

# INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORUM

**Bonn International Security Forum 2018 – Full Report**  
**Rapporteur: Simone Becker**



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## Executive Summary

As the second year of the Trump administration drew to a close, various disruptions and larger trends emerging over the last few years became all the more evident. It has become clear that the current U.S. administration has stepped down from international leadership and has entered into open rivalry with both allied and rivaling nations. Meanwhile, global conflicts are mounting, accompanied by growing uncertainty about the future of the current world order. From November 18 to 20, 2018, distinguished experts, practitioners, and researchers of foreign and security policy gathered in Bonn at the Third International Security Forum to discuss these changes and challenges from a transatlantic and European perspective.

Despite differing opinions on transatlantic relations, security policy toward Russia, and how to react to a rising China, a broad consensus quickly emerged on the irreversibility of the current shifts in international relations. The shifts in U.S. policy, elections of far-right governments in Italy and Brazil, and efforts by Russia and China to challenge and actively reshape the international system are signs of a fundamental transformation of the political climate all over the globe. A snap back to the status quo ante is extremely unlikely.

With its remarkable development over the last few decades, China has the potential to upend the world order. However, its success depends in large part on the institutions and external stability provided by the global order, making it unlikely that Beijing will seek to destroy the system that enabled its rise. Rather, the country is actively adapting and transforming the existing international system in a way that stronger reflects Chinese national interests, and shifting the global balance of power toward Asia.

Against this background, participants agreed that Germany and the EU have to increase their efforts in foreign and security policy. However, the question of whether they are doing so could only be answered by a “Yes and No.” On the one hand, Trump’s unrelenting stance toward Europe and the prospect of losing British defense capacities after Brexit are catalyzing EU efforts to develop a more self-reliant and effective European foreign and security policy. Discussions about European strategic autonomy, the EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and the French-led European Intervention Initiative (E2I) are gaining traction throughout Europe, making it evident that the continent is starting to adopt a new stance in foreign and security policy.

However, it also became clear that a number of serious obstacles remain: most notably, differing priorities among the European partners and a lack of public support for deepened cooperation and reform in multiple European countries. Domestic challenges keep the continent looking inward and threaten European unity. It remains to be seen whether Europe is ready and able to become a credible foreign policy actor and an equal partner to the U.S. – while not knowing whether the U.S. even has an interest in such a relationship.

The transatlantic relationship remained an essential cornerstone of the debates throughout all sessions. Increasing mutual understanding and strengthening transatlantic exchange at a time when the longstanding partnership has entered a difficult stage proved to be the Forum’s leitmotif.

*Participants of the International Security Forum 2018 in front of the Bonn University Forum*



The wide range of diverging assessments and perspectives coming together at the conference showed that the process of adapting to the changes in the international environment will require an immense amount of effort, consideration, reflection, and the political will to compromise and cooperate from all sides. This holds true for the transatlantic relationship, but just as much with regard to mounting tensions with Russia and China. In view of the catastrophic consequences that a military clash between the great powers would have under today's technological conditions, avoiding war is paramount.

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## Setting the Scene for the International Debate



*(l) James D. Bindenagel giving his introductory remarks*

*(r) Participants at the Dinner Talk leading up to the Forum*

From November 18 to 20, 2018, the Center for International Security and Governance (CISG) of the University of Bonn and the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS) of Johns Hopkins University hosted the Third International Security Forum in Bonn.

The CISG, chaired by Henry-Kissinger-Professor and Ambassador ret. James D. Bindenagel, is a research institution focused on transatlantic relations, global security challenges, and the exploration of innovative solutions and dialogue. AICGS, headed by Jeffrey Rathke, is an independent policy research center focused on the most pressing issues at stake for Germany and the United States.

Over the course of three days, numerous foreign policy and security experts, practitioners, and researchers from Europe, Asia, the United States, and Russia gathered in the former capital of Germany for a series of events and to engage in-depth debates on the mounting challenges in international relations. The conference was divided into three sessions, each guided by an overarching question:

1. Are Germany and Europe stepping up to bear more responsibilities in international affairs as the United States withdraws from international leadership?
2. What are the implications of a rising China for international order and security?

3. How are global balances of power shifting, and how can global governance and international order adapt to the emerging multipolar world?

Instead of giving lectures on these issues, participants were invited to make short five-minute statements to serve as impulses for the following open discussion. As in the previous years, debates were held under the Chatham House Rule to promote an open exchange of ideas and perspectives and encourage fruitful debates.

In the first section, this report provides an overview over the insights and findings compiled throughout the Forum, allowing for a unique view into pressing foreign policy issues addressed by experts from both sides of the Atlantic.

The second section will offer a review of a special event introduced at this year's Forum: A scenario round-table as an "intellectual live exercise" in strategic thinking that brought together young professionals and experienced practitioners in an effort to blend practical experience with fresh perspectives. Finally, in the report's third section, some of the Forum's distinguished experts will provide a more profound insight into select issues through personal comments.

To kick off the event, guests gathered for a Dinner Talk on Sunday, November 18. A panel consisting of Julianne Smith, Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Jackson Janes, Ben Hodges, Markus Kaim, and Klaus Scharioth

discussed the implications of the U.S. retreating from its global leadership role for diplomacy and international security. Their thoughtful analysis, along with a firm call to rethink German international engagement, set the stage for the upcoming multi-day event.

Prof. James D. Bindenagel noted in his introductory remarks on Monday, November 19, that the lack of comprehensive approaches to the myriad of challenges of our time – from conflicts in Iran and Syria to ISIS, North Korea, and the South China Sea – in combination with the unprecedented challenges to the current liberal world order call for ample discussions of new approaches to German and American security policy.

University of Bonn Rector Professor Dr. Michael Hoch highlighted in his welcoming remarks that Bonn – a European UN city and site of numerous research institutions, NGOs, and federal agencies – is a hub of international debate as well as of interdisciplinary academic research. While traditional security concepts remain a core element of international security, expanding these concepts by taking into account a wider range of challenges plays a crucial role in identifying core issues of international security and crafting suitable responses. From sustainable development to food security, today's security challenges require a comprehensive approach, institutional collaboration, and interdisciplinary exchange.

The 2018 Forum coincided with a special occasion that highlighted the University of Bonn's commitment to helping navigate the complexity of contemporary global security. In addition to the extension of the CISG Professorial Chair at the University of Bonn, Dr. Marc Speich, State Secretary for Federal, European, and International Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) announced during his address to the Forum, that the state government also recently decided to establish the new NRW Academy for International Security and Integration Studies at the University of Bonn.

Dr. Speich also reminded attendees that academic research isn't meant to be an isolated ivory tower; it is intended to promote understanding and dialogue and to help develop practical solutions to today's political challenges. Concluding that the International Security Forum as a place of encounter and dialogue is a valuable contribution to this, the Forum was then officially initiated with a call to uphold channels of exchange and cooperation among policymakers, academics, regions, and countries – even, or especially, in times of difficulty.

CISG and AICGS would like to thank all partners, supporters, and attendees of the 2018 International Security Forum. We look forward to hosting new debates and lectures soon!



*(l) Mark Speich and Michael Hoch giving their introductory speeches*

*(r) Markus Kaim, Ben Hodges, and Jackson Janes during the Dinner Talk*

## Session I: Are Germany and Europe Stepping Up?

### Key points

- With U.S. security guarantees waning and international challenges mounting, Europe is slowly moving toward a more coherent joint foreign and security policy approach. The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in particular, if implemented successfully, may be a useful instrument to finally answer demands for more transatlantic burden-sharing and help the EU establish itself as a credible foreign policy actor.
- With a combined defense spending that surpasses that of Russia and China, the EU's issues in taking charge of its own security and becoming an equal partner to the U.S. lie less in increasing defense expenditure and more in creating greater coherence within the bloc, addressing the immense deficits in coordination and efficiency, and filling in strategic gaps.
- Internal instability, disagreements between the European partners, preoccupation with domestic challenges, and the rise of nationalism hinder Europe's progress and may grow into a serious threat to European security. Germany, in particular, shows signs of backtracking from its pledge to assume more responsibility, which could have serious implications for European security as a whole. It remains unclear whether Europeans are prepared for the challenges of a deteriorating global security situation – especially if Washington decides to fully withdraw its security commitments from the continent.



## Europe and Germany stepping up?

In the face of numerous global upheavals, the first session was dedicated to the issue of German and European international engagement as the Trump administration is removing the United States from its global commitments. Throughout the discussions, a broad consensus emerged that the question of whether Europe and Germany are stepping up can only be answered with a resounding “Yes and No.” Germany, as a key state for European security, has, in fact, started showing signs of practical development in foreign and security policy engagement since the Ukraine crisis. Substantial momentum was noted especially in terms of the development of defense capacities and cooperation. The newly approved Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) in Ulm, which will be tasked with arms sharing in Europe, was considered an indicator that Germany is starting to follow through on its pledge to assume more responsibility and is willing to shoulder a significant part of the burden of European defense. Participants from both sides of the Atlantic recognized Germany’s engagement as a framework nation within NATO’s Framework Nations Concept (FNC) as an important sign of leadership and a significant contribution to burden-sharing by supplying access for troops.

However, the view that Germany is starting to live up to its pledge to assume leadership was also contested from many sides. While Germany has made significant progress on the ground in terms of defense and NATO engagement, many voices expressed the view that Europe’s largest country is in fact currently showing signs of backtracking at the top: A period of significant advancements seems to have elicited complacency in the Bundestag. German public opinion polls are also showing continued reluctance toward international engagement. This was illustrated by the 2017 election campaign where foreign policy issues were all but absent. In a climate of growing preoccupation with inner turmoil, the foreign policy Trendwende announced in previous years largely seemed to have fallen into oblivion, multiple attendees argued. Various participants also agreed that Germany does not show a linear movement toward reaching its foreign policy, security, and defense goals as the country lacks the resources, financial commitment, and political will to credibly assume leadership. If the country is so committed to arms control and diplomatic solutions over military engagement, its ability to present effective alternative courses of action has often been lacking so far, as Judy Dempsey recently argued.

*l.p.: Jeffrey Rathke, President of AICGS*

*Julianne Smith, Center for a New American Security*





*(l) Jana Puglierin, Center for European Policy Studies, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)*

*(r) Gen. Lt. (ret.) Heinrich Brauss, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*



## European security initiatives and defense expenditure

Germany, one Forum attendee stated, still struggles to adapt to a world that “doesn’t function under the rules of the 1990s anymore,” and remains vulnerable to upcoming global challenges, especially in terms of the fallout from tensions between the U.S. and China and intimidations from Russia.

With Germany facing a possible recession and prospects of a red-red-green majority rising, some participants even expressed their concern that there might be a full reversal on foreign policy and security on the horizon. As Europe’s biggest nation and one of the key states for European security due to its size and location, this might have serious implications for Europe as a whole.

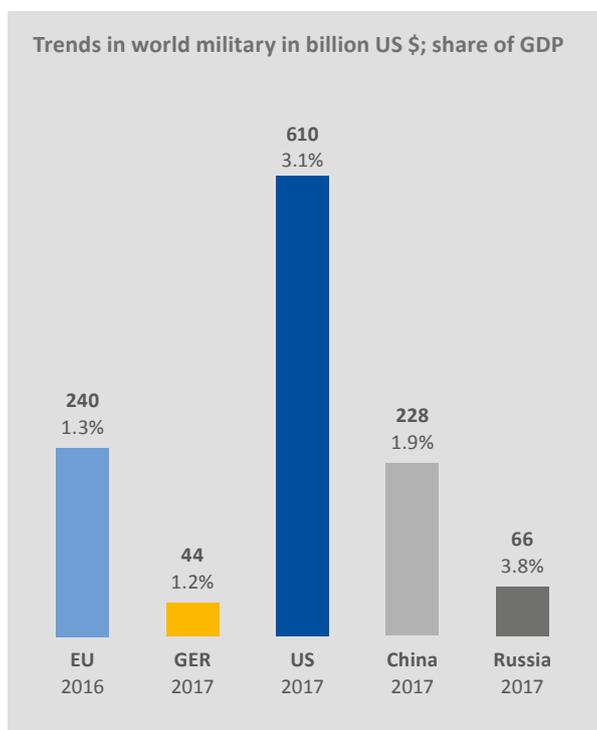
As for EU foreign policy and security efforts, there was near universal consensus that some substantial progress has been made with regard to initiatives such as the EU’s recently established Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) adopted in 2016. Both these structures were assessed largely positively, though the former hasn’t been implemented and has yet to prove its practical worth. And while PESCO was condemned by the Trump administration as a threat to NATO, the initiative may actually prove to be the answer to long-standing American demands for more burden-sharing in NATO. Participants reported that, apart from in the White House, PESCO has largely caused a more positive outlook in most parts of the foreign policy establishment in Washington after two decades of skepticism due to the lack of tangible progress in European defense, security, and foreign policy. The French-led European Intervention Initiative (E2I), established outside of both NATO and EU structures between currently ten European countries, is meant as another step toward a more effective European defense strategy and joint European strategic culture. Set up as a military-to-military “strategic workshop,” the initiative is designed to help build ad-hoc coalitions and serve as a platform for intelligence exchange, scenario planning, and operational coordination.

Military expenditure and the NATO 2 percent goal were a prominent discussion point throughout the Forum. In view of President Trump’s criticism of allies’ military spending, which has been putting enormous pressure on the alliance’s cohesion, burden-sharing within NATO remains a point of contention.

In total, Europe already spends more on defense than China or Russia. Yet despite the huge sums being invested in European defense, Europe is still considered militarily irrelevant. According to many experts present at the 2018 Forum, the main goal in terms of European security and defense efforts should be to “get more for the money we’re already spending,” as one participant put it. The fixation on a spending target clouds the view on the actual challenges and deficits and creates needless friction between allies. To improve military capacities, many voices from both sides of the Atlantic agreed that increasing military spending would yield far fewer results than addressing deficits in coordination and efficiency by building



Gen. Lt. (ret.) Ben Hodges, Center for European Analysis



EU values converted from € to US\$ based on the exchange rate on Dec. 31, 2017

Sources: EU - eurostat, Germany, USA, Russia - SIPRI, China - SIPRI estimate

EXPENDITURE, 2017, online: [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/sipri\\_fs\\_1805\\_milex\\_2017.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/sipri_fs_1805_milex_2017.pdf)  
 Eurostat: General government expenditure by function (COFOG), online: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20180518-1?inheritRedirect=true>

coherence, reducing superfluous spending, and filling in strategic gaps. Increasing military spending to meet the 2 percent GDP defense expenditure target in every European country without addressing structural deficits would amount to a waste of public funds of unprecedented proportions.

