspended for the duration of the standoff. Self-restraint and face-saving should once again be part of the diplomatic toolbox, including a sense of history, mutual respect and common ground. Backchannels should be used, wherever there is a chance – commercial, cultural, diplomatic.

The present standoff resembles the double crisis over Berlin and Cuba half a century ago. When the nuclear superpowers went to the brink, they saw the ashes of their own destruction – and converged in a new balance of power, arms control and self-restraint. This time around, the stakes are as high as ever. The present crisis may indeed give birth to a new steady state. Depending on the West, its negotiating power, coherence and leadership, a new order may be found, at best a rough balance, at worst a mix of confrontation and cooperation.

For the time being, we have to contend with the wisdom of Churchill: "I cannot tell you the future of Russia. It is a riddle inside an enigma shrouded in mystery." ■

The age of "peaceful war"

No one wants armed conflict over Crimea. The Ukraine crisis will cool down

By Egon Bahr

IMAGO/EST&OST

Frozen conflict: Ukrainian soldiers from the 17th tank brigade pose at the entry sign to a frontline village.

Could the regional conflict in Ukraine become an uncontrolled confrontation between East and West? Anyone following what our leading politicians say cannot rule that out. However, I do not share this fear.

The reason for this is the double hope that on the one hand, German politicians are doing all they can to prevent it – although they know that the power to decide does not rest with them; and on the other hand, Presidents Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin do not want to wage war against one another. They know that their collaboration is needed for dealing with many geo-strategic problems – from the Mideast, to Iraq and Iran, Afghanistan, the International Space Station and, not least, the fight against the "Islamic State." If their tacit agreement stopped working, global politics would become unpredictable for everyone, including Europe and Germany.

I therefore assume that there will be no open war. Yet this relief, great though it is, is subject to limitations.

Obama has declared that Russia is merely a regional power. That is totally unacceptable to Putin, who must and will prove that a stable solution for Ukraine cannot be obtained without him and cannot be implemented against Russia's will.

Obama's doctrine is: "We will engage, but we preserve all our capabilities." He will only deploy US forces in case of an attack or an infringement of American interests. That means he can watch as Russia grows weaker with every passing moment – as long as international energy prices remain low.

Putin can also wait as Obama grows weaker with every passing moment and no possible White House successor commits to a specific policy. This is what I call a peaceful war.

Peaceful war also works when it comes to sanctions. Sanctions were originally meant to be a mild warning, a response to the annexation of Crimea, which could not be ignored. Putin was not meant to take them too seriously. But now they have become an instrument that comes with the threat of increasing them if Putin fails to revisit his Crimea policy.

How far should sanctions be taken? Up to the threat of force? Certainly not that far. That would not be in the interests of Washington or Moscow in their geostrategic collaboration. Their silent agreement of "no war between us" includes Crimea. No voice which carries any weight in the world is willing to fight Russia to get back Crimea. That means the war will not happen and the conflict will be frozen – yet another example of peaceful war.

Would it be worth a war to get Ukraine into NATO? Again, of course not. Because stability and security for Ukraine can only be achieved with Russia and not against it.

When Senator John McCain raised expectations in Kiev – as if he could speak in the name of America – even his outrageous insults against the German chancellor did not lead to any change of US foreign policy towards confrontation with Putin. Nor did Vice-President Joe Biden's visit to Kiev alter Washington's caution; yet he did manage to establish a cabinet there whose Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk is known as "our yank."

With the growing realization that security for Ukraine can only be achieved with Russia and not against it comes the third example of peaceful war – the status quo for a trouble spot which no one wants to descend into an uncontrolled confrontation.

The same analysis holds true when we look at the East-West relationship. When Putin feels uncomfortable because NATO is moving closer to Russia's borders, America can reassure him – the Baltic States received security guarantees when they joined NATO, but they did not get any weapons which could be used to threaten Russia. Germany delivered artillery pieces; that is not exactly going to make Russia shiver with fear. And for confirmation, a link was forged between the military on both sides – which can carry on the work the Nato-Russia Council was once meant to do, namely keep a finger on the other's pulse so as to avoid misunderstandings and nasty surprises. Maybe the G-7 could again become the G-8 which Helmut Kohl successfully managed to create.

There can be no resolution without the two big powers. At the same time, Obama is passing more responsibility on to Europe, removing some of the burden from his own country and transferring it to the economically and politically strongest country in the middle of Europe.

Germany feels the effects the most and America the least when trade with Russia is curbed. The US would even benefit if our economic ties wither and negatively affect the political relationship. German policy has no choice but to ensure that, along with maintaining the essential good relations with America, ties with obstinate Russia are kept up – so that the prospects for overall European stability are not shattered.

Egon Bahr was a minister without portfolio in the government of Chancellor Willy Brandt from 1972 to 1974. He played a key role in shaping the "change through rapprochement" approach to East Germany and Eastern Europe that came to be known as "Ostpolitik".

CHRISTIAN KRUPPA

The refusal to send German arms to Kiev is in line with that, as are the efforts by Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier to realize the agreements of Minsk II by the end of this year. Then negotiations for a stable Ukraine could begin – with Germany, France and the OEDC taking part, along with Ukraine itself, which must ultimately decide how Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians can live side by side with all its citizens feeling at home with their faith and their country.

The government in Kiev will have to have a say in the deciding of all the other issues as well. In the phase of peaceful war, that means – no membership of NATO, and for the customs union with Russia there must be agreement on its association with the EU. These negotiations are already under way.

The annexation of Crimea was undoubtedly a breach of existing agreements. But – analogue to the definition used by Willy Brandt in his first government declaration – we could speak of respecting without recognizing it under international law. Brandt's "respect" covered the entire policy of conciliation between East and West Germany with the negotiation and passing of many bilateral and multilateral deals. No one will be hurt if the situation in Crimea is "respected" in this way – without deadlines.

In this kind of situation, very different personalities urged maintenance of ties with Russia – Kohl and Kissinger, Schmidt and Gorbachev.

Dealing with the current situation requires respect for states, which in the West's view are not democracies, as well as the respect that each state decides on its own internal order. That is already reality in our relations with China and Saudi Arabia. But it is hard for us to globalize these two examples. The sooner the West gets used to the idea, the better that will serve a stable world order – because a majority of countries and parts of the world lives with other values than ours and expects that this be respected.

Brandt once said that the peaceful future of Europe cannot be allowed to be hindered by Germany's past. Today, that means Germany must contribute ideas on a dialogue with Putin. Where do we want to go? Where does he want to go? What order is to be replaced by peaceful war? Can the sovereignty of states be reconciled with respect for the differences in their internal workings? That could open up perspectives for a sphere extending from Lisbon to Vladivostok as a realistic aim – one that would take into account the interests of America and China as well.

The meeting between John Kerry and Vladimir Putin in Sochi has once more underlined the reality – a stable peace in Europe needs Moscow and Washington. ■

This article is an extract from a speech made by Egon Bahr at the launch in Berlin of a book by Winfried Scharnagl: "Am Abgrund. Streitschrift für einen anderen Umgang mit Russland."

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With or without Russia

feet – it is also about the country's civil society. In this greatest security crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the EU can demonstrate the power of the European canon of values. We owe it to the young generation of Ukrainians who protested on Maidan Square not against Russia, but against a corrupt Ukrainian elite, which was robbing the country's youth of its chance at a European future.

These people – young journalists reporting on fraud, junior politicians fighting nepotism, NGOs promoting understanding and reconciliation between the ethnic groups – are the hope for a better Ukraine, a European Ukraine. The EU can do far more here, for instance, by allowing visa-free travel, creating more grants for Ukrainian students, and by supporting NGOs in the country.

That is one side of the dual strategy – reassurance by NATO partners and comprehensive help for, and cooperation with, Ukraine. The other side of the strategy should focus more on Russia.

Firstly, the sanctions must remain in place – as far as and as long as Moscow and the separatists fail to comply comprehensively with the Minsk Protocol. But obviously Kiev must also throw its full weight into the implementation of the Minsk deal or the sanctions will lose their political purpose. We have to read the riot act to both sides.

Secondly, the dispute over Ukraine's prospects of joining NATO must be settled once and for all, in Ukraine's own interests. To be honest, the question of NATO membership for Ukraine was essentially answered in the negative long ago. Only the government in Kiev is still clinging onto the idea. Now, a courageous step is needed which only Kiev can take.

The EU could tie the comprehensive aid package proposed above to expectations that Ukraine begin to more strongly define itself as a bridge between East and West – rather as Finland, Austria, and even Switzerland have done in the past. Of course only Ukrainians themselves can decide to embark on such a course – towards an independent, self-determined Ukraine with links to the West and the East.

Thirdly, we need an exit strategy from the politically unhelpful exclusion of Russia from the G-8. Given the annexation of Crimea, the exclusion cannot be reversed in the short to mid-term without a loss of face for the West. One possible way out could be to turn he 5 plus 1 format – used for negotiations with Iran – into a much broader platform with Russia, which could address all kinds of global and regional issues, such as Ukraine and Syria.

That would have the additional benefit of making Washington a full partner again in crisis management efforts regarding Ukraine. Currently, the US is neither represented in the Normandy format nor in the Trilateral Contact Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). That is not in Ukraine's interest – nor in the well-understood interests of the EU.

Fourthly, we need a collective effort by all OSCE members – including Russia – to search for ways to strengthen Europe's security architecture. Conventional and nuclear arms control must be put back on the agenda as well as crisis prevention and confidence-building measures. There can be no place in Europe for military saber-rattling, given the ever-present nuclear threat. Both sides should be interested in reducing risks of miscalculation and escalation by accepting restraints on military overflights and related activities. And visions of strategic economic cooperation also deserve attention, harking back to old ideas of an economic zone "from Lisbon to Vladivostok."

And finally, the OSCE – which had almost been pronounced dead – has demonstrated its unique usefulness in the crisis, particularly with its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), which works under the most difficult conditions. What could be more obvious than to build on the multilateral framework of the OSCE – the three "baskets" of the Helsinki Accords – in order to bring security and cooperation to the fore in Europe in the wake of the Ukraine disaster?

It was not impossible to get a diplomatic, political process going even during the Cold War. We should propose to Moscow to restart such a diplomatic process. An OSCE conference should, however, not be allowed to undermine the Helsinki principles or the Paris Charter. It should be about whether we can work together to reaffirm and reinforce European security principles and where necessary, to add to them. Then it is up to Moscow to say yes or no – and perhaps, if the answer is no, to risk further isolating itself among the 57 participating states in the OSCE. ■

ECONOMY

The new battlefield of geopolitics

Sanctions are the new drones – they have the grammar of commerce but the logic of war | By Mark Leonard

In the nuclear talks with Iran, the timing of when and how to lift the economic and financial sanctions has emerged as the main sticking point. The fact that sanctions have played the starring role in these negotiations will not surprise any observers of recent US foreign policy. For the Obama administration, sanctions are the new drones – offering devastatingly effective but surgical interventions without running the risk of having to send in ground troops.

However, the long-term legacy of Western sanctions goes beyond the question of Iran's nuclear program. The proliferation of the use of sanctions poses bigger questions about the global economic system. As liberals predicted, globalization allowed states to come together. But the growing interdependence created by globalization has also provided states with the tools to compete more effectively – by manipulating their dependence on one another.

In fact, the ever-growing use of sanctions is an example of the rise of geo-economics – a contest defined by the "grammar of commerce but the logic of war" – that risks unraveling the global system and its institutions.

Those who believed that geopolitics was dead, that major powers would rather do business than fight each other, will be disappointed. Geopolitics is not dead, it only changed the battlefield – for today's strategists and diplomats choosing their weapon of choice: 'It's the economy, stupid!'

Five trends are challenging globalization:

First, the outbreak of economic warfare. There is as much talk in Western capitals today about sanctions policy as about trade – towards Iran, towards Russia towards Syria, sanctions are the order of the hour. With every year after the Cold War, there have been more. Between 1990 and 2007 alone, economic sanctions were used by the US, Greece, Russia, the UN and EU, China, Germany, Belgium, France, Saudi Arabia, England, the Netherlands, Spain, Japan, the OAU and ECOWAS, Mercosur, and Turkey.

In part this is a consequence of the increased sophistication of sanctions. Sanctions used to be broad, aimed at the population, which was expected to revolt against their government. Modern sanctions are "smart" – they target specific individuals, groups or companies. Treasuries and foreign offices around the world are working on ever-more sophisticated financial instruments.

PRIVATE

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The second development challenging the current order is the geopoliticisation of trade. Rather than creating a single global market, we are seeing the coming together of regions concentrated around large powers, in particular the EU, US, Russia and China. A surge of regional and bilateral trade talks can be observed across the world. Russia is promoting the Eurasian Economic Union in its 'near-abroad' and China pushes for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and against the rival US Trans-Pacific Partnership. Smaller states find themselves in the middle of this, forced to choose between competing great powers' spheres of influence. These new types of regionalism often strengthen major regional powers at the expense of the periphery.

Third, we are witnessing the rise of state capitalism. Even before the global economic crisis, China's economic success story led many to question the liberal economic consensus. With the crisis, the state has returned as a major player in economic affairs. US and European central banks are pursuing quantitative easing, and more and more industry sectors – from yoghurt production to IT – are being declared 'strategic' and their businesses protected.

Fourth, new alliances are being forged through and around infrastructure projects. Where classical Western alliances were built around trade, the removal of trade barriers and international law, China is developing infrastructure finance projects as a major foreign policy tool. In late 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the "One Belt, One Road" project that will link China to Bangkok and Budapest (the 'belt') and develop the Eurasian coast (the maritime 'road'). This is just one example of the type of infrastructure projects aimed at expanding China's access to raw materials and export markets.

Globalization also faces a challenge from the manipulation of commodity prices. The world was shocked when China used its dominant position in the rare earths market to punish Japanese companies for their national government's stance on territorial issues in the East China Sea.

More recently, some analysts have claimed that Saudi Arabia's decision to keep the oil price low was as much a geopolitical decision as an economical one. Commodities used to be considered a stable store of value during times of broader economic uncertainty – they aren't anymore. The new economic reality is one of commodity price volatility – this is universally bad economic news.

These five trends pose real challenges to globalization, and risk to eventually unravel the global economic system that developed after the Cold War. Economics is not simply about growth and unemployment anymore. It has become a core foreign policy tool. But when governments use it too much, they could make the system seem unreliable and treacherous and thus encourage other powers to hedge against it, which would further undermine the system. ■

Economic sanctions hurt everyone

Blocking trade does not only damage Russia's economy. The Ukraine crisis should be solved by diplomacy

By Eckhard Cordes

IMAGO STOCK&PEOPLE

The conflict over the future of Ukraine has become a major focus for the German business community's Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations. The committee has organized many talks and conferences in Ukraine, Russia and Germany over the past 18 months of this ongoing crisis. It has become clear that the conflict did not begin in Kiev or in Crimea. It is the consequence of a profound loss of trust between Russia and the West that began over ten years ago. Both sides have grounds to self-critically examine the causes of that breakdown.

When the European Union enlarged by ten countries in 2004, expanding its borders to meet the western border of Russia, Moscow accepted it. The new proximity would generate immense opportunities that were obvious for both sides. The EU's new eastern border was not intended to be a dividing line. Instead, it was to become more and more permeable for people and goods.

We experienced a phase of annual two-digit trade growth and constant growth in investment. The people of the EU, Russia and the neighboring countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia all benefited. At the end of 2003, a joint EU-Russian task force presented a concept for creating a common European economic region at a summit in Rome. Since then, the concept is waiting to be implemented.

Now, in 2015, that goal of creating a common economic region seems like an idea from a completely different era. The speed with which the two economic blocks are "demerging" is breathtaking. Mutual economic sanctions are accelerating the process.

In 2014 alone, bilateral trade between Russia and Germany shrank by €6.5 billion and in the first few months of 2015, there was another dramatic decline of 35 percent. Companies are putting their investments on ice and the labor market is losing jobs because of uncertainty over the future.

The economically weaker countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are suffering most. But specialized medium-sized companies in Germany are also in danger. According to a current Federation of German Industries (BDI) and Deutsche Bank survey of 400 major German family-run businesses, 57 percent fear continued negative consequences as a result of the Ukraine crisis.

In the eyes of the Western world, Russia has committed a breach of international law by annexing Crimea. Will economic sanctions and cancelling established dialog formats really bring us closer to a solution to the conflict and render the Russian government more ready to compromise? Current experience shows there is no unambiguous answer.

While EU exports to Russia are dropping disproportionately, countries such as China, South Korea, Taiwan and Switzerland have filled the gaps. Last summer, Russia and China finally shook hands on the comprehensive gas deal they had been unsuccessfully negotiating for the past ten years. In May of this year, it was announced that Chinese banks plan to support Russian companies cut off from the capital markets by the Western sanctions with loans of up to $25 billion. Siemens has been working for years to try and land the order for the Moscow-Kazan high-speed train, but Chinese companies are now realizing the project. These are only three striking examples of a trend that could lead to a long-term change in the economic – and therefore, political – architecture.

The German economy, the approximately 6,000 German companies that have invested more than $20 billion in Russia, did not cause the political crisis that is currently taking on dramatic proportions. Over the past ten to 15 years many have invested private capital in this market. These companies are rightly demanding that the political problems be solved by diplomatic means and not at the expense of their work.

Russia's total land area, including the Asian part, is four times larger than the total area of the European Union. With each severed business contact and each investment not made, the potential for German and European influence shrinks.

Without Russia, it will be difficult to develop a secure, prospering Europe. Against Russia, it will be practically impossible. But Russia in turn needs the West as a partner to achieve stable economic development.

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OSTAUSSCHUSS

Germany bears a historical responsibility to ensure that this necessary partnership is (once again) recognized by the EU as well as Russia. At the height of the Ukraine crisis, Berlin comprehensively lived up to that special role – for which the German business community is very grateful.

The Normandy format negotiations in Minsk in February 2015 showed that it pays to stubbornly remain on the path of diplomacy. We Germans are still heard in Moscow. The Minsk II agreement, which came about due to the personal commitment of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, has opened up the prospect of a peaceful solution.

And there are signs that the German government's diplomatic tenacity is bearing further fruit. The battles in the eastern part of Ukraine are still going on, but their number has declined significantly. The lives of many people have been saved. And now that four joint task forces on the subjects of security, the political process, humanitarian issues and economic development have been set up, there are bodies in which the conflicting parties can iron out their differences over how to implement the Minsk protocol.

Whether it was wise of the EU to rule out lifting the sanctions until Minsk II has been completely implemented is certainly open to debate. On the one hand, implementing the agreements does not only depend on Russia. There are two other parties – the Ukrainian government and the separatists – that have a significant impact on its success. And the EU no longer has the opportunity to initiate a positive stimulus in the peace process by revoking the sanctions step by step.

On the other hand, the EU Commission is now in the process of critically reviewing its own strategy with regard to Eastern Europe and Russia. This is a positive result. The consultation mechanism on this point was initiated in March. Policy papers issued by EU Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy Johannes Hahn and EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini point in the right direction.

I have two key thoughts on the subject:

1. Russia is a geopolitical factor. It must be integrated into the European Neighborhood Policy.

2. The vision of a joint economic region from Lisbon to Vladivostok must be revived. The first step in that direction must be prepared in joint discussion between the European and Eurasian economic commissions.

Russia considered the NATO accession of several Eastern European countries a direct geopolitical challenge. More so, the launch of the EU Eastern Partnership initiative – targeted at six former republics of the Soviet Union – in 2008.

The European Union overlooked that Moscow sees a direct line from planned EU association agreements with some of the Eastern Partnership countries, to EU membership and NATO integration. Moscow considers NATO membership a direct threat to Russian national security.

The EU should have built up trust, acted more transparently with regard to the program and goals of the Eastern Partnership and taken Russian misgivings into consideration and dispelled them at an early stage. It is important to do this now, in retrospect.

The agreements aimed at calming eastern Ukraine that were concluded in Minsk on Feb. 12, 2015 include trilateral talks between the EU, Russia and Ukraine. Energy issues and airing Russian misgivings about the EU free trade treaty with Ukraine will be on the agenda. It would make sense to institutionalize this meeting between the EU, Russia and the Eastern Partnership countries as a forum for solving crises and in general, preventing them.

All the countries in the Eastern Partnership, including Ukraine, have one thing in common: it is not only rational for them to maintain relationships with both the EU and Russia, but is also one of the only options for stabilizing the countries torn by inner tension. This is why there should not be an either-or decision between integration into the EU market or membership in the Eurasian Economic Union. An EU association agreement with Ukraine can only be successful if Ukraine does not lose the important Russian market as a result. And this is why the German business community's Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations has long called for direct talks between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Commission on joint trade standards, certification regulations, and customs regulations.

Unfortunately, there is no political contact between the two institutions at this time. However, in February they again anchored the "vision of a joint humanitarian and economic region from the Atlantic to the Pacific" in the ancillary agreements to the Minsk protocol. The German chancellor has emphasized this vision several times, most recently during her visit to Moscow on May 10. We hope that the debate on this subject will finally take off.

Ongoing talks are the only means of emerging from the current political and economic conflict and crisis mode. We do everything we can to support this effort from the side of the German economy and we all know that this process of communication and reconciliation will take time. But everyone knows that every journey begins with the first step. ■

Europe in a new security environment

Instability in the neighborhood requires a comprehensive and more flexible approach by the EU | By Sebastian Kurz

War in Europe's backyard: A Syrian army fighter jet flies over the Arbin district of Damascus on May 12, 2015.

PICTURE ALLIANCE/ANADOLU AGENCY/MUHAMMED ALA

Our security environment has drastically changed over the last decade. Back then most international security policy actors had only started to address "newly emerging", "unconventional" or "asymmetric" security threats in their respective doctrines and strategies. The European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003 lists terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts and/or state failure with global repercussions, and organized crime, as the main challenges.

