

E-PAPER

Conflict Zone Asia-Pacific // Konfliktzone Fernost

19. Außenpolitische Jahres-
tagung, 21.-22. Juni 2018 //
19th Annual Foreign Policy
Conference, 21-22 June 2018

Reader

Eine Publikation der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Juni 2018

Conflict Zone Asia-Pacific // Konfliktzone Fernost

Crises, power shifts, and its repercussions
for Europe and Germany //

Geopolitische Machtverschiebungen in der
asiatisch-pazifischen Region und Rück-
wirkungen auf Europa und Deutschland

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Preface // Vorwort

Als wir im Sommer 2017 beschlossen, die asiatisch-pazifische Region in den Fokus der 19. Außenpolitischen Jahrestagung zu rücken, konnten wir nicht ahnen, wie sehr sich diese Region in den Vordergrund der internationalen Berichterstattung drängen würde.

Zu Beginn des Jahres 2018 schien die Krise zwischen den Vereinigten Staaten und Nordkorea außer Kontrolle zu geraten, nachdem sich US-Präsident Donald Trump und der nordkoreanische Machthaber Kim Jon-un wochenlang mit immer neuen Drohungen überzogen hatten. Man werde Pjöngjang eine «blutige Nase» schlagen, das war dabei noch eine der harmloseren Verlautbarungen aus dem Weißen Haus. Immer unter Verweis auf sein sehr viel größeres Atomarsenal drohte Donald Trump den Nordkoreanern, ihr Land vollkommen zu zerstören, sollten sie es wagen, die Vereinigten Staaten anzugreifen. Zum ersten Mal seit dem Ende des Kalten Krieges rückte ein Atomkrieg wieder in den Bereich des Möglichen.

Doch einige Monate später, im April dieses unberechenbaren Jahres 2018, wendete sich das Blatt erneut: Jetzt sprach man von einem Friedensvertrag und einer möglichen Denuklearisierung der koreanischen Halbinsel, nachdem sich die Staatsführer Nord- und Südkoreas vollkommen überraschend an der Waffenstillstandslinie des 38. Breitengrades getroffen hatten. Und auch aus Washington sind seit dem Frühjahr 2018 nach langer Zeit wieder versöhnliche Töne zu vernehmen.

Während die nordkoreanische Atomkrise seit den letzten Monaten eine kurze Atempause lässt, dominieren die angespannten amerikanisch-chinesischen Beziehungen jetzt wieder die Schlagzeilen, insbesondere aufgrund der vielen Kontroversen rund um den bilateralen Handel zwischen Washington und Peking. Auch hier zögern einige Beobachter/innen nicht, von einem kommenden Handelskrieg zwischen den beiden größten Volkswirtschaften der Welt zu sprechen – mit unabsehbaren Folgen für die gesamte Weltwirtschaft.

Unter diesen Vorzeichen kommt unsere diesjährige Außenpolitische Jahrestagung zur «Konfliktzone Fernost» gerade zur richtigen Zeit, auch weil sich im Windschatten der zwei manifesten Krisen rund um Nordkorea und den US-chinesischen Handelsstreitigkeiten mindestens zwei weitere Konflikte abzeichnen, die mittelfristig in einer militärischen Konfrontation münden könnten: die Frage nach Taiwans zukünftigem Status und die maritimen Territorialstreitigkeiten im ost- und im südchinesischen Meer.

Die Außenpolitischen Jahrestagungen der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung bieten stets auch ein Forum für kritische Selbstüberprüfung und die Selbstreflexion deutscher und europäischer Annahmen und Gewissheiten internationaler Politik. Ein erster Blick in die asiatisch-pazifische Region mag dabei wenige Anknüpfungspunkte finden, zu weit ist «Fernost» von Europa entfernt – geographisch wie kulturell. Doch ein zweiter Blick in die Region lohnt: In

Japan oder Südkorea etwa sehen wir die strategischen Dilemmata verunsicherter US-Alliierter, die dem Erstarken Chinas und dem Zurückweichen Amerikas mit wachsender Sorge begegnen; in Australien, wie eine liberale westliche Demokratie die chinesische Einflussnahme in inneraustralische Angelegenheiten mit zunehmendem Argwohn betrachtet; und mit den Philippinen schließlich begegnen wir traditionellen US-Verbündeten, die angesichts der Schwächephase Amerikas bereit zu sein scheinen, auf den chinesischen Siegerkarren zu springen.

Es sind dies Motive, die wir aus der europäischen außen- und sicherheitspolitischen Debatte nur allzu gut kennen. Der internationale Machtübergang und die schwindende Bindewirkung westlicher Institutionen und Normen sind eine globale Herausforderung für all jene, die an einer liberalen, multilateralen und regelgeleiteten Weltordnung festhalten wollen.

Die Zukunft dieser Weltordnung entscheidet sich demnach nicht nur diesseits und jenseits des Atlantiks, sondern auch und entscheidend in der heißesten geopolitischen Region des Planeten: im asiatisch-pazifischen Raum.

Mit der 19. Außenpolitischen Jahrestagung hoffen wir, den Blick für diese Entwicklungen zu öffnen und die europäische Debatte zur Zukunft des transatlantischen Verhältnisses, der liberalen Demokratie und der multilateralen Weltordnung zu bereichern.

Berlin, im Juni 2018

Giorgio Franceschini
Referent für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE // AUSGANGSLAGE

Rory Medcalf

Managing strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific: How to avoid replacing one hegemony with another

As Chinese power rises across the broader Asian region, and the world comes to terms with uncertainties and anxieties related to Donald Trump's America, it is easy to leap to certain conclusions. One is that we are seeing the end of the United States as the decisive strategic actor in Asia. Another is that the extension of China's apparent economic largesse across the region—embodied in the so-called Belt and Road initiative—is a welcome and stabilising development. A third false conclusion is that Europe can afford to pay only modest attention to what happens in a strategic and security sense on the other side of the world.

I would challenge all of these conclusions. Instead, I would like to introduce you to a somewhat different way of understanding the strategic competition that is unfolding in what I would term the Indo-Pacific region. This is a personal perspective and an Australian perspective, but it resonates with what is rapidly becoming a new school of analysis and policy thinking—let's call it the Indo-Pacific concept.

At its heart, the Indo-Pacific is about recognising the broad maritime region centred on Southeast Asia as one strategic system. The Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, South Asia and East Asia, India's neighbourhood and China's neighbourhood, can no longer be considered separate zones of security, diplomatic and economic activity. Instead, the interests and behaviour of major powers are intersecting in increasingly complex and competitive ways across this super region, where the interests of Germany and other European countries are also engaged. Indeed, it is reasonable to say that the oceangoing dimension of China's Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the Maritime silk Road, is really the Indo Pacific with Chinese characteristics. The Indo-Pacific includes but also potentially replaces the late 20th century idea of the Asia-Pacific, with which we are more familiar.

The Indo Pacific idea is an objective way of defining strategic geography in a region that is emerging as the global centre of gravity both in security and economics. It is also, however, the basis for a strategy—and that is why it is being met with some considerable discomfort in China. This was made evident most especially at the recent Asian Security Summit or Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore, in early June 2018, when variations on the idea of the Indo Pacific were championed by quite extraordinary range of leaders, scholars and delegations: India, the United States, France, Indonesia, Vietnam and Australia, among others. Whereas earlier this year China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi dismissed the Indo-Pacific as <an attention-grabbing idea> that would <dissipate like ocean foam>, the Chinese

delegation in Singapore was left taking a more oblique and passive approach, basically asking questions.

The Indo-Pacific is emerging as the chief conceptual challenge to the idea of One Belt and One Road—a China-centric vision of the extended region. The Indo-Pacific idea is also reducing the salience of the late 20th century idea of the Asia-Pacific, essentially an East Asia-centric order that had come to suit China because it tended to exclude China's emerging rival, India.

China and the Indo-Pacific

Yet China's own interests and actions have brought us to this Indo-Pacific era. China depends on the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean for its oil security. The Chinese navy now has a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean. China is developing naval platforms such as aircraft carriers for projecting power far from home. It is active in strategic diplomacy to, in effect, encircle India. It has established a military base at Djibouti. There is, in Pakistan, what could be termed a growing quasi-colonial Chinese presence. Beijing is also building influence over countries like Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Meanwhile, there is rapid growth in the activity of Chinese fishing fleets and seabed resource exploration in the Indian Ocean. More broadly, the Belt and Road could be seen as a massive bid to export surplus capacity by building infrastructure and influence southwards and westwards. At home, the Chinese regime must contend with the powerful public expectations it has cultivated, which are fanned by action movies and other propaganda, that it will protect the interests and dignity of its nationals elsewhere in the world, including in Africa. All of these factors are underpinned by China's active, regime-directed reimagining of history to justify an expansive regional and global role.

The idea of the Indo-Pacific is suited to many of the other powers seeking to moderate Chinese behaviour in regional and global politics. Whether Chinese power grows or founders, there are good arguments for the region's many middle powers and stakeholders to coordinate their policies to moderate China's influence and discourage its risk-taking. Indeed, the shape of the region, thus defined, lends itself to such a strategy. It is a region too large and diverse for true hegemony.

The Indo-Pacific concept underscores the fact that the Indian Ocean has replaced the Atlantic as the globe's busiest and most strategically significant trade corridor, carrying two-thirds of global oil shipments and a third of the world's bulk cargo. The powerhouse economies of East Asia depend acutely on oil imports across the Indian Ocean from the Middle East and Africa, and this dependence is set to deepen further. Around 80 percent of China's oil imports, perhaps 90 percent of South Korea's, and up to 90 percent of Japan's are shipped from the Middle East and/or Africa through the Indian Ocean. And even with

all its ambitions overland pipeline projects, China could only offset a small proportion of this seaborne dependency, and at great expense.

The thickening of economic and strategic interaction between China and India is a major part of the Indo-Pacific story. Even so, the Indo-Pacific power narrative is not only about China and India. The region involves the intersecting interests of at least four major powers—China, India, Japan, and the United States, arguably Russia too—as well as many significant middle players including Australia, South Korea, the Southeast Asian countries, and more distant stakeholders such as from Europe.

The term «Free and Open Indo-Pacific» has been used by Japan since 2016 to define its regional strategy. The most active power, however, in advocating the Indo-Pacific idea has been Australia. Canberra has a unique role here: it is a middle power in the gathering Indo-Pacific strategic game, in multiple ways. These include its relative diplomatic influence, its unusual two-ocean geography, its proximity to and advanced surveillance of the crucial sea lanes connecting the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, and its status as a state that—despite being a close US ally—is diversifying and deepening economic, societal, and security relations with multiple Asian powers. The Indo-Pacific is literally Australia's identity.

Made for multipolarity

There are some other significant features of the Indo-Pacific. It is a *maritime* system, where the interests of and interactions of countries at sea tend to overshadow the continental, land-based elements of their relations with each other. It is a *multipolar* system, in which the fate of regional order, or disorder, will not be determined by one or even two powers—the United States and China—but also by the interests and choices of others.

Beyond those two obvious features, it is characterised by *duality*, also encompasses a range of dualities—in other words, the reconciliation of contrasting aspects within one idea. The Indo-Pacific idea is both an objective description of geopolitical circumstances and the basis for a strategy. It is both inclusive and exclusive: It is about incorporating Chinese interests into a regional order where the rights of others are respected; but it is also about balancing against Chinese power when those rights are not. It is both economic and strategic: it has economic origins but profoundly strategic consequences. As a maritime region its boundaries are fluid, in every sense of the word, and this helps explain why some different countries define it differently. Is Africa Indo-Pacific or not? The answer depends on the extent to which the interests of the key Indo-Pacific powers are engaged in African affairs.

The Indo-Pacific matters as a maritime region, but given the emphasis on competing port access and infrastructure in the unfolding great game, perhaps it is the connection of the sea to the land that defines what is strategically important. The Indo-Pacific is thus better

understood as a complement, not merely an alternative, to continental conceptions of connectivity in Eurasia. More accurately, Eurasia is the complement to the Indo-Pacific, given that the sea outweighs the land for ease of power projection and cheapness of transportation.

The Indo-Pacific is also regional *and* global: the Indo-Pacific is the main highway for commerce and energy between Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania and the Americas. Therefore the Indo-Pacific is the most globally-connected of regions. It is, by definition, the global region, and that is a duality not a contradiction. Thus, in practical terms, not all the Indo-Pacific's chief stakeholders are necessarily resident or fully-resident powers. For instance, consider all the countries with interests and capabilities deployed in the Indian Ocean—fairly much all the world's ocean-going navies converged there against Somali piracy—and yet how few of them actually have territory there.

The Indo-Pacific legitimises and facilitates such cooperation across the two oceans, breaking down old boundaries that may once have prevented partnerships between a whole range of countries which previously had shaped their security interactions primarily through bilateral hub and spokes US alliance system. Thus we see for example India and Japan or India and Australia working together bilaterally, or in more creative trilateral or quadrilateral arrangements. The Indo-Pacific idea feeds into the recent revival of a quadrilateral security dialogue or «quad» among the United States, Japan, India and Australia. But it is incorrect to associate the Indo-Pacific solely with the quad, or to imagine the quad will suddenly morph into an «Asian NATO». Many other layers of diplomatic architecture are evolving, some involved non-aligned nations like India and Indonesia. And European powers, notably France, are beginning to re-emerge as active security players in this context; President Macron has even called for an «Indo-Pacific axis» of France, India and Australia.

Implications for Germany and Europe

It will be both fascinating and highly consequential to see how Germany response to these new circumstances. After all, we should bear in mind Germany's deep economic engagement, not only with China but with Indo-Pacific Asia more broadly, as well as Germany's emphasis on rules and values in the way it engages with the world. Various countries in the Indo-Pacific are beginning to push back against Chinese influence, both in terms of its strategic affront to the interests of others, such as in its manufacture and militarisation of islands in the South China Sea, and its apparent efforts to interfere in their sovereign decision-making, as has been alleged in Australia and New Zealand. They will look to Germany for solidarity and partnership on these issues, and will be interested to understand whether Berlin is looking at the Indo-Pacific through more than a commercial prism.

In particular, it will be important in the German and wider European policy debate to understand that the emerging strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific is not simply between China and the United States. Asserting a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific does *not* necessarily mean supporting or tolerating every decision or disruption wrought by Trump. This is a multipolar region with the interests and sensitivities of many powers—including India, Japan, Indonesia and many smaller nations—at stake. Those powers do not want to be dominated by China. Nor do they want their interests to suffer from the unpredictability represented by the Trump presidency.

There seem to be two tracks in US policy towards the Indo-Pacific. The institutional structures of the US system—the State Department, the Pentagon, Congress—are beginning to take the Indo-Pacific seriously. The US 2017 National Security Strategy, whatever its shortcomings, identified strategic competition with China in the Indo-Pacific as a reality, and expressed solidarity with the interests of many regional. Trump himself, however, is at the centre of questions about American credibility and staying power, and it remains to be seen how the great gamble of his diplomacy with North Korea will play out in the region. The policy, therefore, of many Indo-Pacific nations is a kind of many layered hedging strategy. These countries are seeking to deepen and diversify their security ties with one another, to encourage sustained or renewed US commitment to the region, and to build relations of mutual respect—but not acquiescence—with China.