Various participants also argued that other expenses that also contribute to defense, such as cyber capabilities, infrastructure, and border protection, finally need to be taken into account as well. By these standards, Germany, for instance, surpasses the 2 percent mark already today, as opposed to the currently calculated official figure of 1.27 percent. On the issue of German military spending, it was further noted that by reaching the 1.5 percent goal alone, Germany would become NATO’s second-biggest single contributor. This has one essential implication: Increasing military spending to 2 percent of GDP would quickly raise accusations of dominance and militarization both in Germany and among its partners, making such an attempt highly problematic from both a domestic and a European standpoint.



*Brig. Gen. Wolfgang Ohl,  
Federal Ministry of Defence*

### European strategic autonomy, independence, and transatlantic cohesion

The concept of European strategic autonomy, as it featured in the 2016 Global Strategy, has been causing uncertainty and even alarm among allies and proved to be a highly contentious concept during the Forum as well. As Trump's criticism of U.S. allies is challenging NATO's cohesion and unity, the recurring talks about strategic autonomy, especially those happening in Paris, have raised suspicion of disengagement among non-EU allies and are creating further tensions within the alliance. Rigorously rejecting the notion, one participant argued that reaching strategic autonomy would entail gaining full control over nuclear weapons, the full capacity to protect Europe, and the capacity to strike anywhere at any time, neither of which are currently possible or even desirable.

On the other hand, it was argued that the debates about European security initiatives and strategic autonomy are often accompanied by a lack of conceptual clarity. Strategic autonomy as introduced in the EUGS is conceptually visualized not as strategic independence but as responsibility and hedging. The key goal is to develop greater self-reliance characterized by the political, material, and institutional capacities to implement own priorities in foreign and security policy. In practice, with a focus on improving preparation, capacity building, border protection, and the coordination of defense structures, PESCO and other current European defense initiatives are designed to complement, not compete with, existing NATO struc-

tures. Most participants agreed in their assessment that strategic independence from NATO is currently not on the agenda for Europe. At the same time, strategic autonomy is gaining a new quality in view of the growing concern about the Trump administration's commitment to European security – and it may well play a significant role in Europe establishing itself as a credible foreign policy actor. The point was also made that the United States already possesses strategic autonomy without that being a hindrance to NATO commitments.

Europeans are faced with two conflicting tasks: taking charge of their own security while keeping Washington committed to their security. A recurring motive throughout the conference was the impression among experts from both sides of the Atlantic that transatlantic communication needs to be improved. Knowledge gaps and misunderstandings about the specifics of European initiatives as well as the rationales behind them are often one of the main causes for tensions between the allies. The current tensions in the transatlantic relationship notwithstanding, breaking off dialogue and cooperation would be utterly irresponsible in the current global climate – even if Europe can no longer count on the U.S. to shoulder the better part of its security costs. As European capability gaps are identified and structures adjusted, transparency also needs to be increased between EU and NATO structures.

With regard to the troubled relationship between Europe and the United States, one participant emphasized nuclear decoupling as the biggest issue in foreign policy and the key driver of change in transatlantic relations. Washington's recent withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) not only highlights the United States' changed strategic priorities, but it also removes a core element of European security and foreshadows the challenges that Europe may face in the very near future – possibly without substantial U.S. support.

While Germany sees PESCO primarily as an integration project narrowly within the NATO framework and less of a strategic defense tool, France has consistently advocated for a strong PESCO featuring more pronounced strategic autonomy qualities. Similarly, the exclusive character of E2I, like France's idea of a multi-speed Europe in general, are also viewed as problematic in Berlin, which considers them to undermine European unity and has expressed concerns that E2I may cause tensions with non-participating countries. These conflicting objectives between the two crucial EU nations as well as disagreements about reform plans among Europeans, in general, are posing another challenge to Europe's ability to develop a strong joint security approach. Combined with shifting political majorities, the rise of anti-European governments, and the intensifying forces of divergence within the bloc in a broader sense, these factors imply that the current upward trajectory cannot be taken for granted, leaving much room for speculations about the future of European security.

Putting the debates about European capacity building and security engagement into perspective, there was also a critical impulse from one participant: Pushing the narrative of great power competition, as many experts and practitioners are inclined to do today, is further contributing to global tensions in an already heated political climate. Global challenges ranging from nuclear decoupling and terrorism to world hunger and climate change raise the question of whether forming and fueling antagonisms among great powers and ideologies are in fact a sustainable way forward.

The Forum's first session had a clear baseline: To determine whether Germany and Europe are in fact stepping up, the crucial question is what paradigm analysts use as the point of reference. In relation to their past track record, Germany and Europe have made some visible progress. With regard to the speed and unpredictability of current developments, however, the 2018 International Security Forum revealed a widespread concern that Europeans may still be underprepared for the challenges to come. The EU will need to find a strategy to bind its members together; further develop its joint security, defense, and foreign policy guided by a coherent strategic approach; and speak with one voice if it doesn't want to become a mere spectator to global power shifts. It remains to be seen whether Europe is ready and able to effectively take charge of its own security and become an equal partner to the U.S. – albeit not knowing if Washington will even be interested in an equal partnership.

*(l-r) Kim Holmes, The Heritage Foundation  
Julianne Smith, Center for a New American Security and James Bindenagel, CISG*



# The World in Flux. Henry A. Kissinger

*The conference's morning session was concluded with a video interview conducted by Prof. Dr. Karl Kaiser with Dr. Henry Kissinger that touched on Europe, Germany, and China's changing responsibilities. Proposing a non-confrontational approach to deal with the far-reaching disruptions arising from a rising China, the interview led over to the Forum's next part that dealt with the implications of China's rapid ascent for international order and security.*

## Interview with Henry A. Kissinger conducted by Karl Kaiser

**Kaiser:** Dr. Kissinger, we want to thank you that you speak to us on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the University of Bonn. A university, which sent quite a few graduates to the United States. Carl Schurz was one of them, who played quite a role in American politics. And the Henry Kissinger Chair of the University and the Center for International Security and Governance would like to honor you, in particular on your 95th birthday, which is passed. But we want to have a discussion on some strategic questions, on Europe, on China, and in particular on the consequences of World War I and its commemoration. So my first question would be, as we commemorate this terrible war, which was the worst in history at that time: What goes through your head as we look at the Europe of today and the Europe of then? What conclusions should we draw today?

**Kissinger:** On July 1st, 1914, no one in Europe thought it was the eve of calamitous war. I think it is safe to say that none of the leaders who entered the war in 1914 would have done so, had he know what the world would look like 1918, but even in 1960. Nobody expected casualties of this magnitude in such a short period of time. I mention this, because the minimum

lesson it should teach is, not to get into situations, whose consequences you cannot foresee. And that the end of the war determines its importance, not the beginning.

**Kaiser:** What advice would you give to the Europeans today, as they look at the situation of an international system, which is profoundly changing. With great uncertainty reigning, old nationalisms coming back and having really ventured to overcome their conflicts of the past. Are you worried about Europe?

**Kissinger:** Yes, of course, I am worried about Europe, because all of us, including Europe and in some ways especially Europe, are finding themselves in a quite new and unexpected situation. World War I started between European countries. And the other countries of the world were either not directly involved or they were involved as agents of the European nations. The essence of the contemporary world is that there are major changes going on all over the world simultaneously. The emergence of so many new regions and the emergence of Asia, not as an accent of Europe, but as an independent set of powers, is an extraordinary transformation of the system.

**Kaiser:** Do the Europeans have an adequate strategy on Asia?

**Kissinger:** I think nobody knows exactly yet what the adequate strategy is. Because a strategy to be adequate, it has to respond to the immediate problems, but also to the culture and to the history of the other parties involved. And from following the European debate, there is a beginning of questioning, and we in America have the same problem to some extent, and so do the Chinese. That's the essence of the current situation.



**Kaiser:** You once remarked somewhere that Asia could repeat the mistakes of Europe as new powers emerge. That the balance of power system is there. And you also argue that you should combine partnership and balance of power. How do you see the situation today in Asia, when it comes to the prospect of stability and peace?

**Kissinger:** When one thinks now of stability and peace, one also has to think of the nature of modern weapons. In 1914, the leaders thought they understood the characteristics of the weapons, and they were bad enough, but they were relatively finite in relation to what exists today. And technology is changing all the time. So everybody, who wants to participate in the international system, has to develop a concept of the impact of modern technology on the stability of the system. And of how it can be related to the concerns of his own country. That is a huge enterprise. When we look at the evolution of artificial intelligence, we now have to worry not only about the impact of a technology whose characteristics we understand but of a technology, which may have its own ideas about how to employ itself. There is no precedent for that in history.

**Kaiser:** You wrote a very thoughtful article in the Atlantic on that subject. And this is something where of course China, America, and Europe, they're all competing on this issue, like on other issues ...

**Kissinger:** ... but they also have a common interest ...

**Kaiser.** ... they have a common interest and that is my question. Where do you see the future of transatlantic cooperation in dealing with these issues, which also Asia, in particular, China, raises?

**Kissinger:** Since the end of the Second World War, one of the significant achievements has been the growth of a concept of Atlantic partnership that attempts to avoid a conflict of the magnitude of the previous period and tries to apply that relationship to new conditions. But how to do that and how to relate the national culture of countries to the requirements of world order – it is one of the big tasks ahead, there is no good precedent for it yet. So, I would say that the evolution that is ahead of us, will have to deal with that problem. It is a major problem.

**Kaiser:** The transatlantic relationship always had two dimensions: The one was security, the other one was economic relations. And the system that America built up always made sure that security existed and that free trade flows. Do you see dangers to that system now?

**Kissinger:** To have a global system, ideally one would believe that a maximum of free trade would be the most natural way for it to operate. But it has good sides and bad sides, and it has to be implemented by

societies, whose historical evolution has been quite different. I often point out an American example: America has been used to a world in which problems were the exception, and in which the solution of problems brought about stability. Other countries, for example, China, have lived in a world in which there were constant problems. And so, each nation and each society will have its own definition of the nature of stability, and they will have to be brought into concert with each other. That is one of the challenges of our period.

**Kaiser:** Let me ask you a final question. You have played a very important role in the whole post-war history of Europe and Germany including. How do you see Germany's role now in the evolving system with Europe's difficulties, the European Union facing internal problems, with Britain leaving the Union, and all the global problems that we just discussed?

**Kissinger:** In many ways, Germany has had a unique history. It was the last of the major European countries to be unified. One can argue, that it has never had a truly tranquil period until the end of the Second World War. So in German history, in the Empire it felt itself besieged, in the Republic it felt himself abused, under Hitler it felt it could aspire to dominance, and only in the post-war system, it felt it would work explicitly to make itself part of the international system, and after it was accepted for what has been achieved. But Germany also has more neighbors than any other country. So, it is a very difficult challenge for Germany to reinvent itself all the time. But it also presents a great opportunity, because it means that if Germany itself solves these problems it, by definition, contributes to the stability of Europe.

**Kaiser:** That is what we hope will be the policy of the future, and we thank you for your contribution that you made to the state of affairs of Germany. And we want to thank you for this conversation.

**Kissinger:** Thank you very much.

*The interview was made possible thanks to the generous support of*



## Honoring Henry A. Kissinger: World Order and the Rise of China



### Key points

- China's remarkable rise is starting to have notable effects on the global system. While Chinese military capabilities are shifting the regional balance of power heavily in China's favor, Beijing's influence and power are starting to challenge U.S. supremacy in many key areas.
- China's success depends in large part on the institutions and external stability provided by the global order, making it unlikely that Beijing will seek to destroy the system that enabled its rise. Through additional institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well as far-reaching strategic ties with Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, however, the country is actively adapting and transforming the existing international system in a way that stronger reflects Chinese national interests, and shifting the global balance of power toward Asia.
- Growing tensions and hardened rhetoric between the great powers are heightening the risk of a military clash. In view of the catastrophic consequences that a war with modern weapons would have, keeping the contest between the United States and China from escalating into armed conflict is turning into a global security priority.

China has undergone a remarkable development over the last decades. With a GDP of currently USD 12.2 trillion, defense expenditure nearly consistently in double-digit growth since the 1980s, and intense regional and global involvement, the People's Republic has become another great power in economic, diplomatic, and military terms. Beijing has openly acknowledged its intention to take center stage in the economic sphere with its "Made in China 2025" plan and as a global political actor, as the One Belt One Road initiative demonstrates. Against Western expectations, the extensive engagement with China in economic and diplomatic spheres did not lead to China embracing liberal and democratic values. In 2018, President Xi Jinping equipped himself with the right to continue in office indefinitely. Meanwhile, measures of internal control, such as the Social Credit Score System, are being intensified.

With China's growth comes power, and with that power, disruption is to be expected, one Forum attendee warned. Essentially in line with Trump's view of China as a strategic competitor, the Middle Kingdom's ascent has been fueling fears of a new "time of adversity" among many Western politicians and experts, as it was discussed throughout the Forum. Officially, no Chinese functionary has expressed Beijing's intention to replace the U.S. as the dominant global power. Even so, many see Beijing's geostrategic approach as a clear sign of great power projections that constitute a direct threat to Western democracies and can only be countered by immediately thwarting China's further rise.

In an effort to better understand the rationales behind Chinese policies better, discussions also turned to frequent gaps in perception between the Western and Chinese perspective. Some participants maintained that the aim behind China's political efforts is less to emerge as the winner of a global power competition with the United States but merely to regain its lost geopolitical position, influence, and territory, to preserve Chinese sovereignty, and to establish favorable conditions for China's continued development. In this sense, the overall Chinese approach to foreign policy hasn't substantially changed over the last decades. Still referencing back to Deng Xiaoping's policy of a "peaceful rise of China," Beijing seeks to present itself as a non-aggressive empire and responsible leader whose rise will not be a threat to international peace and security. On the other hand, Chinese ventures

such as its activities in the South China Sea as well as the country's unrelenting stance toward Taiwan are a clear indicator that Chinese advances go beyond the peaceful recovery of lost territory. They also contradict Chinese claims of wanting to uphold current global frameworks – and suggest that Beijing doesn't shy away from provoking a military clash as well as breaking with international law if it is conducive to Chinese interests.

Either way, China's rise is constituting serious security challenges for the international community that range from its engagement in space to its immediate interactions with its neighbors. The PRC's highly advanced use of and ambitious goals in the fields of cyber technologies as well as quantum computing, artificial intelligence (AI), and robotics are posing a challenge to U.S. dominance on the technology front. Initiatives such as a large-scale, state-controlled digital circuit embedded in the One Belt One Road program, reminiscent of Telekom's broadband expansion, has the potential to open up vast new spheres of influence. And the People's Liberation Army has gradually acquired the capacities to advance Chinese interests by force, if necessary.

There is also a change on the horizon regarding China's relationship with Europe. So far, the EU has only viewed the People's Republic as a trade partner and failed to consider it from a strategic perspective, one participant argued. To address growing concerns about predatory Chinese investments in European infrastructures and technology, the EU is now starting to push back and launched a screening mechanism for foreign direct investment in strategic sectors in 2018 to protect European interests. The initiative, as the



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head of the parliament's negotiating team Franck Proust declared, is intended to "mark the end of European naivety." The Commission also recently revealed plans for a new EU "Connectivity Strategy" to connect Europe and Asia as a response to the New Silk Road. Europeans are slowly adopting a new stance toward the Middle Kingdom.