But nobody in 2003 could have possibly foreseen the drastic changes, which have in the meantime emerged in the European neighborhood. Since I took office in late 2013 we have seen various crises unfold in parallel: in Ukraine, Russia has annexed Crimea and has become involved in the military conflict with separatists in the east of Ukraine; in the Middle East the civil war in Syria has further worsened and the Islamic State (IS) is shocking the world by its sheer brutality and swift military advancement; the civil war in Libya has fully broken out thereby further aggravating the dramatic refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and creating a vacuum which IS is currently beginning to fill; in Africa we are faced with numerous crises such as in Mali, the Central African Republic or the outbreak of Ebola.

2014 and 2015 were particularly challenging years and have demonstrated how complex and interconnected many of these challenges and crises are. They therefore require a comprehensive and more flexible approach by the EU in order to effectively deal with them. The pace at which our world is changing and security challenges are emerging is likely to accelerate even further.

We should also come to terms with the fact that some developments can just not be predicted. The ESS emphasized in 2003 that "no single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own." I would also like to point out that the EU cannot tackle today's problems on its own. It needs strong and effective partnerships with other regional and international organizations such as the OSCE or the United Nations.

The EU is assuming a growing role in international security. Its main instrument in this respect is the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), which was initiated roughly 15 years ago. The EU launched its first CSDP mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2003.

In the Lisbon Treaty, CSDP is defined as an integral part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). CSDP "shall provide the Union with an operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets." The EU may use them on missions outside the Union for peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The most visible manifestation of CSDP are the EU civilian and military crisis management missions and operations deployed around the globe. The EU has launched so far more than 35 missions and operations, 16 of which are currently operational in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, where two are about to be launched. Two thirds of these activities are civilian crisis management missions. Over the past years, the EU has clearly assumed more and more responsibilities in its neighborhood and beyond.

Since 2013 the EU has carried out several far-reaching reviews of its role as international and security actor.

As for CSDP, there is awareness of the need to plan and deploy the right civilian and military assets more rapidly and effectively, the need to improve the EU rapid response capabilities, including through more flexible and deployable battlegroups, to improve the financial management of missions and operations, as well as of the procedures for supporting civilian missions in particular.

With regard to its Neighborhood Policy, the EU is also undergoing a review process in order to provide more tailor-made and more flexible support to the countries in its east and south. And on a more global and general level, the EU is currently assessing the new challenges and opportunities arising for the Union.

The assumption is that the EU is faced with a changing global environment in a more connected, but also more contested and more complex world. It is more than likely that the EU and its member states will have to further connect and pool their security and foreign policy efforts in order to protect European values and the European way of life.

Migration towards Europe is accelerating dramatically as a result of conflicts, economic disparity, demography and climate change. The planned CSDP mission in the Mediterranean to fight and disrupt the networks of human smugglers is an important step in the right direction. Human traffickers profit from other peoples' misery and have on many occasions shown a blatant disrespect for the very values the EU is standing for, first and foremost human dignity. We must therefore not just content ourselves with addressing the symptoms of the refugee crisis, but also address its manifold root causes.

Sebastian Kurz is Austria's Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs.

WIKIPEDIA/ MAHMOUD-ASHRAF

Hundreds of thousands have fled and are still fleeing from the horrors IS is inflicting on Syria and Iraq. We therefore have to fight the IS barbarians by all means.

This must encompass military actions such as currently undertaken by the international coalition against IS, political measures to support policies of national reconciliation and democratization, financial measures to dry up their sources of revenue as well as police measures to stop further foreign terrorist fighters from joining their ranks. Preventive measures and close cooperation with Muslim communities in our countries as well as with Muslim countries also play a very important role in this regard to further underline that this is a fight against barbarism and not against any religion.

We must also continue to support the UN-led mediation efforts in Libya and at a later stage live up to our words when it comes to supporting a possible Libyan government of national unity, further strengthen good governance in all the countries of the Southern Neighborhood, for example by applying the "more for more" principle, and increase the living conditions in the countries of origin through European development cooperation.

Instability in the Southern Neighborhood affects us directly and Europe cannot afford to turn a blind eye to negative developments there. We therefore have to make wise use of the full range of tools the EU currently has at its disposal.

Developments in Europe's Eastern Neighborhood are equally worrisome and challenging for Europe. Russia has violated international law and shaken Europe's post-World War II order. The EU has sent a strong and unified message by imposing sanctions. From the very beginning, Austria – together with its European partners – has also emphasized dialogue and de-escalation. We cannot wish away the strategic challenges of Russian aggression; at the same time we need a long term vision of cooperation in order not to create new dividing lines in Europe.

In particular the OSCE plays an important role in Ukraine by monitoring military groups and by being a member of the contact group where separatists and Ukrainian government officials can hold discussions. The OSCE should continue to play a decisive role in the implementation of the Minsk agreement.

Countries like Ukraine, Moldova or Georgia must not be pushed anymore to decide between either the EU or the Eurasian Union. We must rather find ways and means to enable good relations with the Eurasian Union and the European Union.

A policy of small steps to build confidence, avoid military confrontation and thereby strengthen Europe's collective security should be pursued. The Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2017 will offer an important opportunity in this regard to contribute to fostering Europe's security and solving pending conflicts through dialogue and confidence-building measures. ■

Europe needs a defense union

The EU has the money and the men – what it lacks is effectiveness | By Hans-Peter Bartels

Let's state clearly what the problem is. We don't need any diplomatic phrases or political catchwords: The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which we have relied upon to date, is the weakest link in European integration. The Lisbon Treaty demands far more and allows far more joint defense.

Sometimes you need a crisis to make real progress. We now have a crisis in Eastern Europe – in Russia and Ukraine. And a crisis to the southeast – the jihadist totalitarianism of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. And a crisis to the south – the legacy of the Arab Spring, not just in Libya.

Hans-Peter Bartels, a former Member of the Bundestag for the Social Democratic Party, and Chairman of its Defense Commitee, is the new Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces.

PRIVATE

And we all have the same money problem – no EU state really wants to spend more on its military. And many can't – they cannot take out more debt. For this reason, the European Union must become much more effective in the area of defense. The 28 EU nations spend €190 billion on defense all told. That is a lot of money, three times what Russia, for example, spends on its military. But we don't spend the money effectively enough – not in any of the 28 member states.

All together, the EU member states have 1.5 million soldiers – many more than, say, the United States. But is this gigantic, 1.5 million-strong army actually visible anywhere? Do we really believe that we are that strong? Do others believe that we are unbeatably strong? The honest answer is – not really.

Does that mean we need more soldiers? No. Does it mean we need more money? No. What we need is effectiveness. That means we need more cooperation. Specifically, we first need more interoperability, second more standardized training, thirdly more standardized equipment, fourthly more joint leadership, fifthly a greater division of labor, and sixthly, we need more real integration.

The German coalition agreement between the CDU/CSU and the SPD also points out where this process could lead to in the end – to a European army. Germany is prepared to phase in a merger of the Bundeswehr with the armies of our European neighbors, friends and partners.

Will that happen fast? No. It will take two or three decades, just like the road to the single currency, the euro. And will everyone join in? No. As with the euro, many will participate, but nobody has to.

Twenty-two of the 28 EU nations are also members of NATO. An improvement of European defense would likewise provide a boost to the credibility of the transatlantic alliance. NATO defense and EU defense policy are not opposites. NATO and the EU are not competitors. Certainly, there is no need for them to be. NATO does not compete against the United States, nor is it supposed to.

The US and the EU could act to complement one another within NATO. There are tasks for the US that are not NATO tasks – such as those in east Asia. And there are tasks for Europe, which are not NATO tasks – such as those in Africa. There are common tasks for America and Europe within NATO. And NATO would be all the stronger for these joint tasks if Europe itself were stronger.

There is one really stupid imperative, a really annoying principle, which has prevented us from becoming more effective in Europe for a long time. It is "no duplication of capabilities." That may sound like a smart way to save money, but this very dictate has prevented us from becoming more effective. What it means is this: No EU military headquarters. And that means – when it comes to defense – NATO is everything and the EU is nothing, or at most, a subordinate helper.

The United States heads NATO in Brussels, run by a four-star general. At the same time, the US has its own military headquarters for all the US forces in Europe.

These headquarters are in Europe, in Germany – more specifically, in Stuttgart. They are called USEUCOM. Is that a duplication of capabilities? No, it is just as sensible to have US headquarters for the United States in Europe as it is to have EU headquarters for Europe in Europe. Because we don't have any such headquarters, we prefer not to acknowledge and eliminate all the duplications of capabilities in our 28 EU member states. This gives rise to the following six requirements.

First: We need our own military EU headquarters in Europe (as suggested by Gerhard Schröder and Jean-Claude Juncker as far back as 2003), in Brussels! Now. Anyone who wants to join is in.

Second: We need a defense commissioner in the European Commission, by 2019 at the latest.

Third: We need a formally independent European Union Council of Defense Ministers (in the format of the Foreign Affairs Council).

Fourth: We need an independent defense committee in the European Parliament (instead of the Subcommittee on Defense of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs).

Fifth: We need more concrete multinational agreements between the armies – such as the joint naval headquarters of the Netherlands and Belgium, like the European Air Transport Command in Eindhoven, the integration of the Netherlands' 11th Airmobile Brigade into the German Rapid Forces Division, and the cooperation agreement between the German and Polish armies. We are not starting at zero here. We have already made a start.

Sixth: We need a new European Security Strategy. The ESS of 2003 was a milestone because it placed Europe's commitment to multilateralism side-by-side with US unilateralism. Ever since, the Common Security and Defense Policy has been on the world stage. Europe announced that it aimed to be an independent actor. But since then there has been far too little progress. Today we have new crises, a new Commission – and a new chance. ■

NATO's comeback

The changes in the European security landscape call for a new defense concept | By Michael Rühle

Is a "bad" Russia "good" for NATO? Many observers seem to think so. Since Russia illegally annexed Crimea and started to destabilize Eastern Ukraine, one can read about NATO's alleged "rejuvenation," "revival" or new-found sense of purpose as a collective defense framework.

If only it were so easy. Stalin may indeed have helped the creation of the Alliance, but it is far from certain whether Putin's policies will have a similar effect. Russia is not the Soviet Union, nor can NATO afford to turn a blind eye to an increasingly volatile security landscape around and beyond Europe's periphery. In short, despite the Russia challenge, the Alliance cannot simply return to the well-established patterns of Cold War-type territorial defense. As globalization continues, circling the wagons will not be enough.

NATO's initial reflexes after Russia's incursion into Ukraine were eminently sound: Allies, notably the United States, quickly enhanced their military presence in Central and Eastern Europe in order to demonstrate NATO's political and military solidarity with its most exposed member states. Cooperation with Russia was suspended, but opportunities for high-level political dialogue remained.

The Wales Summit in September 2014 produced a "Readiness Action Plan," comprising a package of measures aimed at enhancing the ability of NATO forces to quickly deploy to the boundaries of the Alliance, be it in a crisis at NATO's East or South. Allies also underscored their continued cooperation with partner countries and other organizations, bringing home that the end of ISAF in Afghanistan means neither the end of partnership nor of expeditionary engagements. Finally, Allies also pledged to increase their defence budgets with a view to reaching 2 percent of their GDP.

The challenge now is to translate these initial steps into concrete, longer-term policies. If successful, NATO will become a much more agile Alliance: with more military muscle, more rapid decision taking, and with even closer links to the broader international community. However, achieving this kind of Alliance will require the Allies not only to learn some new lessons, but also to rediscover some old lessons that had almost gotten lost.

Among the old lessons that NATO needs to relearn is that geography still matters. In order not to antagonize Russia, NATO's post-Cold War enlargement process was designed in a militarily "soft" way. In the 1997 NATO Russia Founding Act the Allies stated that they did not foresee the permanent deployment of substantial combat forces on the territory of the new member states. The Readiness Action Plan (RAP) remains in line with this commitment. It puts the emphasis on the ability to rapidly deploy forces to the most exposed Allies rather than on stationing force there. Instead, regular exercises and rotational deployments in Central and Eastern Europe will create a semi-permanence that provides those Allies with an entirely new level of military protection.

However, implementing the RAP is expensive: keeping forces on high alert, conducting more frequent exercises, and building new support structures will create considerable financial burdens. Politically, as well, the RAP has its share of challenges. Several NATO allies in Central and Eastern Europe are likely to push for more "permanence" in deployed NATO units on their soil than initially foreseen. At the same time, allies in NATO's Southern Region will insist that the Alliance's defensive measures be balanced and not focus exclusively on a potential threat from the east.

The RAP reflects the reaffirmation of the logic of deterrence and reassurance: rather than offering mere promises of support, NATO is now moving to protect its geographically exposed member states through concrete defense plans and tangible military arrangements. This resurrection of deterrence will also have to encompass the nuclear domain.

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In light of Russian nuclear threats and the vigorous modernization of its nuclear forces, the Allies will have to examine the implications of these developments for their own nuclear policy and posture. This exercise will require member states to demonstrate much intellectual discipline, lest they risk a replay of past controversies.

Some may welcome the re-emphasis on collective defense as a convenient excuse for lowering their "expeditionary" ambitions, yet the need to address contingencies at Europe's periphery and beyond will not vanish with the end of ISAF. The US-led coalition against the Islamic State (IS) indicates as much: Although not acting in a NATO framework, many Allies are part of that coalition, conducting airstrikes, supplying military equipment, and offering training and other assistance to countries in the region. In addition, NATO's other missions, ranging from counter piracy operations ("Ocean Shield") in the Gulf of Aden to the training mission in Afghanistan ("Resolute Support"), will continue, underlining the need to remain engaged in contingencies beyond collective defense.

This outward-looking orientation has also been reaffirmed by new initiatives to further deepen NATO's relations with its partner countries. As ISAF, which used to act as a major catalyst for cooperation, has come to an end, NATO Allies have set in train new initiatives to enhance military interoperability with partners, while some partners were also offered support in defense capacity building.

Finally, the United States' "pivot" to Asia and, accordingly, its focus on missions outside Europe, will continue. While the Ukraine crisis reaffirmed the crucial role of the United States as a provider of military reassurance for Europe, a major reinforcement of the US military presence in Europe is unlikely. In sum, the Allies will try to square the circle by ensuring that changes in NATO's force posture to bolster collective defense will not happen at the expense of their expeditionary capabilities.

In Ukraine, Russia has provided a textbook example of hybrid ("non-linear") warfare: the rapid concentration of regular forces at Ukraine's border, the employment of unmarked special forces on Crimea, support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine, an increase in the gas price and a massive propaganda campaign that sought to obscure the events on the ground. This kind of warfare cannot be deterred merely by the threat of force.

Hence, NATO has started to review its intelligence-sharing and is now examining how to adapt its political decision-taking processes to ambiguous warning situations, for example by pre-delegating the authority to initiate certain crisis response measures to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). Other elements are an increased emphasis on cyber defense, strategic communications, and cooperation with other institutions. Enhancing the ties between NATO and the EU offers the greatest synergies in this regard.

With respect to Russia, NATO remains in a "wait-and-see" mode: Russia's continuing denial to be a warring party in the Ukraine crisis allows for nothing more than a minimalist (and rather terse) dialogue. While Russia's assertive behavior is not likely to change anytime soon, the need for the West and Russia to have a more comprehensive discussion about European security remains as urgent as ever.

One reason is NATO's crisis management role: as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia can veto NATO's stabilization missions. Another reason is the European architecture: It is obvious that the initial post-Cold War approach of enlarging established Western institutions while at the same time building a special relationship with Russia is no longer an option, as it always depended on Russian acquiescence if not full acceptance. At the same time, no alternative structure appears feasible. Given Russia's opposition to the enlargement of NATO and the EU into its "zone of privileged interests" (Dmitri Medvedev) the West will have to seek a formula that takes legitimate Russian interests into account without relegating certain NATO and EU aspirants to a zone of limited sovereignty.

In this broader discussion, NATO would only be one player among several, but the Alliance must demonstrate that it is ready to engage in such a discussion. The issue at stake is not to offer Russia a face-saving exit from its attempt to re-write the rules of the European order by force. Rather, it is about organizing European security after the end of the post-Cold War era. Despite its renewed focus on protecting its members, NATO must be more than just an innocent bystander in such a debate.

The massive changes in the European security landscape since the spring of 2014 make past statements about NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept being the "blueprint for the next decade" appear overly optimistic. As a result, some observers expect that the 2016 Warsaw summit will not only showcase key elements of the Readiness Action Plan, such as the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, but will also take a decision to start work on a new Strategic Concept.

Such a document may attract much public interest, but it hardly seems a priority. Keeping Allies from walking away from their commitments to fully implement the RAP appears far more important, as does keeping them committed to their pledge to increase defense spending, and approaching the pending debates on enlargement and Russia with realism. At the same time, Allies must avoid a bifurcation of NATO into a Northeastern group of Allies that focuses on Russia and a Southern group that focuses on instability in North Africa and the Middle East. Such a regionalization would weaken NATO just at a time when it needs to be strong. "All for one and one for all" is still the best formula to cope with the challenges at hand. ■

New challenges need new answers: The Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS), a transatlantic arms project with German participation. An exercise with the new system in 2013.

PICTURE ALLIANCE/DPA/MEADS INTERNATIONAL

IMAGO/JOACHIM SIELSKI

Technical problems: The new Airbus A400M transport aircraft.

An insecure army

On its 60th anniversary, the Bundeswehr looks back at two decades of dramatic reforms. But it may have to start all over again | By Eric Chauvistré

A navy frigate on an anti-pirate mission off the coast of Somalia lacking the necessary helicopters for its boarding teams; a brand new military transport aircraft grounded in northern Germany; the G36 assault rifle that turns unpredictably inaccurate when used in hot environments or after extended use in combat: in the year of its 60th anniversary, the German Bundeswehr is hitting the headlines with reports of malfunctioning military equipment – while its strategic focus remains unclear.

The technical problems with the old Sea Lynx and the new NH90 helicopters, with the new Airbus A400M transport aircraft, or with the G36 rifle are not inherently linked. It may even be a coincidence that they all made the news at around the same time.

But the issue is highly political. Both the current minister of defense, Ursula von der Leyen, and her predecessor Thomas de Maizière are seen as potential Christian Democratic party candidates for the chancellorship, once Angela Merkel steps down. This explains the unusual degree of attention. The defense portfolio has always been seen as the ultimate test for ambitious politicians in Germany. Most of them failed and had to step down early. So far, only Helmut Schmidt, minister of defense in the early 1970s, actually went on to the top job.

But there is more to it than party politics and the personal ambitions of some individuals. The way the shortcomings of the German military are debated and scandalized indicate that they are a welcome distraction from the still unresolved question of what the Bundeswehr's premier mission ought to be. And it is not only decision makers in government and parliament that are keen to avoid the tough questions. There is a deep-rooted reluctance in the general public to discuss the future role of its armed forces – what the Bundeswehr should be able to do, what one could realistically expect of it, and what price one would be prepared to pay for maintaining an effective force.

The reports that create the image of a poorly equipped force come at a time when German defense policy and the Bundeswehr itself face tremendous challenges, both domestically and internationally.

First, 25 years after the wall came down, the Bundeswehr is more uncertain than ever about its strategic purpose.

Second, Germany still has to demonstrate how it will fulfill the bold commitment made by both Ursula von der Leyen and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the 2014 Munich Security Conference – to assume more responsibility in world affairs. Within Germany, the promise was widely understood – or misunderstood – as an appeal to boost its military engagements.

Thirdly, doubts about Germany's equipment are particularly embarrassing because the Bundeswehr, as part of the German Netherlands Corps, are to be at the heart of Nato's newly established "Very High Readiness Joint Task Force" (VJTF), set up in response to Russian action in the Ukraine to deter any attacks on the Baltic states. Given the drastically reduced stocks in arms and vehicles, putting the contingent together posed an unexpectedly high challenge.

Journalist Eric Chauvistré has reported extensively on the Afghanistan conflict and has spent time embedded with German Bundeswehr troops serving in the ISAF mission there.

NOAM KOHER

Fourthly, the Bundeswehr has been struggling with becoming a professional army that is attractive to young men and women after conscription was suspended in 2011. Given the dramatic demographic changes Germany faces and its, by European standards, relatively low unemployment rate, this is a challenge that won't go away.

Finally, the Bundeswehr is undergoing an often neglected generational shift. Young officers, whose ideas of a modern fighting force were formed in Afghanistan, will soon replace the old guard recruited and trained during the East-West confrontation at a time when the Bundeswehr was a much stronger and larger force – but never seriously expected to fight a real war. The new generation of officers may have a clearer idea of what combat means and how little the use of force may sometimes achieve, but it is also a generation that was deeply frustrated by the lack of public support for the Afghanistan mission.

The Bundeswehr is firmly established in German society. Yet, the fact that it was not an intrinsic part of the old Federal Republic resonates in many debates until today. When the new German army was set up in 1955, the democratic state it was to serve was already six years old. The Wiederbewaffnung (rearmament), only ten years after the end of World War II, was highly controversial.

To engage in missions abroad, half a century later the Bundeswehr had to transform itself from an army equipped with thousands of main battle tanks confronting a potential Soviet attack on the Elbe river and in the "Fulda gap" to a light expeditionary army fighting guerrilla forces on the Kunduz river in Northern Afghanistan. A deployment that was hailed as a shining example of the Bundeswehr as a force bringing peace, democracy or at least some sort of stability to the region, soon turned into a combat mission that never gained wide popular support back home.

Increasingly, the purpose of the Bundeswehr was called into question. No federal government dared to increase the defense budget. The maintenance of existing equipment was being neglected.