Given, however, the unusual quality of the Indo-Pacific as the global region, the positions and decisions of European partners will have an important bearing of how this regional dynamic plays out. This includes the central question of whether China's power can be moderated and its interests incorporated in a way that ensures peace and stability in this Indo-Pacific century.

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Zhou Qi

The Sino-US strategic game and the prospect of bilateral relations

Trump's anti-globalization agenda erodes the basis of Sino-US cooperation

Since the end of the Cold War, for a decade or so, US policy towards China had been ambiguous, swinging either between containment and engagement, or pursuing containment plus engagement. After Robert B. Zoellick, the US Deputy Secretary of State, proposed to make China a stakeholder in June 2006, US policy towards China has basically been based on competition and cooperation. In the past, the United States has understood that, in the era of globalization, it needs to cooperate with China in order to be able to cope with global issues. President Obama repeatedly stated that, in the era of globalization, cooperation between the United States (the only superpower) and China (the most populous third world country) was necessary in order to address common issues faced by humanity, and that a war between the rising and the established power was not inevitable. Whether there's war will depend on the choices of the two countries' policy makers. However, with China's fast economic development and increasing military strength, and with China's growing diplomatic efforts such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), those voices in the US that view China as a threat have become louder by the day. Today, American policy towards China is no longer balanced between competition and cooperation but tilting towards the former.

Trump's «America first» policy implies a stance against globalization, emphasizing «American trade first», «American employment first», and «American economy first». It is based on the belief that more exports and less imports are signs of a healthy national economy, and it views international trade as a zero-sum game. Trump is pushing towards protectionism, he is trying to bring US companies' investments back home, block immigration and he has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Agreement; also, he is trying to renegotiate multi-lateral and bilateral trade agreements in order to get a deal that is more favorable for the United States. All these actions express an anti-globalization sentiment, and Trump's implementation of his «America first» policy causes the US to break international rules of trade, which may cause turmoil in the global economic order.

Anti-globalization has reduced cooperation and increased competition in Sino-US relations. Climate change, terrorism, economic development, drug trafficking and nuclear proliferation are all areas, in which the United States needs to cooperate with China, as they are global phenomena. The 2017 US National Security Strategy Report stated that «Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S.

national security.»^[1] In this report, as well as in the Military Strategy Report issued in January 2018, both China and Russia are called «revisionists» and are named as the US's largest «strategic competitors.»^[2] It seems that in the eyes of the Trump administration, the only remaining field for cooperation is nonproliferation—which leads to the question whether cooperation concerning nuclear proliferation is important enough to prop up reasonably good Sino-American relations.

Current disputes between the US and China are highlighted in trade policy

Trade conflicts between a rising power and an established power may escalate at certain stages of development. However, today competition for colonies, resources and territories is no longer the focus of such rivalry. Under the current international system major countries acquire wealth and power mainly through trade and finance, rather than through military forces. There is a great degree of economic interdependence, and the cost of rebuilding after a war has become forbidding, as shown by the war in Iraq.

Between 1991 and 2018 the US has conducted five Section 301 Investigations against China in cases where the US claimed that China was pursuing unfair trade practices. Although the US has frequently accused China of stealing intellectual property and manipulating RMB exchange rates, issues of trade have not dominated Sino-US relations over the last 20 years. For a period of time, investigations into so-called «theft of intellectual property» focused mainly on pirated DVDs. Today, however, trade has become the most contested topic in Sino-American relations, with the US demanding what it calls «fair trade.» According to US documents, unfair trade means «foreign government subsidies, theft of intellectual property, currency manipulation, unfair competitive behavior by state-owned enterprises, violations of labor laws, use of forced labor, and numerous other unfair practices.»^[3] Thus, the United States has continuously launched investigations under sections 301, 337, 232 and 201 of the Trade Act of 1974, among them the first Section 201 investigation in 16 years.

The President's 2017 Trade Policy Agenda, released in March 2017, stated that the United States must «reject the notion that the United States should, for putative geopolitical advantage, turn a blind eye to unfair trade practices that disadvantage American workers,

1 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America, 2018, p.1.

2 National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017, p. 2.

3 The President's 2017 Trade Policy Agenda, March 1, 2017, p. 1, <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/reports/2017/AnnualReport/Chapter%20I%20-%20The%20President%27s%20Trade%20Policy%20Agenda.pdf>

farmers, rancher and businesses in global markets.»^[4] The Trump administration attributes the slowdown of the US economic growth to unfair trade and blames all problems of the US economy on China's unfair practices, including the slowdown of GDP growth, the increase of the trade deficit, the slow growth in employment and the significant reduction in the number of manufacturing jobs since 2000. The document declares that the current global trade system has been beneficial to China, while, since the year 2000, putting the US at a disadvantage. Therefore, the United States should overhaul the existing international trade system and develop new trade policies.^[5]

In the past, where trade with China was concerned, the United States did not focus as much on the issue of intellectual property, since, before Trump's presidency, China was not viewed as an equal competitor particularly in the field of high-tech. It is well known how the US fought off economic competition from Japan in the 1980s by requiring the Japanese to reduce their trade surplus to the US substantially. Today it is China's turn to be treated in the same way. Due to the relative decline of the United States, Americans have a sense of urgency and anxiety, though they are reluctant to invoke the term «decline.» This is the background against which the Trump administration is determined to change its trade policy towards China.

Trump is not part of the American political establishment, yet he represents parts of the US electorate, in particular blue-collar white Americans. Unlike the CEOs of giant transnational corporations and the high-tech elites, who are very competitive internationally, those blue-collar white Americans can only look for jobs at the local level, and they are suffering from the decline of local manufacturing. Consequently, for them, it has become more difficult to keep their jobs and get into the middle class. In the past, globalization and free trade had brought great benefits to the United States, yet more recently the side effects of globalization have gradually emerged. This causes some serious problems in the US, such as a loss of manufacturing and employment, sinking incomes, economic inequality, political conflict, a crisis of national identity, criminality and threats to national security. It is such crises that have stimulated the anti-globalization trend in the US and spawned nationalist, protectionist and nativist policies.

Although the 2017 US National Security Strategy Report states that «competition does not always mean hostility, nor does it inevitably lead to conflict, successful competition is the best way to prevent conflict,» it has become a top priority for some policy makers in the Trump administration to suppress China's economic development and prevent competition in high-tech areas. The US trade sanctions against China are mainly targeting high-tech industries. US Trade Representative Latschitzer's testimony before the Senate on March 22 indicated that he would recommend raising tariffs on some Chinese high-tech products,

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

such as advanced information technology, automated machine tools and robots. Latschitzer stated, «China intends to invest hundreds of billions of dollars to reach the international advanced level, if China is allowed to do so, it will be very bad for the United States. Any rational person will make such a proposal.»^[6]

Will the Trump administration's policy continue?

US competition with China is different than that with Japan, as it is not only about economics but also concerns strategy and the political system, with the US flying the flag of the democratic camp. The United States believes that China is becoming more and more centralized and authoritarian and therefore poses a great threat to democracies. Chinese president Xi Jinping's report to the 19th National Congress of the CCP is interpreted by the US and other Western countries as a sign that China has become so self-confident that it is now willing to export its development model to other developing countries. This is considered as a new threat.

Some Americans even conclude that the policy the US has pursued towards China since President Clinton's time, that is, welcoming China's integration into the international community and promoting China's accession to the WTO, was wrong, as China did not develop along the lines of US expectations. The US National Security Strategy Report 2017 states that «These competitions require the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades—policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false.»^[7] Michael Swaine, a senior researcher at the Carnegie Endowment, compared current and former US reports on China and concluded that there is a growing anti-Chinese bias.^[8]

Although the US establishment does not subscribe to some of Trump's extreme policies, such as challenging the international rules of trade, many of them share Trump's concerns. The Taiwan Travel Act, which was unanimously passed by both houses on March 1, 2018, and the resolution on mutual calls to be made by US and Taiwanese warships passed in December 2017, are signs that there is a negative bipartisan bias against China. Trump's

6 «U.S. Trade Representative Robert Latschitzer Testified before the Senate Finance Committee on Trade Policy and the Recent Steel and Aluminum Tariffs Announcement from the White House,» March 22, 2018, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?442748-1/us-trade-representative-lighthizer-testifies-steel-aluminum-tariffs&start=317>

7 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, December 2017, p. 3. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

8 Michael D. Swaine, «Creating an Unstable Asia: the U.S. «Free and Open Indo-Pacific» Strategy,» *Foreign Affairs* March 2, 2018.

trade policy possibly represents an approach the US establishment has hesitated to undertake for years due to its principles, yet today may be ready to give a try in order to see whether it can effectively reduce the American trade deficit with China.

In many respects, China has learned a lot from the US and the West, for instance regarding the education, the social insurance and the financial systems. However, it is certain that China will not pursue a kind of development as envisioned by the US. China's traditions, history and culture are very different and, consequently, it will solve its problems in ways that work under its own conditions—even if this means that Sino-American relations will become rocky.

One important question will be whether the Trump administration's China policy is a temporary aberration of US policy—one that is mainly determined by Trump's personality—or whether it represents a lasting sea change. If the answer is the latter, this could be very worrying for China. Regarding China's policy towards the United States, China has, since 2013, sincerely tried to establish a new type of relationship, one that avoids conflict, does not seek confrontation and is based on mutual respect. The aim is to achieve a win-win situation through cooperation between the two countries. This policy is in the interest of China and the Chinese people. China needs a stable external environment to develop its economy and create prosperity for its entire people. However, whether such a peaceful development can be achieved will depend not only on China but also on the United States.

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Angesichts der Veränderungen in Chinas Außenpolitik: EU sucht stärkere Sicherheitskooperation in und mit Asien

40 Jahre nach dem Beginn der von Deng Xiaoping initiierten Politik der Reformen und Öffnung zur Welt hat China eine beispiellose Entwicklung vom einstigen Armenhaus zur globalen Supermacht gemacht. Lange Zeit folgte die chinesische Führung dabei dem von Deng ausgegebenen Rat, das Land solle seine außenpolitischen Ambitionen zurückstellen, strategische Bescheidenheit an den Tag legen und keine Führungsrolle anstreben. Durch diese Orientierung wollte Deng ein möglichst reibungsarmes Umfeld für den strategisch entscheidenden wirtschaftlichen Aufstieg gewährleisten. Im Westen herrschte in dieser Phase die Erwartung vor, es werde mittelfristig zu einer Konvergenz zwischen China und den westlichen Marktwirtschaften kommen, sowohl in Bezug auf die wirtschaftliche als auch auf die politische Ordnung.

Entsprechend wurde China 2001 in die Welthandelsorganisation (WTO) aufgenommen. China sollte sich zu einem «responsible stakeholder» der internationalen Ordnung entwickeln und dabei schrittweise mehr globale Verantwortung übernehmen, wie es der ehemalige Weltbankpräsident Bob Zoellick formulierte. Noch 2009, auf dem gescheiterten Kopenhagener Klimagipfel, beklagte sich das außenpolitische Establishment Chinas, das Land werde durch die Erwartungen seiner internationalen Partner überfordert. Es würde am liebsten eine Weile noch die Rolle einer Regionalmacht spielen und nicht in zu viel globale Verantwortung hineingezogen werden. Doch Kopenhagen erwies sich als Wendepunkt. «Wir wollen nicht, aber wir müssen eine globale Rolle annehmen», so resümierte 2010 der Leiter eines anerkannten Shanghaier Think Tanks.

Der chinesische Präsident Xi Jinping verpasste Pekings Außenpolitik mit seinem Amtsantritt 2012 neue Vorzeichen. An die Stelle kalkulierter Zurückhaltung trat demonstratives Selbstbewusstsein. Als 2015 bei einer Veranstaltung der Körber-Stiftung in Peking der ehemalige Außenpolitik-Zar der chinesischen Regierung, der Diplomat Dai Bingguo, noch einmal mit Argumenten aus dem Rüstzeug der Deng-Periode für Chinas internationale Ordnungsvorstellungen warb, bezeugten die jüngeren chinesischen Teilnehmer zwar sehr viel Respekt vor dem alten Herrn, ließen zugleich aber erkennen, dass dieser aus ihrer Sicht für eine längst vergangene Ära sprach.

Heute lässt die chinesische Führung gar keinen Zweifel: China will nicht nur Weltmacht sein, sondern Supermacht. China will führen. China will seine Ordnungsvorstellungen so weit wie möglich durchsetzen. Dabei tritt das Land manchmal durchaus geschickt und flexibel auf, manchmal schwingt es auch den Holzhammer. Man könnte das chinesische

Vorgehen unter dem Motto zusammenfassen: «So viel multilaterale Einbindung wie nötig, so viel eigener Führungsanspruch wie möglich.» Da China sich selbst viel zutraut, die USA als absteigende Macht betrachtet, Russland für nicht ebenbürtig hält und die EU in vielen Fragen als wenig einig erlebt, nimmt Chinas pralles Selbstbewusstsein immer öfter sehr handfeste Ausmaße an. «Früher klagten Chinesen oft», so ein europäischer Diplomat, «man solle sie doch nicht mit westlicher Anmaßung belehren. Und oft hatten sie recht. Doch heute scheint ihr Leitsatz zu sein: Don't teach us, we teach you.»

In einem Dokument unter dem Titel «Beijing Initiative», das die chinesische Führung Ende 2017 publizierte und das sie als Ergebnis der Beratungen mit über 600 Vertretern sehr vieler Parteien aus der ganzen Welt ausgab, ohne dass irgendeiner dieser ausländischen Teilnehmer bei der Formulierung beteiligt gewesen wäre, wird in außerordentlich aufschlussreicher Weise so getan, als könne China heute schon stolz verbuchen, dass zahllose internationale Partner eigentlich nur darauf warteten, dass die Kommunistische Partei (KP) Chinas der Welt die Richtung weise. Xi Jinping hat für Chinas Führungsanspruch eine Formel geprägt. Diese besagt, China wolle eine globale «community of common destiny» entwickeln. Der Begriff unterstellt, dass es die Aufgabe Chinas sei, seine internationalen Partner dafür zu gewinnen, die von China definierte «Schicksalsgemeinschaft» unter die Führung des unvergleichlichen Xi Jinping zu stellen. Menschenrechte und Freiheit haben in dieser Vision selbstverständlich keinen Platz.

Mit Chinas Aufstieg hat sich dort der Blick auf die Welt, die Richtung, die Schlagzahl, die Ambition anders entwickelt, als es die meisten Beobachter in Europa oder den USA erwartet hätten. In den USA hat man daraus im letzten Jahr parteiübergreifend den Schluss gezogen, China nicht mehr als Partner, sondern als «competitor» zu sehen. In dem Wort stecken sowohl der Wettbewerber als auch der Gegner – ein Bruch mit einer langen Tradition demokratischer wie republikanischer Regierungen seit der Zeit Richard Nixons.