Meanwhile, the large-scale implementation of AI may well be the final nail in the coffin of Chinese liberalization and democracy. Aside from serving as an effective tool for control, big data provides in-depth insights into the population's wants and needs. The high level of sophistication with which the Chinese government uses AI to determine policy targets has even been raising questions among Westerners about whether the Chinese approach may, in fact, serve as a model of good governance in terms of procuring the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

China's internal success depends in large part on the institutions and external stability provided by the global order. Also, Beijing is well aware that the United States may still be the only power to seriously hinder its progress, as slowed economic growth resulting from Trump's sanctions have underlined. Nevertheless, as China's influence and power are starting to overtake the United States' in many key areas and rhetoric between the two powers is hardening, any number of triggers could cause the contest between the two powers to escalate into a military clash. One of the most pressing of these is Taiwan, which China, fueled by flaring nationalism, has declared a core national interest. Exceedingly concerned with further enabling the PRC's rise, the United States is highly unlikely to let China take over the strategically valuable island uncontested.

In determining what the international environment will look like in the future, a particular responsibility will also fall upon China. The question of how far the Middle Kingdom is willing to go in its pursuit of wealth and influence will play a crucial role in determining whether it will be possible to find a new global balance of power and peace. Should Beijing opt to continue its rise through coercion and force, avoiding a violent escalation will become a genuine challenge.

Underlying all discussions about global security and the role that China plays in it was one primary theme: the notion that any war between great powers under today's technological conditions would be a war of disastrous implications. As a result, keeping the tensions between the United States and China from escalating into armed conflict is turning into a global security priority. Any successful American and European strategy aimed at dealing with China's far-reaching rise needs to be guided by an understanding of Chinese rationales and trying to find a balance between the powers. As the Chinese government cannot afford to capitulate to Trump, Beijing substantially struggles with U.S. demands and is especially unlikely to ever accept any demands concerning its inner order and system of state capitalism. To keep a global balance and avoid war with China while protecting and advancing U.S. and European interests, it will be paramount to find a way to make the big powers come together. This will not only result in a challenge for the U.S. administration, but for Beijing as well.

## Session II: How to Shape Order in A Multipolar World?

### Key points

- The current upheavals in international relations are an indicator of long-term shifts in the international system which is, once again, starting to be characterized by power competition, the preeminence of narrowly defined national interests, isolationist tendencies, and strained democracies.
- The global supremacy of the Western-led model of liberalism is being challenged by powerful emerging stakeholders just as much as by forces from within liberal democracies. For Europe and its allies, its security will likely revolve around its ability to answer two big questions: How do we ensure a cooperative system that can safeguard global stability and keep all great powers engaged under fundamentally changed circumstances? And how can liberal democracies counter the eroding support within their own systems?
- Avoiding a military conflict of catastrophic proportions and creating a stable global system that includes mutual checks and balances will likely only be feasible if Russia, China, and the West manage to resolve their tensions.



In the third and final session, the 2018 International Security Forum turned to global power shifts and the question of how global governance and international order can adapt to the emerging multipolar world. The current upheavals in the international system mark a moment of a fundamental shift that touches on nearly all aspects of political and social life. As an immensely complex process, the extent, characteristics, and implications of that global transformation are far from undisputed among experts and political practitioners alike. There was, however, one key point that found broad agreement among the 2018 Forum attendees: The irreversibility of current shifts in the global system. The world will not be able to snap back to the status quo ante after the next change of administration in the United States. Far from being a minor incident, current turbulences in the White House as well as in the transatlantic relationship are broadly related to overarching changes in the global system.

A century after the Treaty of Versailles ended the First World War, the world today is again starting to resemble the interwar period in a number of ways. Nationalism and American isolationism are on the rise. Tensions have mounted between nations, but

also within states and regions. In many ways, the EU is more divided than ever since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and has failed to prevent losing one of its members. Many of the pillars of the order erected after 1945 seem to be losing ground. The global community is (again) inching ever closer toward an international system that is characterized by power competition, the preeminence of narrowly defined national interests, isolationist tendencies, and strained democracies.

At the same time, especially in various integration processes in the Asia-Pacific region, the forces of convergence seem to outweigh those of divergence. This has accelerated a large-scale trend of global implications: the emergence of greater Asia with China as its core. As the American dream is coming under distress, millions of people are caught up in what some have started to call the “Chinese dream” and what is turning into a new key segment of the political dictionary, as one participant declared.

As the world is becoming more Asia-centric, the United States is facing a new strategic situation and redirecting resources away from Europe and toward

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German Federal Office*

*Manuel Muñiz,  
IE University*



Asia. Meanwhile, as various voices from across the Atlantic reported during the 2018 Forum, the U.S. has turned into a deeply divided country. In Washington, nearly all political issues have become partisan. This effect has now also extended to foreign policy, leaving less and less room for nuance and dialogue. Trump's Europe policy, as debates during the Forum revealed, is in part driven by his personal aversion against Europe and Germany. However, the current U.S. president is also tapping into a broader malaise among many Americans who have grown tired of the United States' global commitments. The corrosive rhetoric from the White House is raising questions among its allies about whether the U.S. is still a reliable long-term partner, slowly altering the fundamentals on which the transatlantic relationship was built. With it, he is undermining a crucial pillar of the liberal world order that the United States helped erect after World War II.

The notion that the liberal world order is unraveling has become a recurring theme among foreign policy experts and commentators. Many observers see a new "multipolar world" emerging. During the Forum, one participant even argued that the notion of multipolarity may not be enough to illustrate how deep the current shifts truly go: Rather, we are witnessing the emergence of an entirely new international system that could be called a "multi-order system." In this scenario, liberal concepts and values may well still play a role, but will not remain unchallenged and will be rivaled by other, parallel systems of order.

What is clear is that change is on the horizon for the global system. With China, in particular, there is a

new, powerful stakeholder emerging who is going to make its weight count and advance its own national interests, promoting the establishment of a new global system in which the agenda of international relations isn't largely determined by liberal democracies anymore. Chinese and North Korean ballistic and cruise missile programs, as well as China's enormous naval and air capabilities, have already shifted the balance of power toward Asian actors in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, the heightened antagonistic thinking in global politics is driving forward the partnership between Moscow and Beijing because of strategic considerations. Even though the increasing asymmetry in economic and military spheres is a growing concern for Russia, Trump's aggressive nationalism is pushing the two powers closer together in what has been called an "awkward romance" intended to thwart the U.S. and work toward establishing a revised global order that is more beneficial to Russia and China.

In big part due to its own dependence on the institutions and external stability provided by global liberal frameworks, it seems unlikely that China will attempt to fully dismantle the current global system. It is, however, openly challenging the Western-led model of liberalism. Many participants argued that Beijing will support the current international system only to the extent that it serves its narrow national interests. China is actively adapting, transforming, and supplementing the international system in a way that more strongly reflects Chinese national interests. It does so by introducing additional mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) just as much as through investments and strategic ties with



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*(r) Jamie Shea, Friends of Europe*

(l) Ulrike Franke,  
European Council on  
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(r) Karl-Heinz Kamp,  
Federal Academy  
for Security Policy



countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. In part also depending on where the U.S. is going foreign policy-wise, Beijing with its growing appeal especially to authoritarian regimes may start to replace the U.S. as the dominant norm setter in many regions of the world.

The wide range of diverging assessments and perspectives coming together at the conference showed that the process of adapting to changes in the international system will require an immense amount of effort, consideration, reflection, and the political will to compromise from all sides. This holds true for the transatlantic relationship and disputes within Europe, but just as much with regard to mounting tensions with China as well as Russia and other actors.

With view to rising tensions between Russia and the U.S., the prolonged lack of strategic dialogue, a severe dissent over various global issues such as in Syria, and the deepening distrust between Russia and the U.S. have caused a serious crisis of strategic stability since the early 2000s – a situation that has become immediately threatening to Europe with the United States' decision to leave the INF Treaty. One participant argued that the continuous back and forth of accusations and counter-reactions, combined with incessant arguments about what party is to blame for the rise of tensions, are as dangerous as they are futile and have led to an impasse between the powers. What does present itself as a practical way forward instead, it was suggested during the Forum, would be to use the existing channels of communication to promote and discuss those solutions that are possible, including the idea of launching the Strategic Stability

Consultation between Moscow and Washington. One of the most urgent issues would be to address and extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) before it expires in 2021.

Without mechanisms for mutual control, regulation, and cooperation in place, tensions and power competitions escalated into war at the beginning of the twentieth century, one participant argued during the 2018 Forum. The world today features a few crucial differences to the early twentieth century, however: First, in a globalized and digitalized environment, nations and regions are far more closely intertwined. Peacefully navigating the pronounced entanglements and mutual interdependence in areas such as trade and security just as much as in questions of climate change and environmental protection is near impossible without some overarching institutions. The second crucial difference is the immense destructive power of modern weapons. The enormous human toll of the first two world wars notwithstanding, a military clash between any of the great powers today would have environmental and humanitarian consequences of unprecedented proportions. In view of this, the importance of institutions for cooperation and control gains an entirely new quality. As one participant noted, Germany, in particular, has consistently made a strong case for multilateralism as a system based on rules followed by all instead of rules enforced by the strongest since its unification three decades ago. As a country shaped by its historical lessons from the twentieth century like few others, the Federal Republic has made the experience that investing in a rules-based system is beneficial to all in the long run.



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French Institute for  
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As the multifarious perspectives during the Forum revealed, this is becoming increasingly difficult under today's circumstances. Since the conditions of international relations are changing, multilateral institutions need to be developed in a manner that better reflect changing global realities and counter their current weaknesses, such as the UN Security Council's frequent paralysis, while establishing revised and more effective mechanisms for mutual supervision and engagement.

As one participant noted, the compounding global complexity is making it increasingly tempting to look for easy answers, just as right-wing populism is doing with its call for isolationism. With growing urgency, voices from both sides of the Atlantic have started to make their cases for buckling down and defending the international liberal order against its aggressors as a means to safeguard Western interests and values. As liberal democracies continue to try to hold up their positions and continue leaving their mark on the international system, however, these efforts need to be accompanied by a new understanding: There is little chance of entirely warding off the imminent changes. History, as one participant very clearly stated, doesn't move backward. Europe, the U.S., and its allies are today finding themselves in the situation of having to navigate a changing environment and adapt to it. In order to do that, they will have to assess the properties of that new system in a nuanced manner and explore ways of mitigating the negative implications of a system that is no longer exclusively controlled by powers from the Western hemisphere. As the multifaceted discussions during the Forum underlined, policymakers, experts, researchers,

and practitioners will have to find answers to two big questions: First, how do we ensure a cooperative system that can safeguard global stability under fundamentally changed circumstances? And second, how can liberal democracies address their deficits and blind spots that are causing the eroding support within their populations? Incidentally, it may be this last issue that could turn out to be liberal democracy's decisive battle, and it's the one that is of crucial importance in the quest of adapting to changing global circumstances. In the long term, it will be impossible to persist in a contest of ideologies and to sustain a system without the support of its own people. First and foremost, Western democracies need to get their houses in order, get to the root of dissatisfaction in their populations, and generate greater coherence among one another just as much as inside their respective countries if they want to provide a counterbalance to the emerging powers' growing weight.

On the other hand, it will be crucial to find a way to keep China, Russia, and other powers engaged in multilateral structures, institutions, and frameworks for mutual accountability and cooperation. Many transatlantic security experts see the great power projections especially from Russia and China as a threat to international peace that makes it increasingly difficult to maintain a course of non-confrontation. Despite these concerns, it appears that creating a stable global system of mutual checks and balances to avoid descending into destruction and chaos will likely not be feasible if Russia, China, and the West fail to resolve their tensions.

## Public Lecture: “How to Avoid War – Diplomacy in a Multipolar World”

As a special feature, this year’s Forum coincided with the University of Bonn’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To mark this special occasion, the Forum included a public lecture and panel discussion on Monday evening to address the growing uncertainties in international relations and the role of diplomacy in the twenty-first century. In front of a packed auditorium, Dr. Amanda Sloat, Elmar Brok, Dr. Karl-Heinz Kamp, David Kramer, and Ambassador Tacan İldem discussed what role diplomacy can play under today’s political conditions. While they partly differed in their analyses and assessments, the evening’s overall conclusion was clear: Even as the current political conditions are posing a serious challenge for dialogue and diplomacy, diplomatic efforts significantly contain conflicts, tensions, and violence and must not be discarded – even, or especially, in difficult times.



*Clockwise, starting bottom left: (1) Elmar Brok  
(2) Amanda Sloat and Tacan İldem (3) David Kramer  
(4) Panel discussion*

# SCENARIO ROUND-TABLE REPORT



## Scenario Round-Table: Blending Experience with New Ideas

by Sarah Bressan, Benjamin Cole, and Kate Saslow

The International Security Forum's second day was dedicated to the future. "Imagining what could happen next is just as important as dealing with what is currently happening," read the invitation. Young experts were asked to apply to the forum with a scenario that could impact German and European security. After listening in on the debates on the first day, participants were invited to discuss two of those scenarios in a session chaired by Prof. Dr. Carlo Masala (Bundeswehr University Munich) and facilitated by Dr. Ulrike Franke (ECFR) and Dr. Jana Puglierin (DGAP).

To the organizer's surprise, senior participants of the forum turned out to be just as interested in thinking about the future. So a balanced group of experienced thinkers and newcomers got to exchange ideas on the future of NATO and the implications of artificial intelligence in smart cities' critical infrastructure – two high-impact, low-probability scenarios on potential critical security challenges submitted by Benjamin Cole and Kate Saslow.

The goal of the exercise was to blend experience with fresh ideas, to think outside of the box and discuss how to deal with potential future events that tend to be disregarded as unlikely, but would fundamentally challenge Germany's and Europe's security architecture. Separated into a senior and a junior group of experts for each of the two scenarios, participants were asked to anticipate the possible actions the most important actors of each scenario would take in response to the threat and to present a strategy from a German and European perspective. The other groups were then invited to challenge the results.

This unconventional set up led to surprising insights on the future of German, European and transatlantic security and highlighted the value of the scenario method for strategic thinking.



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Public Policy Institute  
(c) Kate Saslow, Stiftung  
Neue Verantwortung  
(r) Benjamin Cole,  
University of Cologne

# Scenario I: Trump and U.S. Decommit from NATO

by Benjamin Cole

## Summary

The first scenario described a future situation where President Donald Trump decides to “decommit” U.S. forces from the NATO framework. In the scenario, the President does not officially remove the U.S. from the legal treaty as there is a question as to whether or not this would require approval from Congress. But, he uses his executive order powers to recall all U.S. federal personnel and military officials from their NATO posts. The President is also unable to stop federal funding to the U.S.’s NATO operations as that, again, would likely require Congressional approval. This would mean that although the U.S. was still a legal, official NATO member-state and its NATO funding continued, NATO’s operational capabilities would be immediately and drastically changed.