Even though Afghanistan is hardly ever mentioned in the German debate on the G36 assault rifle, it may in fact be more about that mission thatn about the rifle itself. When the Bundeswehr was sent to Afghanistan in 2001, neither political nor military leaders expected a real combat mission. The troops were seen as a stabilization force in a relatively quiet environment. It was not until 2008 that German soldiers got into regular combat situations.

Now that the mission in Afghanistan is drawing to an end, there is a great reluctance to engage in another large-scale deployment. The Bundeswehr is focusing on supposedly low-risk training missions in Mali, Somalia, and Iraq. "Enable and enhance" is the snappy phrase created for this sort of minor mission that allows the political leadership to demonstrate global engagement.

But in the face of Putin's Ukrainian challenge, the Bundeswehr is preparing once again for conflict in Europe. In an attempt to strengthen deterrence, it will reactivate some of its previously mothballed Leopard 2 tanks and is even planning to develop a follow-up system. But even if this is implemented without the usual time delays and cost overruns in arms procurement, it will most certainly not lead to the thousands of tanks the Bundeswehr had in its stocks during the Cold War.

It is ironic that, just at a time when the Bundeswehr had successfully transformed itself into an expeditionary force and demonstrated that it is able to sustain a significant presence in a remote and hostile environment, that approach is being all but abandoned. The strategic focus is shifting again. And the question of an appropriate role for the Bundeswehr is back on the agenda. ■

Peace for our time?

Nuclear deal or not – Iran remains a threat to the whole Middle East

By Michael Wolffsohn

PICTURE ALLIANCE/LANDOV/UPI/ALI SHAYGAN/FARS NEWS AGENCY

A nuclear agreement with Iran is in sight, finally. The nightmare of a A-bomb in the hands of the Shiite revolutionaries seems to have been banished. Thank you, permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany. That, briefly, is the general impression.

Neville Chamberlain pledged "peace for our time" in 1938 following the Munich Conference with Hitler. Bill Clinton similarly hailed his 1994 nuclear deal with North Korea, which trashed the agreement years ago. Barack Obama has likewise been singing the praises of the Lausanne framework accords. The world is celebrating; only Israel is bucking the trend. Why?

I was asked to contribute an article discussing Israel's objections and concerns. I have not done so and will not, as I am a scholar and essayist, not a propagandist for any side. However, I certainly can and will discuss why the supposed bearers of peace, the 5 + 1, who have been negotiating for so long, have nonetheless come up short.

On the technical side we can say that the planned final accord will make it harder for Iran to build a nuclear weapon – substantially so, even, but not structurally.

As the nuclear powers knew during the Cold War between East and West, and as both Israel and Iran know now: the use of nuclear weapons (assuming both sides have them) leads to mutual assured destruction. Neither would survive.

The lethal radiation of Iranian nuclear devices against Israel would target not only the Jewish state, but also Iran's allies and clients: the Shi'ite Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, friends and foes in Syria, which under the Assad regime is still a strategic player on Tehran's side, and of course the pro-Iranian Hamas groups in the Palestinian territories. Even if one considers the Iranian leadership totally irrational, this kind of counterproductive conduct would be unthinkable by any cogent standard. It makes no strategic sense.

Unlike Iran, Israel has a nuclear second-strike capability. That means, should Israel be hit by Iranian nuclear weapons, it could still retaliate. Thanks to German-built submarines that were partly subsidized and partly donated, Israel has the capacity. In 1991, under the Kohl-Genscher government, Israel got the possibility to build a second strike capability. Deliveries were suspended under Gerhard Schröder and Joschka Fischer, but Chancellor Angela Merkel has resumed them in the course of the three successive governing coalitions she has headed since 2005.

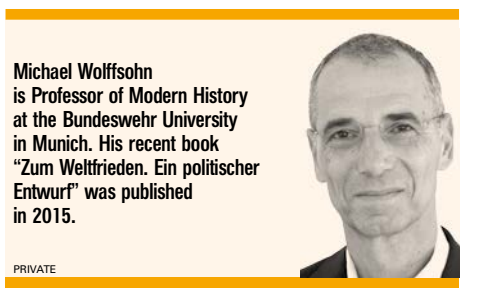
Despite the satisfaction that a nuclear second-strike capability might give Israel, if nuclear war were to break out it would not prevent Israel's destruction. This second strike has been called the "Samson option." Just like the Old Testament judge Samson, an Israel facing its demise would destroy its enemies as well. The deterrent effect is clear.

Israel's nuclear doctrine has been based on Samson from the beginning. Its principle, "if we go down, we take our enemies down with us," could also be stated as: "that day will not come, because our bomb deters the enemy from launching his strike in the first place." At the beginning of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973, it seemed as if Israel would have to implement the Samson option, as a crushing defeat appeared imminent. When the US provided aid to Israel, the German government under Willy Brandt and Walter Scheel refused at first to support US policy and therefore Israel.

Travels more than 2,000 kilometers: A long range Shahab-3 is launched during a test in Iran on Sept. 28, 2009.

The substance of the Samson Option (excluding the Old Testament and Judaism, of course) may also have guided the fathers of the Iranian Bomb. In the First Gulf War (1980-88) the destruction of the Islamic Republic by Saddam Hussein's Iraq seemed at hand. In this emergency situation, leaders in Tehran launched a nuclear weapons program. At the time, Israel played no part in their thinking.

Israel still has a nuclear weapons monopoly in the Middle East. Why not Iran then too? What works for Israel would also be good for Iran, right? One could also see the matter differently, historically and empirically. Israel has kept its nuclear monopoly for decades without threatening to use it, let alone actually pushing the button.



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Libya under Gaddafi attempted to build a nuclear device until 2003 and then stopped. Israel's air force destroyed Syria's Iranian-backed nuclear arms development facilities in September 2007.

Even today, most Arab states feel threatened not by the Israeli monopoly, but by the prospect of a duopoly, should Iran succeed in building its own bomb. Just look at the outraged reaction of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states to the Lausanne talks.

Why would Iran seek to build a bomb if the whole enterprise seems senseless? From the Iranian viewpoint, it is anything but. As the conflict with the Arab states progresses – an end is nowhere in sight – a nuclear deadlock would lead to an intensified conventional arms race. In the long term, structurally, Israel can only lose this race: demographically, economically, and therefore, eventually, militarily. That is the main Israeli criticism of the nuclear deal with Iran. In no way is it limited to the hawks surrounding Prime Minister Netanyahu. It is, unfortunately, real.

Often overlooked and even unknown in the US and Western Europe is that Iran threatens far more states than just Israel. Tehran's missiles currently have a proven range of approximately 2,200 kilometers. Some unverified reports from Western intelligence services – which are more than occasionally wrong (see Iraq 2003) – claim that Iran is working overtime to develop missiles with a range of 10,000 kilometers.

Proven – because it has been launched and displayed – is also Iran's satellite program. The first launch vehicle was built in Russia. Now Iran is building its own. Anyone who can build rockets for satellites can also build long-range missiles for military purposes. In the shorter rather than over the longer term, then, Iran will have strategic ballistic missiles. It will not need them to attack Israel, of course. Tehran is 1,600 kilometers away from Tel Aviv. Iran's existing missile arsenal is already up to that task.

This means that Iran's leaders have far more than Israel in their sights. Why else would they be investing billions (that the civilian population sorely needs) in middle- and long-range missiles and satellite programs? To hit New York, a ballistic missile would have to deliver a nuclear warhead over a distance of 9,900 kilometers from Tehran. That is the geographic sense – or insanity – behind Iran's missile program.

The distance from Iran to Berlin (3,600 km), Paris (4,200 km) and London (4,400 km) is far shorter. As soon as Iran develops intermediate range delivery systems, it will be able to defend itself using missile deterrence against tough and sometimes crippling EU sanctions that include bans on oil purchases from Iran.

It is high time that Germany, Europe and the US look not only at the contents of nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional warheads, but also at their delivery systems and the strategy that derives from Iran's missile geography, and gauge the threat they represent. ■

Building confidence

Implications of the nuclear deal with Iran | By Ambassador Seyed Hossein Mousavian

On April 2, 2015, Iran and the P5+1 reached a framework agreement that ensures intrusive transparency and confidence building measures on Iran's nuclear program in return for a lifting of all nuclear-related sanctions and respecting the legitimate rights of Iran for enrichment, with continued talks until the June 30 deadline toward a comprehensive deal. This initial agreement is a positive step toward ending 12 years of contention over Iran's nuclear program. The next few weeks will be particularly difficult, as thorny technical issues are negotiated and specific phasing out of sanctions is agreed upon. While the drama over the nuclear talks will continue for the next few weeks until the comprehensive agreement is reached and goes into effect, we have to look at the post-deal environment.

Implications for Iran's nuclear program for the next ten to 25 years:

Enrichment: Reduce installed centrifuges by approximately two-thirds of about 19,000 installed today, limiting uranium enrichment to 3.67 percent, reduce current 10,000 kg of low-enriched uranium (LEU) to 300 kg of 3.67 percent LEU and not to build new facilities for the purpose of enriching uranium.

Fordo facility: No enrichment at Fordo, converting the current facility into a R&D center and no fissile material at Fordo.

Natanz facility: The only site where Iran will continue enrichment with only 5,060 IR-1 first-generation centrifuges and 1,000 IR-2M centrifuges currently installed will be placed in a International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitored storage.

Arak reactor: Iran will not produce weapons grade plutonium, will ship all of its spent fuel from the reactor out of the country for the reactor's lifetime, will not build any additional heavy water reactors and will not have reprocessing facility.

Monitoring and Inspections: Iran will implement the highest level of international inspection measures (Subsidiary Arrangement, Modified Code 3.1 and Additional Protocol) and will address the IAEA's concerns regarding the Possible Military Dimensions (PMD) issues.

Following the implementation of the comprehensive nuclear deal, the Iranian nuclear file will be removed from the United Nations Security Council and return to the IAEA. Iran's nuclear facilities following the ten to 25 year limitations will expand in accordance to the domestic needs of the country and in close coordination with the IAEA.

IMAGO/UPI PHOTO

IMAGO/UPI PHOTO

The only site where Iran will continue enrichment: Members of the IAEA inspection team inside the Natanz uranium enrichment plant on Jan. 20, 2014.

Ambassador Seyed Hossein Mousavian is a research scholar at Princeton University and a former spokesman for Iran's nuclear negotiators. His latest book, "Iran and the United States: An Insider's view on the Failed Past and the Road to Peace" was released in May 2014.

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The implications of the nuclear deal for confidence building and nuclear non-proliferation:

1. Diplomacy: Negotiations have succeeded where coercive policy and military threat by a nuclear weapon state against a non-nuclear weapon state have failed in resolving a major international concern over Iran's nuclear file.

2. Strengthening the foundations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): the inalienable right of signatory states to peaceful nuclear energy and technology while adhering to robust verification and monitoring measures to ensure their respective program is peaceful. The April 2 agreement put into place the most intrusive monitoring mechanisms in the history of non-proliferation and these measures will set the stage for the evolution of IAEA safeguards in the future.

3. Confidence building: Resolving the Iranian nuclear file, while alleviating the concerns of world powers and regional countries regarding its nature, scope and aim, will inevitably help confidence and trust regionally and internationally.

4. Non-proliferation model: The comprehensive nuclear deal could become a model the Middle East and beyond enabling the same level of transparency, monitoring and verification to be applied to emerging nuclear programs.

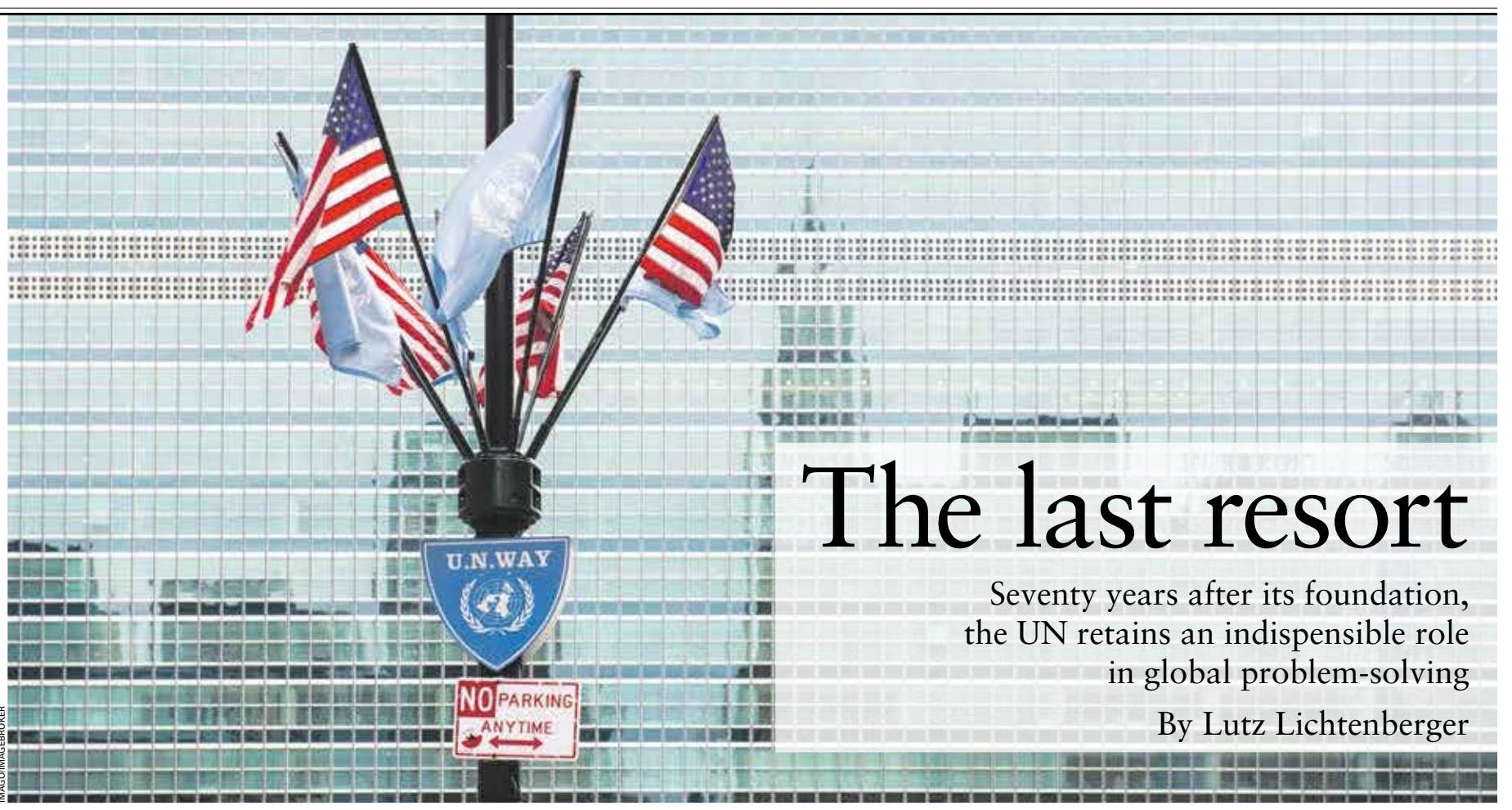
5. Movement toward the Nuclear Free zone: Tailoring the nuclear deal to reflect the domestic enrichment needs of individual countries and enhanced monitoring from raw material procurement to enrichment will also cement safeguards to ensure no fissile material is diverted toward clandestine weapons programs. Once again – the measures agreed upon in the final comprehensive deal will be a building block for the nuclear weapons-free zone (NWFZ) and bring the notion of a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East one step closer.

Implications for Iran's relations with the West and the region:

Iran and the US: The nuclear negotiations between Iran and the world powers has enabled a forum for Iran and the United States to engage on a bilateral basis at foreign minister level for the first time in over 35 years. This development has brought about a sea change in having a direct line of communication between the two capitals. This track could open up the possibility of direct negotiations and cooperation between Tehran and Washington over multiple theaters of conflict raging in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq and instability in the Levant with increasing efforts to counter extremism and terrorism.

Iran and the West: relations between Iran and the West deteriorated during the 8-year presidency of Ahmadinejad and following the election of the moderate Iranian president Rouhani we are finally witnessing both sides coming out of their coma. The European powers involved in the nuclear talks have made major strides in a short time to rectify their relations with Iran. The key to more stable and secure Middle East will have to include the Iranians at every juncture. To this end, Iran and Europe should take constructive steps combating rising trend of new terrorist groups such as IS and Al Qaeda and crisis management in the Middle East.

Iran and the region: The resolution of Iran's nuclear dossier could open the door for a collective forum for dialogue in the Persian Gulf region. The most pressing issues include cooperation on resolving the humanitarian crisis raging on in Syria, fight against the spread of extremists (IS), stability of Iraq, energy security in the Persian Gulf and bringing an end to hostilities in Yemen. These initial steps could develop to eventually include a list of initiatives to address regional challenges through regional solutions and pave the way toward formal security cooperation. ■



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The last resort

Seventy years after its foundation, the UN retains an indispensible role in global problem-solving

By Lutz Lichtenberger

US and UN Flags outside United Nations headquarters in New York.

Germany shouldn't really have been allowed to join in celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. If the UN Charter – signed on June 26, 1945 by 50 nations – had been taken at its word, then the Federal Republic would have been prevented from taking part. In accordance with Article 53, it is still classified as an "enemy state" – just like any state "that was an enemy of the signatories of this charter during World War Two".

In reality, this designation hasn't played any role for a long time. Decades ago, England, France and the US formally gave up their right to intervene in the affairs of those enemy states. With the treaties agreed between Bonn and the Soviet Union in the 1970s, Moscow also signed up to this arrangement.

Generally speaking, the world organization has experienced a dramatic loss of significance. Today 193 nations are members of the General Assembly, among them the island republic of Kiribati, the tiny western European principality of Liechtenstein and – since July 2011 – South Sudan as the youngest member. The total population of these three countries is less than one million. They nevertheless enjoy the same voting rights as India, Brazil and Mexico – with a combined population of almost 1.6 billion.

The principle that puts all nations on a level playing field may well be honorable. But in the political activities of the General Assembly, it has resulted in a progressive loss of relevance. For example, the UN became an international laughing stock in 2010 when the General Assembly initially voted Muammar al-Gaddafi's Libya on to the UN Human Rights Council with a large majority – only to exclude the nation from the committee again one year later after Libyan troops launched brutal attacks on demonstrators.

But first and foremost, the composition of the Security Council no longer reflects the global political realities of the 21st century. France and Britain have lost much of their status, while Brazil, India and Japan – and also Germany – have gained in stature. The five permanent members of the Security Council, all equipped with their veto power, may occasionally pay lip service to the idea of a reform, but in reality they show little interest in anything that would undermine their prominent position.

This is one of the few issues on which China, France, Britain, Russia and the US agree. On other issues, one of the five veto countries will often block resolutions supported by a clear majority. Divergent geopolitical interests have repeatedly rendered the United Nations ineffective in global crises.

Little wonder then, that in addition to the world organization, innumerable institutions have sprung up that find decision-making altogether easier. Fruitful negotiations take place within the G-7, G-8, G-20 and G-77, as well as in ad hoc coalitions, 'minilateral' groups of affected nations or in cooperation with NGOs.

The UN can however look back on some successful endeavors, many of them occurring beneath the perception threshold of the global public eye, which is focused on major geopolitical conflicts.

The Millennium Project, established in 2002 by Secretary General Kofi Annan, is the large-scale action plan against poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people. More than 250 experts, scientists, politicians, representatives of NGOs, the World Bank and IMF have presented detailed plans.

A key instrument of humanitarian aid is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). More than 7,000 employees in 125 nations campaign for refugees on a global scale. The work of the UNHCR has become increasingly crucial in recent years. The missions – medical aid, primary care, tent camps – in Lebanon, Darfur, Afghanistan, Iraq and above all as a result of the Syrian civil war, in Jordan, are among the organization's biggest.

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HEIDI KÜBLER

One of the most powerful UN organizations is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The essence of its work is rooted in the idea, set out in the preamble to the organization's constitution, that political and economic regulations and agreements alone do not go far enough to secure world peace. The preamble goes on to say that one lesson learned from World War II is that peace "is anchored in the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind". UNESCO's most important tasks are to provide access to education, "the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions" and the preservation of world cultural heritage.

In addition, the dangerous peacekeeping and peace enforcing missions in Africa, the Middle East and Asia are generally more effective than their reputation might suggest. There are currently more than 100,000 UN peacekeepers deployed in 16 nations.

A recently published report by the US Council on Foreign Relations concludes that the missions to Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast can be viewed as success stories. Congo, Mali and South Sudan are admittedly still unstable. Nevertheless, the study quotes Paul D. Williams of George Washington University as saying that "these missions failed largely because they were deployed in a context of ongoing war where the belligerents themselves did not want to stop fighting or preying on civilians." In any case, the report continues, the UN mission saved many civilian lives and prevented an escalation in the fighting.

The conflict of interests between permanent members of the Security Council and the tensions within many individual nations will not be resolved through any kind of institutional reorganization or Security Council reform. The UN cannot become a government for the entire world. But despite persistent disputes, divergent interests and apparently insurmountable antagonism, it is viewed as the last resort in global politics and as a forum for debate.

After 70 years the United Nations still retains its significance: as an entity in which – as the case of Germany bears witness – enmity can be buried and overcome. ■

The OSCE: 40 years of the Helsinki Final Act

With armed conflict again a reality in Europe, it is more important than ever | By Lamberto Zannier

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Revolutionary for its time, the Helsinki Final Act pioneered the comprehensive approach to security that encompasses politico-military aspects, economic and environmental issues and the human dimension. For decades its ten fundamental principles have served as the foundation of the European security order.

Such an evocative anniversary provides a unique opportunity to look back at the OSCE's history, achievements and current challenges and to try to chart a course for its future. This is all the more urgent today, when armed conflict is once again a reality on European soil and the East-West divide is growing, undermining the very foundations of European security.

The OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization. Over time, the OSCE has strived to adapt its unique comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to security to an increasing number of challenges: from arms proliferation and the promotion of military transparency to the resolution of protracted conflicts, support to transition processes and democratic reforms and combatting transnational threats.

When the OSCE's predecessor, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), was established, Cold War divisions were deeply entrenched and Euro-Atlantic leaders with drastically opposing ideologies were seeking a flexible multilateral forum where they could work out differences through high-level political dialogue. The result was a process, which not only provided a framework for discussions on security but over time also created the most advanced international regime of conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), such as the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document on Confidence-and Security-building Measures. Many argue that the CSCE helped to end the Cold War. In the 1990 Paris Charter, the CSCE participating States declared an end to confrontation and the division of Europe and welcomed "a new era of democracy, peace and unity" for the continent. In 1994, they turned the Conference into the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The post-Cold War international security environment called for the OSCE to assume new responsibilities, supporting democratic transition across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and helping restore peace in the former Yugoslavia, which violently fell apart in the early 1990s.

The OSCE states progressively responded by establishing permanent structures, including a Secretariat with a Conflict Prevention Centre, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Parliamentary Assembly, and by deploying field operations in Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

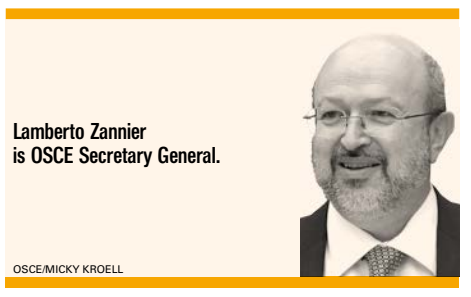
The OSCE's evolution continued throughout the 1990s and well into the twenty-first century, constantly adapting to new strategic challenges arising from the turbulent post-9/11 international context and an increasingly globalized world. Transnational threats, including terrorism, organized and cyber crime and trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings, have emerged. Climate change, which affects natural resources, as well as growing popular demand for more democratic societies, respect for human rights and the rule of law and clamping down on corruption have also been gaining prominence as possible conflict drivers.

Under the guidance of its member states, the OSCE has responded quickly and dynamically to these emerging threats. It has developed and strengthened its ability to provide expert advice and capacity-building support in areas such as good governance, economic reform, environmental protection, minority protection, tolerance and non-discrimination, anti-terrorism, border management and anti-trafficking. The Organization is also strengthening relationships with its Mediterranean and Asian partners for co-operation to jointly respond to common security challenges.

Ultimately, the OSCE's inclusiveness and impartiality have over time become its key comparative advantage in responding to the changing security environment.

The ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine is perhaps the most difficult challenge the Organization has faced after the end of the Cold War.

As the only regional security organization able to bring all the key stakeholders to the table, the OSCE has proved to be well-placed to contribute to international efforts to de-escalate the conflict and support the political process in an inclusive and consensus-based fashion. The Special Monitoring Mission's speedy deployment and its ability to adapt, particularly when it was entrusted with a key role in supporting the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, is a huge achievement for the OSCE and the whole international community. The entire OSCE toolbox has been mobilized to respond to the unfolding crisis with the support of successive OSCE Chairmanships, the Secretariat, institutions, parliamentary assembly, and the Office of the Project Co-ordinator in Kyiv. The scope of the OSCE crisis response has covered the entire conflict cycle and included assistance in conflict de-escalation, national dialogue promotion, reconciliation, constitutional reform, protection of national minorities, and elections.


Lamberto Zannier is OSCE Secretary General.
OSCE/MICKY KROELL

Currently the OSCE is focused on reversing the escalation, facilitating a stable ceasefire and a dynamic political process leading to a sustainable peace under the guidance of the Trilateral Contact Group led by the OSCE Chairmanship's Special Representative. We know from experience that it is not only important to freeze the fighting, but also to avoid freezing the political process and address the root causes of conflicts.

The crisis in and around Ukraine has marked a clear shift from aspiring towards a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community to a return to confrontation and Cold War rhetoric. In this context, the OSCE as an inclusive platform for dialogue and joint action across the entire Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region can play a crucial role not only in defusing the crisis on the ground but also in addressing the challenges facing the European security architecture at the strategic level.

The OSCE Troika-appointed Panel of Eminent Persons, which is looking at ways to reinvigorate the 2010 OSCE Astana Summit's vision of a security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok based on shared commitments and values, and how to reconsolidate European security as a common project, is a most welcome initiative. At a time when deep divisions are emerging on the European continent, the declared ambition to rebuild trust and confidence among participating states through a substantive discussion on the future role of the OSCE in the context of evolving European political and security structures has stalled. Fresh and innovative ideas are needed. In this regard, co-operation with the OSCE Network of think tanks and academic institutions and informal high-level meetings such as OSCE Security Days are increasingly important.

Nevertheless, more than that is needed. A gulf remains between the many ideas and proposals and their implementation as building blocks towards enhanced trust and confidence. The current situation calls for engagement, leadership and commitment to jointly explore opportunities for relaunching the process. Precisely at this particular juncture the OSCE brings value as a platform for inclusive discussion, including on issues pertaining to broader security challenges.

We also need to continue enhancing co-operation with the UN and other international and regional organizations under the framework of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In today's globalized world, security threats are too complex for any one country or organization to tackle alone. We need to join forces, finding synergies and complementarities.

Today we face a defining moment for European and global security. As the international community has "rediscovered" the OSCE as a key actor to help solve the crisis in and around Ukraine, we urgently need to reaffirm the legitimacy and relevance of the Helsinki fundamental principles, and make them more difficult to defy. Although these principles have been violated, they have not lost their validity.

We must revive the "spirit of Helsinki" and draw inspiration from the leaders of states who 40 years ago sat at the same table and engaged in dialogue to prevent a new war. We need the same kind of courageous leadership now. The OSCE has the table ready. ■

From CSCE to OSCE

57 countries are members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. They include all European countries; Turkey; Mongolia; Russia and all states on the territory of the former Soviet Union; as well as the US and Canada.

The Organization's headquarters (Secretariat) are in Vienna.

July 3, 1973: East-West Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki.

September 18, 1973 - July 21, 1975: Preparatory talks in Geneva.

August 1, 1975: Signing of the Helsinki Accords in the Finnish capital, agreeing on the inviolability of frontiers, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Cooperation in economic, scientific and environmental matters.

September 9, 1983: Agreement in Madrid on a mandate for a Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) and Disarmament in Europe; talks began January 1984 in Stockholm.

January 17, 1984: In Stockholm, establishment of a forum for security dialogue in Europe.

September 6, 1985: In Madrid, agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs).

September 19, 1986: Agreement to invite observers from all other participating states to watch certain military exercises. Verification via inspections on land and from the air as early as 36 hours after maneuvers are announced; permission may not be denied.

March 19 - April 11, 1990: CSCE conference in Bonn on economic cooperation. From June 5 - June 28, 1990 in Copenhagen, experts met to discuss the Human Dimension of the CSCE.

November 19, 1990: Charter of Paris for a New Europe, international agreement on the creation of a new, peaceful order in Europe following the reunification of Germany and the end of the East-West confrontation. Final document of the CSCE summit signed by 32 European countries and the US and Canada; the division of Europe is declared over. The Paris Charter committed signatories to democracy as the sole form of government as well as to human rights and basic freedoms guarantees.

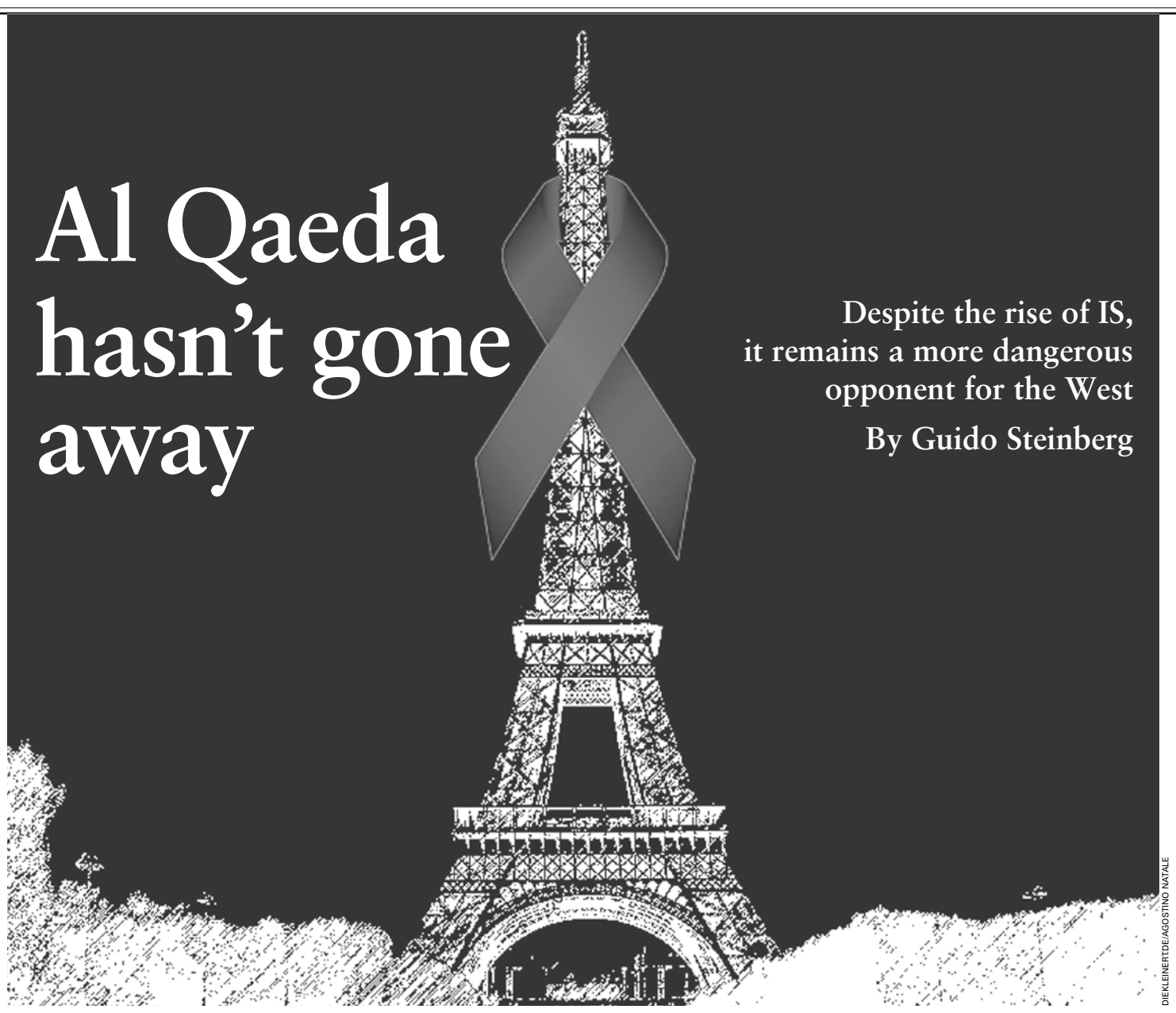
December 5 - 6, 1994: CSCE summit in Budapest. The CSCE becomes an organization and from 1 January 1995 is known as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

December 1 - 2, 2010: In Astana at the first summit for some time, no resolutions are made for the future strategic and thematic direction of the OSCE.

The organization's main aim remains to secure peace and reconstruction in the wake of conflict. Under chapter VIII of the United Nations and in accordance with the subsidiarity principle the OSCE serves as the first international contact in conflicts within its area. The activities of the OSCE are divided into three "dimensions" based on the three themes set out in the Helsinki Accords: the Political-Military Dimension, the Economic and Environmental Dimension, and the Human Dimension.

The current chairman of the OSCE is Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić.

Al Qaeda hasn't gone away



Despite the rise of IS, it remains a more dangerous opponent for the West

By Guido Steinberg

DIEKLEINERTDE/AGOSTINO NATALE

"Paris in Mourning" after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January this year. Al-Qaeda trained at least one of the two attackers.

Before the Iraqi terror organization known as ISIS and IS came to the world's attention, it had been fighting for almost a decade as a regional organization of Al Qaeda. From 2004 to 2006, it called itself "al Qaeda in Mesopotamia." This caused some confusion in 2013 and 2014, when it became increasingly clear that not only did Al Qaeda and IS represent fundamentally different jihadist schools of thought, but when IS began openly to fight against al Qaeda and its allies in Syria.

But as early as 2004, the association with Al Qaeda could barely conceal the fact that this was a marriage of convenience. Iraqi Al Qaeda and its founder Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was never subordinate to Bin Laden and the Al Qaeda leadership in Pakistan, but rather pursued their own goals and strategies, for which they wanted to make use of recruits and cash from the Gulf region.

Al Qaeda on the other hand was going through a weak phase at the time, and the fealty of the Iraqis helped it to generate the impression that Al Qaeda was a network that spanned the globe. That the disputes emerging in 2005 did not lead to an immediate rupture was primarily to do with the fact that contact between Pakistan and Iraq was broken off and both organizations were fighting for their survival in the ensuing years.

It was only when both groupings supported the same local jihadists in the Syrian civil war that they came into renewed contact with each other. The conflict was overlaid with a battle for power and influence and as it progressed, it became apparent that ISIS/IS by no means viewed itself as part of Al Qaeda, but much more as an autonomous organization that was seeking to wrest control of the jihadist movement from Al Qaeda.

IS success in Iraq and Syria made the group so attractive that numerous jihadists declared their allegiance. Just as many regional organizations joined Al Qaeda after 2001, now IS groups have been forming in Libya, Egypt, Afghanistan and the Caucasus, among other places. In addition from early 2014, many volunteer fighters carried out attacks in the West in the name of IS. Many commentators believed this spelled the end for Al Qaeda.

Although Abu Musab al-Zarqawi publicly joined Al Qaeda in 2004, he never wholly submitted to Osama Bin Laden's leadership. This was already evident in 2005, when Bin Laden's deputy and later successor, the Egyptian Aiman al-Zawahiri, wrote a letter to Zarqawi sharply criticizing his approach. The Al Qaeda leadership was especially perturbed by the brutal attacks on Shiite targets that had become a hallmark of the Iraqi group. The execution of Western hostages – in filmed decapitations arranged by Zarqawi – was also criticized. Instead of creating a climate of horror and fear within the Muslim community with their acts of violence, said Zawahiri, Iraqi Al Qaeda should make efforts to win the support of the population.

But Zarqawi and his followers did not change their conduct. Shortly after the death of Zarqawi in June 2006, they even went a step further by proclaiming the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) and demanding that other Iraqi rebel groups fall into line with them. This also contradicted Al Qaeda strategy, which had relied on robust alliances with like-minded organizations – first and foremost with the Taliban – and which had succeeded in overcoming several problematic phases. Iraqi Al Qaeda formulated a leadership claim that endures to this day, but that resulted in a bitter defeat in Iraq. Faced with the new enemy within their own ranks, many rebels gave up the armed struggle and allied themselves with US troops, which moved quickly to force back ISI until it appeared to have been almost totally vanquished in 2008.

But ISI survived, as a small but very strong terrorist organization. It profited from the American withdrawal that began in 2009 and was completed in late 2011. But even more significant were the policies of the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who used his extended powers to eradicate Sunnis from the nation's political system. Late 2011 saw the start of a concerted campaign of persecution against Sunni politicians and many civilians detained without trial in their thousands. The Iraqi government lost all support in Sunni regions of the country, where ISI were increasingly able to recruit and operate without fear of recriminations.

The number of attacks and victims steadily increased from 2012; ISI gained in strength. It captured Fallujah in late 2013, followed by Mosul in June 2014, until large swathes of western and northwestern Iraq were under jihadi control.

The start of the civil war in neighboring Syria furthered this development, as ISI also celebrated successes there. The organization did not make any public appearances until April 2013, but instead supported an offshoot calling itself the Nusra Front (The Support Front for the People of Al-Sham). The group was founded by Syrian members of ISI and also copied the car bomb attacks of its Iraqi parent organization. But its strategy followed the guidelines of Al Qaeda.

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SWP-BERLIN.ORG

In contrast to ISI, it very pragmatically sought out allies among the Syrian rebels in pursuit of a common goal – the toppling of the Assad regime.

The events of April 2013 showed that the Nusra Front did indeed align itself with Al Qaeda. During the previous months, ISI leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had tried in vain to bring the group into line. In April he announced that he was dissolving the Syrian organization and merging it, together with ISI, into a new group called the "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" (ISIS).

The formation of ISIS led to an open conflict between Baghdadi and Zawahiri. The Nusra Front sought help from the Al Qaeda leader who issued the prompt decree that the Nusra Front should continue to operate in Syria and ISI in Iraq – under the supreme command of Zawahiri. But Baghdadi refused to obey Zawahiri and a power struggle began in Syria that only came to a temporary halt in 2014 when ISIS/IS began fighting in the north and east, and the severely weakened Nusra Front in the northwest of the country.

Zawahiri threw ISIS out of the Al Qaeda network in early 2014, whereupon Baghdadi declared himself the Caliph of the Islamic State. This resulted in the creation of two enemy camps locked in a bitter duel.

It did indeed seem as though Al Qaeda had passed its zenith in 2014. Intensified persecution since 2001 had put the organization under huge pressure, and it was rarely able to carry out high-profile attacks on Western targets – the 2005 London attacks were the last in Europe for a long while.

In 2011, weak spots in the once powerful terror organizations became especially apparent: the jihadists played absolutely no part at all in the Arab revolutions, because they had never managed to garner broad popular support. At the same time, the ruthless US drone war in Pakistan was bearing fruit, ending the lives of most of Al Qaeda's top brass. The killing of Osama Bin Laden in May 2011 appeared to confirm this trend.

But by establishing regional organizations in the Arab world, Al Qaeda had since 2002 already been working on safeguarding its own survival independently of the fate of the leadership in Pakistan. Al Qaeda "branches" were set up in Saudi Arabia in 2003, in Iraq in 2004, Algeria in 2007 and Yemen in 2009. And while Iraqi Al Qaeda broke away in 2013 to become a rival and enemy, the Yemeni subsidiary not only turned out to be absolutely loyal to the Al Qaeda leadership, with which it maintained close contacts, but also assumed the role of a parent organization in the battle against the US.

In 2009 and 2010 it attempted to detonate bombs on transatlantic flights shortly before the planes landed in the US; the explosives were detected at the last minute during en route stopovers. Al Qaeda in Yemen eventually scored a major coup in January 2015: It had trained at least one of the two attackers who murdered journalists working at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris. After 10 years, Al Qaeda had yet again carried out a successful attack on European soil.

IS triumphs in Iraq and Syria and the many attacks by sympathizers of the group in the West had almost managed to obscure Al Qaeda's enduring strength. This strength will continue to endure. This is first and foremost due to the group's strategy, which is more pragmatic. It is primarily focused on the battle with the West, which it aims to weaken in a protracted war of attrition.

Its long-term goal is also to establish an "Islamic state", but it believes attempts to do this are hugely premature, because the West would today find it easy to destroy such a state. Its strategy is much more focused on meticulously planned, well conceived, high profile attacks such as the one carried out in Paris, aimed at provoking an overreaction from the West – or in other words: military interventions in the Muslim world where Al Qaeda is better placed to continue the battle. To increase its chances of success, Al Qaeda relies on allegiances with groups such as the Taliban and tries not to make too many ene-

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Is anarchy worse than dictatorship?

The rise of Islamic State and the responsibility of Washington and its allies for the civil wars in the Middle East | By Peter H. Koepf

Was the invasion of Iraq in 2003 a good or a bad idea? In May, likely US presidential hopeful Jeb Bush did not yet have a clear position on that question. His responses have ranged from yes, it was the right thing, to "knowing what we know now I would not have engaged – I would not have gone into Iraq." He then added, referring to the 4,491 soldiers who lost their lives there: "it was worth it for the people that made major sacrifices."

Germany had a clear answer as far back as 2003. Then Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said no, he was "not convinced" by the information provided by Secretary of State Colin Powell and doctored by US intelligence services. Today the German people – and perhaps the majority of Americans as well – feel confirmed in their doubts. The invasion of Iraq was a disaster. It cost the lives of one hundred times as many Iraqis as US troops and spawned a new, potent enemy that, besides massacring "infidels" in Iraq, has expanded into Syria, Yemen, Libya and elsewhere in Africa.

"Since 2001, the US has intervened militarily or operated armed drone missions in seven mainly Muslim states: Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Libya and Syria," writes Middle East analyst Michael Lüders, who also contributes to this publication. "In which of these states have living conditions for the population then improved, with better prospects for stability and security?" he asks. Lüders is convinced that, had Saddam Hussein not been toppled, the Islamic State group would not exist today. "Both Al Qaeda and 'Islamic State' have earned the label 'made in USA'" Lüders writes.

Jeb Bush has also registered the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS), but said that when the US withdrawal began in 2008, Iraq was not in the shape it is today: "It was fragile, but it was stable."

Compare that with Rainer Hermann, veteran correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, who accuses the US of having left Iraq too early. The Americans had not delivered their promises of a stable democracy and economic recovery, he writes. The early pullout in 2011 made possible the expansion of IS, Hermann says, adding that in both Iraq and Syria, whose dictator Washington likewise wanted to remove, the anarchy in some places has proven worse than dictatorship.

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HEIDI KÜBLER

Now Jeb Bush says the US must "re-engage" in Iraq and go beyond the steps that President Obama has already taken. Besides flying drone missions, "we have to be there to train the military and to do the things that are being done right now."

What are the things being done right now? Flying in special forces now and then to kidnap or kill IS leaders, such as the group's chief oil dealer Abu Sayyaf on May 16?