Europa tut sich indes schwer eine gemeinsame Position zu finden. Es gibt seit zwei Jahren – zumindest auf dem Papier – eine solide Chinastrategie der EU. Faktisch existiert jedoch keine zusammenhängende Chinapolitik der EU-Mitgliedsländer. Doch die EU lernt dazu. Neue Regelungen gegen chinesische Dumpingexporte waren ein erster Schritt. Verhandlungen über eine europaweite Kooperation bei der Überprüfung sensibler Direktinvestitionen, insbesondere aus China, wurden erst vor Kurzem von Frankreich, Deutschland und Italien initiiert und sollen bis Ende 2018 abgeschlossen werden. Die ursprünglich blauäugige Reaktion aus Brüssel auf Chinas Seidenstraßenprojekt ist zunehmend einer Nüchternheit gewichen, mit der die außerordentlich großen geostrategischen Risiken dieses Vorhabens reflektiert werden. Anhand der Erfahrung mit dem 16+1-Format, einem Kooperationsmechanismus, mit dem China seit einigen Jahren versucht 16 ost- und südosteuropäische Länder stärker an sich zu binden, darunter 11 EU-Mitgliedstaaten, muss die EU zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass China willens ist, Spaltungslinien systematisch zu nutzen, wo immer es sie findet. Mit der Forderung nach einer chinesischen Ein-Europa-Politik hat unter anderem der ehemalige Bundesaußenminister Sigmar

Gabriel versucht darauf hinzuweisen, dass China hiermit gegen ein Kerninteresse der Europäischen Union verstößt.

Doch Brüssel bleibt erfreulicherweise nicht beim defensiven Reagieren stehen. Kommissionspräsident Jean-Claude Juncker schlug im letzten Jahr vor, die europäische Konnektivitätspolitik nach Osten durch einen entsprechenden Fonds zu unterstützen. Verstärkte europäische Bemühungen um die Intensivierung von Handels- und Investitionsbeziehungen mit asiatischen Staaten sind offenkundig, insbesondere seitdem die USA aus der ursprünglichen transpazifischen Partnerschaft ausgestiegen sind. Und zuletzt beschloss der Europäische Rat bei seiner 3621. Sitzung am 28. Mai 2018 Schlussfolgerungen zum Thema einer verstärkten EU-Sicherheitskooperation in und mit Asien. In insgesamt 8 Punkten wird dort eine breit angelegte Agenda der Sicherheitskooperation aufgegliedert, die, falls sie realisiert wird, eine ganz neue Rolle der EU in asiatischen Zusammenhängen prägen wird. Das ist himmelweit entfernt von der Position, mit der Bundesverteidigungsministerin Ursula von der Leyen noch 2015 beim Shangri-La-Dialogforum die Europäer als «normative Macht» präsentieren wollte. Es ist erfreulicherweise aber auch nicht verunreinigt von dem Gerede von einer «Supermacht Europa», das man in Brüssel, leider auch von Federica Mogherini, viel zu oft hört. Die neue Ambition heißt: «Der Rat bekräftigt, dass die EU ein fundamentales Interesse hat an der Kooperation mit Partnern weltweit, einschließlich in Asien, um ihre Bürger zu schützen, die fundamentalen Werte zu verteidigen, auf die die Union gegründet ist, einschließlich des Schutzes der Menschenrechte, das internationale System der Herrschaft des Rechts aufrechtzuerhalten, den Multilateralismus zu befördern, zu regionaler Stabilität beizutragen, gewaltsame Konflikte zu verhüten und die Wirtschaftsinteressen der Union zu sichern.»

Offenkundig vermeidet das Ratsdokument bestimmte sensible Stichworte. Das Südchinesische Meer, welches China immer weiter militarisiert, wird nicht ausdrücklich erwähnt, wohl aber Freedom of Navigation sowie die UN-Seerechtskonvention. Das ist jeweils kodierte Sprache für die europäische Opposition gegen Chinas Ansprüche im Südchinesischen Meer. Während der Rat neben China Indien, Japan und Südkorea als strategische Partner der EU benennt, hat er es leider versäumt, den Ansatz einer strategischen Partnerschaft mit ASEAN energisch weiterzuverfolgen. Das Dokument nimmt auch nicht Stellung zur Entwicklung einer verstärkten indopazifischen Kooperation zwischen den USA, Indien, Japan und Australien, die sich gegenwärtig unter dem Namen «Quad» entwickelt. Trotzdem ist das Signal des Dokumentes eindeutig: Die Europäer beginnen zur Kenntnis zu nehmen, dass sie nicht ferne, zwar interessierte, aber wenig engagierte Beobachter der asiatischen Entwicklungen bleiben können, wenn sie auf die dortigen Verschiebungen und insbesondere den schnellen und machthungrigen Aufstieg Chinas angemessen reagieren wollen.

Der Weg von einem ersten Ratspapier zu realer Politik ist natürlich noch sehr lang und man kann sich dort leicht verirren. Aber es ist gut, dass die EU sich aufmacht.

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CHAPTER 2

CONFLICT AND ESCALATION // KRISENHERDE

Assessing the risk of military escalation in East Asian hotspots

The central questions regarding the risk of military escalation in East Asia are whether China will rationally choose the use of force to solve territorial disputes and whether the United States will strike North Korea. Rational choice requires a careful assessment of costs, risks and benefits. Conflicts can be provoked by unintended accidents during close encounters of military forces. The risk of such incidents is mitigated by confidence-building and crisis management measures that target miscommunication and misunderstandings. However, conflicts that are the result of rational choices and that are related to evident political goals are more difficult to prevent. This paper provides a risk assessment of the four East Asian hotspots: tensions between China and Japan regarding the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and the East China Sea, the South China Sea, Taiwan and cross-strait relations and, finally, the Korean peninsula.

The East China Sea

The beginning of 2018 has seen a fragile improvement of China-Japan relations in the East China Sea. In May, after exactly a decade of stalemate, the two countries finally concluded a Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism (AMCM). This mechanism provides standard operation procedures to manage close encounters and aims at lowering the risk of incidents between naval and air forces of the two sides. Since early 2018, the Chinese Coast Guard is no longer under civilian command but under the authority of the People's Armed Police and the Central Military Commission. Therefore, the hotline should also cover their activities. Most importantly, the mechanism provides a platform for the militaries of the two sides to communicate regularly and learn practical lessons from their risky encounters. This creates a framework for interaction that lowers the risk of miscalculations.

However, the adoption of a crisis management mechanism does not change fundamentally the mutual distrust between China and Japan. The balance of military power between China and the US-Japan alliance is clearly in favor of the latter, especially as the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands are clearly covered by the US-Japan Defense Treaty, as is the case with all territories administered by Japan. This has a powerful deterrent effect. Therefore, the incentive for China to use force to assert its territorial claims is very low. The only scenario in which a use of force to seize the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands would be credible is in case of a major Taiwan conflict, in which Japan would be involved alongside Taiwan and the United States.

Besides such a worst-case scenario, the level of security tensions in the East China Sea will continue to reflect the state of political relations between China and Japan. As long as the balance of military power is not clearly tilting in favor of China, the primary source of concern for the international community will remain the risk of incidents. Efforts at building on the existing bilateral crisis management diplomacy should be encouraged by external stakeholders.

The South China Sea

There are two plausible causes for military escalation in the South China Sea: a Chinese decision to seize by force features controlled by rival claimants, and an incident between a US surveillance asset and the Chinese military.

China is currently consolidating its position as the dominant military power in the South China Sea vis-à-vis other claimants and building up a capability to interdict US surveillance missions targeting its military assets, especially the Hainan-based ballistic submarines.

Before building the seven artificial features, China was the claimant with the weakest physical presence in the Spratly Islands. Today, Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef and Subi Reef already support a range of PLA operations: maritime and aerial domain awareness, surveillance and reconnaissance, area defense through the recent deployment of air defense and anti-ship missiles and support for long-range air operations. In the near future, the PLA will likely deploy fighter jets and permanent troops, possibly from the rapidly expanding PLAN marine corps, on these three military outposts. A similar modus operandi is at play on Woody Island in the Paracel where, however, it is more mature. Together, these deployments reshape the balance of military power in relation to rival claimants and the United States, and they support China's long-term strategic goal to develop a reliable undersea deterrent in Hainan.

China's initial promise to refrain from militarizing its artificial islands has been broken. For this, of course, China has always come up with an explanation in order to gain the moral high ground, namely, that such measures have been reactive and are only undertaken in response to hostile US military activities in the region. The term best to describe the cycle of action and reaction between the US and China is «reactive assertiveness», meaning that China seizes every opportunity to increase its administrative control over the South China Sea.

Can this result in an escalation? The US is recalibrating its approach in the South China Sea, realizing that past approaches have failed. According to US Admiral Richardson, likely the next PACOM commander, «The PLA will be able to use these bases to challenge U.S. presence in the region, and any forces deployed to the islands would easily overwhelm

the military forces of any other South China Sea-claimants . . . In short, China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the United States.» Such statements will incite China to continue building military strength in the South China Sea. While the two countries have a functioning crisis management mechanism, an incident cannot be completely ruled out. China's ultimate goal is to put an end to US surveillance activities, and, under certain circumstance, the PLA might come to the assessment that an incident might help attain such an outcome. Under the current configuration of the US-China balance of power this is however extremely unlikely.

Another possible path to escalation would be a Chinese decision to seize by force territories controlled by other claimants. This has happened against Vietnam in 1974 (Paracel Islands) and against the Philippines in 1995 (Mischief Reef) and 2012 (Scarborough Shoal). China has certainly accumulated the capacity to occupy all features in the South China Sea. However, in the short term, China is likely to focus on further increasing the military asymmetry in relation to other claimants.

The Taiwan Strait

The risk of a war that is waged for calculated reasons is highest in the Taiwan Strait. The structural contradiction between the CCP's historic mission to achieve unification with Taiwan under the PRC and the emergence of a separate national identity in Taiwan continues to grow. As a result, the prospect for a peaceful political settlement is near zero. However, despite much pessimism, China has not adopted a timeline for unification with Taiwan at its 19th Party Congress.

After the reshuffle of the Taiwan policy team at the 19th Party Congress and the National People's Congress, the pattern of carrots and sticks has intensified. The campaign to offer Taiwanese students jobs on the mainland has been ramped up, which, given the higher salaries in the most advanced Chinese cities, has led to a brain drain. At the same time, the PLA increasingly resorts to military intimidation to support its goals and prepare for future contingencies.

Many of the new capacities the Chinese military has developed are closely related to Taiwan. This is particularly the case with regard to amphibious assault capabilities, including the next generation of aircraft carriers, the construction of the type 075 helicopter carrier, and the continuing construction of the type 071 for the Navy. This comes with the decision to increase the size of the Marines corps of the PLAN from 20,000 to 100,000 troops, which is one of the clearest signs of China's great ambitions in amphibious warfare.

The question whether it is rational to use force to accomplish unification depends on the cost of winning such a war. China's military build-up ensures air and naval superiority in the Taiwan Strait but the PLA would suffer significant losses given Taiwan's growing

arsenal of surface-to-air and anti-ship missiles. Any landing operation would also result in considerable casualties among invading PLA amphibious troops, and controlling a mountainous and humid island covered in forests would be a major challenge for Chinese ground troops.

As is the case in the South China Sea, all current Chinese actions have the aim to increase asymmetry, giving the Chinese leadership future coercive options. The key factor that could lead to a decision to use force against Taiwan will be the assessment in Beijing of Taiwan's resolve to resist, and even more, of the possible reaction of the United States.

The Korean peninsula

The current round of US-DPRK diplomacy may determine whether the future of the Korean peninsula is war or peace. The situation is very volatile and the short-term risk of a US military strike should not be dismissed.

What is clear is that the threat of a limited US strike on North Korean missile and possibly nuclear facilities—the so-called «bloody nose strategy»—has been decisive for the resumption of diplomacy. In late 2017, Pyongyang and other East Asian capitals took the possibility of a US strike very seriously. Chinese experts, which were interviewed in December 2017, argued—somewhat along the lines of the most hard-line US Republicans—that if North Korea is a rational actor, as is now cliché to assume, then one should expect that it will not retaliate, if struck by US cruise missiles. The logic is that retaliation would lead to escalation, an outcome North Korea is not in position to control and that would lead to full military defeat. North Korea's awareness that it does not control the escalation ladder is the main argument of the proponents of a «bloody nose» strike meant to coerce North Korea to negotiate from a position of weakness. If the current diplomatic efforts fail, this argument will make a comeback.

The main hope for avoiding a clash is to involve the two sides in a diplomatic process. Their baseline positions remain as diametrically opposed as ever. The US seeks «complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement» (CVID) and the DPRK seeks recognition as a nuclear power. A recent statement by the North Korean Foreign Ministry made clear that «if the U.S. is trying to drive us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment, we will no longer be interested in (...) dialogue.» A diplomatic process will only get under way, if North Korea makes concessions on aspects of its WMD programs and stops uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing in exchange for credible security guarantees.

Implications for Europe

Europe is only marginally influencing international security trends in East Asia. There is little Europe can do to decisively reduce tensions and risks of military confrontation. At the same time, Europe's restrictions on arms sales and technology transfers play a part in shaping the balance of power, which is the most important factor to ensure peace, as long as the territorial disputes remain unsolved. As a clear proponent of a rules-based international order, Europe also contributes diplomatically to the ideas of crisis management, confidence-building measures and international law. European passivity might weaken such notions, and in their stead the pure logics of power would reign supreme.

The intensification of US-China geopolitical competition raises the stakes for all strategic players, including the EU's big three. Increasingly, the question whether Europe should take sides is emerging in policy discussions, namely around the issue whether it is in Europe's interest to endorse unambiguously the «free and open Indo-Pacific» terminology put forward by Australia, Japan, India and the United States. Here, France and the UK seem to agree, Germany however has reservations. The question whether Europe will involve itself to a greater degree in managing security risks in East Asia should be explored in a trilateral format.

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Competition without conflict: Security in the Asia Pacific

Predictions about conflict in the Asia Pacific—essentially a war between China and the United States—have by now become a theory with a life of its own. If a rising power and an established power each believe that they are destined for a showdown, thus the thinking, then that conflict is very likely to occur. However, I continue to maintain that competition without conflict is the more likely version of how future change will play out.

On the one hand, official rhetoric does render support to growing levels of hostility. For example, the latest US national security strategy, as well as its defense strategy paper, defines China as a «revisionist power», that is, a power uncomfortable with the world order as dictated by Washington and its allies. The primary focus of US national security is said to have shifted from curbing the spread of terrorism to prioritizing «great-power competition» with countries such as China.

Washington's increased wariness about China's national goals seems to be confirmed by official Chinese statements envisioning a «new era» for the nation in the world. In the official English translation of the 19th Party Congress held in November 2017, one aspect of «the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation» is defined as «an era that sees China moving closer to center stage and making greater contributions to mankind.»^[1] Foreign observers, however, are more likely to pay attention to unofficial translations such as «it is time for [China] to take center stage in the world.»

Whatever the nuances of wording, the Chinese leadership has certainly articulated a proactive vision. To many, the question that naturally follows is: whose share of the pie in regional and global economics and politics is China going to take?

On the other hand, even when anti-terrorism was the central focus of official US defense strategy, competing against China was still seen as paramount. Successive US governments have refused to extradite Chinese nationals who were arrested by US forces in Afghanistan back in the early 2000s.^[2] The US government determined that honoring the wishes of detainees was more important than letting the Chinese authorities have access to

1 Xinhua, «Full text of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress,» *China Daily*, November 4, 2017, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2017-11/04/content_34115212.htm (accessed May 29, 2018)

2 «US Frees Last of Uighur Detainees from Guantanamo,» *The New York Times*, January 1, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/01/us/us-frees-last-of-uighur-detainees-from-guantanamo.html> (accessed May 29, 2018)

them in order to fight terrorism in their own part of the world. Nobody in the US security establishment has explicitly said that their country differentiates between acts of terrorism depending on who the victims are, but the implicit message could have hardly been clearer.