## Anticipated response

A few questions concerning the details of the scenario instantly arose among the participant groups. Most predominantly, how deep would this “de-commitment” go? – Would this mean every-single person under the employ of the U.S. federal government in a NATO position would be removed? Would it mean that those positions and offices would still exist but their offices are left empty, or would the entire operations be closed as well?

Among the groups, there were two approaches to reacting to the scenario. The first was developed by the more experienced group: take the wording of the scenario for granted and react as if the U.S. was removing every U.S. person. The second approach, adopted by the junior group, began with seeking clarification from the Trump administration about exactly what the “de-commitment” would entail. But both experienced and junior participants agreed that the most crucial steps would be to analyze the post-

“de-commitment” security infrastructure and determine what capabilities still existed for NATO members (especially Europe and Germany), analyze and prioritize what threats exist, develop an immediate strategy to mitigate the most immediate and urgent security threats, and develop a long-term strategy of defense and security for the post-withdrawal NATO framework.

## Proposed strategy

In their final responses to the scenario, the groups diverged into two camps again over what a long-term strategic approach should be. Although the experienced group focused on setting a framework for meeting the immediate security needs of the other NATO member-states and continuing the most critical NATO operations with as little interruption as possible, their long-term strategy would be to try to get the Trump administration back into NATO cooperation or leave the door open to the U.S. and wait for the next administration to recommit to NATO. They also proposed some ideas they felt would incentivize President Trump to rethink a de-commitment, including negotiating a mass purchase of the F-35 by other NATO member-states, or calling for budget negotiations among NATO member states and develop a tangible plan for all NATO member-states to commit anywhere between 2.5% to 4.5% of their GDP towards NATO funding to appease President Trump’s requests.

However, the younger group questioned how committed the Trump administration or any future administrations would be to reintegrating U.S. forces back into NATO to the same degree as they were previously. Specifically they argued, ‘Once you’ve broken up, it’s difficult to trust that you won’t break up again.’ Because of this, the younger group decided



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(r) Carlo Masala, Bundeswehr University Munich*

they would not be against the U.S. returning, but they thought it would be better for the long-term interests of Europe and other NATO members to develop a “NATO Minus” or “Euro Defense Plus” strategy that does not rely on U.S. cooperation. However, the younger groups did recognize that, in real life, there

would be discord among the participating states in a NATO-/Euro+ system about prioritization of security problems and decisions over which actors and members should shoulder which responsibilities and costs and long debates about these problems would leave the members vulnerable to security contingencies.

### Key Takeaways

- U.S. “decommitment” or withdrawal from NATO would greatly impact NATO operational capacity and upend current security strategies.
- The prospect of U.S. withdrawal from NATO to any degree (whether it be full withdrawal from the treaty, decommitment of resources, or any other possibility) has already invigorated debate in Europe about strengthening current EU defense and security infrastructures and developing more robust infrastructures for the future that are less dependent on the U.S.
- Even though these debates are already underway, they are highly complex and getting the various voices within the EU on the same page on security and defense will be difficult.
- Time will be the most crucial resource. Although Europe is stepping up in its defense investments, it will be a long time before it has a completely U.S.-independent infrastructure, if ever. Therefore, prioritization of security contingencies is key to deciding where investments will have the highest impact, and increased integration and cooperation and operational coordination will be increasingly tantamount to the functional and successful defense infrastructures.

# Scenario II: AI in BRICS Public Critical Infrastructure

by Kate Saslow

## Summary

The second scenario focused on how emerging technologies are able to supercharge fundamental debates being had within international relations. In it, Chinese Tech Giant Alibaba has rolled out smart city infrastructures all over BRICS countries, which gather vast amounts of data to train artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning systems to allow cities that face rapid growth best function. Alibaba's growing presence in cities in the BRICS regions pose crucial questions concerning both surveillance and security. Another key characteristic of the actors in this scenario is the close ties between Alibaba, the Chinese government, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Such successful implementation of AI by the private sector in public critical infrastructure has not yet been seen in other powerhouses, like the United States or Europe.

This scenario tested global power relations as the BRICS countries used their increasing cooperation in science, technology, and innovation to transition into a security alliance challenging the resilience of NATO. The BRICS-NATO Summit in 2025 in the newest smart city in Russia showed just how critical the public critical infrastructure could be; the NATO motorcade was

ambushed by a swarm of sUAS (small unmanned aerial systems) traffic drones and led to the deaths of five NATO officials as the autonomous vehicles' routes were locked and crashed into cement barricades.

## Anticipated response

During the discussion of this scenario, the divide between senior and junior expert groups resulted in very different understandings of not only who the key actors were, but also what the appropriate responses to an attack may be. The more junior-level participants discussed the events to fully understand the implications of the attack. The first part of the scenario leading to debate among the participants was whether or not the car crash leading to the death of NATO officials could be defined as an attack on a NATO member state. If this constitutes an attack, then the logical next step would be to trigger Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, calling for collective defense against the perpetrator. This potential reaction was brought up by the senior-level participants as well. Before invoking Article 5, however, a few other questions needed to be answered.

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(r) Kate Saslow, Stiftung Neue Verantwortung, and Frederik Schorn, Office of the Cologne Mayor



## Proposed strategy

If the decision to counter attack is made, then who would be held responsible? That is a question that both groups had to answer before developing a strategy for action. This led to questions of accountability and attribution. The attack happened in Russia, but Russian officials claimed no responsibility. Can Russia certainly be held accountable? Or is Alibaba liable for the malfunctioning of these systems that they sold to BRICS municipalities? Does the Chinese government play any role if Alibaba is responsible? These questions presented further obstacles in the discussion because even if the stakeholders agreed that there was an attack against a NATO member and Article 5 is triggered, who should be the subject of a counter attack? Both groups seemed to agree that before attribution, launching an official investigation into the events was necessary.

In addition to military responses, the groups discussed more long-term dilemmas as well. The growing presence of Alibaba in many regions means access to immense amount of sensitive data in the scenario. If a big part of the “threat” to NATO was Alibaba’s growing influence, then Europe, with Germany taking an active role, needs to offer an alternative. Developing and deploying responsible AI was also a part of both groups’ discussions. Both groups agreed that simply trying to get rid of the smart cities infrastructures in order to taper Alibaba’s influence was not realistic. The consensus was that instead, there needs to be a safer, more responsible, and more transparent alternative. If Alibaba was able to roll out AI scaffolding into

public infrastructure in different corners of the world, then this could be an opportunity for European tech companies to leverage responsible AI. This could allow European tech companies to set standards internationally by offering responsible AI systems that are not affiliated strongly with any country’s political party.

One trend that the two groups disagreed on was the rise in importance of regional governance. While the senior-level group tended to think only of state-level actors, the junior participants toyed with the idea of governance happening at the city level. For example, within India, not every city may be a smart city connected with these AI systems, but the well-connected mega cities would have a different significance on the international arena. The senior-level group, however, stood behind the traditional nation-state agency in dealing with this crisis, saying that only state actors carry weight on the international level.

While the two groups did not reach two drastically different action plans, the way the discussion evolved showed that dividing the participants into level of experience changed who the important stakeholders were. However, the infiltration of emerging technologies into critical public infrastructure showed that fundamental questions are still unanswered and challenged. The scenario dealing with AI systems and the equality of public- and private-sector players in the face of the law super-charged the discussions of accountability, attribution, and stabilizing the rapidly-changing global power dynamics.

### Key Takeaways

- Collection and processing of Big Data in smart city infrastructures opens the doors for security and surveillance threats, which states are not able to fully address.
- A NATO security alliance is easily challenged today by shifting technological capabilities and closer cooperation of states that were not previously threats.
- AI has the ability of supercharging fundamental questions that remain unanswered: how does globalization and technological advancement affect geopolitics? What does brain drain from public to private sector mean for military threats in multinational corporations? How can machines be held accountable in the case of an accident or attack, or can they at all?
- Innovation in technology may require innovation in international relations.

# Conclusion: Strategic Thinking Needs Foresight

by Sarah Bressan

From national ministries and multilateral organizations to think tanks, scenarios are an increasingly popular tool for thinking about the future. They are useful to encourage people to talk about developments they usually write off as unlikely, and to improve (strategic) planning for the future.

## The Scenario Method

A prominent tool of future studies, the scenario method is applied to foster strategic thinking about the future, improve decision-making and facilitate group communication.

Scenarios are **not predictions** and therefore not judged by their ability to correctly foresee the future. Instead, a scenario is an illustrative story or thought experiment about a **possible** future or aspects thereof. Scenarios are a tool to simulate variations of **plausible** futures, find discontinuities and deal with complex interactions that predictive tools cannot simulate.

Scenario exercises often focus on finding so-called “wild cards”. These are possible future events or developments that are commonly ignored – even by the expert community – because they are deemed highly unlikely, despite their potentially critical consequences. In a scenario process, a trained facilitator supports people to overcome their cognitive biases and think ahead in a structured manner. There is a range of supporting foresight methods, which often result in multiple scenarios about how the future may unfold and can then inform strategic planning.

For the Scenario Roundtable in Bonn, organizers took a different approach. Starting with two pre-selected wild card scenarios written by young professionals, they allowed participants to focus on the analysis of actors and interests at stake and to discuss potential strategic responses. They also enabled young professionals to set the agenda and force experts to discuss issues that had been major “elephants in the room” during the forum’s first day: the U.S.’ decommitment from Europe’s security and the increasing importance of artificial intelligence in a changing global security context.

The separation of senior and junior experts into different discussion groups may seem counterintuitive from a methodological perspective. To ensure plausible scenarios that are well-supported and thought through, facilitators usually aim at groups that are as diverse as possible. In this case, however, the unusual setup proved to be a guarantor of interesting discussions and important insights.

In the young professional groups, participants were able to express their innovative ideas freely and unconstrained by senior experts’ view on what’s currently possible within NATO or national MoDs. The senior experts, in turn, were able to discuss the details of NATO and government operations without having to explain background knowledge to newcomers. This led, for example, to the junior group expressing doubts about a future U.S. commitment to European security independently from the current administration, while experienced participants focused on the potential to negotiate a re-commitment and wait for better times. It also enabled junior participants to declare cities and multinational com-

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panies to be much more important players in the AI&BRICS scenario and almost completely sideline national governments in their solution, while the senior group focused on “more realistic” negotiated solutions between national governments.

Altogether, the senior groups turned out to be more focused on criteria such as likelihood and realism and had a harder time letting go of the idea of correct predictions in favor of out-of-the-box thinking and plausibility. In the comparing plenary discussion, however, their experience and insights into both national governments’ and NATO’s operating procedures enabled senior experts to challenge core elements of the strategies presented by young participants, eventually adding to a more plausible plan for possible future strategic conduct. And they were more experienced in deconstructing the motivation of a potential attacker that tries to weaken NATO.

From leveraging European private data and technology companies against Alibaba as a semi-autonomous non-state actor, to the importance of a “plan B” in the case of the U.S. decommitting from the nuclear umbrella: the roundtable highlighted areas in which Germany and Europe are currently not prepared to meet potential future challenges and made participants aware of the urgent need to change this. Scenarios and other tools of strategic foresight are important to achieve this goal - as is including young people. In contrast to mathematical predictions that try to calculate future developments on the basis of past or current trends, (strategic) foresight focuses on

discontinuities and leverages diverse perspectives. It thus helps to open up debates, draw attention to overlooked problems and facilitate important shifts needed in the strategic planning of defense and security actors.

The policy implications that result from thinking through speculative scenarios are transferable across different potential threats. For example, deciding to expand an institutions’ strategic foresight toolbox, to regularly review strategic priorities, and to consult people with different sets of expertise and world-views can help organizations to counter a specific risk like artificial intelligence in critical infrastructure, but to be adaptive in an environment of rapidly evolving, complex risks

The outcome of scenario processes are closely linked to participants’ unique experience that cannot be replicated in a different setting. Results are thus often hard to “sell” to outsiders. Policy makers might not “buy” the exact scenarios discussed at the roundtable, or deem the strategic options developed as unrealistic. But even if we assume current trends like the increasing importance of artificial intelligence, China’s growing power and the U.S.’ shifting geopolitical focus continue at the current pace, the two scenarios and their implications are no overstatement of the coming security challenges for Germany and Europe. After the exercise, participants very much felt like they were just variations of potential futures that might start to unfold tomorrow. So it might be time to start adapting today.

# COMMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

## Making Germany More Strategic

By James D. Bindenagel



*Ambassador (ret.) James D. Bindenagel, Henry-Kissinger-Professor and Head of the Center for International Security and Governance (CISG), University of Bonn*

Experts at the Bonn CISG International Security Forum confronted the perfect storm of combined challenges of growing multipolarity, rising unilateralism, and global threats. The world order that has been in place for decades is rapidly changing. This unraveling of world order makes transatlantic leadership all the more necessary. The United States is stepping down from its leadership role in global affairs despite studies such as the 2018 Pew Global Attitudes Study that showed that 63 percent of respondents worldwide and 58 percent of Germans “prefer the U.S. over China as the world’s leading power.” Competition to fill the leadership vacuum has begun with a rising China and nationalist Russia taking the initiative. Will Europe strengthen the Transatlantic Pillar?

The wide range of diverging assessments and perspectives presented at the Security Forum made it clear that the process of adapting to changes in the international system will require an immense amount of effort, consideration, reflection, and the political will to compromise and cooperate.

The need to take on more responsibility is especially acute in Europe and Germany. Sustaining the Transatlantic Partnership’s Western values is needed to help reshape world order. French President Emmanuel Macron has presented a vision to reform the European Union and to prepare it for international leadership. However, Germany, the economic powerhouse in the middle of the continent, remains reluctant to take a leading role. It continues to react with crisis management, lacking strategic vision. This reluctance results in halting steps toward reform of the EU, including in security issues, such as PESCO and a European intervention force, as well as in eurozone economic structures that would strengthen the union on the international stage.

Germany’s history compounds its reluctant leadership dilemma and has become an obstacle to its future. After World War II, the country set out to recover economically under the security umbrella of the United States. Lacking full sovereignty during the Cold War and struggling with its history of nationalism, mil-

itarism, and Nazism, Germany developed a strategic culture that was passive, timid, morally uncompromising, and dominated by feelings of guilt. Never again would it engage in “regular” foreign affairs that include protecting national interests and morally messy foreign policy.

Nearly three decades after unification and at a time when power politics and nationalism are on the rise, Germany has to recalibrate its strategic culture. For several years, U.S. presidents have called for German leadership and a stronger Europe. Now is the time for Germany to find the right balance between its international responsibilities and its culture of remembrance. Since nothing moves forward in Europe without it, the country not only has to develop a national strategy but also strengthen Europe’s strategic role in the transatlantic partnership.