By not committing ground forces in Iraq or Syria, the US cannot be defeated there. Drawing the Americans back into the country appears to be Islamic State strategy. Each horrific killing of a hostage is another bid to lure US troops. A President Jeb Bush or one from the Democratic Party might consider that option. But why should "the West" again set foot on Arab land as an occupier? To make new mistakes that might not be reversible?

After the "infidels" took over Iraq in 2003, misstep followed mistake. Lüders, Hermann and Guido Steinberg of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) accuse the US and, more broadly, the "Friends of the Syrian People Group" (including the "West," Turkey and the Gulf States) of committing eleven capital errors:

1. The West has intervened in wars and conflicts in the Middle East with the stated purpose of bringing democracy – and the unstated one of installing pliant new leaders.

2. Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US civilian administrator Paul Bremer dismantled the final vestiges of functioning central authority, a display of "remarkable incompetence" (Lüders).

3. The US did not ensure that sectarian groups, especially the Shi'ites, were included in talks on rebuilding.

4. The US permitted Nuri al-Maliki, Iraq's Shi'ite prime minister from 2006 to 2014, to persecute and imprison Sunni and secular politicians and other opponents of the government. As a result, the Sunnis refused to defend the Iraqi state against the jihadists and allowed IS to take power in Sunni areas "because their populations hated the governments in Baghdad and Damascus more than IS" (Guido Steinberg).

5. The US banned the secular Baath party and dissolved the Iraqi army. Many Sunnis lost their livelihoods as a result. Many former generals, officers and soldiers joined the resistance to the occupiers, including IS.

6. The removal of the Saddam Hussein regime "greatly altered the regional balance of power in favor of Iran and Shi'ite

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No sign of victory

The proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia is creating instability in half the Middle East – and will probably continue for years to come | By Markus Bickel

IMAGO/KYODO NEWS

Watchful: A Saudi soldier monitors the border with Yemen.

The May 22nd suicide attack on the Shi'ite Imam Ali mosque in Eastern Saudi Arabia has changed everything. For the first time, the "Islamic State" terrorist group managed to attack a religious building in the country that is the custodian of the Muslim holy sites of Mecca and Medina – and killed 21 people in the process. This was the most serious attack on Shi'ites in the history of the kingdom. The sectarian conflict fueled by the regional powers of Saudi Arabia and Iran for years has now reached the heartland of the Sunni world – and raised the confrontation between the Shi'ite regime in Iran and Riyadh to a new level.

The province of Ash Sharqiya in the eastern part of Saudi Arabia, where all the important oil facilities are located, is the kingdom's vulnerable point. Concern that the many Saudi Shi'ites living here could act as a "fifth column" for Iran has been worrying the ruling elite around King Salman for years.

The almost three million followers of the Shi'ite minority, on the other hand, feel discriminated by the strict Wahhabite interpretation of the Sunni teachings by the ruling class. "I believe the government is responsible for the attack," said activist Nasima al Sada, who is based in the mainly Shi'ite city of Qatif, just a few kilometers from the village of al-Qadeeh where the suicide attacker detonated his explosives. "It should protect us and not promote sermons and textbooks that vilify us as unbelievers."

Shi'ite believers have increasingly been the target of the government and the reactionary religious police force since the Iranian revolution in 1979. Indeed, Saudi security forces in Qatif had to quell protests in the same year for the first time. Tensions increased again when the uprisings in the Arab world aroused hopes of political change in a region that is suppressed by authoritarian rulers. More than two dozen people were killed in Eastern Province in 2012 alone when the police suppressed demonstrations in a violent manner. A Sharia court also condemned the prominent Shi'ite imam Nimr Bakir al-Nimr to death in the fall of 2014.

There is nothing new about this policy: fears of being encircled by Iran have dominated the policies pursued by the royal government for years. Domestically, concern is primarily directed towards the cities near the tiny island state of Bahrain, where the Sunni King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa keeps the Shi'ite majority in check. Riyadh already sent troops to Manama's Pearl Roundabout via the King Fahd Causeway in March 2011 to restrict the spread of the freedom movement by followers there.

However, protests are continuing, albeit at a low level, even four years later. It is not possible to suppress the uprising against the Sunni dictatorship permanently through repression alone – regardless of how strong the influence of Iran really is.

The top priority for the ruling family in Riyadh has been to curb this influence since King Salman became ruler at the beginning of the year. The successor to King Abdullah, who died in January, has made resistance to Iran's hegemonic ambitions the crucial change in his regional policy – in addition to the fight against "Islamic State", which has challenged the country and its 29 million inhabitants like no other terror organization.

Not even Al Qaeda, led initially by the Saudi-born Osama Bin Laden, managed to cast doubts on the Al-Saud dynasty's exclusive claim to represent the nation in such a way as the fighters of the IS caliph Abu Bakr al-Bagdadi. Dozens of IS cells have been crushed since it rose to become the most significant Sunni force in Syria and Iraq between Jeddah and Dharan – but the Saudis still failed to prevent the attack on the Imam-Ali mosque in al-Qadeeh in May and the Shi'ite al-Anoud mosque in Dammam one week later.

As in Iraq and Syria, where the royal family departed from its traditional policy of checkbook diplomacy last summer and attacked IS positions with its own fighter aircraft, Salman is now using military might against Tehran's allies. The Saudi air force, which is commanded by his son Mohammed Bin Salman as defense minister, has been bombarding the Zaidist Houthi rebels in Yemen since March. Riyadh views the supporters of the liberal Shi'ite movement as followers of Iran, even if Tehran's influence on the "Ansar Allah" party and its leader Abd al Malik al-Houthi is far less than on the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon or on Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

Allies of Saudi Arabia and Iran are also facing off in Mesopotamia. The proxy war between the two regional powers, which has provided additional impetus to the sectarian conflict between the Shi'ite and Sunni teachings, has long since replaced the conflict between moderate and extremist forces, which still dominated politics in the Middle East in the glory days of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). "Why are you going to Camp David?" the Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said at the end of May, appealing to his "Saudi brothers" to find a solution at a regional level. "We're keen on good relations in contrast to America, which is only pursuing its own interests."

PRIVATE

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

However, the Arab rulers in the Gulf region not only doubt this – but also worry about Barack Obama's determination to guarantee their security in the face of Iran's expansionism. The American president had invited the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to his country estate at Camp David in the US state of Maryland. However, four of the six seats reserved for the heads of state remained empty – both the kings of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and the Sultan of Oman and the emir of Abu Dhabi turned down the invitation. They have sensed a lack of support from America for some time – and fear that Obama's rapprochement with the Shi'ite regime in Iran could undermine their security interests.

They believe that their role as the most important regional allies of the United States could be in jeopardy as a result of the positive nuclear talks in Lausanne, which could lead to an historic agreement between Washington and Tehran in Vienna at the end of June. Their role was very secure for decades: in return for supplying oil, US presidents had provided protection for the most important trading routes since the overthrow of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in 1979. And Washington turned a blind eye to the suppression of the Saudi population.

That could all be over by the end of this summer: The international comeback of the Islamic Republic under the Supreme Leader of the revolution Ayatollah Ali Khameini would inevitably create a situation where the Arab states would increasingly take a back seat in strategic terms. Already, the petro-dollars are unable to halt the insidious decline of the Sunni dictatorships, which solely rely on repression and state handouts. The triumphant progress made by "Islamic State" threatens the stability of the Arab world from Morocco to the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia's allies have been weakened both politically and militarily in all the locations where they are competing with Tehran's followers. Riyadh failed to strengthen the Sunni tribes in Iraq, which are promoting the establishment of a national guard to create a counterweight to the Shia-dominated army and the militias financed by Iran. Like the Sunni stronghold of Tikrit, Ramadi, the capital of the province of Anbar on the border with Saudi Arabia, will probably be reconquered by Shi'ite popular mobilization forces (*Hashed Shaabi*), not by state forces. The Sunni allies of Riyadh no longer have a voice in the largest Iraqi province.

Nor has King Salman so far achieved any of his goals on the southern flank of the kingdom either, even after almost 100 days of air strikes against the Houthi, their fighters are still advancing. Yemen's President Abd Rabbo Mansur, who fled to Riyadh in March, has not been reinstated and his militias have not managed to decisively weaken the fighters of the "Ansar-Allah" militia led by Abdul Malik al Houthi. Not even the massive air strikes have dispelled Riyadh's fears that Sanaa could become the fourth Arab capital to be permanently controlled by Tehran, following Baghdad, Damascus and Beirut.

Saudi Arabia's partners in Lebanon have been on the back foot strategically for years. The Shi'ite militia Hezbollah, supported by Iran, controls the army and government in Beirut – and it has been preventing the election of a new president for more than 12 months. Moderate Sunni groups are not gaining the upper hand in Lebanon, but the local branch of Al Qaeda, the Nusra Front, and "Islamic State." This is all taking place very close to Israel, which is already facing the possibility of the war in Syria spilling over to the Golan Heights.

Saudi Arabia recently launched a new military initiative in the country that has been wrecked by civil war for four years to topple the dictator in Damascus, who is allied to Tehran. The successes enjoyed by Sunni militias in the south and north-west of Syria will probably only lead to an escalation in the power struggle with Shi'ite militias and officers from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, who have rushed to assist the exhausted army of Bashir al-Assad. So there is no end in sight to the Iranian-Saudi proxy war, even if agreement is reached at the nuclear talks in Vienna at the end of June. On the contrary, the conflicts in Iraq, Yemen and Syria are likely to continue for a long time. ■

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Is anarchy worse than dictatorship?

Islam" (Rainer Hermann). Iraq and Syria became "the battlefield of the Arab Thirty Years War of our time," a "devastating struggle between Wahhabi-Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shi'ite Iran for regional hegemony."

7. The US denationalized the oil industry, allowing US and British companies to receive exploration licenses. In the view of many Iraqis, that amounted to theft. (Even a commentator on CNN said as much in 2013: "Yes, the Iraq War was a war for oil, and it was a war with winners: Big Oil.")

8. The US accepted the fact that Saudi Arabia, its most important ally in the region, di not stop the Sunni tribes over which it has much influence from "entering a pact with the devil with IS" (Rainer Hermann).

9. Turkey, a NATO member, apparently has the tacit approval of the US to support IS, which is fighting three enemies of Turkey at once: the Assad regime, the Shi'ite government of Iraq and the Kurds.

10. Following Bashar al-Assad's murderous response to demonstrators demanding the rule of law and economic opportunities, members of the "Friends of the Syrian People Group" supplied weapons to the Syrian opposition, ostensibly to protect the demonstrators' lives, but actually to topple Assad.

11. The US has supplied arms to "moderate Islamists," weapons that frequently ended up with Al Qaeda or IS, such as the equipment of the Iraqi army after it practically melted away last year against the jihadists. That Assad has not shied away from supporting Salafists and jihadists to divide the opposition has not made the situation any better.

What can the West learn from all this?

Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya have demonstrated that democracy cannot be imposed from the outside, and certainly not in states without a middle class or civil society. "We surely know now from experience that the overthrow of dictators by force – especially by outside force – rarely ushers in peace and demonstrably better leadership," writes Graham E. Fuller, former deputy chairman of the CIA's National Intelligence Council. "It is beyond the capabilities of US intelligence, or any other Western states for that matter, to gain the complex strategic and tactical insight and the instinctive feel to successfully manipulate the conflict in the directions we want."

Seeking the overthrow of a dictator can be a worthwhile pursuit if there is a suitable successor. But who should succeed Bashar al-Assad? Of the country's 60 percent Sunni population, only one group would be in a position to take over, Michael Lüders writes. "Had the dictator really been overthrown, the jihadists would be in power today in Damascus."

Democracy has its own risks and side effects, and can produce unwanted results. The removal of democratically elected governments or tolerating their removal, as in Egypt, certainly does not enhance the credibility of those who hail democracy as the best form of government.

The West is seeking to support "moderate" jihadists in their fight against Assad. That does not help credibility either. Nor does it demonstrate that lessons have been learned. In Afghanistan the mujahideen received arms and training for their fight against the Communist regime and its Soviet backers. These fighters later founded Al Qaeda and the Taliban. In Peshawar, Pakistan, Osama bin Laden established a "service office" that funneled Arab fighters to the front. He set up a register called "The Network," or Al Qaeda. It was an early database for jihad and the foundation for his subsequent fight against pro-Western governments, first and foremost Saudi Arabia, the US's closest ally in the region.

Instead, Jeb Bush seems to be listening to David Frum, senior editor at *The Atlantic* and a former speechwriter in the George W. Bush administration. Frum writes: "After a wrong decision, it's the job of a leader to retrieve the consequences, not to waste time and energy on regrets." Jeb Bush says: "What's the role of America going forward? Are we going to pull back now and be defeatist and pessimistic or are we going to engage in a way that creates a more peaceful and secure world?"

The German writers appeal for new approaches: Stopping the civil war seems to be achievable only together with Assad. IS can likewise be defeated only with Assad's help. Quelling both fronts will not be possible, they write. Iran, which is already fighting in northern Iraq against IS, will have to be included in the solution. More broadly, Lüders recommends that "anyone wanting to see Wahhabism, Al Qaeda and 'Islamic State' weakened would do well to recognize the Muslim Brotherhood as an alternative."

Steinberg, on the other hand, writes that the US should demand a "compromise with the Sunnis" from the new Iraqi government of Haider al-Abadi and to incorporate them into a new Iraqi national guard to deny IS their support. In Syria, Steinberg says the US is no longer working directly for the overthrow of Assad. Yet he calls a continuation of the regime unacceptable.

Hermann is more pessimistic. The Arab Thirty Years War is still in its early stages, he writes. IS will not be its final phase. In Europe's Thirty Years War too, religion at some point no longer sufficed as a sufficiently mobilizing force, Herrmann says. He believes, what matters is what will follow IS. ■

Three German writers agree: The US and its allies blithely destroyed the Sunni-Shi'ite balance of power in the Middle East. The gravest result of this imbalance has so far been the Islamic State group. Unfortunately their books are (so far) available only in German.

Rainer Hermann: Endstation Islamischer Staat? Staatsversagen und Religionskrieg in der arabischen Welt, dtv, 12,90 Euro

Michael Lüders: Wer den Wind sät. Was westliche Politik im Orient anrichtet, C. H. Beck, 14,95 Euro

Guido Steinberg: Kalifat des Schreckens. IS und die Bedrohung durch den islamistischen Terror, Knaur, 12,99 Euro

You can read Graham E. Fuller's article at: http://grahamefuller.com/articles/

Here to stay

Jihadist organizations continue to spread in Africa – often because of local conflicts

By Annette Weber

PICTURE ALLIANCE/AP PHOTO

African future? Jihadist movements are spreading in Africa, where there is a lack of state order. In Nigeria, Boko Haram terrorists have been gaining territory.

Images from Iraq and Syria and the reports of young Islamic State (IS) fighters from Europe shape our view of Islamist terror groups. However, jihadist movements are developing just as strongly in Africa, a continent that was once a model for the peaceful coexistence of religions. Groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria, al-Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya, MUJAO, Ansar al-Din and AQIM in the Sahel, Tunisia and Algeria and Islamic State in Libya have tens of thousands of fighters and supporters. They all exploit local grievances in order to primarily recruit young men to their ranks.

Frustration, hopelessness and anger are catalysts that back up the jihadist claims of paradise in the afterlife and total power in this one. The root cause of the upheaval in Tunisia was the failure to fulfill promises regarding modernization. Economic marginalization is the issue in northeastern Nigeria; ongoing conflicts and the resulting hopelessness stimulate the violence in Somalia. Political power struggles are additional factors in Northern Mali and Libya involving control over territory and resources. Conflicts between political elites, jihadist groups and organized crime ensure that there will be no easy solution in the short term.

Radical Islamists are spreading anywhere where there is a lack of state order, because no state existed for decades, as in Somalia; or because the state only holds sway in the capital, but not in the rest of the country. Social bodies usually fill the vacuum created in the areas of security, jurisdiction and social welfare – whether it is the village community, clans, families, tribes or ethnic groups. But jihadist groups are increasingly succeeding in this sphere too.

This brings to light two fundamental problems in handling and combating these groups. Firstly, the state is not in a position or is unwilling to care for the population in outlying areas; it therefore surrenders this territory to the terrorists. Secondly, there is a very close link between the jihadists and local social structures, as they recruit their members precisely from these.

When combating jihadist groups, it is therefore essential to create trust between the state and the population. The opposite usually takes place in any purely military action when civilians often suffer, too. The state, which had been absent or had not been viewed as trustworthy, then becomes a direct threat.

However, jihadist groups are not only on the rise in weak states – Nigeria is a regional power, Tunisia is the pattern for a successful Arab Spring movement and Kenya is the economic powerhouse in East Africa. In all these countries, regions or groups of the population have suffered discrimination or been marginalized, so enabling the jihadists to successfully mobilize them.

This is particularly effective among young people. Two thirds of the population in Africa are aged below 35. Their prospects of finding a job after completing their training are slim.

The rapid advance of urbanization in Africa is also an indicator that work in the agricultural sector is unattractive to young people. The millions of young people who grow up in camps for refugees or displaced persons have even fewer opportunities to carve out a future for themselves.

African jihadists successfully draw attention to the ostensible ineffectiveness of education. Boko Haram's name embodies this principle; it means "Western Education is forbidden."

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The abduction of the schoolgirls from Chibok in 2014 and attacks on schools and universities by Boko Haram and al Shabaab are designed to demonstrate that Western promises related to education are pointless.

Spectacular attacks on the elite and on tourists in Tunisia (Bardo 2015; 2004) and in Kenya (Westgate Mall 2013, Mombasa 2002), on markets (Potiskum, Nigeria 2015) and travelers are also designed to instill a state of permanent terror in people, restrict their mobility and finally destroy revenues for the state, which is viewed as a puppet of the unbelieving "crusaders".

The prospect of controlling resources and exercising power over countries and groups of the population is coupled with the perception of the threat posed by Islam. The defense of Islam against the morally corrupt West, a country's own political elite and all those in theological error legitimizes any kind of violence. The opportunity presented to the members of any terrorist group to do the right thing for their faith and be part of a global movement is an explosive and highly successful mobilization strategy.

Protracted conflicts, homelessness in exile or the lack of any prospects in refugee camps are an extreme burden on traditional structures and family groups. Traditional authority structures lose their significance if they cannot defend themselves against armed groups or do not have any negotiating powers with the state. Jihadist organizations offer the vision of a life in fraternal communities to oppose the state and even traditional authorities – together with the noble goal of spreading the pure and absolute truth.

It is therefore necessary to understand why jihadist movements are so successful in order to take the wind out of their sails. They replace the corrupt or absent state with an "Islamic community", where there are opportunities for fame and heroism for all the fighters (mujahideen) and power is redistributed.

Two things are necessary in addition to conducting military campaigns against jihadist groups: economic, political and social justice in distribution processes and offering people real opportunities for the future. They should be the major focus, particularly for those involved from outside. ■

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Al Qaeda hasn't gone away

mies at the same time – which explains its opposition to IS anti-Shiite violence.

IS on the other hand perceives itself as being in a world full of enemies, who must either toe the line or be destroyed as "infidels". This applies to the US, the West as a whole, the governments of the Arab world, the Jews, Christians, Shiites and even Sunnis who do not share their jihadist interpretation of Islam without reservation. IS supporters want to live in an "Islamic state" and have no concerns about deploying any kind of violence to stabilize this state.

IS could enjoy lasting success first and foremost because its jihadist approach is more appealing than that of Al Qaeda, as evidenced by the influx of foreign recruits and the support of many small groups in the Arab world and South Asia. But Al Qaeda's strategy is by far the more promising, as it pays heed to its own weaknesses. A terrorist organization cannot take on half the world alone and hope for success in such an undertaking.

The differing strategies also impact upon the threat to Europe presented by both groups. Because IS is concentrated on the establishment of its "state," it is first and foremost a danger to Iraq, Syria and its neighbors. Al Qaeda on the other hand continues to focus on major attacks in the Western world and has shown in Paris that it can succeed in carrying these out. It can be assumed that its Yemeni subsidiary is still planning attacks on transatlantic flights. This means that in the near future at least, it represents the most dangerous terrorist threat to Europe. ■

Beijing's legal alchemy

China is not reclaiming land, it is building artificial islands as forward staging bases for its military | By Carlyle Thayer

Ever since last year when satellite imagery confirmed that China was constructing artificial islands in the South China Sea, journalists, security specialists and even government officials uncritically have adopted terminology that obfuscates rather than clarifies the issues at stake. No term has been so abused as "land reclamation" both in its everyday usage and legal meaning.