US security elites across the ideological spectrum have, for decades, argued that the pillars of China's recent success were made in the United States. They argue that Washington carved out this path by letting China into the World Trade Organization and that it continues to facilitate China's success by using the US Navy to help keep the Indian and Pacific Oceans open for shipping in and out of Chinese ports.

Washington regards these points as facts, while Chinese security analysts often view them as opinions. Does the difference really matter? A sensible response might be that neither side can afford to rock the boat, and that both sides need to find ways of peaceful co-existence. So, does China objectively pose a threat to the United States? My answer to this is a resounding «no.»

Indeed, officially sanctioned Chinese rhetoric, which is broadcast domestically and internationally, will have it that China takes pride in pursuing its own path to greatness. Which country in the whole world would not project a similar line when it comes to nation building? Does a country's political system (and practice) have to be either like that of the United States or, if not, be deemed intolerable by the United States?

Although many in China don't like to mention it, the fact of the matter is that China is the greatest beneficiary of the post-WWII international economic system created and led by the West. Meanwhile, China is by far the best-performing player within the Bretton Woods systems—if one takes the timely repayment of loans by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as indicators. Then, why the sense of unease about China in the West today? A bank needs high-performing clients to prosper but feels threatened when its role is supplanted. That is a natural sentiment. Yet, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which was initiated by China, is just another instrument of competition. Has anyone counted how many regional development banks were established after the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund?

It is hard not to view the ongoing round of American-greatness-under-duress as a repetition of the time Ronald Reagan became president. Back then, Japan was identified as having taken advantage of America, with Japan's trade surplus as the target. In response, some in Japan tried to convince the rest of the world that it was just a bit different and nothing else. The rest is history.

China would do well to carefully consider the episode of Japan-US relations in the 1980s. American sentiments about the United States' place in the world—and not just the official ones in Washington or the White House—are real and they need to be taken into consideration. China will have absolutely nothing to gain from getting into a rhetorical fight with

the United States. Instead, it needs to demonstrate through deeds that while, at the end of the day, the two civilizations, each with its unfathomable sense of pride, do compete with each other, they are however committed to acting in good faith and willing to abide by mutually accepted rules in their interactions.

One area where there is a risk for direct military conflict is Taiwan. Since Trump's inauguration, *both* administrative and legislative branches of the US government have taken incremental yet determined steps to keep Taiwan separate from China. Behind this are powerful (although unspoken) American assumptions about what geographical reach is appropriate for China.

At first glance, the question of China's location may seem utterly silly. Yet different answers, from abroad and within China, provide arguably the single most influential pillar underpinning conceptual differences about China's place in the contemporary world and its future evolution. Failure to find common ground regarding China's legitimate geographical scope is behind the disagreement over which side—the United States (and its allies) or China—is working to destroy a rule-based regional/international order.

Highlighting this question should not be mistaken as validation of the claim that one current in Chinese domestic and foreign policy is aiming to avenge its «Century of Humiliation.» Far from it. International recognition of territorial boundaries is a very serious matter. When a government takes measures to defend what is widely seen as its legitimate territory, then this is quite normal and not a challenge to the values underpinning international relations. When a government either fails or refuses to settle a territorial boundary dispute peacefully, this is seen as aggressive nationalism and, by logical extension, as an effort to rewrite international rules. Consequently *all* states have a stake in observing the principle of territorial integrity of *any* state and the peaceful resolution of border disputes.

Many Westerners have used the concept of «China proper» on the basis of early sinology, distinguishing what were seen as the core eighteen provinces of China, where Han Chinese prevailed, from other parts of the country. However, for Chinese observers of Western diplomacy the differentiation between a «China proper» and the total territory of the country smacks of a larger geostrategic agenda. Fueling such suspicions is the fact that expressions about the kind of China the West would like to see lack the key word «united.» Thus, for example, it has become standard for presidents of the United States to say that they welcome the rise of a China that is prosperous, peaceful and stable.

Furthermore, from Beijing's point of view, its policy towards Taiwan has undergone substantial changes, from «liberation» (read: military invasion) during the 1950s to 1970s, to calls for «peaceful unification» in the 1990s, to accepting Taiwan as an equal member of the World Trade Organization in the early 2000s—and since then there have been many

pragmatic interactions across the Taiwan Strait.^[3] The bottom line here is stability: As long as Taiwan does not declare de jure independence, Beijing can find ways to live with the status quo.

Another area where differences concerning regional order has become manifest is claims of territorial rights in the South China Sea. Since the end of the Second World War, the messy history of sovereignty claims and rebuttals had been largely dormant. Then, in 2010, the United States declared that it had a national interest in the South China Sea. Ever since, the American navy has held exercises in the area, only to be tailed by Chinese ships, and this pattern of interactions has frequently generated headlines. With Australian, British, and French war ships joining, parade of flags has become more colorful. In the end, however, if order is indeed a goal, then it has to be acknowledged that there are differences between what constitutes a legitimate scope of action of a littoral state, as opposed to a user state. Among the littoral states, the diplomatic truce between China and the Philippines, which came about shortly after a tribunal awarded disputed territory to the latter, points towards a way to reduce tensions. Meanwhile, China's legal experts continue to parse through the said tribunal's verdict, which can be read as preparation for a possible future reversal.^[4]

Differences between China and the West (whether led by the US or not) have much to do with divergent notions of what constitutes legitimate rights of governance within one's national boundaries. Initially it was thought in the West that China would develop a multi-party political system in exchange for access to the commodity and financial markets of the liberal democracies. This didn't happen, and today the goal of a «free and open Indo-Pacific» has become an alternative and a 21st century framework of containment.

Official Chinese ideology rejects such logic. However, some in China may be overselling the purportedly unique (implying «superior») Chinese approach to governance. Still, doesn't China have a right to choose its own path of development? And as long as China is not imposing its system of governance as a precondition for aid, trade and investment—which it is not—what is there to complain about China's growing role in the world?

One may recall that not so long ago there was talk of «East Asian models of capitalism» or «Asian values». Such debates came and went and had much to do with the ups and downs experienced by all economic systems. No-one can prescribe governance systems or design its keys to success.

3 Wu-ueh Chang and Chien-min Chao, «Managing Stability in the Taiwan Strait: Non-Military Policy towards Taiwan under Hu Jintao,» *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 2009, pp. 99-118.

4 Chinese Society of International Law, «The South China Sea Arbitration Awards: a critical study,» *Chinese Journal of International Law*, Volume 17, Issue 2, June 2018, pp.207-748.

Last but not least, it is the webs created by interdependencies among the various societies in the Asia-Pacific region that have prevented conflict in the recent past and, in the same fashion, they will also work against any impulses to create conflict. This is the nature of true competition.

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Ongoing, frozen and looming conflicts in the Asia-Pacific: A Southeast Asian Perspective

An overview of the conflict landscape in the Asia-Pacific

Amitav Acharya has aptly positioned Southeast Asia as «East of India, South of China». The region is indeed a crossroads where many major powers meet, including but not limited to the United States (US), China, Japan, and India. Any mention of conflict in East Asia would bring to mind the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan Straits, and the South China Sea. However, decades ago Southeast Asia witnessed one of the deadliest wars after the end of the World War II—the Vietnam War—and bloody civil wars and political repression in places such as Myanmar and Indonesia. Today, most conflicts in Southeast Asia are relatively well contained. There are still ongoing armed conflicts in Myanmar, and the country's Rohingya issue continues to attract attention, but Southeast Asia has been relatively peaceful and stable for at least thirty years. The South China Sea issue, however, is a potentially dangerous flashpoint, and it involves China, which also draws the attention of its strategic competitors, including the US, India and Japan. Nevertheless, Southeast Asia cannot be complacent, as conflicts in East Asia will have serious ramifications for Southeast Asian nations and peoples. This brings us to the heart of the discussion on the simmering conflicts in the region and their implications for regional security.

As the theme of the conference suggests, the ongoing crisis and power shift in the Asia-Pacific could have repercussion for Europe and Germany. In the case of Southeast Asia relevant issues include: the rise of China's political and economic influence that goes along with a more assertive foreign policy (for example, The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the South China Sea conflict), growing defense spending and arms purchases and more and more spillover effects from crises originating in neighboring areas (an escalation on the Korean Peninsula or a Taiwan Straits crisis, for example). I will discuss this from a Southeast Asian standpoint.

Alignment options and power shift

Fundamentally, all the relevant issues come down to one major fact: China's rapid rise over the past decade. Although sometimes China's rise has been overestimated and its weaknesses overlooked, still, the prevailing view in the region, at both elite and popular levels, is that China's rise is real, and that it is already having a significant impact. Whether it is overestimated or not, leaders make their decisions based on the projected trends, which in turn rely on their reading of the geopolitical and geo-economic order. Here, China's rise is the main trend.

This rise has elicited mixed responses from the countries in the region: Some are excited by the boost China is bringing to the global economy, especially after the financial crisis that has weakened the traditional powers; some view the rise as a cautionary tale about neo-imperialism akin to that of Japan up to and during World War II; and some major powers (especially the US) are anxious that the US-centric world order will be challenged and that shifting alignments will tilt the balance of power and lead to greater uncertainty. With China's massive Belt and Road Initiative, which encompasses much of the Eurasian continent from Asia to Europe via Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and possibly the Middle East, the potential of greater connectivity excites and startles stakeholders and observers alike. For many major powers, including those in Europe, it is crucial to understand the responses in Southeast Asia in order to be able to gauge the impact of this major foreign policy initiative.

Western countries have often highlighted the negative aspects of BRI and taken a skeptical attitude, thereby overlooking the fact that those Southeast Asian countries, and in fact most developing countries, do welcome the initiative. There are doubts within these countries, too, regarding debts, the lack of local benefits, and possible corruption arising from BRI-related projects, but such doubts should not be viewed as a rejection of BRI. The countries in question have a pragmatic attitude towards BRI, and they view it as generally beneficial to their own economic well-being, as China's BRI policy has given them opportunities and tangible help. In short, they do not necessarily subscribe to the US-centric liberal order to the same degree as those trying to uphold the old order (US, Japan, Europe). Of course, this varies by degree, but generally speaking, Southeast Asia has adopted a rather pragmatic attitude towards China's rise.

However, welcoming China's rise does not mean jumping on China's bandwagon (and opposing the US), nor is the reverse true, namely that opposing China's rise equals a pro-US stance. The simple fact is that most countries in the region are pragmatic, which implies a certain neutrality, the hedging of one's bets etc., although this tends to vary depending on the specific situation of each country. As long as China and the US remain competitors, Southeast Asia will continue with this type of pragmatism. However, should US-China relations become highly confrontational, it is likely that Southeast Asian countries will be forced to take sides—and that will be their worst nightmare. The current trend in US-China relations indicates increasing conflict, something that is truly worrying.

China-US competition will not be confined to China and US. Already talk of the «Quad»^[1] implies that the US wants to mobilize its closest friends and allies. Among the members of the Quad, Japan has, over many years, built up economic influence in Southeast Asia, and in fact could be said to be the most favored country. Numerically, Japan's investment is

1 The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD), an informal strategic dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India.

still the highest in Southeast Asia, although China is catching up fast. India is also rising rapidly, however its political and economic influence cannot be equal to that of China or Japan. For a long time Australia has been viewed by many Southeast Asians as the US's deputy sheriff in the region—for good and for bad. In case of a conflict between China and the Quad, Southeast Asia will be right in the middle of it, with possibly serious consequences.

Is the military build-up a response to escalating conflict?

While defense spending in Southeast Asian countries has increased, it is still too early to talk of an arms race. As mentioned earlier, Southeast Asia has been peaceful for decades. The proliferation of institutions in Asia came about through ASEAN, a regional organization of the smaller countries, which has been the cornerstone of an emerging security architecture that also supports extra-regional membership. Security cooperation in East Asia, however, has been mired by structural factors such as a history of disputes and the shifting geopolitical order, and the current military build-up is fostered by fears of escalating conflicts.

On the seas, these challenges are further complicated by competing sovereignty claims, territorial disputes, energy security, shipping lanes and lines of communications, military activities, as well as non-military security threats (maritime crimes and piracy). Among the maritime countries of Southeast Asia defense spending has increased, as they want to guard against these threats. In doing this, the countries in question do not want to achieve military parity with China. In fact, only rich countries can afford arms races, as the most advanced weapons have become so expensive that, realistically speaking, the developing countries of Southeast Asia will be unable to play this game. For that very reason there is always a considerable faction in the countries in question that argues that investing in the military is ultimately futile, and that the funds are better spent on diplomacy and political solutions to conflicts.

Therefore, the comparatively small acquisitions of military hardware made by the Southeast Asian states are more symbolic than practical in nature. The end of Cold War and the economic boom in Asia frequently lead to projections of increased arms spending. The US and European countries provide countries around the world with military equipment (Germany ranks among the top five), and demand is always on the rise, as new technologies require the modernization of forces to safeguard territorial integrity. The proliferation of submarine capabilities^[2] in Southeast Asia will never catch up with China's submarine and

2 European military hardware is popular across the region as shown by purchases such as the Swedish *Challenger*-class (for Singapore), French *Scorpène*-class (Malaysia), German Type-209 submarines (Indonesia) and Russian *Kilo*-class (Vietnam).

navy fleets. The easy access to global arms markets enables Southeast Asian states such as Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia to be among the world's top 20 arms importers. However, the easy access to arms and the increased capability to procure arms and spend more on the military do not mean that there is a greater danger of conflict in mainland or maritime Southeast Asia.

The Northeast Asian crisis

Southeast Asia is worried about the two potential crises in other parts of East Asia, namely in Taiwan and Korea. Taiwan has maintained a significant presence in Southeast Asia through years of investment that can be traced back to Lee Teng-Hui's «Go South Policy.» Now, under Tsai Ing-Wen, a new round of such measures is being formulated and implemented, and the expectation is that Taiwan will try to increase its economic and cultural cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. Likewise, there is a growing population of Southeast Asian people living in Taiwan. Southeast Asian countries therefore have a direct stake in peaceful relations across the Taiwan Straits. Any armed conflict, furthermore, is likely to have a negative impact on the region's economy.

Following the trend of «pivoting» to Southeast Asia, South Korea has launched its «New Southern Policy,» which was announced within a month after Moon Jae-in's government was formed. The aim is to «elevate Korea's relationship with ASEAN to the level of its relations with the four major powers around the Korean Peninsula.» For the first time, South Korea recognizes the role played by Southeast Asia with regard to North Korea via the economic-security linkages, the long-standing bilateral relations, and the illegal trade and financial networks the DPRK has established in the region. South Korea enjoys an ever-increasing presence across Southeast Asia via the socio-cultural channel provided by the so-called «Korean Wave,»^[3] as well as through its competitive strength, which makes it a viable alternative to China and Japan regarding investment and the development of infrastructure. The traditional friendship between the majority of ASEAN members and South Korea and the possibility that an ASEAN troika will get involved in the Korean peace process shows how important the Korean Peninsula is to Southeast Asia.