Three obstacles stand in the way of Germany developing a new strategic culture, however.

First, even though its leadership set out at the Munich Security Conference in 2014 to take on more responsibility, and despite the subsequently conducted foreign policy and defense reviews, German strategic culture and the German public’s aversion to the military have not changed significantly. According to one survey in 2017, “two-thirds (67 percent) of Germans also hold a positive opinion of NATO but were least supportive of defending Alliance members. Just 40 percent of Germans believe that Germany should provide military force to defend a NATO ally if Russia attacks it. More than half (53 percent) did not support such aid.”



Second, given the dominant strategic culture, it is politically risky to suggest a German initiative or participation in international alliances publicly when the situation is morally and legally unclear. Dogmatic public backlash often prevents an informed debate on foreign policy issues and preempts policy decisions, as seen recently with the suggestion of a German military intervention should the regime in Syria again use chemical weapons against its opponents. Furthermore, domestic rather than international or security issues drive the political fortunes of aspiring and high-level German politicians.

Third, Germany’s strategic thinking is hampered by a lack of cooperation and coordination within the government and especially among ministries, whose independence is protected by a constitutional mandate. At the same time, foreign policy in coalition governments, which are the norm for the country, requires collaboration between ministers with often conflicting political programs, adding to the lack of coherent strategic thinking and planning.

Germany can resolve its dilemma by implementing a more strategic process in its political structure to overcome its reactive, crisis-management culture. A strategic approach builds on informed public debate as a foundation for policymaking, which an independent expert council could address. Similar but not identical to a National Security Council, such an independent Council of Experts for Strategic Foresight could support an informed public discussion but is not caught up in the inter-ministerial or intra-coalition rivalry in policymaking. The Council of Economic Experts is an excellent model for such an independent body. The German Council of Economic Experts – Germany’s Economic Wise Men – reports to the chancellor once a year on the projected development of the economy. The government responds, and the result is an informed public debate that receives a significant level of media coverage.

A Council for Strategic Foresight could contribute significantly to a more strategic consideration of developments that German foreign policy will likely face in the future. It could lay the foundation for a continuing, informed public debate on strategy and foreign and security policy, based on an annual experts’ report that includes scenarios and foresight for current as well as likely future challenges. In the long run, this could lead to a change in the strategic culture, enabling elites and politicians to develop more easily a strategy for Germany and Europe backed by the public, which would strengthen or reshape world order with a robust transatlantic pillar.



# Milestones with Mixed Messages: German-American Relations at 70

By Jackson Janes



2019 will mark a number of meaningful milestones in German-American relations: 70 years since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany and NATO and 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall. These achievements will be celebrated, but they will also be accompanied by many harbingers of more challenges and uncertainty ahead. Because the past is informative, if not determinative, reviewing how we got to today may reveal where we are going.

## **Milestones with Mixed Messages: German-American Relations at 70**

Founded in 1949, in the wake of a devastating world war, the Federal Republic of Germany has since been described by former federal president Joachim Gauck as “the best Germany we have ever had.” The country has built a respectable record of learning, reforming, and renewing.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also came into being in 1949 and is now known as the most successful alliance in history. Germany, a member since 1955, was the frontline of the alliance during the Cold War and remains one of the most important and active members today.

Thirty years ago, the Berlin Wall fell – symbolically ending the Cold War and beginning the process of German unification and Europe becoming “whole and free.” Of the many German-American joint efforts during these past 70 years, German unification certainly stands out as the capstone of cooperation.

Those three milestones are evidence of cooperation – a cooperation without which none of them would have been possible. American support of the birth of the Federal Republic was critical to the evolution of a stable democracy. Six years after its founding, West Germany joined the NATO alliance to secure its partnership with both the U.S. and other alliance members. American diplomatic support in 1990 was of equal importance in laying the framework for the fulfillment of German unification.

During the past seven decades, there were multiple occasions that tested and strained the German-American partnership, but the bonds of common interests and goals have mostly held – until now.

### Warning Signs

Despite the successes of the past 70 years, other milestones will mark serious warning signs in 2019. In the 20th century, the incapacity of Europe and the unwillingness of an isolationist U.S. to engage in preventing the Second World War reminds us of the dangers of a world left to the rule of the jungle. That deficit has clear messages as we look at contemporary threats to our democracies today.

Other red flags could include the 20th anniversary of the euro. While it has survived multiple crises in the last 20 years, there is a serious question about its ability to survive another set. With the current president of the European Central Bank due to retire this year, the status of Europe and the role of the euro in a fragmented environment does not bode well for his successor.

NATO's 70th anniversary will be celebrated in April in Washington. Whether President Trump will use the opportunity to complain again about NATO members' financial obligations remains to be seen. The anniversary celebration will be accompanied by tensions within the alliance: uncertainties about its future and a tenuous consensus on solidarity, shared purposes, and burden sharing.

These reminders as to how far Germany and the U.S. have come – through both crises and accomplishments – as well as the challenges in the new year are both encouraging and sobering for 2019 and the foreseeable future.

### Challenges in 2019

In both countries, there are doubts about the current political leadership. Will Merkel remain chancellor if her party takes another hit in upcoming elections? Who will be her successor and in what combination of coalition government?

Will Donald Trump be confronted with a serious set of allegations either from the Mueller investigations or from the House of Representatives, now under Democratic Party control? And who – Democrat or Republican – might succeed Trump in 2020 should he leave office?

These uncertainties occur while more tectonic shifts on the global stage are creating new, more serious challenges to both countries and their longtime partnership.



The future of the European Union and its capacity to sustain momentum in the face of spreading populist movements is at stake. The results of the European Parliament elections in May will shape the governing structure of the EU, which will have to deal with contention over trade policy, defense, energy security, and the refugee crises. Germany's role in the EU will be even more decisive in holding Europe together in the wake of Brexit. It will be no easy task.

Russia's use of military force in Crimea to alter the map of Europe and other aggressions demand a more vigorous response from Europe. Despite the multiple initiatives to generate a stronger European security capability being taken, it remains unclear if the EU can reach the level of cohesion and credibility needed to seriously confront Russia. Meanwhile, things continue to deteriorate in Ukraine, and Putin continues to destabilize Europe.

At the same time, challenges are also emerging from the Trump administration. In questioning the parameters and cornerstones of the European-U.S. relationship – a commitment to mutual security, human rights, and a liberal trade system – Trump appears to be ambivalent about the value of an integrated Europe. He seemingly rejects the notion that Europe and the U.S. are partners, rather seeing the EU as a rival and questioning whether Europe is really taking advantage of the U.S. But there is a larger American debate unfolding about the role and responsibility of the U.S. on the world stage – one that will not be settled even after Trump leaves the White House.

There is also the growing shadow of China on transatlantic relations. Over the past few years Beijing has engaged in more investment and other forms of involvement in Europe in line with its Belt and Road Initiative. It has been particularly interested in Germany's high-tech sector, but it has also made enormous investments in other countries, leading to concerns about increasing Chinese leverage without seeing agreement on policies and practices in trade agreements. Meanwhile, trade policy clashes between China and the U.S. have escalated significantly and, despite an opportunity for transatlantic cooperation, a lack of a consensus in Europe and the U.S. on how to address trade concerns has hampered cooperation.

There are many assumptions that have long been taken for granted in the transatlantic dialogue and that now need to be reset.

Germany's role is shaped by the fact that Berlin is the clear European leader in partnership with the other European countries. Germans don't like to express it that way, but it is undeniable. This is due to a combination of the strength of the largest economy in the EU, the German leverage within the institutions that make up the EU, and until now, the relative political strength and continuity of leadership in Germany over the past decades. There has been a good deal of German consensus about dealing with Europe in the name of achieving a peaceful and successful continent. Germany has also sought to deal with its past, present, and future through Europe. That is also the case regarding Germany's commitment to the common defense of Europe under NATO.

Germany does not want significant change in those institutional cornerstones. Europe's close alliance with the U.S. has allowed Germany to profit immensely from the post-Cold War international system. That is why German leaders, including Merkel, have been cautious about alienating Washington.

Yet Europe now faces a situation in which the transatlantic cornerstones are less stable on both sides of the pond.

The clash over defense spending, for instance, is a wakeup call that Europe must shed its reticence over the use of military force in order to strengthen European defense. As Angela Merkel advised, Europeans must "fight for our future on our own, for our destiny as Europeans." Yet that will require more resources. For Germany, it could mean that it will wind up being the largest EU contributor to defense. The resurgence of nationalist fervor in many European countries, in addition to the reticence of governments to surrender defense policy sovereignty, stands in the way of significant progress.



Rather than letting disputes and disillusion dilute it, the Euro-Atlantic partners should seize the opportunity to craft a stronger alliance. That effort will need to be accompanied by shifts in both thinking and policy, as well as a reset of burden and power-sharing in the 21st century.

Issues that challenge the U.S. and Europe at home and abroad, such as immigration, terrorism, economic inequality, digital revolutions, and regional security can be shared in both their diagnoses as well as potential responses. The domestic political eruptions visible on both sides of the Atlantic stem from backlashes against ever more rapid globalization, anxiety about the future, and the need to rethink and reform the institutions needed to confront them. Europe and the U.S. share both the challenges and the consequences for either success or failure, and this makes the transatlantic relationship more important now than it has been since the end of the Cold War.

Traditional political elites in Europe and Washington are struggling to convince their constituents that globalization is still beneficial. Germany needs to rethink its role and responsibilities as the anchor of a European order. Americans need to grasp the fact that a secure and stable Europe – and Germany at its center – is one of its major accomplishments in the twentieth century. That both sides of the Atlantic have arrived to an environment of stability, security, and prosperity is a result of strong leaders in partnership.

There is no doubt that we are witnessing deteriorating trends in that partnership today. To deal with that threat, four questions need to be addressed: how, when, where, and why do the members of the transatlantic community need each other. The answers may be uncomfortable, unsettling, and uncertain. But the two countries which profited so much from the last seven decades need to lead that effort again now.

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# Trump Reinvents Limited Sovereignty

By Pascal Boniface



*Prof. Dr. Pascal Boniface, Director, French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs*

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has never been a fervent supporter of multilateralism. But Donald Trump is taking this tendency to a new level. Many among the American elites have believed, or still believe, in the existence of a unipolar world.

It is a combination of the United States' exceptional power, their faith in their historic destiny as a nation and the widely shared feeling that they hold a mission of spreading values that they believe to be superior which are contributing to this view. Of course, within this broad sentiment shared by many, a wide range of nuances and differences exist. Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have been quite multilateralist presidents, especially when compared to others such as George W. Bush. Yet, it was Bill Clinton, considered a president who was open towards multilateralism, who nevertheless claimed that the United States remained "the one indispensable nation". American unilateralism wasn't born on 9/11, and neither on the day D.J. Trump was elected. Unilateralism is one of the tenets of US foreign policy. It is encoded in its DNA, in the conception of a perfectly exceptional nation. B. Obama had reduced this tendency towards unilateralism, but even he did so only partially.

But Donald Trump brings this tendency to fever pitch. His slogan "America First" hardly hides his deeper goal of "America only". The problem is not that the current US president disagrees with other nations or that he prefers unilateral political action over cooperation. The core problem is that Trump's foreign policy is based on using threats and punishment as a means to control those who disagree with him. According to him, it should be exclusively the United States who determines international rules in terms of economy or security. Other countries would be wrong to disagree and thus run the risk of being punished. This is what happened with the Iranian nuclear agreement, signed in July 2015 in Vienna, which had patiently been negotiated over more than twelve years between the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany and was approved by the UN assembly's vast majority, only to be one-sidedly broken by the United States. What's more, the current US administration considers it to be legitimate to punish those parties who want to continue adhering to the jointly built agreement by upholding trade with Iran. They also arrogate themselves the right to back out of the Paris agreement on global warming, signed in December 2015, denying the near universal consensus among political leaders and scientists who have identified global warming as the greatest challenge for humanity.

Finally, the United States treats its NATO allies as subordinates. Every head of state and government supports its country when bidding for the organization of sportive competition, such as the Olympics or the Soccer World Cup. As for Donald Trump, the US application for the organization of the 2026 World cup was accompanied with the threat of sanctions for countries unwilling to support the US application. This is a first in the history of great sporting events

attribution. The United States makes requests and decides unilaterally, and all other countries must follow obediently. Donald Trump's national security advisor, John Bolton, made a speech that can be considered as a declaration of war to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and by extension to international law as a whole: "If the court comes after us, Israel or other US allies, we will not sit quietly. [...] We will ban its judges and prosecutors from entering the United States. We will sanction their funds in the US financial system, and we will prosecute them in the US criminal system. We will do the same for any company or state that assists an ICC investigation of Americans. We will take note if any countries cooperate with ICC investigations of the United States and its allies." This statement clearly illustrated the United States' current belief of holding all rights and privileges while all other countries don't hold any, resembling a cowboy in a Native American reservation. The US, according to this narrative, is not subjected to any superior law and no other nation or body has the right or ability to judge it. By what right?

There is a deep contradiction between the European vision, shared by many other countries worldwide, and the position of the United States on the other hand that places Washington outside of international rules and reciprocal accountability. As a result, the question emerges: Can this country still pretend to speak out in the name of western values? What would have we said if Russian or Chinese leaders had made a statement similar to Bolton's?

In 1968, when the Warsaw Pact troops entered in Czechoslovakia, Leonid Brejnev invented the concept of "limited sovereignty", an oxymoron which aimed to conceal the underlying reality: At the time, no country of the Warsaw Pact could exercise its sovereign rights because they were contrary to the soviet policy. Today, Donald Trump is reinventing this concept with an especially resounding impact for the western world.

For sure, we could presume that Trump's era is just a rough period and that we merely have to wait until it ends. But that would be an error. No one can predict when Trump will end his term. He may well win the 2020 elections. We must be prepared to be confronted with a Trump presidency until 2024. But even if another candidate enters the White House, sooner or later, there are few chances that he or she will be a strong tenant of multilateralism. As Stephen Walt accurately described in his latest book, *The Hell of Good Intentions*, the consensus on the hegemony of American liberalism unifies liberals and neocons in the Washington Belt.

Trump is simply blunter and more brutal than his predecessors.

But, at the same time, he is also a challenger and an opportunity for Europeans. He pushes us to be more organized and more coherent as our security is at stake. We need to move towards a European Strategic Autonomy for real.

The concept of European Strategic Autonomy is not directed against the US. It is directed against dependency. By becoming autonomous, European countries could enhance, not weaken, their links to Washington, based on the foundation of a more balanced alliance. We do have a lot of common interests with the US, but sometimes, interests and goals may differ. In this case, it is paramount for Europeans to be able to have the choice between following the American route or not – instead of being obliged to do so in the absence of any true alternative.