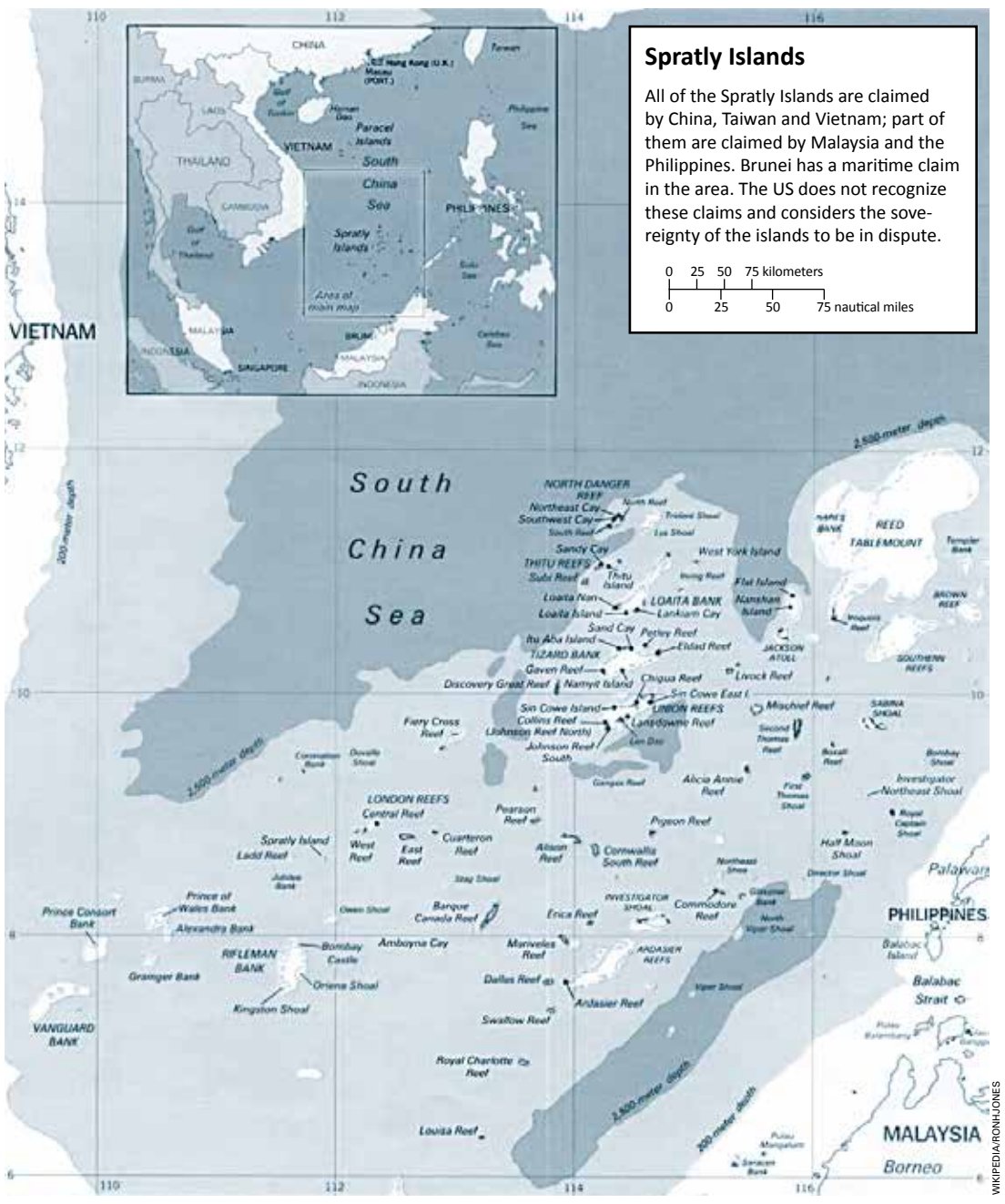
A commentary written by Chinese academic Shen Dingli argues that there is no prohibition in international law about land reclamation. He cites the examples of Shanghai city, Japan's Kansai International Airport, Hong Kong and Dubai. None of these examples are comparable to what it taking place in the South China Sea.

Let's be clear: China is not reclaiming land in the South China Sea in order to improve conditions on a land feature – an island – that has deteriorated due the impact of the environment or human use. China is dredging sand from the seabed and coral reefs to create artificial islands. China misleadingly states it is reclaiming land on islands over which it has sovereignty. This is not the case. China is building artificial structures on low tide elevations (submerged features at high tide) and rocks. China cannot claim sovereignty over these features. These features are not entitled to maritime zones or airspace.

Artificial islands have a distinct meaning in international law. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sovereignty over artificial islands can only be exercised by a coastal state in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Article 56 states, "In the exclusive economic zone, the coastal State has…jurisdiction… with regard to ... the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures…" Article 60 gives the coastal state "exclusive right to construct… artificial islands." And Article 80 extends this provision to artificial islands on a coastal state's continental shelf.

All seven of the features that China presently occupies and has converted into artificial islands are the subject of legal proceeding brought by the Philippines before the UN's Arbitral Tribunal. The Philippines Notification and Statement of Claim argued that under UNCLOS Mischief Reef, McKennan Reef, Gaven Reef and Subi Reef are submerged features and both Mischief Reef and McKennan Reef form part of the Philippines' continental shelf. Further, the Philippines argued that Scarborough Shoal, Johnson Reef, Fiery Cross Reef and Cuarteron Reef are rocks under UNCLOS. All of these features lie within the Philippines' EEZ or continental shelf.

In summary, China considers these features to be islands in the legal sense and therefore claims not only sovereignty over them but a territorial sea, EEZ, continental shelf and airspace above them. The Philippines argues that these features are submerged banks, reefs and low tide elevations that do not qualify as islands under UNCLOS but are part of the Philippines continental shelf, or the international seabed.



WIKIPEDIA/RONHJONES


Johnson Reef South.
PICTURE ALLIANCE/DPA/HO

The issue of China's construction of artificial islands has been befuddled by three other issues. The first issue concerns China's attempt to enforce its jurisdiction over 12 nautical miles of water surrounding these artificial islands and the airspace above these features. Chinese law requires the promulgation of baseline prior to the assertion of sovereign jurisdiction over maritime zones. With the exception of the Paracels, China has not promulgated any baseline over the features it occupies.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UNSW CANBERRA

It should be noted that all of China's artificial islands are located close to features occupied by Vietnam. If these features were entitled to a 12 nautical mile territorial sea China's zone would overlap a similar zone claimed by Vietnam. The bottom line is that all of these features are contested and signatories to UNCLOS are enjoined not to take actions that would change the status quo.

China's assertions of sovereign rights in these circumstances represent a form of legal alchemy in which China attempts to convert submerged features and rocks into naturally formed islands.

China has repeatedly challenged flights by military aircraft from the Philippines and the United States ordering them to leave what Chinese military officials call a "military alert area" or a "military security zone." If media reports are accurate that United States warships have refrained from encroaching within 12 nautical miles of the artificial islands and US military aircraft have not directly overflown these features then Chinese legal alchemy will have succeeded.

The second issue concerns the equivalency of China's so-called land reclamation with similar efforts by Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines. China argues that the other claimants upset the status long ago and China is only catching up. The critical question is what activities have been carried out since 2002 and for what purpose?

The Philippines has carried out land reclamation on Palawan. Palawan is a naturally formed land feature and qualifies as an island under international law. The Philippines has sovereignty over Palawan and therefore may legally reclaim land for whatever purpose.

The case of Vietnam is different. Satellite imagery of Vietnamese-occupied Sand Cay and West London Reef, published by the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI), indicates that since 2010 Vietnam has expanded these features by 21,000 and 65,000 square meters, respectively. Does size matter? Journalists, academic commentators and government officials are quick to note that the scope and scale of China construction dwarfs that of the other claimants. Vietnam's so-called land reclamation amounts to 1.9 percent of the area built by China.

None of these commentators, including the AMTI, have put "land reclamation" in the South China Sea in proper context. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter's call for Vietnam to halt "land reclamation" is misguided. The litmus test is not the extent of artificial construction but the intent behind this construction. China and all of the other claimants are signatories to the non-binding Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) agreed to in November 2002.

Under the DOC the signatories agreed "to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability…" Quite clearly none of the land reclamation undertaken by the Philippines or enlargement carried out by Vietnam rises to the point of complicating or escalating disputes and affecting peace and stability in the South China Sea.

China's actions, on the other hand, have complicated disputes. China's construction of artificial islands directly subverts UNCLOS and represents a preemptive move against any decision by the Arbitral Tribunal. China has changed "facts on the ground" and presented the region with a fait accompli. China is already challenging the freedom of navigation and overflight of naval vessels and aircraft as well as fishermen in the area. For example, there are current reports that a Chinese warship fired at Filipino fishermen near one of China's artificial islands.

China's construction activities have affected regional peace and stability because of China's repeated statements that the artificial islands will serve defense purposes. China has repeatedly proclaimed its right unilaterally to declare and enforce an Air Defence Identification Zone over the South China Sea. A Chinese commentator has gone so far to argue China should confront Australian military aircraft flying over the airspace above China's artificial islands and if necessary shoot them down.

China has reportedly ceased "land reclamation" on four of its features and moved to consolidate its presence by building piers, harbors and multi-storey buildings. The construction of a 3,110 meter long runway on Fiery Cross Reef coupled with reports that a similar airstrip will be built at Subi Reef provide the infrastructure to support the deployment of all types of military aircraft in China's current inventory. Suddenly and at short notice China can transform ostensibly civilian and scientific facilities into forward staging bases for military operations.

The third issue relates to the impact on the marine environment by China's construction activities. As a signatory to UNCLOS China is bound to protect the marine environment. Chinese officials repeatedly claim that they have taken into account the environmental impact of their construction activities and no harm is being done. China's assertions are challenged by Phillipine officials as well as marine scientists. Satellite imagery clearly shows dredging marks on coral reefs adjacent to where China is building artificial islands.

No, China is not reclaiming land. China is building forward staging bases on artificial islands for its fishing fleet, oil and gas exploration vessels and maritime law enforcement vessels. When China completes building its infrastructure, including long range radar, it will be only a matter of time before military aircraft and naval warships make their appearance.

In sum, China has succeeded in legal alchemy by transforming UNCLOS into "international law with Chinese characteristics." This development will bolster China's assertion of "indisputable sovereignty" over the South China Sea. China is slowly and deliberately excising the maritime heart out of Southeast Asia. ■

Mischief reefs

China's new strategy and its behaviour in the South China Sea reveal its expansionist intentions | By Felix Lee

The first lines sound harmless enough. In late May, the Chinese leadership in Beijing presented a white paper outlining a new strategy for the development of its armed forces. The document speaks of "active defense" and the "expansion of the military for exclusively peaceful purposes". At first glance, the government appears still to be adhering closely to the doctrine set out by China's great reformer Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s: the defense of the nation's own borders and coastal waters. He rejected an aggressive foreign policy.

But other choices of phrase make the reader sit up and take notice: Suddenly there is mention of "China's military presence beyond national borders," of a "combination of offshore waters defense and open seas protection," And that China's leadership will give greater importance to the navy and air force first and foremost. According to the document, these will concentrate on "both defense and attack" in the future. So what is this then?

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simply wanted to be better able to fulfill its "international obligations," such as in sea rescue operations, disaster control, marine exploration, weather forecasting and environmental protection, said Admiral Sun Jianguo, deputy chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army, also at the Shangri-La Dialogue. He also criticized what he described as the aggressive actions of neighboring countries. In its defense white paper, Beijing accuses "several" neighbors of provocative behavior, claiming that they had been "reinforcing their military presence on illegally occupied Chinese reefs and islands". And, the paper continues, the change in military strategy comes in response to this.

Although the reefs themselves do not serve any practical uses, it is thought that there are large reserves of crude oil and natural gas beneath the seabed. But above all, the South China Sea is strategically important. In the course of the rapid economic expansion of China and South East Asia over the past 20 years, it has in the meantime become the world's busiest maritime trading route. More than half of global tanker traffic now passes through these waters.

The German government has also now recognized the gravity of the situation. Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen, who was also present at the Singapore meeting, stressed that the crises in Asia were also relevant to Germany and Europe. "We live in a globalized world, in which we also create access to wealth through free trade," she said, adding that secure and stable relations were a prerequisite for this.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea as its territory and cites history in justification: the area was already under Chinese control back in the 14th century, says Beijing. On official Chinese maps these borders run through regions that are practically visible from the coastlines of other countries. All of China's neighbors reject this geographical perspective. Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines view China's artificial islands as an aggression.

But China's leadership views Vietnam, which is also a Communist nation, first and foremost as an aggressor. This is because the Vietnamese are also creating their own islands, thereby reinforcing their own claim to these marine territories – with the support of the US. Ever since US President Barack Obama turned his attentions to the Pacific region three years ago, tensions with China have been considerably heightened.

But the Americans are much better at selling their policies to the outside world. They present themselves as reliable partners in alliances with small nations, while China comes over as a bully challenging them over their territory. While US Defense Secretary Carter conceded at the Singapore meeting that other states were also establishing outposts in the region, he defended these actions by saying that China had gone much further, and that it was laying claim to a much larger area than the others. Beijing is feeling increasingly forced into a corner by Washington's policy stance.

Indeed, the US takes every opportunity to needle China. It regularly sends aircraft and naval vessels dangerously close to Chinese territory, even close to the Chinese coast, thereby demonstrating that despite bolstering its arsenals on a massive scale in recent years, China's military continues to be no match for its US counterpart.

In mid-May, one such scenario was made public when the US military took a team of CNN reporters along on a surveillance flight over the South China Sea. The reporters were able to capture the moment when the Chinese military bombarded the aircraft with threats via radio. "Such activities can lead to misunderstandings and accidents," a nervous representative of the Chinese People's Liberation Army could be heard saying.

Analysts from the independent think tank IHS Jane's are still talking about a "PR war over the South China Sea". But they warn: military upgrading and increasingly bellicose verbal threats are raising the risk of actual military engagement. "The prospect of a naval battle between China and the US is becoming a potential threat," they say. ■

Under construction: Fiery Cross Reef and Gaven Reef (below).

PICTURE ALLIANCE/DPA/HO (2)

A defensive military policy, or an aggressive one after all?

A reality check of recent months shows: it is highly likely that a momentous paradigm shift is taking place in Chinese foreign policy. It appears to be anything other than peaceful.

The clearest evidence of China's new military strategy can currently be seen in the island dispute currently going on in the South China Sea. Satellite images taken by the US think tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) shocked South China Sea nations at the beginning of the year. The photos, taken in the area of the disputed Spratly Islands archipelago, show dozens of freighters loaded with excavators tipping sand and rubble onto the reefs and sandbanks, and securing them with concrete to create new islands.

Members of the US military are convinced that China is building, among other things, a 3,000-meter landing strip for military jets on this manmade land. "We all know that there is no military solution to the South China Sea disputes," US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter reprimanded the Chinese in late May at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Asia's most important security conference.

China rejected criticism of its island building project. Beijing

No solution in sight

The EU's plans for migrants pose problems | By Andreas Zumach

More than 1,300 African migrants drowned in the Mediterranean in April trying to reach Europe. Over the first weekend in June, Italian, German and other navies rescued 4,500 refugees; again many others drowned. In the light of such repeated tragedies at sea, the European Union plans to revise its policy towards asylum seekers. But many experts view the plans submitted by Brussels so far as inadequate and extremely questionable.

The EU Commission has suggested a quota system that would distribute migrants to the 28 member states according to each country's economic power, population, jobless rate and the number of migrants that each nation has already taken in. But refugee aid organizations and the Greens in the EU Parliament believe that simply making decisions on the basis of these four criteria could lead to many incorrect results.

"Sending a Syrian refugee with relatives in Sweden ready to take them in to a completely foreign environment in France just for quota reasons would be completely mad," said Barbara Lochbihler, the human rights spokesperson for the Greens party group. "The plans to restrict the numbers to no more than 5,000 refugees in the paper presented by the EU Commission are also completely inadequate given the size of the migrant problem."

However, many believe that a quota system would at least represent some kind of progress in comparison to the Dublin Regulation, which came into force in 1997. According to this arrangement, migrants must seek asylum in the EU country where they first arrive or in whose territorial waters they are picked up. They are not allowed to simply travel to other EU nations. This regulation has created an extremely unjust allocation of asylum seekers within the EU over the last 18 years.

More than 80 percent of all asylum seekers come across the Mediterranean. They first enter EU territory in Malta, Lampedusa and on the mainland of Italy, Greece or Spain. Almost 20 percent try their luck across Turkey's land borders with Greece and Bulgaria.

But there are doubts whether the quota system proposed by the EU Commission will actually be introduced to replace the Dublin Regulation. Eleven EU states – including Britain, the Baltic States and most eastern European nations – had already rejected the plan by the beginning of June.

The EU is also planning to reinforce its ability to rescue migrants at sea as a second measure. But the proposal on the table is hardly credible: The funding for the program proposed by Brussels is less than €9 million per month, which Italy spent on its "Mare Nostrum" maritime rescue mission from October 2013 to October 2014.

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According to details published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) based in Geneva, Mare Nostrum rescued at least 150,000 asylum seekers from death by drowning. But a lack of financial involvement and logistical support by the other 27 EU member states, led the government in Rome to halt the sea rescue mission in October 2014. The German government in particular stirred up opposition to "Mare Nostrum" within the EU, asserting that the mission was "creating a bridge to Europe" for migrants and "making business easier for human traffickers."

Now, the EU is planning to combat the people smugglers with military might. The first phase envisages "identifying" their vessels using drones, satellites and other technical reconnaissance equipment," according to a catalogue of measures proposed by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Policy, Federica Mogherini, and approved by the 28 EU Foreign and Defense Ministers. But how is it possible to reliably differentiate between smugglers' boats and fishing vessels – particularly when they are sailing the Mediterranean empty after discharging their would-be refugees in Europe?

Mogherini did not have an answer to this question posed by journalists. A mandate from the UN Security Council will be necessary for the proposed second phase – direct action against the human traffickers' boats on the high seas (boarding, searching and sinking). The planned third stage involving the destruction of human smugglers' boats in the territorial waters or on the coasts of Libya and other North African states bordering the Mediterranean will require the prior agreement of the governments of these countries, in addition to a UN mandate.

The Libyan government, which was internationally recognized after the elections in 2011 and has a seat and voice in the UN General Assembly, has already rejected the EU's planned military measures. Due to the internal violent conflicts, this government has its base outside the capital Tripoli, but it is still the country's legitimate representative under international law. Any military action by the EU in Libyan territorial waters or on the mainland without the approval of this government would be a clear violation of international law.

The rival Libyan government formed by Islamists has also rejected any military action. Its approval may not be necessary under international law. But the EU would depend on the practical cooperation of this body, as it controls significant parts of the Libyan coast, from which the smugglers' boats start their journey with asylum-seekers.

The current police and military measures used by the EU's Frontex organization since 2005 in its attempts to prevent migrants' boats reaching the territorial waters or the territory of EU states are a violation of the Geneva 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The same applies to similar measures adopted by the Australian Navy in protecting the country's territorial waters from the arrival of boats full of asylum seekers. These kinds of measures deprive migrants of the right and opportunity to seek asylum in a country, as laid down in the Geneva Convention.

Even the Australian Navy's actions in the Pacific involving the deportation of captured asylum seekers to internment camps in Indonesia, to Cambodia and the island of West Papua violate the Geneva Convention. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has still been refused entry to these camps. Amnesty International says the inmates are subject to massive violations of human rights.

The same also applies to the internment camps where Libya's former dictator Muammar Gaddafi incarcerated hundreds of thousands of African migrants until 2011 on the basis of an agreement with the EU and with funding from Brussels. This prevented them from continuing their journey across the Mediterranean to Europe. By supporting and financing these camps, the EU not only contravened the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, but also the European Convention on Human Rights. ■

IMAGO STOCK&PEOPLE/EPD

Could a fixed quota system help the refugees? In 2014 Amnesty International used a paper boat installation to commemorate the hundreds of drowned and demanded safe pathways.

The fog of peace

Mitigating the messy conflicts of the 21st century requires political savvy | By Jean-Marie Guéhenno

The migrants trying to reach Europe give a renewed urgency to the debate on intervention: Can there be islands of peace and prosperity in an ocean of turmoil and despair? For the last 15 years, the answer was a resounding no. The unprecedented growth of UN peacekeeping operations, which saw the number of peacekeepers deployed increase from a few tens of thousands to more than 100,000, embodied a new activism of the international community.

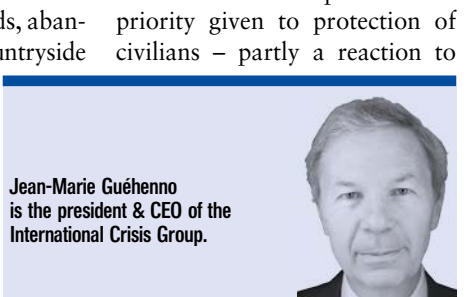
Today that confidence has been lost. Peacekeeping is seen as costly, complicated, and high risk. Is the investment in blood and treasure worth it, when there are so few obvious success stories? Should the priority shift to securing borders and conducting targeted counterterrorism operations rather than pursuing the elusive goal of stabilizing countries?

World leaders are not sure what to make of a decade and a half of interventionism, even if they know that one bout of violence avoided may save tens of thousands of lives, and more than compensates many failures. That may be why there has been no sharp downsizing of UN peacekeeping. As the head of UN peacekeeping for eight years, at the time of its fastest expansion, I believe two important lessons should be brought into the present debate.

First, no amount of force, whether deployed by the UN, US, or NATO, can in and of itself stabilize a country. Stabilization is about politics. Too often in the last 15 years, the focus has been on the hardware of military deployments rather than the software of a smart political strategy. Peacekeepers, instead of providing leverage, can actually become a disincentive for governments to conduct necessary reform.

That is now the risk in Mali, where President Modibo Keita, elected and secure in his position, sees little reason to open up political space and address the many problems of his country. Decisive military action has not been followed by a well-thought out, and inclusive, political strategy.

Second, force can play a critical supporting role in a political process but to do so it needs to be applied early and intelligently. In Afghanistan, the US-led coalition initially relied on warlords, abandoning Kabul and the countryside to militias instead of establishing a strong and impartial international presence. When it became apparent that the Taliban were reconstituting, it had to play catch up. However, applying military force as well as engaging the Taliban was much more difficult once the initial window of opportunity had closed.



Jean-Marie Guéhenno is the president & CEO of the International Crisis Group.
ICC

The same can be said of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The UN mission there was strengthened in response to crises, and it has become more robust at the time when its political capital is exhausted. On the contrary, a robust posture in the early days of Sierra Leone (after an initial debacle) and Liberia has allowed those two missions – albeit in rather less challenging contexts – to come closer to success.

The Security Council remains ambivalent on the relationship between force and politics. The priority given to protection of civilians – partly a reaction to its abstention at the time of the Rwandan genocide – can become a diversion: the creation a year ago of a special brigade mandated to protect the population of eastern Congo from armed groups is not a sustainable response. Civilians will be protected only when there is a trusted Congolese state.