Conclusion: Diversity of Southeast Asia and the «ASEAN Way» as the «Asia-Pacific Way»

Last but not least, it is easily forgotten that Southeast Asia is in fact a very diverse region. The countries come together in the form of ASEAN and have maintained a certain kind of

3 That is, the success of South Korean popular culture such as K-dramas and K-pop across the region.

stability and order, however this does not change the fact that the region is still very diverse. Whenever there is talk of conflict between China and Southeast Asia, the focus is on the South China Sea—which ignores the fact that this is only of concern to the maritime countries of Southeast Asia. Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar have very little interest in the South China Sea. Political systems, economic developments, religious heritages all play a role in this great diversity. For this reason, pragmatism is the order of the day, while value-based foreign policy has gained very little traction. Academics from the region have long argued that the ‹ASEAN Way› is actually the ‹Asia-Pacific Way›, as it represents a framework for cooperative security involving various stakeholders across the Asia-Pacific region and manages to reconcile universal principles with traits and diversity that are unique to the region. All major powers, including China, the US, Japan and of course the European powers, should take this into account when trying to understand the ongoing ‹frozen› and looming conflicts in the Asia-Pacific.

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CHAPTER 3

CRISIS MANAGEMENT // KRISENMANAGEMENT

Jürgen Trittin

It's the economy, stupid – Investitionen als Geostrategie

Spätestens mit dem letzten Besuch der Bundeskanzlerin in China hat sich die Sicht auf dieses Land verändert. Merkels Reise fällt mitten in eine Zeit der gewaltigen politischen und ökonomischen Kräfteverschiebungen. Mit dem Ende der bipolaren Weltordnung nach dem Zerfall der Sowjetunion ist nun auch die unipolare Weltordnung mit den USA als alleiniger Großmacht gescheitert. Wir leben in einer multipolaren Welt. Sichtbarster Ausdruck dieser neuen Weltordnung ist der (Wieder-) Aufstieg Chinas.

In dieser neuen multipolaren Welt folgt die Politik stärker der Ökonomie. Der Spruch «it's the economy, stupid» – er gilt jetzt erst recht. US-Präsident Donald Trump zieht gerade seine Konsequenzen aus der amerikanischen Überdehnung und verfolgt ganz ungeniert einen aggressiven Wirtschaftsnationalismus gepaart mit einer unilateralen Außenpolitik. Sein Rambo-Kurs bei Klima, Handel und Abrüstung hat die Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Europa und den USA aufgekündigt. In jeder dieser Fragen stehen heute China und Europa in einem gemeinsamen Interessenbündnis.

Während die USA aus dem Klimaschutzvertrag von Paris aussteigen, investiert China im großen Stil in Klimaschutz und saubere Technologien. Deutschland, dem Mutterland der Energiewende, läuft China international inzwischen den Rang ab. Längst bestimmt China den Weltmarktpreis für Solarpaneele und ist Weltmarktführer bei Wasserkraft, Bioenergie für Stromerzeugung und Wärme sowie E-Mobilität. In Handelsfragen ist China, wie Europa, ins Fadenkreuz der USA geraten. In diesem Streit bietet sich China als Bündnispartner Europas zur Verteidigung einer multilateralen Ordnung an – obwohl es selbst Dumping praktiziert. Während Trump das Iran-Abkommen aufkündigt und damit den wichtigsten Schritt realer Abrüstung der letzten zehn Jahre gefährdet, sind Europa und China bemüht zu retten, was zu retten ist.

Doch diese Interessenüberschneidungen machen aus China noch keinen natürlichen Verbündeten Europas. Das Land hat seine über Jahrzehnte praktizierte außenpolitische Zurückhaltung aufgegeben. Im südchinesischen Meer agiert es – allen multilateralen Bekenntnissen zum Trotz – in klassischer Großmachtpolitik und schreckt auch vor dem Einsatz militärischer Gewalt nicht zurück. Unbeirrt durch Urteile des internationalen Schiedsgerichtshofs in Den Haag treibt China die Aufrüstung umstrittener Inseln voran, zum Beispiel durch die Errichtung von Raketensystemen. Zuletzt ließ die chinesische Luftwaffe dort erstmals Langstreckenbomber landen. Die Aktion löste in der Nachbarschaft große Verunsicherung aus.

Positiver ist die Rolle Chinas im derzeitigen Ringen um den Bestand des Atomabkommens (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) mit Iran. Nachdem die Amerikaner aus dem Abkommen ausgestiegen sind (US-Präsident Trump bezeichnete den Deal als «den schlechtesten aller Zeiten»), versuchen die E3^[1]/EU zusammen mit Russland und China und – am wichtigsten – mit Iran, das Atomabkommen zu retten. Hier besteht eine Chance, mit China – und auch mit Russland – im Rahmen der internationalen Ordnung konstruktiv und wegweisend zusammenzuarbeiten.

Entlang der Initiative *One Belt, One Road* (OBOR) setzt China auf Handel und Investitionen als Mittel der Geostrategie. Die Jahrtausende chinesischer Staatlichkeit waren weniger von Eroberungen als vom Streben nach ökonomischer Hegemonie geprägt. Daran knüpft Chinas Staatspräsident Xi Jinping mit der 2013 ins Leben gerufenen OBOR an, die China auf dem Landweg und Seeweg mit Europa verbinden soll. Das Giga-Infrastrukturprojekt führt allerdings schon jetzt zu ökonomischen und politischen Abhängigkeiten. So musste Sri Lanka einen strategisch wichtigen Hafen für 99 Jahre an China vermieten, weil es seinen finanziellen Verpflichtungen gegenüber Peking nicht mehr nachkommen konnte.

Die Initiative hat auch Auswirkungen auf den Zusammenhalt der Europäischen Union. China hat seine Investitionen in Europa seit 2010 um 1.500 Prozent gesteigert. Die Gelder fließen vor allem in die krisengeschüttelten Staaten des Südens, aber auch in osteuropäische Staaten. Das bleibt nicht ohne Folgen. So neigen Länder mit großen chinesischen Investitionen inzwischen zu größerer Zurückhaltung bei ihrer Kritik der Menschenrechtslage in China. Darüber hinaus strebt China an, in Schlüsselbereichen der Wirtschaft zur Nummer eins der Welt zu werden.

Mit der Initiative *16 plus 1*, in der 11 Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union sind, versucht China aktiv die EU zu spalten.

Geostrategisch und industriepolitisch setzt China auf den Industrie-Masterplan *Made in China 2025*. Bis 2025 will China zu einer internationalen Hightech-Supermacht aufsteigen, besonders im Bereich Künstliche Intelligenz und Robotik. Das chinesische Erfolgsrezept: der Kauf von Technologiefirmen, gerade auch in Deutschland. Gleichzeitig werden europäische Unternehmen beim Zugang zum chinesischen Markt blockiert.

Bisher blieben chinesische Versprechen, den eigenen Markt weiter zu öffnen, hauptsächlich Lippenbekenntnisse. Vor dem Besuch der Kanzlerin im Mai 2018 hatte die chinesische Seite angekündigt, deutschen Autobauern zukünftig zu gestatten, auch ohne chinesische Partner in den Automarkt des Landes einzusteigen. Bisher gilt in China ein genereller Joint-Venture-Zwang mit chinesischen Firmen.

1 Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien.

Noch ist die ganze Tragweite von *Made in China 2025* nicht absehbar. Derzeit brummt in China, verordnet von oben, die E-Auto-Branche. Volkswagen will davon profitieren. 2025 will das Unternehmen 1,5 Millionen E-Autos pro Jahr auf dem chinesischen Markt verkaufen. In China gilt allerdings die Regel, dass Batterien für E-Autos von heimischen Herstellern stammen müssen. VW beugt sich und überlässt die Batterieproduktion gleich ganz den anderen. Das Unternehmen bezieht seine Batterien hauptsächlich vom chinesischen Hersteller *Contemporary Amperex Technology* (CATL). Mit der Entschuldigung «das ist nicht unsere Kernkompetenz» verweigert VW sich dieser Zukunftstechnologie. Damit droht die Initiative *Made in China 2025* für die Zukunft der deutschen Automobilbranche zum Problem zu werden.

Gleichzeitig ist China in den letzten Jahren unter dem Stichwort «Korruptionsbekämpfung» einen immer autoritäreren und zentralistischeren Weg gegangen. Das ist sehr besorgniserregend und erschwert die Kooperation. Immer offensiver versucht die chinesische Führung, den Diskurs über Menschenrechte zu verdrängen und stattdessen von einer Schicksalsgemeinschaft der Menschheit zu sprechen. Hier muss die Bundesregierung hartnäckig bleiben.

Inzwischen ist unübersehbar: Das Reich der Mitte rüttelt an den globalen Strukturen und Machtverhältnissen. Der Rest der Welt hat darauf noch keine Antwort gefunden. Vor 200 Jahren war China schon einmal Weltmacht. Dort strebt es erklärtermaßen wieder hin. In seinem Vorgehen erinnert es stark an jenes deutsche Kaiserreich, das für einen «Platz an der Sonne» angesichts aufgeteilter Kolonien auf wirtschaftliche Expansion setzte, etwa mit der Bagdad-Eisenbahn. Damals endeten diese Bestrebungen in einem Krieg mit den Nachbarn.

Auf diese Herausforderungen muss Europa zusammen mit den südostasiatischen Staaten eine Antwort geben. Und die Zeit drängt, denn China betreibt aktiv die Spaltung der ASEAN-Staaten. Doch damit diese Antwort überhaupt Aussicht auf Erfolg hat, muss sie zu uns passen. Die europäischen Stärken liegen weniger im Bereich militärischer Macht. Deshalb kann ein Militärbündnis nicht die Antwort sein. In diesem Bereich stehen sich die USA und China gegenüber. Europas Stärke liegt viel eher in eben jener *Soft Power*, auf die auch China setzt. Der europäische Binnenmarkt ist der wichtigste der Welt. Das ist unser Pfund. Ist nicht neben einer Sicherheitsarchitektur nach dem Vorbild der OSZE eine Vertiefung analog der Europäischen Union ein Weg für die ASEAN-Staaten? Und ist nicht die Europäische Union mit ihren gemeinsamen Institutionen und mit ihrer ökonomisch basierten politischen Verflechtung der europäischen Staaten ein Rollenmodell für diese Staaten?

Staaten wie Singapur hätten Interesse an einem solchen ökonomischen Schulterchluss. Jetzt geht es um die Ausgestaltung solcher Handelsabkommen. Und um die Frage, wie die Europäische Union auftritt. Derzeit gibt es keine einheitliche europäische China-Politik. Damit Europa aber in der Region ausgleichend auftreten kann, muss es erstmal

«weltpolitikfähig» werden (EU-Kommissionspräsident Jean-Claude Juncker). Dazu muss Europa sicherstellen, dass seine *Soft Power* auch wirklich Power hat.

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Bündniswechsel – ein radikales Gedankenexperiment zum Koreakonflikt

Ein von der koreanischen Halbinsel ausgehender Nuklearkrieg schien bis vor Kurzem eine reale Gefahr zu sein. US-Präsident Donald Trump und Nordkoreas Diktator Kim Jong-un zeterten gegeneinander wie verfeindete Hooligans. Nordkorea war zwar wohl noch von der Fähigkeit entfernt, den amerikanischen Kontinent mit einem Kernwaffenschlag zu bedrohen, betrieb aber emsig deren Entwicklung; Trump war zuzutrauen, diese Gefahr durch einen Präventivschlag im Keim zu ersticken. Alle Mittel schienen ausgeschöpft. Diplomatie wurde unter den US-Präsidenten Clinton und Obama versucht und kam nicht ans Ziel. Drohungen und Sanktionen waren Politik der Bush-Administration, die unter Trump wieder in volle Geltung eingesetzt wurden. Beide Strategien erreichten nichts. Nordkorea produzierte und testete Kernwaffen und betrieb sein Raketenprogramm. Für einen Neuanfang hat der südkoreanische Präsident Moon Jae-in in Berlin im Juli 2017 ein Entspannungsprogramm vorgeschlagen, das in vielen kleinen Schritten die Krise entschärfen soll.

Entspannung für die Halbinsel: Das «Berliner Konzept» Präsident Moons

Präsident Moon hat sein Konzept aus den Erfahrungen der deutschen Wiedervereinigung abgeleitet und auf die koreanische Lage zugeschnitten. Praktische Schritte sollen in sinnvoller Reihenfolge aufeinander folgen und sich dabei in einem Prozess ständig wachsender Kooperation wechselseitig verstärken. Begegnungen zwischen den Menschen (namentlich Familienzusammenführung), wirtschaftlicher Austausch, von dem beide Seiten profitieren, gemeinsame Projekte in der Wasserwirtschaft, dem Gesundheitswesen und zum Schutz der Umwelt sollen praktischen Nutzen friedlicher Beziehungen dokumentieren, politischer Dialog und militärische Vertrauensbildung diese Beziehungen festigen. Der Prozess sollte mit größter Behutsamkeit geplant und betrieben werden, denn die Akteure müssen das tiefe Misstrauen zwischen den Parteien in Rechnung stellen. Nur eine Forderung fällt aus dieser klug-vorsichtigen Vorgehensweise heraus: Nordkorea solle unverzüglich sein Kernwaffenprogramm beenden.

Das Berliner Konzept traf laut Präsident Moon auf die Zustimmung der USA und Chinas. Die Unterstützung dieser beiden Mächte ist natürlich die Voraussetzung für die praktische Umsetzung – umso hinderlicher ist die schwankende Haltung Amerikas unter der Präsidentschaft Trumps.

Der Umsetzung stehen jedoch zwei Umstände entgegen: erstens die ständige Ungewissheit, ob die Absichten, Ziele und Motivationen der nordkoreanischen Führung richtig erkannt und verarbeitet werden, zweitens die Bündnisstrukturen der Region und ihre Einbettung in geostrategische Prozesse.

Ungewissheit über die Absichten Nordkoreas

Der herrschenden Meinung nach geht es dem nordkoreanischen Regime einerseits um das Überleben (des Regimes und seiner Führung), andererseits darum, von den Vereinigten Staaten als gleichberechtigter und gleichwertiger Akteur anerkannt zu werden. Das Streben nach Sicherheit ist also mit einem psychologischen Grundbedürfnis – Anerkennung – verbunden. Beide Motivationen, so die These, bildeten die Triebkräfte des Kernwaffenprogramms. Vielleicht ist das so. Letztliche Gewissheit lässt sich indes nicht gewinnen, weil das hermetischste Regime der Welt sich nur begrenzt durchschauen lässt.

Kim Jong-un wurde von früher Jugend an auf die Führerrolle hin sozialisiert. Er lernte, ein unfehlbares, unbegrenzt mächtiges, gottähnliches Wesen zu sein. Sein Großvater hatte den Anspruch gestellt, beide Koreas unter Führung des Nordens zu vereinigen, notfalls auch mit militärischen Mitteln. Hat der Enkel diesen Traum aufgegeben oder sieht er sich als der Erbe des verehrten Vorfahren, der dessen Versprechen verwirklichen will?