# Are Germany and Europe Stepping up? A NATO Perspective

By Heinrich Brauss



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From a NATO perspective the current overall political landscape can be summarised as follows:

- President Trump's rhetoric regarding NATO, his harsh criticism of European allies, and his unilateral actions have shaken the trans-Atlantic partnership – and sparked a debate about Europe's future strategic orientation aiming at "strategic autonomy". Yet, the US military presence in Europe and its nuclear deterrence extended to Europe remain vital for Europe's security vis-à-vis a confrontational Russia.
- Fair burden sharing has become a defining issue for the transatlantic partnership. The imbalance between the US and European allies in defence spending and the provision of high-end military capabilities for NATO is unacceptable for a defence alliance.
- NATO's security environment has fundamentally changed. To the east, Russia's aggressive posture, its growing conventional and nuclear capabilities, continuous disinformation and intimidation campaigns and cyber-attacks aim to destabilise Western societies and undermine the unity of NATO and the EU. To the south, in North African and the Middle East, continuing crises, state failure and wars have fuelled terrorism and caused mass migration that affect Europe's stability.

NATO has adopted a dual strategy to counter these different threats: strengthening deterrence and defence and projecting stability outside its territory. They complement each other in upholding security at and beyond NATO's borders. NATO's projecting stability efforts focus on providing substantial assistance to partners, such as Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq and Afghanistan, to help them provide for their own security. In light of Russia's strategy, however, deterrence and defence has again become NATO's strategic priority. NATO needs to be able to rapidly respond to simultaneous threats that could emanate from several regions across NATO's entire area. The Alliance must ensure that it has the right forces in the right place at the right time to reinforce, protect or defend threatened allies. At the same time, the Alliance must enhance its resilience against cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns.

To this end, NATO has set up an ambitious programme. A few examples: the size of the NATO Response Force has been tripled to become a joint force of some 40,000 troops. Its spearhead force of some 5,000 troops is ready to move within a few days. The multinational battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, led by Great Britain, Canada, Germany and the US, demonstrate that even in case of a limited incursion to create a *fait accompli*, Russia would immediately be confronted with the Alliance as a whole. The 2018 July Summit in Brussels launched

additional steps to enhance NATO's posture further, such as improving NATO's strategic anticipation capability and accelerating decision-making; adapting the NATO Command Structure to become again capable of commanding the whole range of operations, including large-scale collective defence under cyber threats; the NATO Readiness Initiative "4-30", to enhance the readiness of 30 land battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat vessels, ready to employ in theatre within 30 days; creating the legal and infrastructure conditions to enable rapid military movement across the Atlantic and across Europe; further improving cyber defence; and expanding NATO-EU security cooperation through more than 70 projects.

Are the Europeans and Germany stepping up their contributions to these efforts? The answer is yes and no or not enough. A few examples:

- (1) In the past few years, the EU has spent significant efforts to strengthen European Defence, i.e. enhance border protection, improve the capabilities of EU nations and foster multinational cooperation, while Collective Defence will remain the sole responsibility of NATO. European Defence will also strengthen the Alliance, if military capabilities developed within the EU, including through Permanent Structured Cooperation, are also available to NATO. EU and NATO staffs work together to ensure that capability development in both organisations is complementary and priorities are coherent. But all of this is still subject of planning, the EU need to deliver!
- (2) The EU is working to implement its Action Plan on Military Mobility. It complements NATO's enablement efforts. The European Commission has set up its Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) programme comprising nine core network corridors across Europe to co-finance projects that are of dual, civilian and military, use – roads, railways, bridges, harbours and airports. TEN-T will benefit both NATO and EU nations. It will contribute to facilitating the deployment of US forces to, across and from Europe. It therefore contributes to trans-Atlantic burden sharing. But delivery will take years. The EU must redouble its efforts to accelerate implementation.

- (3) Germany, too, has stepped up its efforts. In Lithuania, Germany leads one of the four NATO Battle-groups in the region. In 2019, it again leads NATO's spearhead force and contributes some 5,000 troops. It leads the new Joint Support and Enabling Command of NATO, which plays a key role in managing the movement of forces across Europe. It has gathered 19 allies to contribute to the German-led Framework Nations Grouping with the aim to create a land Corps capacity; progress achieved so far is impressive. It has significantly increased its contingent in Afghanistan, and supports the UN and the EU in Mali.

But in terms of fair sharing of risks and burdens, most allies believe Germany can and should do more – as the central European power, the biggest European economy and the most prosperous European Ally. Since 2014, Germany has indeed continuously increased defence spending in real terms; for 2019 by some € 4 billion nominally. But it only spends some 1.3 % of GDP. As things stand now, Germany will miss the 2% NATO target by 2024 as it was agreed by all political leaders, although Berlin's objective of achieving 1.5 % by 2024 could result in an increase of the defence budget by some 80%. This not only upsets the US, but also incurs increasing displeasure by European allies. A number of much smaller and less capable allies do already spend 2% – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

Moreover, after many years of focusing on light, deployable contingents for counter-insurgency and peacekeeping and continuous year-by-year reduction of the defence budget, the Bundeswehr is still in bad shape. It faces a multiple challenge: a) reconstituting its existing structures: fully manned, fully equipped, and fully trained formations; b) meeting demanding additional NATO Capability Targets: heavier, more high-end forces and more forces at higher readiness; c) enhancing resilience and cyber defence; and d) sustaining deployments abroad. These requirements necessitate a lot more resources and a steady significant increase year after year, in Germany's own security interests – to make the Bundeswehr fully operational and to appropriately contribute to common operations and missions. Fair burden-sharing among allies is crucial to Alliance solidarity and credibility. It is also essential for Germany's credibility and the future US-European relations.

# The Response to Trump: Emancipation!

By Tobias Fella



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Just like a deer caught in the headlights waiting for the worst to happen, the world watches the unpredictable U.S. President. However, by taking on the discussion on the decline of U.S. leadership, Europe misses a chance.

NATO-Summit in Brussels, trade wars with China and the European Union, withdrawing from the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA) or meeting Putin in Helsinki: Trump dominates the international agenda. He sets topics and defines terms – in front of the camera, via twitter or with the help of his friends on Fox News. Just like the U.S. President, also his team knows of the power of words. Words never only describe reality, they also shape it. Thus, using their power means shaping the policy discourse.

We Europeans have difficulties coping with all the irritations, opinions and ‘alternative facts’ Trump is offering us on a daily basis. Yet, we continue trying to fathom his personality or state of mind – his “true” intentions behind what is being said. We keep asking: What will he do next? Will it be even worse? Is the world as we know it coming to an end? – quoting the title of “Der Spiegel” just after Trump’s election – and

if so: What then? In order to being able to foresee the future we also develop sophisticated models of foresight, identify trends, build and discuss scenarios that are based on scientific theory and methodologies. However, the man in the white house keeps catching us by surprise and shows us that our predictions were utterly wrong, almost like ‘Kremlin Astrology’ during the Cold War. But there are ways to ease the situation, which ideally lead to a common European America Policy, in short: Emancipation!

## Three steps need to be taken:

First, we need to recognize the unparalleled power potential of the United States. As historian Paul Kennedy said: The United States is “the greatest superpower, the world has ever seen”. With only 5 percent of the world population, it makes up 25 percent of the world’s economy, over a third of the world’s military spending and it invests by far the most in research and development – almost 500 billion US-Dollars annually. It is home of 600 out of the 2000 most profitable companies as well of 50 of the 100 top universities in the world. In addition, the United

States is able to take military action all over the world in less than an hour, benefits from favorable demographics, and is surrounded by two massive oceans. Hence, Trump is doing what he does, simply because he can.

Second, we need to take into account that the U.S. President does not disagree with the American belief shared by the U.S. elite of being an exceptional nation with a special mission that decides over its own destiny. In this understanding, it is only the American people who determine the United States' place in the world. It is neither China nor Russia. Thus, being number two is not an option – neither for New York Times or Washington Post columnists criticizing Trump nor for renowned U.S. think tanks like The Brookings Institution or the Council on Foreign Relations. Meanwhile, these only represent parts of the American public, making a visit to Trump-friendly platforms such as “American Greatness”, “Breitbart”, and the opinion section of the “Walt Street Journal” and “The American Conservative” worthwhile.

Third, we must be wary of taking on the American discourse one-to-one, because it could lead to accepting a worldview we do not actually approve of. This includes legitimizing U.S. leadership simply by its absence. Connecting crises such as the Ukraine crisis, NATO burden sharing and the Syria Crisis to the with-

drawal of the United States from the world stage or to its demise as a former superpower assumes that the world is in need of U.S. leadership. Surely, we live in turbulent times and face major challenges. Nevertheless, there is room for self-reliance and emancipation. In fact, while Trump criticizes Europe and Germany, in particular, using both as a projection screen for all bad things and negative developments, he implicitly recognizes Europe and Germany's significance. A significance, which has a lot of potential. Hence, we should find the courage to emancipate – first of all our thinking!

One point should be made perfectly clear, however: Demanding emancipation does not mean separation. Emancipation, rather, is a precondition for being able to better understand the United States as well as revitalizing the transatlantic partnership. In a globalized world with its transnational challenges, everything else would be grossly negligent. Anyone who is calling for “Strategic Autonomy” or a “European Army” should be aware of this while also keeping in mind that it feeds into the logic of multipolarity and power rivalries, including ideas of closed and confrontational spheres of influence. But this cannot be in anyone's interest. Rather, “strategic interrelation” should be our leitmotif – forming an enlightened and self-critical Euro-American alliance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

# It's the Economy, Stupid! Rethinking Germany's National Industrial Policies Amidst a Changing International Security Environment

By Enrico Fels



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## Economics and Security

For many centuries, strategists and political thinkers have argued that the economic base of a political entity is not only responsible for the provision of goods and services to its people, but also the premise for the technological, logistical and personnel support of its armed forces and thus key for national security. More than 2000 years ago, the Chinese strategists Sun Tzu, for instance, strongly warned generals and politicians against overspending in war and advised to be aware of the state's actual economic resources. Both King Archidamos II. and Pericles likewise emphasised the importance of economic means for waging war in their respective speeches before the outbreak of hostilities between the Spartans and the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War. Almost two millennia later, Machiavelli recommended that a political leader should always make sure "that with his economy his revenues are enough, that he can defend himself against all attacks". Thomas Hobbes similarly argued that "the wealth and riches" of a nation's citizens constitute the strength of the state (constituting the commonwealth in his parlance).

Within International Relations, especially scholars writing in the Realist tradition have emphasised for a long time the importance of economics for national security. The significance of a nation's industrial capacity was particularly highlighted by Hans Morgenthau: He maintained that in the industrial age "it was inevitable that the leading industrial nations have been identical with the great powers, and a change in industrial rank [...] has been accompanied or followed by a corresponding change in the hierarchy of power". Also Kenneth Waltz depicted economic capacity as essential and illustrated that the US "used its superior economic capability to promote its political and security interests". More recently, John Mearsheimer maintained that "economic might is the foundation of military might", while Fareed Zakaria seconded that "Britain was undone as a global power not because of bad politics but because of bad economics". For Graham Allison, one of the key lessons from the Cold War is that "domestic performance is important" and that without its greater economy the US might have fared quite differently in its rivalry with the Soviet Union.

Mirroring this thinking, the Obama Administration’s 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) argued that “economic strength is the foundation of our national security and a critical source of our influence abroad”. In short, the relationship between national economics and a nation’s power and its overall security is widely shared and well-established. This is the major reason why alterations in the economic capacities of states are studied for assessing changes within the distribution of international power.

### National industrial policies in the twenty-first century

Having and maintaining a competitive industrial sector lies in the strategic interest of states and particularly of great powers. Given this delicate relationship between security and economics, the new 2017 NSS’s dictum according to which “the United States will no longer tolerate economic aggression” becomes more plausible. The Trump Administration sees “America’s economic security” threatened by other countries’ subsidized industries, mandatory technology transfers for US companies and distorted international markets. (Interestingly, even the word “economic” (118) is considerably more present in the NSS than the term “military” (70) or “strategy” (50).)

Also other great powers connect economic with security interests. That is why China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has gained such great public, political and academic attention since its launch in 2013. The BRI is seen as a grand strategy to further extent Beijing’s economic clout both at home and abroad and thus improve and secure China’s international position. Moreover, China announced a “Made in China 2025” initiative in 2015, which lists ten key industry sectors in which the Chinese governments seeks to improve the technological position of Chinese companies and compete with the developed Western economies in the very profitable advanced manufacturing sector. Given the impressive development of the Chinese economy, strategist, politicians and academics have for good reason concentrated on China’s rise and its re-appearance on the world stage. If measured in purchasing power parity, the Chinese GDP is already considerably larger than the one of the US. This, of course, is a significant economic development with considerable strategic consequences: Before being overtaken by China in 2014, the US had the biggest economy for more than 140 years. Its economic development has allowed China to considerably close the gap in defence expenditures with the US since the end of the Cold War (fig.1). As Henry Kissinger argues, this trend ought not to mean that Beijing should automatically be seen as a threat, but

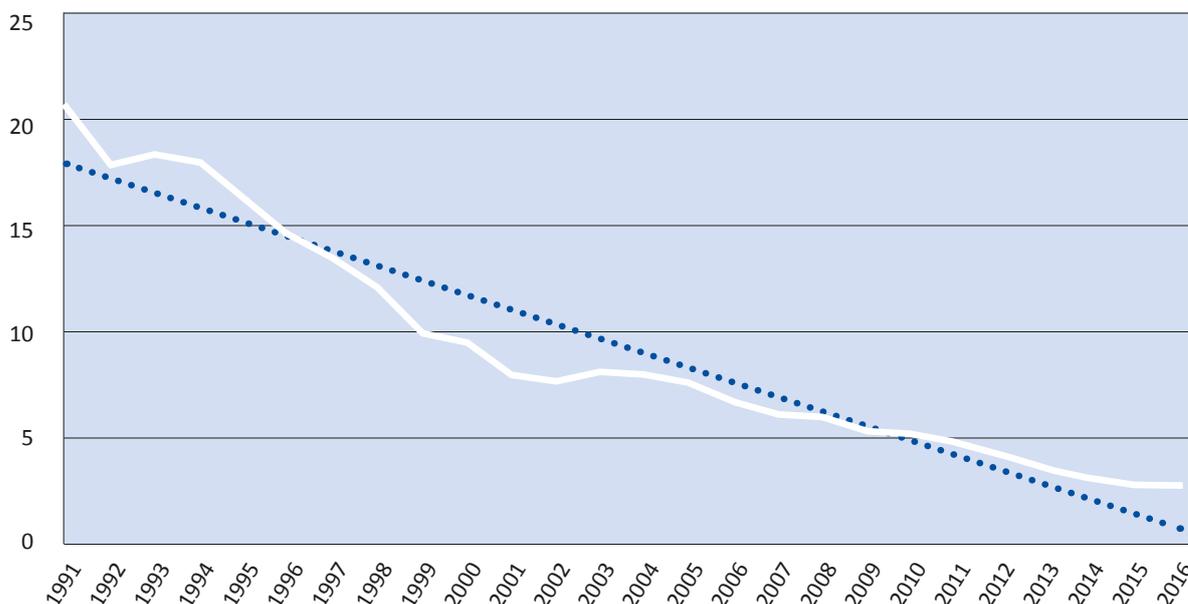


Fig. 1: Ratio of the defence spending between the US and China (1991-2016; incl. trend line; own calculation based on SIPRI data)

rather as “a potential partner in the construction of world order”. Yet the closing spending gap still outlines the wider strategic effects of continuing economic growth in case such a partnership cannot be established.