The Security Council cannot hide behind humanitarian goals to avoid its political responsibility. Nor can counterterrorism operations substitute for politics. In Mali, a rushed political process risks leaving out groups that may then be pushed into the terrorist orbit. In Libya, a military operation without reconciliation between the two main centers of power would most likely further fragment the country.

From Syria to Libya, from South Sudan to Congo, the West would like to have it both ways: using force without putting too many boots on the ground, and achieving peace without risking serious political engagement. That won't work. Protecting civilians from the sky has major limitations, and the developing countries that provide the bulk of peacekeeping troops are increasingly reluctant to deploy in dangerous environments, leaving the UN reliant on interested parties with the risk of regionalizing war and losing its most critical asset, impartiality. Meanwhile destroying through drone strikes the chain of command of "terrorist" groups is not a political strategy. Most conflicts end with a negotiation, for which you need interlocutors.

What is needed is a combination of humility, determination, and political savvy. Humility, because there is a moral hazard in pursuing overambitious and unsustainable goals of social engineering, and we need to scale down ambitions. Determination, because abstention is not an option, and even limited goals require a willingness to take risks, including through deployments of high capacity forces in support of UN missions. Political savvy, because peace is usually achieved through imperfect compromises that avoid a binary opposition between them and us.

The fog of peace is as treacherous as the fog of war, and it is high time for the international community to acknowledge that the messy conflicts of the 21st century cannot be described and resolved through the prism of simplistic non-political categories. ■

Countering Putin's disinformation campaign

Germany's international broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) launches a new flagship English-language news channel

By Paul Hockenos

IMAGO/JÜRGEN RITTER

Small budget, big ambitions – the DW television center in Berlin.

Deutsche Welle, Germany's state-financed radio and television broadcaster, is taking a big gamble. Its new administration thinks that a significantly revamped and beefed up multimedia English-language service can one day boost it into the league of the BBC – and critically, in the short term, pose a counterweight to Russia's powerful international broadcasting and propaganda machines.

For years, Deutsche Welle – with much smaller budgets – has lagged far behind the big-ticket international broadcasters like BBC and CNN. Despite its 60 year history, Deutsche Welle has seen France 24 and Al Jazeera coming out of nowhere and overtake it in terms of viewers, programming quality and clout.

Russia Today (RT), Moscow's state-directed broadcaster, is another newcomer. It appeared on the scene in 2005. Since then it has exerted significant influence on world opinion, in particular on the topic of Vladimir Putin's Russia and its current conflicts with Ukraine and the West. The broadcasting venture and strong public relations campaigns have helped Russia punch above its weight, collect allies and sympathizers, and make the West look hypocritical. In eastern Ukraine and Russia, it has shored up support for the pro-Russian rebels in Ukraine and for President Vladimir Putin's leadership.

All the while, Deutsche Welle was unable to forge a strong international profile with soft cultural shows about German traditions and holiday locations – and steadily declining budgets. But those days are over, says Peter Limbourg, Deutsche Welle's director general since 2013. Limbourg went to the mat with Berlin's political class to have the broadcaster's budget increased, though just to €274 million, less than 1 percent more than in 2014. Moreover, Deutsche Welle has received additional project funds (about €3.5 million) for programming in Ukrainian and Russian. The latter has enabled it to expand its Russian-language program to full time and the Ukrainian program to 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

The issue of financing is sensitive as Deutsche Welle's funding comes indirectly from the German taxpayer. The German broadcaster currently has about 1,500 full-time staff supported by 4,000 freelancers. It is not widely watched within Germany. Yet it boasts 100 million viewers and listeners worldwide every week.

Moreover, Deutsche Welle is restructuring from within, devoting more resources to news programming in English, less to the programming it does in 30 other languages, including German. The quantity of English-language news shows is being upped from four hours to 13 a day. More correspondents are being put on the ground in world hot spots.

"We're not going to be able to compete overnight with the big international broadcasters like CNN and BBC," says Carsten von Nahmen, head of news programming at the DW. "But we're taking a step in that direction," he says referring to the relaunch planned for June 22. "BBC and CNN set the mark for quality in the market. We want to narrow the gap," he says, and then hopefully in the future compete on the first tier of international broadcasting.

The ascent of Limbourg has sparked anew a debate about what Deutsche Welle is and what it hopes to be. "In the past we didn't focus so much on hard news," explains von Nahmen. "This will change. It's important that there be a German voice in the international television news market. We're going to try to get there first and break some important stories," he says.

Von Nahmen says that the new DW News service can overtake the likes of Al Jazeera, RT and China's CCTV simply on the basis of quality journalism, which none of these state-financed broadcasters can match. In particular, Deutsche Welle hopes to win new viewers in places like Africa and Asia where English is widely spoken. "This market has been dominated by Anglo-American broadcasters," he says. "Al Jazeera broke into it and now we want to, too."

Deutsche Welle says it will do so by providing something that's missing: a German perspective. During the Iraq War in 2003, for example, Germany, which opposed the war, had a view different from the Americans and the British, who backed it.

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PRIVATE

"I'm not really sure what a German perspective would entail," admits Henning Riecke of the German Council on Foreign Relations. But he says that there's growing interest around the globe in Germany – and German power in the world. "These days people are more interested in what is happening in Germany than, say, England," he says.

But others, like Dusan Reljic, head of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs' Brussels office, thinks it's a waste of money. "I can't see the added value that Deutsche Welle can provide in the international television news market," he says.

One of Limbourg's main arguments in seeking new funding was that a new and improved Deutsche Welle is needed to counter Russia's global media reach. Russia Today broadcasts in English, Spanish, Arabic and Russian. It claims it has 700 million viewers in more than 100 countries across the world.

"We're currently experiencing an international disinformation campaign by Putin," the Christian Democrat politician Roderich Kiesewetter told the *Handelsblatt*. "A strengthened Deutsche Welle can effectively send information and signals of support to the people in Eastern Europe, and also to the millions of Russians living abroad."

Reljic, a native of Serbia and expert on Southeastern Europe, is skeptical.

The region is particularly important since countries like Romania, Montenegro, Serbia and Greece tend to lean toward Russia on some political issues. But Reljic says that English-language programming "doesn't have a chance in southeastern Europe." Al Jazeera already has a Serbian-language program, while RT is planning one. Deutsche Welle has for years translated radio programming into Serbian and other regional languages, but of late its funding for this has been scaled back.

"In Serbia it's the young people who tend to understand English the best but they don't watch television," says Reljic. "Older people tend to be the television watchers. But there're not going to be open to Deutsche Welle in any language."

"Deutsche Welle is the lighthouse for Germany's democracy around the world," said Monika Grütters, Germany's Commissioner for culture and media, last year. "For some it is the only connection to the free world."

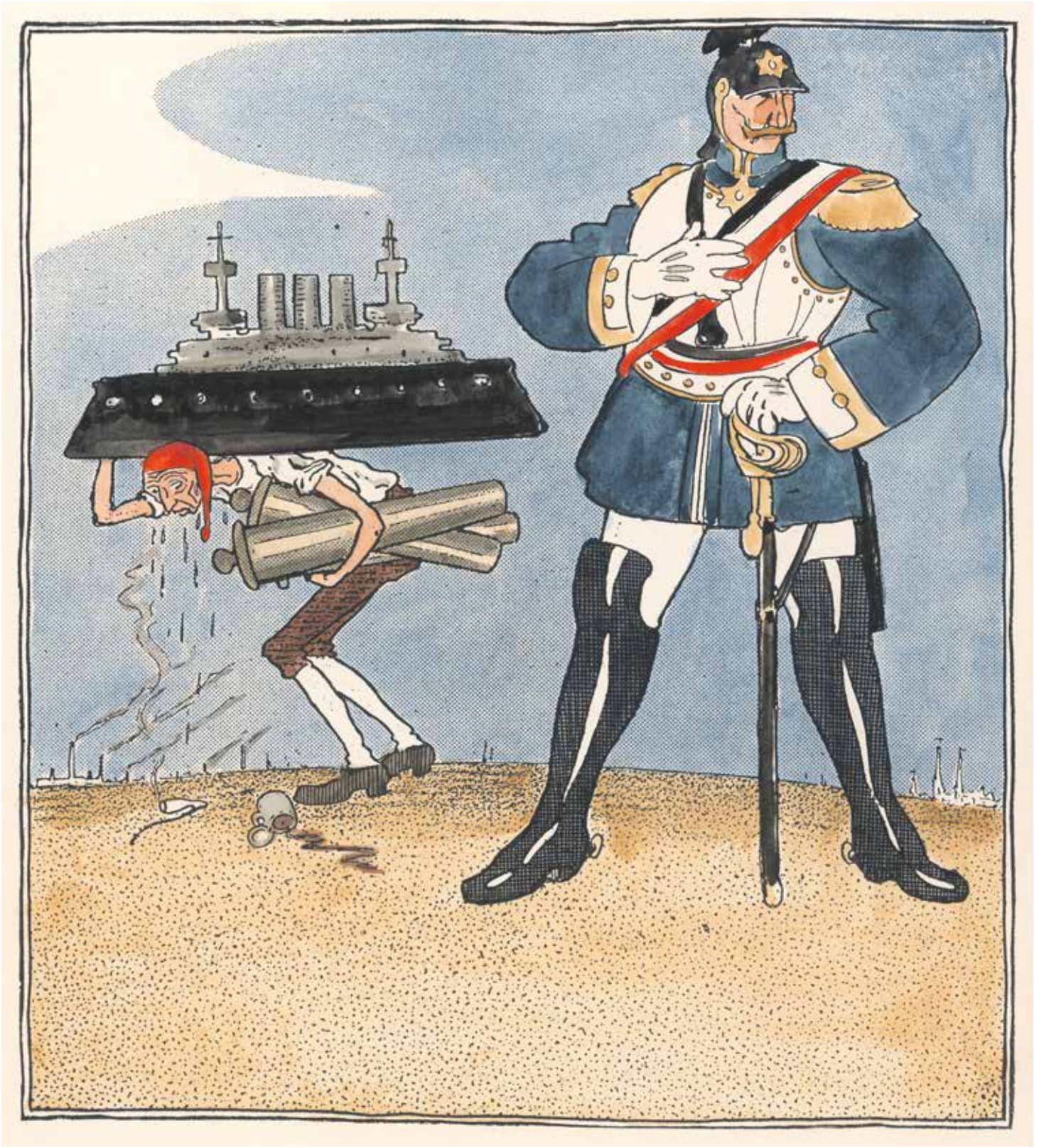
If its aim is to outdo the Russian media and PR offensives, will it then become a propaganda tool of the German government, just as Russia Today is of the Putin administration? The issue has been hotly discussed in the Bundestag where MPs of the democratic socialist Left Party have objected to this trend. "I don't want to see the Deutsche Welle become a mouthpiece for the German foreign ministry," said Harald Petzold of the Left Party in the Bundestag.

But Riecke thinks Deutsche Welle is up to the task. "Deutsche Welle doesn't twist reality the way RT does," he says. "It is overseen by external bodies. There's no way that it will turn to the hate speech and disingenuous journalism of RT."

The new profile of Deutsche Welle also has adversaries within the organization. Veterans at the broadcaster say it shouldn't give up German programming as its core function. In the past, German language news had first priority and was then translated into English and other languages for the international programs.

"This is one of the difficulties trying to change something that has been around for so long as Deutsche Welle has," says von Nahmen. "There's a lot of tradition and history that has to be overcome." ■

Disputed military build-up



PICTURE ALLIANCE/AKG-IMAGES

„Germany needs to have a powerful fleet, to protect its trade and its manifold interests in the most distant seas.“ This sentence was part of an interview with the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II, published by the Daily Telegraph in 1908. Many Germans then welcomed the fleet plans. The satirical newspaper *Der Wahre Jacob*, however, mocked the Kaiser. The title of its cartoon: “An illustrious speech. We Germans are a people fond of weapons and fond of war (...)” Britain’s opinion leaders condemned the construction of the German fleet, considering it a military threat and a cause of war.

Global defense trends and the military balance in 2015

An assessment by the International Institute for Strategic Studies | By Bastian Giegerich and James Hackett

Defense strategists and policymakers continue to grapple with the challenges posed by an increasingly dangerous security environment. Multiple complex security crisis are testing the scope and sustainability of military capabilities. These capabilities are increasingly technologically advanced. They are also growing in destructive power, and are proliferating.

In defense spending terms, the strategic center of gravity continues to move from the West to the Asia Pacific, and *The Military Balance* 2015 confirms the decline in European defense spending and the increase in Asian defense expenditure.

However, while only some 18 months ago, the concern was about possible military conflict in Asia, the salient strategic reality since has been the re-emergence of conflict in Europe and the ever complicating and widening nature of extreme Islamist terrorist groups’ activity in the Middle East and Africa.

This has prompted a shift in the defense debate in Europe, and leaders in a growing number of European countries are now arguing that the decline in European spending cannot continue in light of the growing security challenges in Europe and in Europe’s near abroad.

Events in Ukraine over the last year, and the erosion of virtually all trust between Western powers and Russia, have shaken the post-cold war European settlement.

Throughout this crisis, Russia has shown its determination to use force and support the use of force by others in Ukraine. The methods applied included the use of military and non-military tools in an integrated campaign utilizing, for instance, sophisticated and rapid information and electronic warfare operations; as well as covert and occasionally overt military and intelligence action. This has been termed an example of hybrid warfare. While this term is nothing new, the sophisticated blend of capabilities observed in Ukraine, and their rapid and synchronised application, is novel.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to modernize its armed forces. Russia’s rapid reaction forces benefited from investment early in the reform process. Reorganization of the armed services continues, as does investment in new armor, ships, combat aircraft and guided weapons. Russia continues to test the Sukhoi T-50 fifth generation fighter aircraft, and may be finalizing designs of a new long-range bomber. Its air and maritime capabilities are again – after a near gap of 20-or-so years – being seen on long-distance missions.

Real Russian defense spending increases have averaged 10 percent in the three years to 2014. However, maintaining this rate of increase will be difficult given the deterioration in Russia’s economy, and will likely require political prioritization of defense while focusing budget cuts on other government spending areas.

Russia’s continuing military modernization, its increasing display of modernized military platforms, and actions in Ukraine, have worried many European states – particularly those in Europe’s east. Save either increased or pledged to increase defense spending; and in response to their worries NATO has launched a package of ‘reassurance’ initiatives.

There are signs that the more challenging strategic environment is shifting budgetary priorities, particularly in northern and eastern Europe. In 2015, defense allocations in Europe’s leading military players have started to move as well. In France and Germany, it looked like the hitherto downward trajectory in defense spending might change. However, following the May 2015 election, the UK ministry of defense is likely to be less fortunate.

There is a long way to go. European defense spending was in 2014 cumulatively 8 percent lower, in real terms, than in 2010. If NATO’s European members were to implement the spending target agreed at the Cardiff Summit (2 percent of GDP by 2024) they would have to close a spending gap that amounted to $100 billion in 2014.

After the end of the Cold War, many European states reduced their armed forces as a result of ‘peace dividends’. Between 1995 and 2015, main battle tanks in Europe dropped from a total of around 25,000 to just under 8,000, while fighters and ground attack aircraft decreased from 5,400 to 2,400. The changes that some European governments have now started to implement will not lead to a reversal of this loss in ‘mass’ that accrued in previous years.

While a revisionist Russia has challenged the European security order, the threat from extreme Islamist terrorists increased. The rise of the Islamic State (IS) and the flow of jihadists in and out of various Middle East theatres of war has become a major pre-occupation for European states. Military successes on the part of IS galvanized a US-led coalition into launching airstrikes against the jihadi movement in Iraq and also in Syria.

Coalition air operations may lead to tactical victories against IS but they cannot inflict strategic defeat on the group. Countering IS’s information operations, designed in equal measure to intimidate and open seams in the coalition will require lasting multilateral attention. Long-term training and support for both Syria’s non-IS rebels and Iraq’s security forces and broader government institutions will be required. That support will need to be combined with sustained political efforts to regain the trust of Iraq’s Sunni minority.

For regional states, particularly some in the Gulf, there is growing willingness to use force to address national security priorities, and not be solely nested within US-led coalitions. The Saudi-led operation in Yemen is indicative of that trend.

Regional defense spending was already high. But growing insecurity and conflict have contributed to a further increase.

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IISS IISS

Spending remains focused on air defense and strike systems, particularly in the Gulf. In 2011, average real defense spending growth in the Middle East and North Africa region was 3.5 percent. In each year since, the IISS estimates it has increased by an average of 10 percent.

Further east, defense investments in Asia continue to rise. Since 2010, spending increasing by more than a quarter in nominal terms – growing to more than $340 billion in 2014. China’s defense spending continues to outpace that of its neighbours’. In 2010 China accounted for around 28 percent of the Asian total; by 2014 its share had increased to around 38 percent. In contrast, Japan’s share of regional military outlays fell from 20 percent in 2010 to just less than 14 percent in 2014.

China’s military procurements, supported by these budget increases, continue to attract attention. Following a flurry of new naval programs, from the Liaoning carrier to destroyers, more are underway. Armament has also improved. The 61 destroyer and frigate hulls in service in 2000 had less than 600 anti-ship and surface-to-air missile tubes between them; the current fleet has almost trebled that number, with only 20 percent more hulls. The November 2014 Zhuhai air show hightlighted the FC-31 combat-aircraft prototype, a large ramjet powered supersonic anti-ship missile design, the CX-1, and a range of air-to-surface weapons being offered for use on UAVs.

Japan too has increased its defense budget, and continues to boost its military capabilities. Tokyo’s defense plans include acquisition of F-35s, Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, development of an amphibious force and an expanded submarine fleet. Australia is assessing the Soryu-class as a possible replacement for its existing submarines, but is also looking at French and German designs. Submarines remain a key requirement for states across Asia. Vietnam has started to receive its Kilo-class boats from Russia, and India, South Korea, Indonesia and Singapore are also upgrading their submarine forces.

Emerging economies have continued to escalate their defense spending. In 2014 these increases more than offset Western reductions. Overall, real global defense expenditure in 2014 rose by 1.7 percent after three years of reductions. However, this trend may moderate this year in light of falling oil prices, the stagnation of the Russian economy and slowing global growth.

The reduction in Western defense spending remains striking. Reductions in the US base and overseas contingency operations budgets following the drawdowns from Iraq and Afghanistan meant that US spending fell from some 47 percent of the global total in 2010 to around 38 percent in 2014. The West still spent more than half of global defense outlays in 2014, though this was down from two-thirds of global totals in 2010.

Given this trend, and even though some states have marginally increased their defense efforts amid heightened security concerns, Western states will have to more seriously weigh the optimum balance between their defense ambitions, deficit reduction and military outlays. It is clear that the demand for defense engagement – and on occasion the exercise of military force – is not diminishing.

It is unlikely that budget realities in the West will see forces grow once more, but that places a premium on policymakers and defense planners providing a suitable force mix and spectrum of capabilities, and generating adaptive military and security capacities – in terms of personnel as well as equipment – able to deploy rapidly and operate across all domains. States also have to ensure nimble electronic warfare, information operations, cyber and strategic-communications capacities so that they can operate in the information realm as well as in military theaters. Meanwhile, armed forces remain involved not just on traditional military tasks, but also on missions as wide-ranging as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and pandemic response. These missions remain global in scope and complex in execution.

In 2014, the IISS highlighted the challenge to defense planners from a fractured and complex security environment. In 2015, this state of affairs is more threatening. Insecurity, violence and the use of military force are all increasing; the ‘arc of instability’ is widening, and military crises do not seem to end, but rather multiply. ■

Expensive defense

EU military spending rises in the wake of the Ukraine Crisis | By Sam Perlo-Freeman

The political and military crisis in Ukraine has led to a major reassessment of threat perceptions and military strategies in much of Europe. Increased threat perceptions have led to calls in Europe for higher military spending and, in particular, a renewed commitment by NATO members to spend at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on the military.

SIPRI's provisional estimate for Ukraine's military expenditure in 2014 is $4.0 billion, an increase in real terms of 23 percent compared to 2013, and 65 percent compared to 2005. However, this estimate may not fully include war costs and the final figure is likely to be higher.

SIPRI's figures for Ukrainian military spending are considerably higher than most other sources as they include spending on

1) the paramilitary border guard – which has been directly involved in the fighting in the east;

2) interior ministry troops; and

3) military pensions, a legacy of the Soviet era.

For 2015 Ukraine has announced a massive increase in military spending with a total budget for 'defense and security' mounting to $4.1 billion, of which:

- $1.8 billion will be for the regular armed forces, compared to 15 billion budgeted in 2014;
- $318 million for the newly created National Guard, compared to 1.5 billion in 2014; and
- an additional $273 million in state guarantees for the Ukrainian arms industry.

Despite 14 percent inflation, the budget for the regular armed forces will more than double in real terms. However, the effectiveness of Ukrainian military spending is severely compromised by systemic corruption.

RUSSIA

Military spending in Russia increased by 8.1 percent in real terms in 2014 to $84.5 billion. Modernization of the Russian armed forces has been a major priority since 2011, with the aim of rearming 70 percent of the armed forces with new equipment by 2020. This effort intensified in 2014 with increased deliveries of new equipment. A substantial increase in military spending – around 15 percent in real terms – to $76 billion is budgeted in 2015. Almost all of the increase is earmarked for procurement, which is set to increase by over 60 percent in 2015 and to remain at this higher level in 2016 and 2017.

Most or all of the increases were planned before the Ukrainian crisis and the 2014 economic crisis. Falling oil and gas prices and economic sanctions have reduced state income dramatically and led to a major devaluation of the rouble. As a result, the initial defense budget for 2015, which was $80 billion, was cut by around 5 percent in the revised budget presented in March 2015.