Gibt ihm seine militärische Führung ein realistisches Lagebild, in dem das Kräfteverhältnis zwischen Südkorea, den USA und Nordkorea korrekt beschrieben und die Schwächen seiner eigenen Streitkräfte schonungslos offenbart werden? Oder herrscht die Angst vor dem Schicksal der Boten mit schlechten Nachrichten vor? Hält er seine Truppen wirklich für unbesiegbar, wie die offizielle Propaganda dröhnt und wie er es selbst in öffentlichen Äußerungen immer wieder behauptet, oder weiß er, dass er eine militärische Auseinandersetzung unter allen Umständen vermeiden muss? Man ist geneigt, an eine realistische Sicht der Dinge zu glauben – wissen kann man das aber aus den oben genannten Gründen nicht.

In der ersten Jahreshälfte 2018 hat der nordkoreanische Diktator ein neues Gesicht gezeigt: entspannt, freundlich, entspannungsbereit. Diese Haltung wurde aber wiederholt durch das gewohnt ruppige Verhalten unterbrochen, wenn die USA nicht in der erhofften Weise reagierten. Schlussendlich war der Wunsch, sich mit dem amerikanischen Präsidenten zu treffen, stark genug, um die Kränkung durch die vorübergehende Absage zu überwinden – die Antwort war das Maßvollste, was die nordkoreanische Diplomatie in ihrer Geschichte produziert hat. Ob diese Position nachhaltig bleibt, ist gegenwärtig noch Sache der Spekulation. Die strukturellen Bedingungen der Politik in Ostasien jedenfalls sind bisher noch unverändert.

Die ostasiatische Bündnisstruktur

Die nukleare Frage ist keineswegs ein anachronistischer Überrest des Kalten Krieges. Sie ist vielmehr eingebettet in die heutige Konfliktstruktur Ostasiens. Die beiden Koreas sind feste Bestandteile politisch-militärischer Allianzen (China/Nordkorea versus USA/Südkorea/Japan), die wiederum die globale und regionale Rivalität des alten Hegemons USA und des hegemonial ambitionierten Herausforderers China spiegeln. Solange diese regionale Ordnung besteht, gibt es Handlungszwänge, die einer nachhaltigen Lösung des Nuklearkonflikts im Wege stehen: Die beiden Länder mit den stärksten Interessen an Stabilität und Frieden – China und Südkorea – sind demzufolge in zwei antagonistische Allianzen eingespannt. Beide wollen die Krise friedlich lösen, weil sie die Region stabilisieren und damit vorteilhafte Rahmenbedingungen für ihre Wirtschaft und Sicherheit schaffen wollen. Ihre Bündnisbeziehungen sind dabei hinderlich.

Die Machtrivalität mit Amerika veranlasst China, an Nordkorea festzuhalten. Die jahrelangen Provokationen Pjöngjangs gegen die USA und Südkorea waren nur möglich, weil Nordkorea sich für den Fall eines Falles auf den chinesischen Schutz verließ. China wiederum ist gegenüber Nordkorea nur begrenzt sanktionsfähig und als Mediator zwischen den beiden Nachbarstaaten (eine Rolle, die ihm eigentlich zufiele) unbrauchbar, weil es am Bündnis festhalten muss und den unangenehmen Bündnispartner braucht, solange die US-Truppen auf der Halbinsel stehen. Der Verlust Pjöngjangs nährt in Peking den Albtraum amerikanischer Truppen an der nordkoreanisch-chinesischen Grenze. Chinas befriedende Rolle bleibt der Geist in der Flasche, solange die koreanischen Staaten Figuren im amerikanisch-chinesischen Machtspiel sind.

Südkorea steht unter der Schutzgarantie der USA und hat nur begrenzte Einflussmöglichkeiten auf den Bündnispartner. Andererseits braucht es wegen der Unberechenbarkeit und nuklearen Bewaffnung Nordkoreas einen starken Alliierten. Seit Präsident George W. Bush in Nordkorea ein Mitglied der «Achse des Bösen» sah, hat Seoul lernen müssen, dass die Interessen seiner Garantiemacht von den eigenen massiv abweichen können. Unter Donald Trump erlebt Südkorea die Steigerung dieser Differenz, nur dass Trump, ebenso wie Kim Jong-un, unberechenbar scheint. Handelspolitisch gebärdet er sich wie ein Feind seiner asiatischen Verbündeten. Rationale Kräfte in seiner Umgebung haben ihn bislang in der Sicherheitspolitik halbwegs unter Kontrolle gebracht – ohne Garantie für die Zukunft, denn ihre Reihen sind durch die Abgänge von Sicherheitsberater McMaster und Außenminister Tillerson stark geschwächt, während die Hardliner durch die Beförderung Pompeo zum Außenminister und die Ernennung John Boltons zum Sicherheitsberater ihren Einfluss beträchtlich ausgedehnt haben. Seoul findet sich damit im klassischen Allianz-dilemma: Auf der einen Seite muss der kleinere Alliierte fürchten, dass die Schutzmacht ihren Schutzschirm zurückzieht. Südkoreas Rolle in Washingtons Geostrategie ist aus US-Perspektive, zumal derjenigen Trumps, nicht zwingend. Trumps grobe Androhung eines Handelskrieges gegen die südkoreanische Exportwirtschaft zeigt seine begrenzte

Wertschätzung für den Partner. Zwischenzeitliche Freundlichkeiten ändern daran nichts. Der amerikanische Bündnispartner ist notorisch unverlässlich geworden.

Auf der anderen Seite besteht die Gefahr, dass der große Allianzpartner den kleinen in einen von diesem nicht gewünschten Konflikt verwickelt. Dass Trump Nordkorea «vollständige Vernichtung» androhte, erfuhr Seoul aus den Medien. Rhetorik und Twitter-Eruptionen des US-Präsidenten sind gefährlich; vielleicht ist er sich darüber nicht einmal klar. Während China und Südkorea versuchten, die Wogen zu glätten, putschten sich die narzisstischen Führungsfiguren in Pjöngjang und Washington gegenseitig hoch. Ob der jüngste Gipfel der beiden starken Egos dieses Verhältnis grundstürzend ändert, steht in den Sternen.

Damit scheint Südkorea in der Falle zu sitzen: Kritik an Trumps Eskalationsrhetorik könnte das Bündnis gefährden, das man gegen den unberechenbaren Verwandten im Norden braucht. Eine Anpassung an die Trumpsche Konfrontationspolitik liefe indes der beabsichtigten Entspannung des Berliner Konzepts entgegen, das Präsident Moons Politik leitet und entscheidend zum gegenwärtigen Entspannungsprozess beigetragen hat. Das Misstrauen der ohnedies paranoiden Führung in Pjöngjang ließe sich so nicht abbauen.

Präsident Moon hat die Stetigkeit kooperativer Politik als Grundbedingung für sein Friedenskonzept bezeichnet. Die US-Politik der letzten zwei Jahrzehnte verspricht das Gegenteil: ein chaotisches Hin und Her zwischen Provokation und Entspannungsbereitschaft. Der blitzschnelle Wechsel zwischen Absage des Gipfels und der Rückkehr zur Gipfelplanung für denselben Termin ist nur das jüngste Wechselbad, in das Washington seine asiatischen Verhandlungspartner stürzte. Diese Unberechenbarkeit wird bleiben: Die tiefe Spaltung der amerikanischen Gesellschaft und die Radikalisierung der republikanischen Partei bis an den Rand des Neofaschismus lassen kaum Änderung zum Besseren erhoffen.

Bündniswechsel

Der Erfolg des Berliner Konzepts setzt die Veränderung der strategischen Strukturen Ostasiens voraus. Solange der innerkoreanische Gegensatz mit der chinesisch-amerikanischen Rivalität verknüpft ist, wird Entspannung nur episodisch auftreten oder ganz scheitern. Ein kühner Schritt könnte helfen: Seoul müsste sich aus dem Bündnis mit den USA lösen und die Anlehnung an China suchen.

In dieser neuen Konstellation würde Peking eine Garantie für die Sicherheit Südkoreas gegen jeden Angriff abgeben, auch wenn die Aggression von Nordkorea ausginge. Im Gegenzug würde Südkorea seine amerikanische Allianz beenden und Washington bitten, die auf seinem Territorium stationierten Verbände so bald wie möglich abzuziehen. Die

Freiheit von fremden Truppen würde Südkorea auch für den Fall einer koreanischen Wiedervereinigung garantieren.

Sein neues Bündnis könnte die Sicherheit Südkoreas im Vergleich zum Status quo erhöhen. Denn China hat aufgrund seiner unmittelbaren Nachbarschaft vitale Interessen an einer stabilen und friedlichen Entwicklung. Überdies kann nur Peking auf Nordkorea politisch wirksamen Druck ausüben. Seine konventionelle Schlagkraft ist erheblich und seine geheimdienstlichen Erkenntnisse und Operationsfähigkeit in dem abgeschotteten Nachbarland vermutlich besser als die jedes anderen Staates. China kann nicht aus der Region abziehen – das weiß die nordkoreanische Führung natürlich. Und in dieser seiner eigenen Region wird es von der Verteidigung seiner vitalen Interessen nicht abgeschreckt werden können, eben weil es keine Exit-Option hat.

Für die Volksrepublik wäre dieser Wandel ein historischer diplomatischer Triumph. Das Risiko, mit den USA über Korea in einen Krieg zu geraten, würde verschwinden, die geopolitische Position Pekings gestärkt. Nordkorea wäre als Bündnispartner entbehrlich. An seiner Stelle träte mit Südkorea ein wirtschaftlich potenter, mit China eng verflochtener stabiler Partner mit kompatiblen Interessen.

Konfliktmanagement nach dem Wechsel

Die Entspannungsschritte des Berliner Konzepts könnten in einer völkerrechtlichen Vereinbarung zwischen China und den beiden Koreas fixiert werden. Das Abkommen würde den Friedensschluss kodifizieren, China würde es garantieren. Die Durchführung der Verpflichtungen würden regelmäßig überprüft.

Das geteilte chinesisch-südkoreanische Interesse an einer stabilen Region bildet eine Versicherung gegen etwaige nordkoreanische Unberechenbarkeiten. China und Südkorea könnten die Haltung gegenüber Pjöngjang abgestimmt der jeweiligen Lage anpassen. Da die Mitgliedschaft in antagonistischen Bündnissen entfallen wäre, könnten die gemeinsamen Interessen Pekings und Seouls voll zum Tragen kommen. Diese Interessen sollten kleinere wirtschaftliche Interessendispute neutralisieren können. Das andere mögliche Konfliktfeld, Menschenrechte, hat die Beziehungen noch nie nennenswert belastet. Es gibt keinen Grund zu vermuten, dass sich dieser Zustand bei wesentlich engeren Beziehungen ändern sollte.

Das nukleare Problem müsste nicht vorab gelöst werden, die Lösung würde in den Entspannungsprozess eingepreist. Die kernwaffenfreie Zone Korea wäre Programmpunkt des Entspannungsprozesses. Nordkorea könnte sich dazu verstehen, weil die existentielle Bedrohung mit einem inszenierten Regimesturz entfallen wäre, hätten die USA erst die Halbinsel verlassen. Damit wäre auch nukleare Abschreckung gegen die USA keine Überlebensnotwendigkeit mehr. Wollte Pjöngjang Südkorea bedrohen, würde das die

chinesische Sicherheitsgarantie für Seoul auf den Plan rufen. Dieses Risiko würde der Norden vermeiden wollen.

Das Ende der Kernwaffen- und Raketentests würde zwischen den drei Partnern kodifiziert und kontrolliert. Der sinnvolle nächste Schritt wäre die Verpflichtung Nordkoreas, die Produktion von Waffenspaltstoff zu beenden, dann würde sich die Demontage der nordkoreanischen Kernwaffen anschließen. Dieser Weg zur Abrüstung auf der Halbinsel ist realistischer als der Traum John Boltons, das ganze durch amerikanische Drohungen, Sanktionen und womöglich einen gewaltsamen Regimewechsel zu erreichen.

Die USA würden einen Bündnispartner, einen Brückenkopf auf dem asiatischen Festland und eine wichtige geostrategische Position für den Fall einer Taiwan-Krise verlieren. Zugleich entfele jedoch eine äußerst riskante Bündnispflicht, und das Risiko eines bewaffneten Konflikts mit China verlöre einen seiner wahrscheinlichsten Auslöser. Die amerikanische Allianz mit Japan könnte aus dem Wandel sogar gestärkt hervorgehen, da die Position der USA in Ostasien nunmehr ausschließlich auf diesem Bündnis beruhen würde. Die stabilere Gesamtlage der Region wäre schließlich auch für Japan vorteilhaft.

Schlussbemerkung

Der Schlüssel zur Verwirklichung dieses Szenarios «out of the box» und der mögliche Showstopper ist der Grad des südkoreanischen Vertrauens in die guten Absichten und die Verlässlichkeit Chinas. Die Lebenszeitdiktatur von Präsident Xi Jinping, die verstärkte Repression in China und die inzwischen sehr robuste Verfechtung territorialer Ansprüche durch Peking machen nachdenklich.

Andererseits macht das zunehmend erratische und konfrontative Verhalten der USA einen Partnerwechsel für Seoul attraktiver. Als Präsident Moon vor einigen Monaten China besuchte, war in der gemeinsamen Stellungnahme der beiden Präsidenten von einer geplanten Annäherung die Rede. Anschließend fuhr ein hochrangiger chinesischer Vertreter nach Pjöngjang, wenig später begann das unerwartete Entspannungskarussell sich zu drehen. War diese Abfolge Zufall?

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Strategic alignments in the Indo-Pacific

China's economic, political, and military rise over the past decade has long raised concerns, particularly among its neighbors. However, it was only after Xi Jinping took over the leadership in 2012 that China began to devise a foreign and security policy, which truly reflects its claims and ambitions. This gist of Xi's «China Dream» is to «resurrect» Chinese power and achieve a «great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.»^[1] Since then, Xi Jinping emphasized the modernization of the military, and in particular the navy, with the aim to develop a truly blue-water navy. During the 19th Party Congress in October 2017, Xi had announced plans to modernize the Chinese army by 2035 in such a way that, by 2050, China's military would be one of most high-ranking in the world. In 2017, Chinese defense spending increased by 7%, including a sizable amount to protect China's maritime rights in the South China Sea.

Xi's China pursues its claims through an increasingly assertive foreign policy stance towards its neighbors. The Chinese military has been probing Japan's airspace and maritime space around the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, for instance. China has also been expanding into the Indian Ocean much to the concern of India, which, in addition, faces regular border skirmishes with China, such as last year during a two-month standoff on the Doklam plateau. China's projection of power in the South China Sea in particular has raised concern among several Southeast Asian countries, as well as Australia. China has been violating international law in the South China Sea by turning reefs and rocks into proper «islands,» all with their own exclusive economic zones. In 2017, China built about 290,000 square meters of new military facilities on contested islands in the South China Sea, including munitions depots, sensor arrays, radar systems and missile shelters. In May, the Chinese military landed nuclear-capable bombers on its artificial islands for the first time. China's expansion in the South China Sea appears to be an integral part of its «China Dream.»