Of course, China is not the only country pursuing an ambitious industrial policy: In Asia, countries like Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong or Taiwan have been using similar policies to enhance their industrial capacities, catch up with the West and defend their improved industrial position now as best as possible. Also the US has relied on protectionist policies in the past to nurture infant industries, absorb advanced technologies of other nations and regulate foreign investors. Even in the heart of Western capitalism, politicians more than often do not play by the text books of liberal economics: The Obama Administration, for instance, took a neo-mercantilist stance and used over 80 billion USD of taxpayers’ money in order to avoid the total collapse of the US auto industry during the Financial Crisis (a strategically wise decision given the military importance of a domestic automotive industry). The current success of Silicon Valley, to give another example for state intervention in the US, is based on substantial government funding, incentives and protection in the past (and today). As Nigel Cameron outlines, “the core technologies that enabled Silicon Valley were not developed by Silicon Valley geniuses funded by Silicon Valley venture capital. It was the federal government, chiefly through DARPA, who made the development of these now ubiquitous technologies possible, and who gifted them to anyone who was interested.” Mariana Mazzucato suggests in her prized *The Entrepreneurial State* that with the right programs and institutions, governments can actually trigger innovation and allow domestic companies to develop a technological edge over competitors home and abroad.

The US is not the only Western country relying on industrial policies. Since the 1960s, debates about a closer coordination of the European Community’s member states’ national industrial policies have played a strong role in Western European policy circles

in order to cope with the rising competition from the US, Japan and other countries. Basically every European country has run programs with sympathies for what the former French president Jacques Chirac once approvingly called “economic patriotism”. Unsurprisingly, the US has had a keen eye on the industrial policy which its leading competitors have run over the last decades. Not all (perhaps even most) of these governmental programs did achieve their political or economic aims. As the eventual implosion of the Soviet Union’s command economy showed, the state evidently is neither the best investor nor the most prolific economic administrator. Still, given the link between economics and security, governmental interventions into the economic sphere did and will take place, and as outlined, some of these interventions have in the past been instrumental for key innovations and economic progress.

#### **The Altmaier-Plan: Germany’s “Nationale Industriestrategie 2030”**

The changing international environment (particularly due to globalisation, technological change, the crisis of the Pax Americana and the rise of China) and a greater willingness of national governments around the world to interfere in their domestic markets (America First being just one of many examples) puts new pressure on policymakers for ensuring the economic well-being and safety of their nations. As Europe’s largest economy, Germany is no exception to this. A new proposal for maintaining and further developing the industrial sector was presented by Peter Altmaier, Germany’s Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, in February 2019. The “Nationale Industriestrategie 2030 – Strategische Leitlinien für eine deutsche und europäische Industriepolitik”, or Altmaier-Plan, started a debate within Germany about how to best react to the huge international changes particularly amidst a greater political willingness within foreign governments to not rely on a level-playing field competition and instead provide their domestic companies with asymmetrical protection.



Altmaier argues that while Germany's economy has fared quite well over the last decades due to its strong position in important industrial segments, this is no guarantee for a positive future development. He identifies not only the above-mentioned geopolitical developments and a revival of industrial policies by foreign governments that seek to (quasi)monopolize or distort domestic markets via protectionism as challenges to Germany's economic security, but also outlines the effects that new and game-changing disruptive technologies can create for established industries. In particular, Altmaier identifies digitalisation and automation, artificial intelligence, nano- and biotechnology, lightweight construction, new (composite) materials as well as quantum technology as economic game changers. According to him, these areas are of interest for Germany and Europe and justify soft and indirect political efforts in line with Germany's social market economy to ensure that the level of manufacturing is not further receding in Europe. The Altmaier-Plan aims to raise the level of manufacturing in Germany to 25% and Europe to 20% of GDP, support small and medium-sized businesses, preserve value-added chains in Europe and Germany, and adjust the legal framework in order to allow for the establishment of national and European champions. Importantly, Altmaier also wants to better protect those segments of the German industry against mergers and acquisitions that are seen as being important for the country's national security (e.g. critical infrastructures). For doing so, he envisions the establishment of a state-run holding facility in order to allow for a temporary stake of the federal government in national companies deemed to be important for Germany's national security and capacity for technological innovation.

It is beyond the scope of this text to assess the economic soundness of the measures proposed by the Altmaier-Plan and its adherence to the long-held and sound principles of Germany's social market economy. Altmaier labels his plan to be a first draft, which is open for discussion and amendments – leading economists will hopefully be able to further develop and improve it. What is important, however, is that the Altmaier-Plan is trying to start a debate in Berlin about the best way for ensuring prosperity, liberty and security for Germany and Europe amidst a drastically changing global environment.

West-Germany's socio-economic model proved to be very successful during the Cold War, when international trade was limited, and it did after the reunification during the three decades of economic liberalisation that followed the demise of the Soviet Union. Given the ongoing massive international changes, it is about time that Germany has a grand debate about how to realistically respond to the immense strategic turbulences both country and continent face and end a plagues strategic shortsightedness that lasted too long already. Of course, such a discussion must also include the economic sphere, given its great importance for a country's security and political power. Following Graham Allison, a "coherent strategy does not guarantee success, but its absence is a reliable route to failure". The Altmaier-Plan is an important attempt to evade failure and help crafting such a grand strategy for Germany in order to tackle the geostrategic challenges ahead.

# European Conference on European Security: Reasons and Arguments

By Alexey Gromyko



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In 2008, the then president of Russia Dmitri Medvedev proposed to the EU, NATO, OSCE, CIS and Common Security Treaty Organisation to conclude the European Security Treaty. The idea was to create a common Euro-Atlantic security space based on the legally binding idea of indivisibility of security. NATO, EU and OSCE have never replied to it. The draft of the new treaty was a part of Russia's efforts to revive the spirit of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and to draw a final line under the Cold War. "Helsinki 2.0" was coined as a shorthand of this and other attempts to find a common security denominator between Russia and the West.

By 2019, against the backdrop of grand destabilization, growing systemic risks in Europe and in the neighbouring regions, the necessity of the European security system has become an existential demand.

In the long and complicated history of the Cold War, de-escalation had its peaks and troughs. One of profound achievements of peace making in old times was The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in Helsinki in 1975. That was the highest point of detente, the embodiment of a new *modus vivendi*, first of all in the relationship between the Soviet Union and the USA. The state of strategic stability was imbedded in the fundamental

international treaty. Later, due to the Helsinki process, Europe got its most representative organization – the OSCE.

In the 1970s, the premise for a success of the Helsinki project was the solution of the German question. The Moscow treaty of 1970 was a decisive step in that direction. And again, in the XXI century the position of Germany in the joint efforts to prevent a new cold war is of a significant importance as well as in the joint efforts to create a durable and comprehensive European security system.

The Helsinki treaty has not become outdated judging from the high demand of the OSCE, especially since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis. Moreover, the course of events has put into sharp relief the necessity of a new big treaty. The idea is to reconfirm the principles of 1975 and of the 1990 Paris Charter, taking into account huge historical changes, which have happened since then. It is not about copying from the past but about reapplying of fundamental principles of the balance of interests, compromise, mutually beneficial solutions, based on the international law and the supremacy of the UN Charter. In the absence of any positive signs in this sphere, the spill over of the new arms race into the nuclear domain is a stark

reality. The readiness of the USA to leave the 1987 INF treaty can have dramatic consequences. Several attempts to move in the direction of Helsinki 2.0 were made in the past. As a repercussion of Medvedev's proposal, in 2009 the OSCE launched the Corfu process. In 2010, Russia and Germany put forward the Meseberg initiative. Providing that the political will is expressed, there can be various modalities of Helsinki 2.0. It can be a permanent Conference, covering all four Helsinki baskets. Or it could concentrate on politico-military issues, taking into consideration the urgency of de-escalation in this particular area.

Participants of such a permanent Conference can be both states and international organizations, provided with a proper mandate. The Final Act of 1975 was signed by 35 states. Potentially, the number of participants of Helsinki 2.0 may be significantly higher in view of the sharp increase in the number of European states after the breakup of the Soviet Union. However, it does not mean that all of them should be expected to join the Conference outright. On the basis of the multi-speed principle the initiative can be launched by a coalition of the willing, intended to make this process as inclusive as possible. A host nation for the Conference can be one of internationally recognized mediators such as Finland, Austria or Switzerland.

Among the arguments against Helsinki 2.0 is the reference to sufficiency of the existing international treaties, including the UN Charter, The Final Act, The Paris Charter, etc. Indeed, numerous recognized principles of international behaviour were proclaimed at different points in history. However, their interpretations vary and new historical circumstances impose upon us new challenges and problems. If mutual claims and counterclaims mount and tensions rise, the opposing sides should be prepared to meet and conduct structured and serious dialogue.

Another argument is that prior to negotiations the opposite side should comply with preliminary conditions. As a result, we get a vicious circle of blames and counter blames. In the past key international treaties were concluded after major wars, the outcome of which divided nations into the victors and the defeated. Today, it is impossible to expect any leading centre of power, especially a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to admit its defeat or to yield to ultimatums. Therefore, to put forward preliminary

conditions to launch talks on transregional security is in effect to torpedo the settlement of international disputes through diplomacy.

The main criticism from NATO regarding such ideas as the European Security Treaty consists in vehement opposition to anything that can limit the ability of the Alliance to enlarge. However, this is a weak position. Firstly, indivisibility of security does not automatically prohibit enlargement of any military organisation. Secondly, it does not kill the open door policy of NATO, SCTO or other alliances but put it on the basis of pragmatism instead of ideology and propaganda. Thirdly, it implies that all sides become reciprocal stakeholders in the common security sphere and the dividing lines between opponents start to blur. The more this process is advanced, the more it gets unnecessary for military organisations to grow territorially.

Common sense and dangerous situation in the sphere of arms control and strategic stability dictate the necessity to launch dialogue among coalitions of the willing in the spirit of Helsinki. It is highly desirable that all states in the space from Vancouver to Vladivostok participate in this endeavour. However, in the near future it would be unreal to expect such an idealistic scenario to unfold. At the same time, merely waiting for a favourable moment to arrive in the future means letting the chances of a new great war increase.

Nations which suffered most from the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century should bear the responsibility for initiating a new permanent Conference on European security. What can be a nobler task than to save the world?



## What Remains to be Done: Some Conclusions

By Karl Kaiser



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As the established international order crumbles, old commitments weaken and the threats to Germany and the EU increase, the pressure grows on Germany to take decisive and truly consequential action. Five years have elapsed since Federal President Gauck, Foreign Minister Steinmeier and Defense Minister von der Leyen issued their much-quoted pleas for greater German responsibility, many studies have been published with the same tenor, and numerous speeches have been made by politicians calling for a greater German role. However, the tendency of the German public to underestimate the dangers of the contemporary situation and to leave safeguarding Germany's security to others who are in fact more reluctant to do so is as strong as ever. Politicians follow the trend. The German defense budget has increased only moderately. Those who argue against the target of 2 % of GNP for defense, supposed to create an overwhelming weight of Germany's armed forces in Europe, overlook that Germany could easily achieve 2% by assisting NATO partners in need and by contributing to shared systems and infrastructures while maintaining an acceptable size of its armed forces. It behooves a true leader to use its resources, considerable in Germany's case, to help others.

Germany's aspiration to be an anchor of the EU, shared by all German centrist parties, should move from a rhetorical posture to concrete policies. In the same way, as the US established the Atlantic community through the Marshal Plan a country with a balanced budget and large trade surpluses like Germany should keep the EU afloat by helping others rather than self-righteously preaching others to follow its virtuous example.

With regard to China, Germany has for a long time basked in the sunlight of its phenomenal trade and investment relationship – Europe's number one – and failed to see that the bilateral approach pushed by Beijing inherently undermines a common European posture, as does China's "16 + 1" policy vis-a-vis East Central European EU members and its bilateral action under the "Belt and Road Initiative". China likes to contrast its advocacy of free trade with the protectionism as the Trump Administration applies it, but at the same time, it denies true reciprocity in the treatment of foreign investors, enforces the transfer of technology and sponsors the theft of intellectual property. In this respect, Germany, as Europe's lead-

ing economic power, must actively pursue adherence to principles of openness and fairness and try to forge an alliance of like-minded countries including even the Trump Administration despite its predisposition to unilateralism.

Like practically the rest of the EU, Germany has for a long time seen its relationship with China almost exclusively in commercial terms. However, as a rising China raises territorial claims on its neighbors and refuses to accept the Law of the Sea ruling of the Hague Court on the South China Sea Germany and the EU can no longer afford to ignore the security implications of their involvement with China. This attention to security suggests by no means advocating a relationship of enmity, but Germany and the EU will have to join those who support efforts to keep China's rise peaceful.

Helping to develop the EU is at the core of Germany's central interest. This task requires a close relationship with France which, thanks to President Macron, has a new chance to recreate the Franco-German motor for the EU. Here again, Germany must consider giving up its orthodoxy in economic policy and be more forthcoming in security policy if it wants the relationship to succeed.

As President Trump's policies continue to undermine established relationships and the post-war liberal order, Germany must help the EU to focus on those elements of the Trump Administration's policies that preserve established cooperation across the Atlantic, avoid all policies that produce a lasting decoupling from America, limit the damage and preserve what is essential to the West's essence.



# Addressing China's Global Strategy

By Philippe Le Corre



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In December 1978, Deng Xiaoping launched the so-called Open-Door policy which led to the emergence of a new China, which led to three decades of double-digit GDP growth. Over the years, China has also become increasingly powerful politically, diplomatically, militarily. Around the same time, in 1979, the United States established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China – as a result of the efforts by Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon, who had visited Beijing in 1972. To these two facts, we should add a third one: the inclusion of China in the World Trade Organisation, in 2001, which led both American and European governments to start believing in the 1980s that engaging with China would help the West to make China “more like the West”. It has not been the case, although multinationals poured into China hundreds of billions of dollars in investments (for example, U.S. FDI to China between 1990 and 2015 reached \$228 billion) and the West opened widely its doors to Chinese products, notably after 2001.