POLAND

In contrast to most of western and central Europe, Poland is likely to exceed the NATO 2 percent target in 2015. Poland's military expenditure increased by 38 percent in real terms between 2005 and 2014, including a 13 percent increase in 2014. A further increase of 19 percent in real terms is budgeted for 2015.

The reasons for this are that Poland largely avoided the economic fallout from the 2008 financial crisis; and has been willing to invest in its military, engage in NATO and US-led military operations and host the US ballistic missile defense program (largely due to historical fears of Russia). Planned well before the start of the Ukraine crisis, events in Ukraine have prompted the Polish Government to seek to accelerate aspects of a new 10-year military modernization plan from 2013–22. The Polish Ministry of Defense budget for 2015 amounts to $9.9 billion, about 2.1 percent of Poland's projected GDP in 2015.

SWEDEN

Sweden made significant post-Cold War reductions in military spending and its armed forces, which were reoriented from territorial defense toward participation in overseas peacekeeping operations. Concerns over Russia's actions in Ukraine have been heightened by a number of confirmed and suspected incidents in the Baltic involving Russian military forces, which have prompted questions as to the adequacy of Sweden's military capabilities.

A May 2014 report by the Swedish Parliament's Defense Commission recommended an increase in the annual defense budget of $650 million, or about 12 percent, by the end of the five to seven years' Defense Planning Period (starting in 2015). Since then, the Government and three opposition parties agreed in March on a further increase of $1.2 billion spread over five years compared to the existing plans. The events in Ukraine have also prompted Sweden to seek increased military cooperation with NATO and its neighbors. In August 2014, Sweden signed a memorandum of understanding with NATO on 'host nation support' that would allow NATO troops to be deployed to Sweden under certain circumstances. Sweden has also proposed enhancing the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO) and extending it to Baltic states.

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SIPRI

BALTIC STATES

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are among the smallest members of NATO in terms of population, GDP and military spending, but – given their geographic location and history of Russian rule – have long sought to establish themselves as serious contributors to NATO. Events in Ukraine, as well as numerous incidents involving Russian, have heightened their traditional fears. All three countries increased military expenditure sharply in the years leading up to and following NATO membership in 2004, only to cut it sharply again during and following the global financial and economic crisis in 2008. In the last two to three years spending has been increasing once again, and the Ukraine crisis is further spurring this trend. Budgets for 2015 show a continued increase in military spending in all three countries and some degree of convergence:

- a 7.3 percent increase in Estonia, to $436 million;
- a 14.9 percent increase in Latvia, to $269 million; and
- most dramatically, a 50 percent increase in Lithuania, to $480 million.

WESTERN EUROPE

Despite the strong condemnations of Russian actions in Ukraine and the defense policy responses taken by NATO, there has been little change in military spending budgets and plans in Western Europe, especially among the largest spenders. France's core defense budget is constant in nominal terms in 2015. Both the German and Italian defense budgets are marginally down, in line with previously announced plans as part of austerity measures.

However, in February 2015 Germany announced plans to raise military spending in the medium term, although the increases might not start until after 2016. In April 2015, France also announced a small increase of $4.3 billion over the period 2016-2019 (about 3 percent compared to previous plans), although this was linked to the threat of terrorism rather than to the Ukraine crisis. There have been no announced changes to the UK's existing plans (part of long-running austerity measures) for a modest cut in the 2015–16 defense budget. In general, the pattern is of increases in military spending in most central European and some Nordic countries, but falling or flat spending in west European countries.

NATO

FOTOLIA/ALEX DEMESHKO

The September 2014 NATO summit in Wales was NATO's first major response to events in Ukraine. As well as producing a 'Readiness Action Plan' designed to improve NATO's ability to respond to the crisis, member states 'pledged' to increase their military expenditure to NATO's long-standing target level of two percent of GDP over 10 years. The long-term, nonbinding nature of the pledge represents a compromise between countries that were pushing hard for increases to military spending (mainly the USA) and others that were more reticent (especially Canada and Germany).

Unless tensions with Russia escalate significantly, it seems unlikely that many NATO members will meet this target. The Ukraine crisis may well mark a break in the trend of falling military spending in western and central Europe. Even where countries are not immediately revising plans, there is growing pressure on NATO members to at least maintain, and if possible increase, their military spending in keeping with NATO commitments. ■

Together against cybercrime

We can only make the Internet safer if business, politicians and security authorities work together | By Holger Münch

The vast majority of people in society use the Internet daily, often via their smartphones while traveling. People buy goods and services in online shops, send tweets and have "friends" in social networks. Many of them can no longer imagine communication and social interaction without the Internet.

Business also uses the web. Vast numbers of business processes are now based on the Internet, using it as their central infrastructure; some companies rely wholly on the Internet to sell their products. The proportion of e-commerce in total sales within the European Union was 15 percent on average in 2014, according to the European statistics office Eurostat. In Germany, the proportion was 13 percent, while in Ireland it was more than half all sales (52 percent).

The net is also a place for crime; criminal activities cause considerable damage. Many conventional crimes can also be carried out in cyberspace – fraud, for instance. Greater use of technology, the outsourcing of business processes and a growing number of Internet users opens the door to new, criminal "business models" – and the trend is growing. So is the damage. The number of unreported cases is immense. The Office of Criminal Investigation for the state of Lower Saxony determined in 2013 that only 9 percent of cybercrime cases were reported to police.

According to a study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the IT security provider McAfee, the annual cost of cybercrime around the world is between 100 and 500 billion US dollars. The cost of cybercrime in Germany was estimated to be 1.6 percent of GDP in 2013 – putting Germany in an unenviable first place. The costs were incurred chiefly via untraceable financial crimes, market manipulation, industrial espionage and the loss of intellectual property. The study concludes that cybercrime is a growing industry with high returns and relatively low risks.

The continuing digitalization of our world – and the consequences – are comparable with the effects of the first industrial revolution some 200 years ago. One result of increasing electronic communication and commerce is that there is a steady stream of new opportunities for criminals with both financial and ideological motives. Intelligent systems for the home and factory, and the "Internet of things" generally, make modern IT, data processing and the Internet an even more essential part of our everyday lives than ever. This opens up chances for criminals in many new areas.

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Businesses are targeted by cybercriminals, foreign secret services, and competitors seeking an unfair advantage. These dangers can only be combatted and punished if there is close cooperation between business and the authorities. That includes the reporting of attacks and the passing on of comprehensive information by businesses. If that does not happen, the criminals cannot be caught and there can be no development of methods to prevent such attacks.

We need to form interdisciplinary networks – between the police and other authorities, between the authorities and businesses, across the world of commerce, at the state, federal, and European levels, and beyond. A comprehensive exchange of information increases the competencies of all those involved, as well as raising the awareness of responsibility and levels of trust between the cooperating partners. We will only be able to meet the future challenges adequately if we pool our abilities and resources.

This is equally true for the police; that is why competence centers are a key part of our strategy. Along with many cooperating partnerships between the authorities and private enterprise which help to protect us against dangers on the Internet, Germany's federal criminal investigation authority is also involved in institutionalized public-private partnerships, for instance, with three German banks in the German Competence Center against Cyber Crime (G4C).

An effective, targeted exchange of information and analysis between globally-connected partners from the fields of business, politics, security services, and the wider society plays an important role in developing an awareness of the risks, which in turn provides a basis for us to respond appropriately to constantly-changing areas of danger and to come up with preventative strategies. Security is an essential feature of the German economy and we must work to ensure it. ■

The days of coal are numbered.
A brown coal power station in Schkopau, Saxony-Anhalt.

IMAGO STOCK&PEOPLE/RAINER WEISFLOG

The days of coal are numbered

Climate protection starts with renouncing fossil fuels – and using energy more effectively | By Stephan Kohler

The international energy markets, particularly oil and natural gas, have developed in an interesting way over the past few months. A decline in the price of oil to $50 per barrel was inconceivable even a short while ago, although an oil price above $50 was considered absolutely detrimental to the global economy at the beginning of this century. However, the price of oil has always been subject to major fluctuations. In November 2001, a barrel cost about $17; the price rose to a maximum figure of $147 in August 2011; it had fallen to $35 by December 2008 and then exceeded the $100 threshold again during 2011.

These fluctuations often cause huge social and economic damage, either for the oil-producing nations or for consumer countries. Both oil suppliers and customers had adapted to a price of about $100 for more than three years and had accepted that it would remain at this level. With this high price, the suppliers of natural gas and coal also had reliable markets and a good revenue situation, renewable energy sources were economically more attractive and many countries decided to adopt major subsidy programs to reduce their dependence on fossil energy sources and meet goals designed to protect the climate too.

However, oil and energy prices are not stable. They are subject to many influences: global economic growth and its structure, political interference (e.g. how OPEC behaves), wars and civil wars (e.g. Iraq, Libya), sanctions (Iran), environmental disasters (hurricanes), the development and use of new drilling techniques like fracking or those designed to tap into deposits out at sea or in Arctic regions.

Liquid natural gas (LNG) is also expected to exert a major influence on the international natural gas markets, where similar trading conditions could be created to those governing the oil market – i.e. global trade, which does not depend on pipelines. This is particularly interesting for Europeans, who hope that they can reduce dependency on Russia for imports of natural gas through pipelines by switching to LNG.

This was the reason why the speech by Iranian Energy Minister Bijan Namdar was eagerly awaited at the Energy Security Summit held in Berlin in May 2015. Iran is one of the world's countries with huge natural resources and it has considerable deposits of oil and natural gas. How will Iran behave after the lifting of Western sanctions? Namdar made it very clear that Iran will not construct any pipelines to Western Europe and LNG exports will target markets with the highest price levels – i.e. not Europe, but Asia.

China has already signed long-term energy supply agreements with Iran. Russia will increasingly supply China with oil and gas too, not least because of the Western economic sanctions as a result of the Ukraine conflict. This competition between Europe and Asia for energy sources will increase.

Future climate protection policy will be crucial for the ongoing development of energy markets. Germany and Europe plan to reduce their CO_2 emissions by 40 percent and 20 percent respectively by the year 2020, although Germany is shutting down all its nuclear power plants at the same time. At their Elmau Summit, the G-7 agreed to reduce CO_2 emmissions by 40 to 70 perecent by 2050.

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FRANK PETERS

It will therefore be interesting to see what is agreed at the World Climate Conference in Paris in the fall. If delegates adopt ambitious climate protection goals for the whole planet, it will be necessary to reduce the use of coal to a significant degree in the future. These kinds of political decisions against the use of coal have an effect on the energy mix and they would trigger greater demand for oil and natural gas.

The financial markets are now having serious misgivings about the continued use of coal, too. The Norwegian State Fund has decided to no longer invest in corporations that are involved in the coal business. Oil and gas conglomerates are supporting a global CO_2 levy to protect the climate in the run-up to the conference.

It is conceivable that climate change will increasingly dominate the development of energy markets. The major focus is on the use of fossil energy sources. They are believed to be responsible for the growing number of storms with their enormous potential to do damage, hurricanes and tornados with wind speeds previously unknown (350 km/h) and the intense and long-lasting disasters caused by drought and periods of extreme heat, not least in the US and India.

Foresight is better than combating damage; many countries cannot afford the latter anyway. The poorest people in the world suffer the most.

The world cannot afford to allow this to happen. Climatologists generally agree now that the average global temperature must not be allowed to rise by more than 2 degrees Celsius by the year 2100. This goal provides a reliable basis for determining and introducing a future climate and energy strategy. The countries attending the climate conference in Paris should reach an agreement on this. There is a need to finally define a clear development path for global CO_2 emissions.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has demanded the following in its World Energy Outlook: CO_2 emissions amounting to approximately 30 gigatons (GT) in 2010 must be reduced to 22 GT by the year 2035.

This would require a major reduction in the use of fossil energy sources. Coal would have to be replaced first, as it generates the highest CO_2 emissions when being converted into energy. However, coal is almost always cheaper than oil and natural gas, it is available around the world and it will be so for several hundred years to come. This also helps ensure reliable supplies.

The CO_2 emission goals can also be achieved by higher degrees of energy efficiency and energy savings, according to the IEA's World Energy Outlook, but this would only create half the necessary reductions in CO_2 by the year 2020. Therefore, the highest priority should be given to introducing these efficiency goals.

Can these efficiency goals be achieved through a global CO_2 levy, with higher energy prices that lead to greater savings? This is only true to a certain extent. Expertise, technology and capital are all required to achieve efficiency potential.

Those involved often lack the necessary capital and the expertise. It is therefore necessary to introduce a program for developing energy efficiency in addition to any global CO_2 levy. This means investments in training, providing investment funds and developing innovative energy services. This will open up new business opportunities for energy corporations and create skilled jobs around the globe.

This efficiency strategy will mean a fall in demand on the fossil energy markets and therefore greater pressure on prices or falling prices. The CO_2 levy is therefore essential in order not to jeopardize the cost-effectiveness of efficiency measures.

However, the CO_2 levy will not help organize the switch in energy sources from coal to natural gas; the price differences are simply too high. The CO_2 levy will not placate energy markets overall either, although falling demand might reduce dependency on fossile fuels and their market dominance.

Energy efficiency is particularly important so that any increase in demand for natural gas and oil triggered by climate policy does not trigger risks regarding energy supplies or energy prices that are no longer acceptable. Climate policy must not create a situation where developing countries no longer have any economic prospects. ■

PICTURE ALLIANCE/DPA/MAURIZIO GAMBARINI

Cyber defender: German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen at the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CoE).

Defending the Internet

NATO prepares for cyberwar with new centers in the Baltic States

By Johannes Leithäuser

Saber Strike is the name of the military maneuver conducted by several NATO states in Lithuania. The exercise is due to run for three weeks in June and train NATO partners in military cooperation on their northeastern flank. And although the name may sound old-fashioned, this maneuver includes elements of the war of the future. Some of the soldiers active in Saber Strike will be fighting off attacks in the virtual world – practicing for cyberbattle.

The Baltic States are the ideal place to train for cyber war. Estonia, the smallest and northernmost Baltic State – with barely more than 1.3 million inhabitants – has implemented new electronic methods comprehensively in administration and government communication. And Estonia was the first country to become the target of a cyberattack – in 2007, when the websites of many authorities, ministries, and trading banks were blocked and unusable for nearly a day.

It is likely the attack came from Russia – but this cannot be proven. Estonian politicians and military commanders are wary even today of pointing the finger at Moscow. But there is no doubt that in response to the attack, the Estonian capital Tallinn was chosen as NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in May 2008. Today, 50 officers, civilian researchers and technicians are on the staff of this think tank, which aims to shed light on the opportunities and dangers the Internet holds for NATO.

The Atlantic Alliance has more than 20 such centers of excellence. Placing new ones in the Baltic States also serves a demonstrative purpose. Along with the cyber agency in Estonia, the NATO Strategic Communications Center of Excellence in Riga, the capital of neighboring Latvia, deals with the effects of targeted strategic information. The propaganda war, too, is increasingly being fought on the Internet, where social media allows large groups to be mobilized and manipulated.

NATO's information experts in Riga have just released their first study – an analysis of Putin's propaganda war during the Ukraine crisis. Their cyber colleagues in Tallinn have been at work somewhat longer, exploring the nature of possible attacks from the depths of the Internet. For more than five years, they have been holding an annual exercise dubbed Closed Shields, which has become the world's biggest simulated attack on virtual networks. This year, teams from 18 countries are taking part in the operation.

But for the first time, NATO's cyberdefenders have opened up their exclusive circle. The center's German chief of staff Jens van Laak, recently announced that his cyber fighters would be taking part in all future cyber security drills which NATO organizes as part of its "reinsurance policy" program in the eastern member states. "We won't shut down communications, we don't want to block the entire exercise," van Laak said. But the aim would certainly be to disrupt Internet-driven systems – a contingency expected to occur in real conflicts.

WONGE BERGMANN

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The real-life case the cyberwar experts are using as a guideline is not the Internet blackout that Estonia suffered in 2007. Rather, the experts are focusing on the attacks on Georgian military databases less than a year later, when Georgia had become involved in skirmishes with the Russian military.

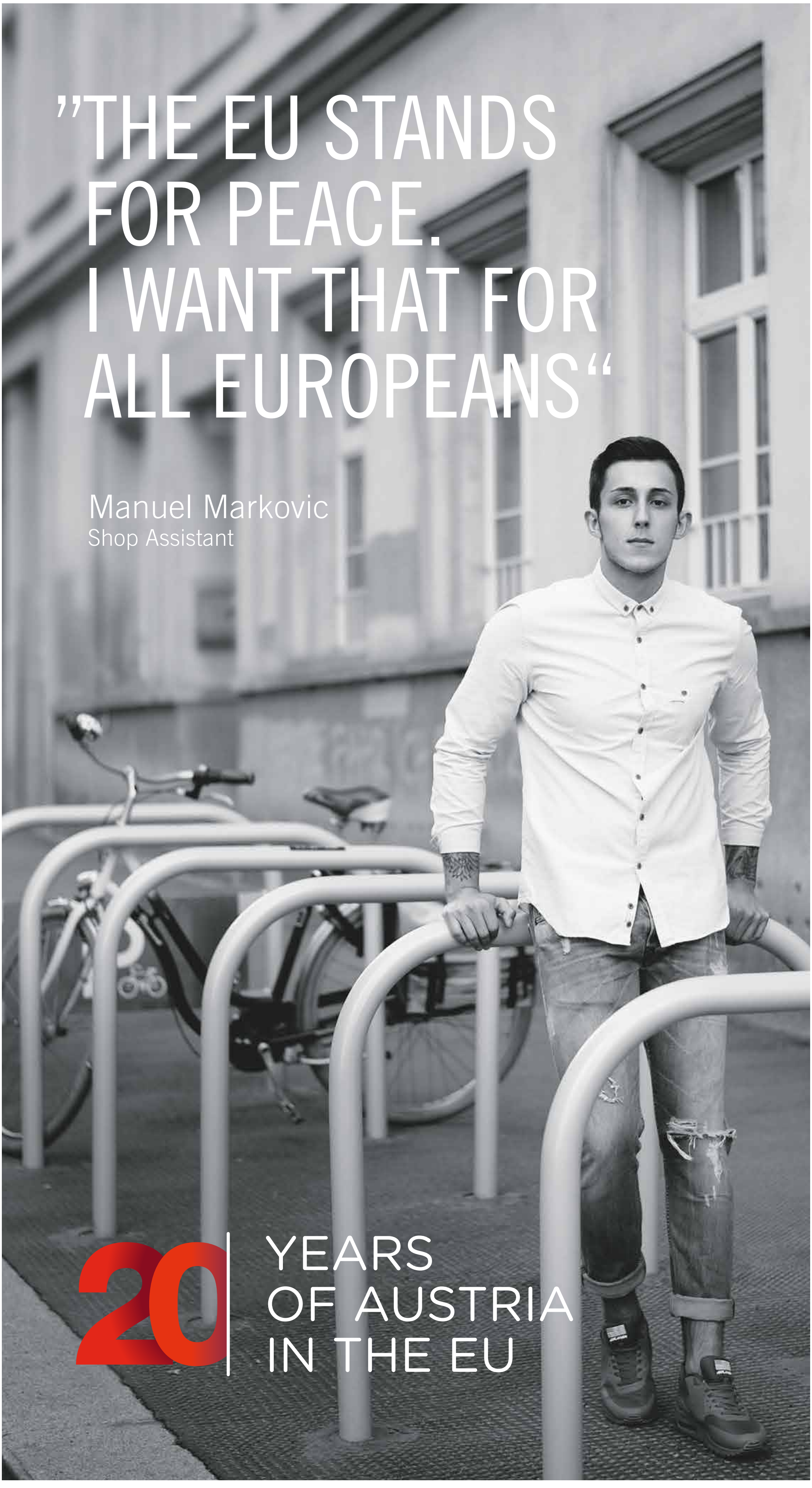
Van Laak does not give much detail about these scenarios, yet they provide a realistic template for the drills that the Cybercenter now carries out. There is a weak spot wherever military computers use data from outside of closed systems, such as when they access GPS from the field or exchange messages.

The work at the Estonian NATO center received even more weight at the last NATO summit in Wales in September 2014, which placed cyberattacks in the same danger category as attacks with conventional weapons. The relevant resolution says that cyberattacks could "reach a point where they jeopardize prosperity, security and stability at the national and Euro-Atlantic level." It adds that for this reason cyberdefense will in future be "a part of NATO's core activities of collective defense." It is now considered possible for a cyberattack to activate Article 5 of the NATO charter, under which an attack on one NATO member is considered an attack on all members.

The Estonian Aare Reintam, who is preparing the Closed Shields cyberattack drill, explains that members of the Center – and they alone – are "on the red side," that is, they are playing the role of attackers. The actual maneuver participants, military and civilian IT specialists from many NATO countries, make up the "blue team" for each nation on the other side.

The Center provides computers and software for the duration of the exercise. The teams have to ensure, for instance, that the fictitious websites of their nation cannot be shut down or altered, or that undesired or misleading e-mails can be stopped from going into email accounts. For two days there is "no mercy for the blue side," Reintam says with a grin. And he stresses that "we are only practicing defense here." The aim, he says, is simply for the participants to learn how to shield their information networks against attack. NATO, he adds, does not carry out attack maneuvers.

Janis Karklins, the head of NATO's Strategic Communications Center in Riga, has a similar message. His agency discovered and disproved claims by the Moscow-based Russia Today broadcaster that the NATO cyberspecialists in Tallinn were helping Ukrainian hackers. Karklins says that it is not his institution's job to develop information strategies without taking into account their correlation with the facts. "We have to stick with the truth," Karklins says. "Our toolbox is fairly limited in that respect." ■


”THE EU STANDS FOR PEACE. I WANT THAT FOR ALL EUROPEANS“
Manuel Markovic
Shop Assistant
20
YEARS OF AUSTRIA IN THE EU