China's emerging ambitions, which also challenge the regional order, are clearly reflected in its most ambitious project, the «Belt and Road Initiative» (BRI), which has a significant maritime component. China's influence in ports along the Indian Ocean, Hambantota in Sri Lanka for instance, or Gwadar port in Pakistan, could have major geopolitical consequences for the region, in particular since some of the Chinese ports could be dual use, meaning their purpose could be commercial as well as military.

1 The Chinese text of Xi Jinping's «China's dream» is available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-11/30/c_124026690.htm.

Above all, the US worries about China's ambition to extend its reach beyond the so-called First Island Chain and potentially push up against US territories in the Western Pacific. In 2016, China's only aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, sailed into the Western Pacific for the first time. Previously, the US had tried, unsuccessfully, to put pressure on Beijing to terminate its islands constructions. In 2017, the US passed a defense budget, which included a provision encouraging navy ships to make port calls in Taiwan. A clause in the defense bill directs the Pentagon to «consider the advisability and feasibility of re-establishing port of call exchanges between the United States Navy and the Taiwan navy.» Many US allies in the Asia-Pacific are wondering how much longer the US will keep a military presence in the region and live up to its security guarantees—something that has become ever more questionable since Donald Trump became president. Secretary of Defense James Mattis stressed the importance of the US commitment to the region during his speech at the Shangri-la Dialogue on June 2, saying, «... make no mistake, America is in the Indo-Pacific to stay.» He further stated «China's policy in the South China Sea stands in stark contrast to the openness of our strategy.»^[2]

Facing a strategic shift in the Asia-Pacific or, as the US and its allies in Asia prefer to call it, the Indo-Pacific, because of China's rise as a regional power with greater military capacities, some countries in the Asia-Pacific have begun to build stronger alliances and have increased military cooperation. China's neighbors have ramped up joint naval drills and various high-profile military exercises aimed at defending the freedom of navigation in international waters.

As early as 2007, India, Japan, Australia, and the US had initiated an informal strategic forum, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, which, however, lapsed shortly after when Australia withdrew (under Kevin Rudd). Ten years later, against the background of China's increasing assertiveness and territorial claims, the four countries did revive the dialogue. The Quad group held talks in Manila on the sidelines of the November 2017 ASEAN Summit, with the four countries emphasizing the need for a free and open Indo-Pacific, freedom of navigation and airspace, as well as respect for international law and maritime security. Australia, India, Japan, and the United States also announced that, beginning in 2018, they would establish a joint regional infrastructure program, which appears to be an alternative to China's BRI initiative.

In Europe, there have been discussions in foreign policy circles on whether European countries, in particular France, Germany and the United Kingdom, should engage with the Quad, given their high stakes in a «free and open Indo-Pacific.» However, given that the Quad appears to be a de facto military alliance and that Europe's role in the area of

2 Remarks by Secretary of Defense Mattis at the Plenary Session of the 2018 Shangri-La Dialogue, June 2, 2018, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1538599/remarks-by-secretary-mattis-at-plenary-session-of-the-2018-shangri-la-dialogue/>

security will remain limited, the Europeans will be unable to fully endorse the Quad. In addition, both Europeans and the Quad members have a strong interest in avoiding to appear as an anti-China alliance. China already sees the Quad as an attempt by regional democracies to contain its power, and the members of the Quad will not want to provoke China further, as this would fuel rather than constrain China's maritime assertiveness, particularly in the South China Sea.

Nevertheless EU member states should consider what their contribution to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific might be. France and Britain have already begun cooperating on maritime issues, such as a maritime task group in the South China Sea, and they could deepen such cooperation to expand their maritime capacity in the Indo-Pacific. Stronger cooperation on non-security issues between the EU and key players in the Indo-Pacific would also be feasible, in particular on shaping the rules around connectivity between Asia and Europe. The EU has recently already started to frame its own strategy on infrastructure development as a response to China's BRI.

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CHAPTER 4

NORTH KOREA // NORDKOREA

Mark Fitzpatrick

If US-North Korea talks fail, nuclear proliferation in Northeast Asia may escalate

The ongoing drama concerning North Korea has seen so many plot shifts of late that it puts cheap novels to shame. After several years of fast acceleration in its missile and nuclear program, the Democratic Peoples' Republic (DPRK) this year put on the brakes, pursuing instead a «charm offensive.» After meeting almost no foreign officials during the first six years of his reign, leader Kim Jong-un opened the door to South Korean senior officials on March 5 and passed an offer to meet with US President Donald Trump, which was accepted on the spot. Kim then traveled to China for the first time to confer with Chinese President Xi Jin Ping, twice, and met Republic of Korea (ROK) president Moon Jae-in, again twice. On May 24, after an exchange of boasts and insults, Trump called off his summit with Kim, which had been scheduled to be held in Singapore on June 12, only to voice another change of mind two days later. As this paper is being submitted in late May, it is difficult to anticipate what other dizzying developments may ensue.

However the summit turns out, the last act in the drama is far from being staged. The unprecedented meeting between the US and DPRK leaders will spawn eye-grabbing headlines and, surely, pronouncements of triumph. Yet the real success of the summit will be judged over time, as lofty agreements on denuclearization are translated into actionable steps and the minutiae of implementation. Let us hope the process does not break down, as happened over several years with the 1994 Agreed Framework, over several months after the 2005 and 2008 agreements under the Six Party Talks and over mere days after the 2012 Leap Day Deal.

At their April 27 Panmunjom Summit, Kim and Moon declared the goal of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula «through complete denuclearization.» This was little more than an aspiration, akin to the goal of nuclear disarmament in Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Who knows when it will eventuate? «Perhaps not in my lifetime,» said President Barack Obama, speaking about a nuclear-weapons-free world, in his April 2009 Prague speech.

For the United States, denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula means «complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement» (CVID) of the North Korean nuclear arsenal and related infrastructure. To North Korea, it means an end to the perceived US nuclear threat. Neither side is at all prepared to give what the other wants. Former insider Thae Yong Ho, who in 2016 defected as DPRK's deputy ambassador in London, argued in May that CVID «will strike at the core of North Korea's power structure. North Korea will not accept CVID that does not ensure the security of the regime.» The United States, for its part, has no nuclear weapons in South Korea, but would retain multiple nuclear strike

options no matter what arrangements are made concerning deployment of forces in the Korean theater.

Disputes over verification are what sank the last effort to dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Destruction of the cooling tower of the plutonium production reactor in late June 2008, filmed live by Western media, was hailed as a seminal step toward DPRK disarmament. Yet, three months later, talks unraveled over North Korea's refusal to accept US demands for verification, which included «full access to any site, facility or location» deemed relevant to the nuclear program, including military facilities. Given that one of the forces behind those verification demands in 2008 is current US National Security Advisor John Bolton, it is likely that the US would again demand full access to DPRK military sites during the implementation process that follows any Kim-Trump summit.

Not long before he joined the White House, Bolton made a legal case for bombing North Korea and argued that diplomacy with dictators is a waste of time. In his White House role, Bolton's maximalist demands on North Korea are seen by skeptics as a strategy for sabotaging talks. In May, the DPRK lashed out at him personally for his insistence that North Korea must turn over its nuclear weapons capabilities to the United States as Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi did in 2003. The North Koreans detest the «Libya model,» not just because Qaddafi met a gruesome death ten years later after the US turned on him, but because it implies that they have to give up their entire nuclear deterrent before receiving benefits in return.

US-DPRK diplomacy holds great promise of détente and a path toward removing the North Korean nuclear threat. It also holds great risk, in two ways. The first is that the talks could very well fail, either immediately over differing interpretations of the goal, or later, over verification disputes. At that stage, Bolton would likely argue that this proves that engagement is worthless. Trump may agree that it would be time, instead, for military action to ramp up the «maximum pressure» strategy. Even a so-called limited strike, however, would likely escalate to all-out war and the nightmare scenario of a nuclear exchange, as I gamed out in a *New York Times* interactive op-ed on May 24.

The second risk is that Trump will give away too much, too quickly. An isolationist at heart who has long railed about the cost of overseas bases, he, twice this year, had to be talked out of removing US troops from South Korea. A troop withdrawal might be a reasonable quid pro quo for CVID and an end to other North Korean threats, but offering it up front confounds US allies in northeast Asia. It signals a loosening of US alliance commitments and gives South Korea and Japan reason to reconsider their security dependency on the United States.

In Northeast Asia as in Europe, US security alliances have worked well to keep the peace. US extended deterrence has also served non-proliferation goals. As long as Japan and the ROK felt protected by the United States, including by its «nuclear umbrella,» they had no

need to consider nuclear armaments of their own. When the US commitment has seemed to waiver, however, allied security planners have had to reconsider their options.

In South Korea's case, security fears and concern over US abandonment led President Park Chung-hee to actively pursue nuclear weapons in the 1970s. The effort was launched after

President Richard Nixon's 1969 declaration in Guam of a new policy of shifting the burden of Asian allies' conventional defense to the countries themselves. Two years later, the US abruptly withdrew its Seventh Infantry Division from South Korea amid calls in Congress for additional withdrawals. Park did not get far with his efforts to procure plutonium-reprocessing equipment before the US intervened to stop it. But the November 1976 election of Jimmy Carter, who during the campaign had pledged to withdraw all US troops from South Korea, prompted Park to resume the secret nuclear program.

Park's assassination in October 1979 ended the second effort. His successor Chun Doo-hwan, who seized power via a military coup, needed the legitimacy provided by friendly relations with the US and thus did not continue the nuclear program. By this time, Carter had scrapped his plans to withdraw troops and tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea. The Reagan administration, which came to power in 1981, then provided a reinvigorated security guarantee. In the years that followed, South Korean scientists dabbled in uranium-enrichment and plutonium-separation experiments and officials repeatedly sought US approval for sensitive nuclear technologies like the ones Japan was allowed to possess.

Today, opinion polls in South Korea show sustained popular support for the idea of indigenous nuclear weapons, driven by a sense of despair that the US failed to prevent North Korea from obtaining them. Yet successive governments have maintained the ROK's non-proliferation pledge under the NPT, knowing only too well that nuclear weapons would bring more trouble than benefit. I explained these dynamics in a 2016 book, entitled *Asia's Latent Nuclear Powers: Japan, South Korea and Taiwan*.

Post-war Japan has never gone down Park Chung-hee's path of actively seeking nuclear weapons, but it has a quasi nuclear-hedging strategy in the form of uranium enrichment and plutonium-reprocessing technologies. At least five times over the last 50 years, the Japanese security establishment undertook studies to assess the costs and benefits of having their own nuclear weapons. Each time, the studies were undertaken in response to a changed security environment, including China's nuclearization and, later, the end of the Cold War. Each study concluded that going nuclear was neither desirable nor necessary as long as Japan could rely on the US defense commitment. Quietly leaking the assessments typically served to encourage the US to reaffirm its extended deterrence commitment.

The most important factor affecting Japan's continued non-nuclear posture is the credibility it places in US extended deterrence. Credibility is a highly subjective criterion, depending more on perceptions than reality. On the campaign trail in 2016, candidate Donald Trump's disparaging comments about Japan and South Korea undermined the confidence allies had about US willingness to come to their defense. His off-hand remarks played directly into North Korea's decoupling strategy. As president, Trump generally has stuck to scripted US policy on extended deterrence. Yet there have been notable lapses, such as when he purposely failed to reaffirm the NATO Article V commitment when speaking at NATO headquarters in Brussels in May 2017.

Musing about prematurely withdrawing US troops from South Korea is another such lapse. It stimulates security concerns not just in the ROK but also in Japan, which then would become the only nation in East Asia to permanently host US forces. A withdrawal of US forces while North Korea retains its nuclear arsenal and China's continues to grow would leave Japan feeling exposed and worried that US troops there would be next.

Japan will not easily be propelled down a nuclear-weapons path. A so-called «nuclear allergy» remains deeply rooted in the Japanese psyche. While Japan may have the technical capability to build rudimentary nuclear weapons in as short as a year, overcoming societal and legal barriers would probably prove to be more challenging unless stimulated by a rapid deterioration of Japan's security environment. A failed US-DPRK summit and resumption of North Korean missile testing could be one such shock. A hasty US retreat could be another.

All parties should maintain a steady and patient posture and keep their eyes on the goal of a secure and peaceful Korean Peninsula. One-day summits can make for dramatic turning points, but putting in place lasting solutions will take a sustained effort. A diplomatic framework is needed that provides for reciprocal steps toward denuclearization and a sustainable peace. Meanwhile, it will be important for the United States and other parties to support ROK President Moon in his peaceful quest, because it is his nation that will bear the greatest burden if diplomacy sours and is supplanted by military options.

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Last to escape, first to disarm? Three scenarios of peace and war on the Korean Peninsula

In 2018, political relations on the Korean peninsula are in flux to an unprecedented degree. Back in the summer of 2017, the possibility of a friendly visit of North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un to South Korea would have seemed far-fetched. Even more unrealistic: the prospect of a potential summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump, openly discussing the possibility of a full de-nuclearization of the North and a lasting peace framework for both Koreas. «What is real, and what is illusion?» we might ask ourselves. Is it really possible that Kim Jong-un, after decades of strenuous efforts from North Korea to acquire nuclear weapons, and after being punished by the international community with the most rigid sanctions regime, will simply give up his «ultimate insurance» policy? Would Washington truly be ready to consider withdrawing its forces from the peninsula as a result of a comprehensive peace agreement? And what could all that mean for East Asia and Europe?

At this point in time, with so many variables in flux, we can merely speculate. However, sometimes speculation is the only available means for assessing future outcomes and options. Taking note of the unclear situation, this article deliberately engages in speculation and develops three scenarios for the Korean Peninsula. The author does not claim that any of these will become reality—and in certain cases strongly wishes the opposite.

Scenario I: Diplomacy and deterrence

The Trump-Kim Summit—first anticipated, then cancelled, and finally still going ahead in Singapore—will not be short of big words and memorable images. Trump, the self-proclaimed dealmaker, will return home to the United States, just falling short of exclaiming «peace in our times» to the crowd of reporters, while no-one will know whether Kim has had a similarly enthusiastic welcome back home in Pyongyang. The next days and weeks belong to the journalists and pundits, sounding out each and every word uttered by anonymous sources at the summit sidelines. Soon, their initial praise for Trump's «bold move» will give way to a more sober assessment, as it becomes clear that, aside from the initially stated goals of «full de-nuclearization» and «peace for both Koreas,» not much was agreed between the two alpha males. More daunting still, there is no clear and mutually shared understanding of what those goals might mean in practice and how to achieve them. Though both sides did agree on intensified and sustained diplomatic negotiations at the highest levels, there is not even a tentative roadmap with tangible interim steps.

Over the next two years the mileage account of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo goes through the roof, as he is shuttling back and forth between Washington and East Asia. What is leaked to the press—and much is leaked thanks to the undisciplined US team—is that negotiations with the North have become quite cumbersome. Pyongyang’s diplomats are well prepared and shrewd, while Washington’s negotiators lack a clear mandate. The Department of State’s team is understaffed and lacks critical expertise. As a further complication Trump will, every now and then, send out another tweet either threatening or courting Kim who, in turn, keeps an unusually low public profile. What initially looks like concessions by the North, such as shutting down the Punggye-ri nuclear test site,^[1] turns out to be sophisticated Kabuki. Ever more unnerving, reports by the Japanese press call into question Kim’s lofty bid to freeze the nuclear program. More and more, it looks as though the North just wanted to buy time and capitalize on the ramifications of international recognition.