Let us now look at the past year, since the 19th party congress of the Chinese Communist party, in October 2017:

- Xi Jinping was re-appointed as state president – a function that now has no term limit. He stated “China’s rejuvenation” without reference to Deng’s low-profile approach on the international system.
- China wants to take “center stage”. It no longer wants to be confined to be an economic power. Xi acknowledged China’s intention of reaching the top position in a number of key-sectors such as robotics, AI, electric cars, biotech and aviation.
- The PRC expanded its programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the internationalization of the RMB; it raised the budget of the foreign ministry – and of course the Defense budget continued its double-digit growth – as it has been the case since the 1980s

This strategy has been met with a strong pushback:

- In America, Donald Trump launched its offensive against China as a strategic competitor. It started with trade sanctions before the summer, it continued with a reinforcement of CFIUS; and visa threats against Chinese scholars and students. Vice President Mike Pence delivered an offensive speech in September, where it declared the Administration's full engagement against China's rise. He repeated this strong message just in November at the APEC meeting which ended with no joint communique due to the US-China row.
- A number of countries in South Asia, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa have started complaining about the burden associated with being part of BRI. The debt trap faced by Sri Lanka and the Maldives are well known.

The Kissinger doctrine of "adopting a strategy of non-confrontation" becomes harder to sustain. There is clearly a cold-war type confrontation between the two largest powers in the world, the existing one and the emerging one. As for Europeans, they should avoid remaining on the side-lines.

China's ambition is now clearly across the board – and across the world. There is simply no single region or continent where Chinese companies have not stepped foot.

Republicans and Democrats have reached a consensus on the ways to address the China question, especially with regard to trade and security. In a 2012 Foreign Affairs article, Kissinger wrote that a confrontation in Asia-Pacific would be detrimental to US interests as China would be a formidable adversary. But Asia is the area that China wants to control the most even

though – "No Chinese government official has proclaimed officially the ambition of displacing the US as the preeminent power in the Western Pacific". Looking at what China is currently doing in the South China Sea and its ambitious geo-economic plan under the "Belt and Road" banner, it is hard to see a country without geopolitical ambitions. China says it wants to preserve the current international framework but it also promises to offer a connectivity that has not adequately been addressed by existing international institutions.

China will do everything it can to increase its influence in the current world institutions and to enhance its own concepts through the BRI, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and others.

The CCP is mainly focused on the preservation of its domestic power and the continuation of its economic growth, now around 6 percent. The party wants to remain at the core of China's society and is therefore enhancing its influence at both private Chinese firms and foreign companies.

In reality, the country is facing massive problems and it has acknowledged that an enhancement of its 1990 "going out" policy is the way to address problems ranging from overcapacities to the rising production costs that are affecting both foreign and Chinese companies. The CCP has prioritized the role of state-owned enterprises in delivering its long-term goals in sectors such as hi-tech manufacturing – if necessary by acquiring overseas technologies. The party wants to attain great-power status by 2049 at the latest. "Going out" means economically but also strategically with potential actions in the South China Sea or even Taiwan.

Despite the recent Trump-Xi meeting, the US-China relationship will not show sign of improvement for quite some time. In a way, Beijing has been shocked by Trump. A Chinese retrenchment is not impossible if the trade war and the pushback continue. China will almost certainly roll back some of its commitments and prioritize them, giving greater attention to strategically important projects

### Where does this leave Europe?

In one of his answers to Karl Kaiser's interview just days before the 2018 Bonn Security Forum, Henry Kissinger had this apparently benign answer on China: "In Europe, he said, there is the beginning of a questioning".

Europeans have indeed started to realize that the time of competition is gradually being replaced by the time of adversity. Chinese investments have been massively targeting Europe – just like the rest of the world. This gives China a true influence in the affairs of many nations.

With the U.S.-China relationship at one of its lowest points, Beijing will probably change tactics and seek alliance with Europeans.

Europe is split between those who consider China as a rival and those who welcome Chinese capital without questioning either its motives or rationale. China multiplies predatory investments across Europe. For

example, it has taken over Athens' Piraeus harbour. In Portugal, China has invested in projects ranging from energy to transport, insurance, health, financial services, real estate and media. Meanwhile, in Germany, there are serious concerns on the technology front, as China has opened set goals in sectors such as artificial intelligence, robotics, alternative-energy vehicles, medical devices or aviation. If it cannot achieve it alone, snapping foreign innovative firms will be another way.

Although many Europeans are considering China not playing fairly (no reciprocity), China's "queue-jumping" is not well understood. Xi's recent state visit to Spain and Portugal has shown that there is too little information about the Chinese economy or Chinese politics. Fortunately, the EU has adopted an investment screening mechanism, two years after the governments of France, Germany and Italy advocated for such a scheme. It should serve as a wake-up call. The EU will produce a non-binding alert mechanism for future investments and a centralized database of current investments while leaving the final decision of approving deals to individual member states. With regard to the BRI, the EU has also launched a counter offensive, named the EU-Asia connectivity strategy which should start offering an alternative to countries that have felt left out by the EU after the 2008 financial crisis.

## It's Time for More Realpolitik in Global Economic Governance

By Peter S. Rashish



*Peter S. Rashish, Senior Fellow and Director of the Geoeconomics Program, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies*

The World Trade Organization is a magnificent achievement. It has created an open trading system on a global scale, increasing welfare for its 160 plus member countries. It has reduced uncertainty in the global economy, thereby encouraging long-term investment by companies. And through its dispute settlement system it has strengthened the rule of law, helping to legitimize the idea of free trade. In short, when we say that the international economic system built 70 years ago is both “liberal” and constitutes an “order,” we largely have the WTO and its predecessor the GATT to thank for that.

That’s the good news. But as the G20 leaders’ declaration from the recent Buenos Aires summit accurately points out, “the [multilateral] system is currently falling short of its objectives and there is room for improvement.” There are two reasons for multilateralism’s growing band of discontents.

One stems from the ideology of the current U.S. Administration. Maximizing U.S. power is the Trump White House’s North Star for advancing the country’s interests in the world. This is not an isolationist Administration, but it is a nationalist one. It believes home-grown solutions are best, seeks a maximum freedom of action, and is skeptical bordering on hostile to international commitments that could limit this freedom of action.

The WTO is only one of several institutions and agreements that are suspect because of their potential to limit U.S. power. Some have experienced mild annoyance from Washington (NATO) while others have felt the full force of rejection (the Paris climate accords, the Trans-Pacific Partnership). The WTO lies somewhere in between these two extremes.

A second reason for growing unease about multilateralism, especially trade multilateralism, is China.

There is a view held not only within the U.S. Administration but also by many Republican and Democratic lawmakers – and increasingly by leaders of core EU member states – that the WTO was not built to handle an economy like China’s. Instead of reforming and growing to become more like the U.S. or European economy, China’s economy has become more state directed, less transparent, and less respectful of global trade rules.

While the U.S. Administration appears open to reforming WTO rules, this is an era of impatient politics. It seems clear the White House is not going to wait forever for the multilateral avenue to lead to results.

Since modernizing the WTO so that it better accounts for China's state capitalism is going to be a long process it may not be wise to make it the only focus for preserving the component parts of the current liberal economic order. If the WTO and the trade multilateralism it represents is a great achievement but also an obstructed path, what is the way forward?

One option could be for the European Union, Japan and other countries with more taste for long-term agendas to pursue multilateralism minus the United States, trying to move ahead with WTO reform efforts without the support of Washington. It's not clear that would work.

The EU has a number of offensive and defensive trade policy interests where the role of the U.S. is crucial. These include removing the Section 232 on steel and aluminum tariffs, preventing the imposition of similar tariffs on automobiles, strengthening foreign investment screening, nudging China to change its technology transfer, intellectual property, and cyber policies, forging a long-term response to the Made in China 2025 plan for industrial supremacy, and writing rules for digital trade. Sidelining the U.S. at the WTO would be unlikely to encourage Washington to take a cooperative approach to the EU's interests on these fronts.

Borrowing a concept more often associated with international relations theory, another option could be for the United States and the European Union to pursue a "realist" course of trade policy.

Not the full-bore Hobbesian approach that characterizes the current U.S. Administration. Rather, the idea would be to identify where key U.S. and EU trade policy interests lie, where these interests overlap, and then to craft transatlantic strategies to advance those

interests. U.S. and European economic power would be multiplied, increasing its capacity to leverage change elsewhere in the international economic system.

As the trilateral cooperation among the U.S., the EU, and Japan begun at the end of 2017 to develop new global trade rules demonstrates, even a U.S. Administration that sees the world as an irredeemable arena of competition for power, one that puts America First, may understand that to achieve its goals some of that power will have to be harnessed from beyond U.S. borders.

Now, the risk of Realpolitik – whether in trade policy or in international relations – is that it could sacrifice values at the altar of interests. And the preservation of the liberal values at the heart of the global trading system should be non-negotiable.

These values include the rule of law, the primacy of the individual and private interests vs. state interests, fair and regulated competition, transparency, and openness to economic and technological progress.

Yet it is precisely these values that a realist approach to trade policy would promote.

U.S.-EU cooperation to advance their common economic interests could aim among other things to agree on a code of conduct for state-owned enterprises and means to enforce that code, promote an open digital economy together that bars the localization of data into state-controlled silos, strengthen competition policy to prevent states from subsidizing exports of underperforming firms, and create high standards for labor rights and environmental protection.

These steps would strengthen liberal values and the ability of U.S. and European firms that operate according to those values to flourish in the global economy. And they would help give citizens confidence that governments are working to promote a global economy that both reflects their values and invests in their future prosperity.

A realist approach to trade policy that focuses on state-to-state cooperation need not present a challenge to the institutionalism represented by the WTO. The two paths can be followed simultaneously, and one day efforts outside the WTO could be brought inside it.

Whether it is the U.S.-EU-Japan trilateral process, or the U.S.-EU trade talks launched in July 2018, avenues are not lacking for building leverage to encourage China to take a more market-oriented economic path. All the more reason, then, not to turn cooperation in the WTO setting into a test case for the U.S.-European relationship. That would do little to narrow transatlantic differences over the role of multilateralism, while at the same time be unlikely to help strengthen the liberalism at the heart of the global economic order.

# Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) and NATO Burdensharing

By Martin Schelleis



*Lt. Gen. Martin Schelleis,  
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and Enabling Service,  
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It is four years ago now that the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula meant a violation of international law and thus a serious challenge to the peace and security architecture in Europe.

The decisions taken at the NATO summits since then are the Alliance's answer to these developments – more emphasis on national and collective defense, with a focus on the European continent in general and the eastern boundaries of Alliance territory in particular.

Situated in the heart of Europe, Germany will in many cases be a critical part of NATO's strategic hub, mounting base, transit country and rearward operating base for re-assurance and collective defense. Many of our neighbors face similar challenges, so it is quite natural to look for a common approach to master them.

To this end – among other measures – Germany introduced the Framework Nations Concept, the FNC, into the Alliance. The FNC offers very flexible tools to build-up and maintain multinational military capabilities.

The FNC aims at combining European efforts in the development of military capabilities and the provision of operationally ready forces to NATO, thus strengthening NATO's European pillar.

One partner – the framework nation – provides all necessary elements – the frame – that constitute a military capability, e.g. command and control, training, infrastructure and force packages. All other partners from NATO nations and beyond are then invited to join, be it just with a few elements or with all of their resources. The decision is up to each individual nation.

So, the capability in its entirety will be provided by the framework nation but it will be enriched and enlarged by contributions from other nations. My service, the German Joint Support and Enabling Service (JSES), provides supporting and enabling capabilities jointly for the Bundeswehr.

With regard to the FNC, we now lift this up on the multinational level. The aim is to develop a combined and joint military service – a CJSES – that offers crucial supporting capabilities to NATO and others in Europe.

We've stepped up and opened all our operationally relevant military capabilities for multinational cooperation – command and control, logistics, military police, protection against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats, civil-military cooperation and host nation support.

The capacities in these military capabilities are scarce all over the Alliance in Europe. So, enhancing them is in the interest of all: NATO, EU, and partners.

Very importantly: the FNC allows each nation to choose where and to what degree it wants to cooperate with us – from mere coordination to deep integration. There is always the possibility to opt out! This design of Armed Forces of Europe w.r.t. critical enablers might seem disappointing in light of the current discussion about European Armed Forces. But as long as we don't have a more binding political comment on the common use of multinational forces, as long as nations put emphasis on their full sovereignty the Armed Forces of Europe is the best we can get. And by the way - it is a very effective construct.

To prove this - we have just been able to declare FOC of the first FNC cluster on CBRN-Defence after displaying our ability to prepare and conduct successfully NATO's largest CBRN-Defence exercise ever! Operationally ready multinational forces, that's what we are looking for!

Basis for this are the already existing FNC capability clusters Logistics, CBRN Protection und Civil-Military Cooperation supplemented by the new ones for Military Police, enhanced Host Nation Support and Deployable Field Camps.

The establishment of the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) for NATO will give a real boost to this. My JSES is charged with mounting and supporting this new German lead NATO command. Thus we are building up a multinational command and control capability for NATO that can draw on relevant multinational capabilities under development within JSES.

In close coordination with the host nations the JSEC will be responsible for security, freedom of movement and support of NATO forces in the rear area. It will ensure rapid forward deployment of allied reinforcements to the respective operations area.

The rear area could extend from the North Cape to Anatolia, from Portugal to Poland, so this is quite a task. Also the set timelines are challenging! We have to achieve IOC next year and FOC in less than two years.

But we are adamant to send a clear signal to our partners that Germany is willing to take a fair share of the burden.





Our significant participation in TRIDENT JUNCTURE is just another example for this. We were there with almost 10.000 men, a very good overture for the German lead Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) Land in 2019.

And not the least, our strong engagement in strengthening European defense capabilities within NATO. We want to combine the efforts and proceed as inclusive as possible – fully in line with the Joint Declaration of NATO's SecGen, the President of the European Commission and the Chairman of the European Council.

In practical terms: our support to the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) within the EU and our concrete projects are all designed to support the European pillar in NATO, thus both organizations.

A good example for this is the Military Mobility project initiated by the NLD and co-sponsored by DEU. Or should I say: initiated by General Ben Hodges by his demand for freedom of movement for his forces in Europe?

With this PESCO project, we simplify and standardize procedures for cross-border military transports in Europe to the benefit of NATO as well. And we are combining EU efforts to enhance infrastructure with NATO's requirements for rapid military mobility in Europe.

We will link it with the German/French PESCO project to establish a "Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations" and also our FNC cluster "Logistics". These and several more initiatives fit perfectly well with the JSEC. We net together a HQ with the respective capabilities.

To sum it up: We are willing to deliver. With respect to critical enabling and supporting capabilities, the CJSES could become the nucleus of the Armed Forces of Europe and even the European Armed Forces serving both, Europe and NATO.

**A special thanks to our co-host:**



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