That scenario, though not entirely realistic, would have implications that could build on actual real-world trends. First, it would send a devastating signal to all other signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In effect, North Korea, being the last NPT signatory to successfully escape the regime, would not be the first to disarm. More so, having acquired nuclear weapons and subsequently gained the political recognition from the highest US echelons would demonstrate that «going nuclear» has great advantages. All other adversaries of the United States, including Iran—by then perhaps still locked in a standoff with Washington over its own nuclear ambitions^[2]—would be closely watching. At some point, US politicians and the defense establishment might have to accept grudgingly that mutual nuclear deterrence with North Korea has become the dominant security vector for the foreseeable future.^[3] For the Europeans, both developments would be problematic.

On the one hand, Washington’s renewed focus on East Asia would only accelerate Obama’s famous «pivot to Asia.» The more diplomatic and military resources the United States would devote to that crucial region of the world, the less its enthusiasm to reassure its European allies or support a European Union struggling with yet another economic crisis due to a prolonged trade war with Washington. Russia, benefiting from the constantly

- 1** Adam Taylor, «North Korea’s mountain mystery: Is Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site still functional?» *The Washington Post* (April 25, 2018), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/04/25/north-koreas-mountain-mystery-is-punggye-ri-nuclear-test-site-still-functional/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2d92f4aefdf7
- 2** Laurence Norman, «How Fast Iran Could Build a Nuclear Bomb,» *The Wall Street Journal* (May 8, 2018), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-fast-could-iran-build-a-nuclear-bomb-1525803666>
- 3** Uri Friedman, «Can America Live With a Nuclear North Korea?» *The Atlantic* (September 14, 2017), <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/09/north-korea-nuclear-deterrence/539205/>

rising oil prices that resulted from Trump's decision to opt out of the Iran nuclear deal,^[4] could feel emboldened and openly court EU governments to finally recognize Moscow's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, Berlin might resolutely debate how to take on more responsibility in an ever-changing world.

On the other hand, seeing the already moribund NPT regime further fray would run counter to established EU efforts to curb the spread of nuclear arms in a multilateral setting. This development would take place against the background of 122 states having agreed on a new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (or Ban Treaty) in 2017.^[5] Together, these two developments could lead to the eventual collapse of the NPT.^[6]

Scenario II: Peace and retreat

To the great surprise of most international observers, US-North Korean talks proceed smoothly. Already in late 2018, negotiators announce a detailed plan for phasing out the North's nuclear weapons program. Inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency gain access to a number of facilities in early 2019, confirming what was already known, that Pyongyang was on the cusp of acquiring a full-fledged nuclear deterrent. The Kim regime accepts to re-join the NPT and to sign the IAEA's Additional Protocol, allowing for intrusive verification of North Korea's soon to be peaceful nuclear program.

In exchange, Washington agrees to a peace settlement for the Korean peninsula, which includes the long-term prospect of a peaceful reunification of the two nations. One precondition set by Kim was the phased withdrawal of all US military personnel from South Korea and an end to all joint military activities, including naval exercises. While many in the United States warn Trump of such wide-ranging concessions, the White House refers to the President's campaign pledge to scale back unnecessary and costly US security commitments around the globe. In 2020, Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un jointly receive the Nobel Peace Prize. For years to come, international relations experts struggle with how to explain such a momentous turn of events that runs against the grain of any established academic knowledge.

This scenario, though considerably less likely, would have much more far-ranging repercussions than the previous one. Perhaps most importantly, Trump's decision to retreat from

4 «Oil price shoots higher as Trump quits Iran nuclear deal,» *Financial Times* (May 9, 2018), <https://www.ft.com/content/106bdc1a-534b-11e8-b3ee-41e0209208ec>

5 «Nearly two-thirds of U.N. states agree treaty to ban nuclear weapons,» Reuters (July 7, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nuclear-un-idUSKBN19S2F5>

6 Cf. Angela Kane and Ulrich Kühn, «Nuclear Disarmament, Arms Control, and Nonproliferation in Retreat: What Europe Can Do,» *S+F Sicherheit und Frieden* 36, no. 1 (2018): 40–4.

the Korean peninsula would massively alter the balance of power in East Asia, thereby strengthening Beijing's hand in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Faced with this, close US allies such as Japan and Australia would ask themselves how much further a US retreat might proceed in years to come. In actual fact, currently there already is a lively, albeit mostly academic debate in Australia about the future of US security guarantees. One option discussed is that Canberra will develop its own nuclear deterrent in case China should win the upper hand in the Asia-Pacific.^[7]

European governments would be confronted with a number of uncomfortable questions. Already under economic pressure from China and militarily threatened by Russia, Europeans would wonder who's next on Trump's retreat list. Is America's commitment to NATO still «iron-clad?» Particularly NATO's eastern member states might be apprehensive that the end of the Pax Americana is near. While the initial effects of North Korea renouncing nuclear arms could give a boost to the wider nonproliferation regime, a novel proliferation risk might take shape: instead of US adversaries it could be US allies that increasingly consider acquiring nuclear weapons. All the while, Berlin would still be debating how to take on more responsibility in an ever-changing world.

Scenario III: War and turmoil

It will take historians years to figure out the exact details of the spectacularly failed Trump-Kim summit. What is clear is that at one point Trump unsuccessfully tried to bully Kim into disposing of all nuclear weapons and related facilities within one year and to forego enrichment and reprocessing activities indefinitely. South Korean President Moon then called on all sides to remain calm, to rethink expectations, and to return to a policy of small and incremental steps. While Trump fires a new salvo of early-morning «fire and fury» tweets and orders a large-scale military exercise in the Sea of Japan, European leaders urge Trump not to over-react, and Emmanuel Macron volunteers to mediate between the parties. Two days later, US long-range bombers and fighter jets launch a massive conventional attack against North Korean targets. That same night, Donald Trump declares that America is at war and that he was never willing to accept a nuclear-armed North Korea that was threatening to strike the US with nuclear warheads.

7 Tony Walker, «Why Australia might be forced to consider nuclear weapons,» *The Sydney Morning Herald* (January 12, 2018), <https://www.smh.com.au/opinion/why-australia-might-be-forced-to-consider-nuclear-weapons-20180111-h0gojv.html>

Contrary to previous nightmare scenarios published in the American press,^[8] the US military is successful in taking out all of North Korea's nuclear-weapons capabilities. However, that does not prevent the Kim regime from wreaking havoc in the South Korean regions bordering the demilitarized zone. Seoul, in particular, suffers massive damage from the North's conventional barrage, causing thousands of civilian casualties. While Chinese and Russian strategic nuclear forces are on high alert, the US Pacific Command announces it will not deploy boots on the ground but employ its air force to enforce a new demilitarized zone extending 30 kilometers into North Korean territory. After three weeks, the US bombing campaign is over. Kim Jong-un's whereabouts are unknown.

This extreme case is a low probability, high impact scenario. It would plunge the world into turmoil, rattling both US adversaries and allies alike. Particularly at the outset, the Chinese leadership would be apprehensive that the US military might go into North Korea, eliminating the Kim regime and effectively taking over the North. The prospect of US forces at China's borders—as well as at Russia's—would cause massive regional instability and open up a number of pathways for escalation with consequences impossible to gauge. US allies in the region would be in a state of shock, having had to witness how Washington condoned massive South Korean casualties, while trying to eliminate a questionable nuclear threat to America.

The shockwaves of such an event would extend to Europe, dwarfing previous debates about proliferation or the future of the NPT. Suddenly, being allied with the United States might no longer be primarily perceived as a guarantee for one's own freedom and security but as a potential liability. After America's exit from the Paris climate accord, the trade war over steel tariffs, and Trump's nixing the Iran deal, Washington, for the fourth time in a row, would have acted against EU advice and interest. Perhaps, at that point, Berlin would stop debating and start acting. Spurred by the events, Angela Merkel might seek an immediate meeting with the French President. Macron, never averse to symbolism, would await the German Chancellor onboard a *Le Triomphant*-class nuclear missile submarine in the Breton port of Île Longue. As usual, Merkel's appearance would not reveal her true inner feelings.

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8 Jeffrey Lewis, «This is how nuclear war with North Korea would unfold,» *The Washington Post* (December 8, 2017), https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/this-is-how-nuclear-war-with-north-korea-would-unfold/2017/12/08/4e298a28-db07-11e7-a841-2066faf731ef_story.html?utm_term=.2a3b15c45de3

Promoting Peace on the Korean Peninsula: Departure Points for Europe

At first sight, the role of the EU and its member states in resolving the conflict on the Korean Peninsula and achieve a viable mid-term to long-term solution seems to be limited. Neither is the EU a regional security actor in Northeast Asia, nor has it been directly involved in any previous negotiations. Yet, for precisely these reasons, the EU or its member states might have the ideal requisites for greater involvement in a necessary peace process. Besides support through economic cooperation and financial aid, which has become a standard diplomatic tool, a greater diplomatic role for the EU is also desirable.

In addition to political support for South Korea's endeavors towards a sustainable diplomatic process, European players could conceivably implement a set of other measures. Previous summits and talks had taken place without a mediator, and so far the key parties have not articulated a need for active mediation. However, given the continuously lopsided expectations (i.e., expected concessions) and absolute demands put on North Korea, an organized approach for conflict settlement would be desirable. Here, the relatively neutral position of European states in the region might be helpful. Overall, the lessons learned from Cold War summitry (and its later reassessment) or of the negotiations with Iran may provide stepping stones on a roadmap towards peace.

Resetting Europe's role?

In the past, the role of the EU and its member states was limited to supporting existing initiatives, with little stakes in the actual negotiations. In 1997, the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) joined the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and was represented on its executive board. The organization was a means to implement the so-called *Agreed Framework* of 1994. This included the freezing of the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center and the construction of two nuclear plants with light-water reactors.

Besides this major initiative, over the years, individual European governments, civil society organizations and think tanks have been involved in facilitating track dialogues aiming to reinvigorate official talks and in keeping doors open. Hopes, however, for North Korea to establish formal diplomatic relations with EU and open a permanent mission in Brussels were frustrated. Still, a range of European countries maintains diplomatic missions in Pyongyang, including Germany, Sweden, Poland, Switzerland, the UK, France and Romania.

In the past, policy towards North Korea has been pragmatic, focusing on «critical engagement» combined with the support of sanctions meant to uphold the international non-proliferation regime. Generally, EU foreign and security policy depended on US policy, and all too often interactions with North Korea only followed directives from Washington. Today, with growing differences on international issues such as the handling of the Iran deal and a gradual reshaping of the international order, the EU needs to assume a more independent role and develop instruments for dealing with global challenges. An independent diplomatic strategy towards Asian security in general and the Korean Peninsula in particular is needed. This requires pragmatic policies that meet existing trends and challenges—and do more than just reiterate general principles.

Points of departure on the peninsula

The current situation on the Korean Peninsula involves a whole range of diplomatic challenges that are relevant for the EU, both in terms of regional stability and as entry points for cooperation.

First, the overall security situation in Northeast Asia remains uncertain, as there is no status quo that would regulate security relations among key countries in the region. During the Six Party talks it was proposed that this format might be the basis for long-term regional security cooperation. Although the talks did not lead to the desired results the need for closer cooperation in the region remains. In view of a peace process on the Korean Peninsula and eventual denuclearization, North Korea's key demand will be viable security guarantees. Yet such guarantees are only truly possible, if regional uncertainties about alliances, great power competition and unresolved historical animosities are being dealt with in a more formal manner than has been the case so far. Promising approaches, such as the South Korean Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), are a starting point for cooperative security in the region—and to succeed they need international support.

Second, the issue of security guarantees as a precondition for any path towards denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula has widely been underestimated. Viable solutions would need to involve measures that are clearly reciprocal («action for action»), and that gradually build security, both in terms of perception (confidence) as well as on a technical level. After the experiences of Libya and Iraq and the recent US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, the prerequisites for building trust are not ideal. A strict process with a roadmap that involves clearly defined measures and mechanisms could help building security. However, thus far there has been a lack of concrete concepts that would be suitable for two countries, such as the US and North Korea, which are militarily very unequal.

Third, if the peace process results in denuclearization, the technical details of decommissioning nuclear facilities and technologies at this stage of development are complicated. Beyond freezing programs and allowing verification mechanisms this would require capacities for negotiations and for practical implementation. Thus far this is lacking.

What can the Europeans do?

When South Korean President Moon Jae-in gave his Berlin Speech in early 2017 he sent a clear message. The presidency would be dedicated to serious inter-Korean rapprochement, and for this political support from Germany and the EU would be needed to strengthen the role of the two Koreas in any future process. Indeed, if there were to be any success, the most pragmatic way forward would be for the two Koreas to gain center stage and shape the peace process themselves. By contrast, the current normalization in US-North Korea relations and direct negotiations on security-building measures and denuclearization is promising but could only be one part of a larger peace process. The two sides have managed to re-enter into negotiations primarily by softening the absolute demand for denuclearization. On the other hand, the process might fail again if the US is not willing to uphold this expectation management because the steps both parties agreed upon no longer meet their core interests. If this happens, Seoul will be in a weak position vis-à-vis Washington, and strong diplomatic support from the EU and key member states will be very helpful.

The history of the Cold War in Europe and of the Helsinki process provides key examples for how to build security and trust. However, based on this experience new concepts need to be developed—concepts that suit the very specific situation on the peninsula, namely, a small country facing a global power; an outdated armistice agreement that can no longer uphold the status quo; a non-existing regional security architecture; and a situation, in which there is only a thin line dividing dialogue from further escalation. Drawing on lessons learned, expertise in support of a peace process—including new types of measures—need to be developed in order to achieve a sustainable peace treaty that may replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953. At the same time, new approaches need to be found for how to guarantee the provisions of a peace treaty, and, most likely, that will have to happen at the level of the United Nations.

In the course of negotiations with Iran, Euratom has gathered in-depth knowledge on how to proceed with decommissioning nuclear facilities and technologies. This knowledge is crucial for capacity building in the Koreas and for setting up the peace process. Here, the EU can play an important role in providing support to a key aspect of the peace process.

In the long run, EU companies and projects can assist South Korea in building economic corridors connecting Northern and Southern industrial hubs. As soon as economic

sanctions become redundant, there will be great potential for investment in North Korean Economic zones—and with it will come a large degree of decentralization in the country.

Outlook

The EU should seek closer cooperation with South Korea in order to fulfill its greatest potential, namely, to settle the conflict on the Korean Peninsula sustainably and help build a security architecture in the region that is more predictable and cooperative. For this to happen, new diplomatic tools for international mediation and conflict resolution need to be developed, tools that will complement traditional approaches such as sanctions and the reliance on international norms. Additionally, one possibility in building up and safeguarding a «peace-regime» on the Peninsula could involve international observers. In such case the EU could play a vital role. Although North Korea is not a top priority on the European security agenda, it may become a test case for the EU's ability to get involved in international diplomacy and provide alternatives that help settle conflicts in ways other than militarily or by means of economic sanctions.

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Impressum // Imprint

Herausgeberin // Ed.: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V.,
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Erscheinungsort: www.boell.de

Erscheinungsdatum: Juni 2018

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