

KAS INTERNATIONAL REPORTS

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Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The transatlantic relationship is complex, comprising political as well as economic and cultural aspects. We are further linked to the United States by a long friendship, which has evolved over time. By implementing the Marshall Plan after World War II, the USA provided one of the foundations for the German Economic Miracle. Germany's integration into the transatlantic security community of NATO was instrumental in setting the course for security cooperation between the two countries.

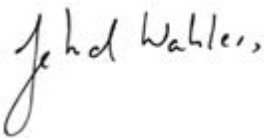
Germans and Americans share values and interests that go back to common cultural roots to some extent. About 50 million, i.e. some 15 per cent of Americans, are of German descent; over a million people in the USA speak German at home. German-Americans represent the largest single ethnic group in the USA. They maintain German traditions in numerous associations. And hundreds of thousands of people travel across the Atlantic every year – as tourists, participants in exchange programs, scientists, and school and university students.

We also share interests where the economy is concerned. Since July 2013, the European Union and the USA have conducted negotiations about a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which will not only entail far-reaching consequences for the economic development of the two parties, but also have the potential to effect sustainable changes in the perspective of values and standards as well as in the global trading and welfare system. In view of the scope of this comprehensive trade agreement, the TTIP plans have raised a number of economic and political issues, eliciting controversial discussions on both sides of the Atlantic; these have not been conducted altogether objectively and based on the facts in the German public arena. For this reason, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has made the TTIP a priority theme. Considering the emergence of other actors, who are intent on shaping the world order according to their own rules – first and foremost the People's Republic of China – the transatlantic partnership is gaining in new geostrategic importance. We should there-

fore not hesitate to embrace the opportunities a transatlantic trading area would offer us to remain a key player at a global level.

In terms of security policy, the transatlantic partners are facing numerous challenges. The annexation of Crimea in contravention of international law, the Russian aggression in Ukraine, Islamist terror in Syria and Iraq, Iran's demands for a nuclear program – these all represent attacks on our liberal order and our Western basic values by authoritarian regimes or non-state actors, which require concerted action. Close cooperation and a continuous dialogue between the Western partners will be essential prerequisites. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung offers discussion forums for politicians and consultants on both sides of the Atlantic. It is intent on attracting further actors from German, European and U.S. politics to engage in the transatlantic dialogue.

With this issue of the International Reports, we would like to contribute to deepening this dialogue and highlight those aspects that are fundamental to the transatlantic relationship – today and in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'G'.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary General

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A MARSHALL PLAN FOR AFRICA?!

AN INTERJECTION

Wolfgang Maier



Dr. Wolfgang Maier has been Deputy Head of the Department for European and International Cooperation since 2012 and has been working with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung since 1983. He is an agricultural economist with a doctorate in agricultural sciences (University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart). During his career he spent several years abroad on behalf of the foundation, namely in Swaziland, Tanzania and Namibia.

There are various methods available to determine the impact of development cooperation activities – in today's world, no project remains unevaluated. Universities have facilities for evaluation research. Donor and implementing organisations have their own evaluation units. The recently founded German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) coordinates and advises these organisations and also performs evaluations of its own.

Evaluation reports predominantly strike a positive note (there are virtually no projects that are useless or superfluous) and usually contain numerous constructive suggestions on how an ongoing project work may be improved. Assuming institutional education has been provided, the quality of development cooperation endeavours and their impacts will have improved steadily over the last few decades of development – and this may well be the case. If the impacts remain less than satisfactory (there is still too much hunger in the world), one asserts that this must be due to inadequate supplies. Consequently, the presumption is made that greater inputs would have produced better outcomes.

Of course, these introductory remarks are rather superficial, and the reality of development cooperation is complex. One must differentiate between individual regions and sectors, different institutions and their practices, etc. But that is not the objective of this article. Many projects have indeed been initiated, frequently with great dedication, and there have been some positive results. The only question is whether enough has been done.

Let us take a look at our neighbouring continent of Africa. Many African countries are still experiencing crisis levels of poverty, and in many cases hunger. Conflicts erupt locally and regionally, and some areas are no longer accessible for engaging in development

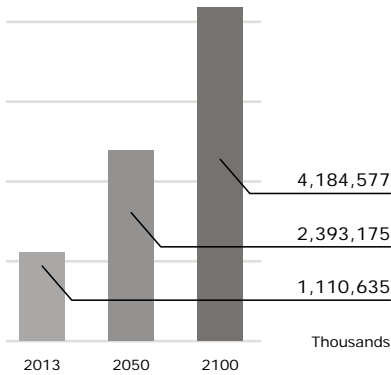
cooperation activities. The achievements of years of development cooperation on the continent are rather modest, and to many fleeing their dire circumstances now appears the last and only resort. And even in places where the situation is still relatively calm, there are hardly any prospects for young people, who no longer see a future for themselves there.

All this is part of current reality, and we see increasing numbers of people around the world contemplating migration as a viable option. This is resulting in streams of refugees from numerous countries (many of them from Africa), who are setting off for a variety of reasons with Europe as their destination.

Another aspect of this reality is that the African population currently stands at more than one billion. The UN predicts this number will rise to approximately 2.4 billion by 2050 and to over four billion by 2100 (which some of us may live long enough to see).¹

Fig. 1

African Population / Prognoses

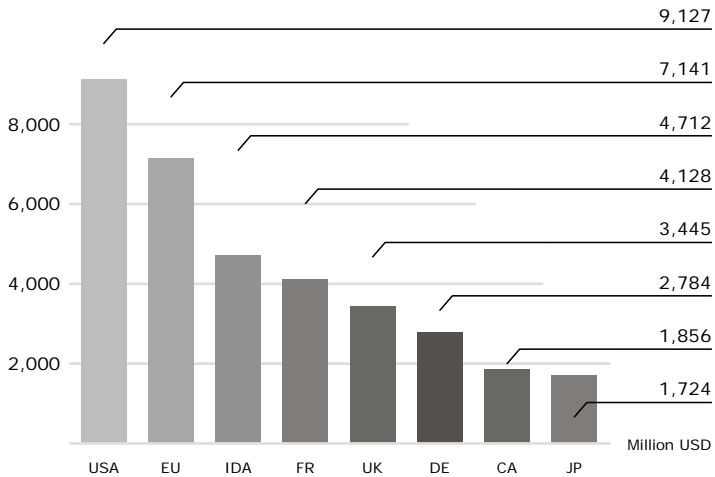


Source: UN, n. 1.

Seeing that we did not succeed in the past nor are succeeding now in managing the crises already identified, that the tools available to us are not adequate in terms of quality or quantity, what can those engaged in development cooperation even do in the face of these magnitudes, which can no longer be denied?

1 | United Nations, "World Population 2012", http://un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/trends/WPP2012_Wallchart.pdf (accessed 7 May 2015).

Fig. 2

Selected ODA Donor Countries to Africa 2012

Source: OECD, "Development Aid at a Glance. Statistics by Region. 2. Africa", 2014, p. 2, <http://oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/2.%20Africa%20-%20Development%20Aid%20at%20a%20Glance%202014.pdf> (accessed 13 May 2015).

The assertion being made here is that we are no longer dealing with a development policy issue – not now, and even less in the future. A development policy purporting to be capable of overcoming such challenges is overrating its own powers. It is akin to someone attempting to cure a burst appendix with a barbiturate, an addictive sleeping pill.

The same naturally applies to the attempts to manage the humanitarian catastrophe in the Mediterranean with a fleet of sea rescue vessels, as heart-warming as these may appear. Constructing large reception camps in North Africa would not provide a solution either and be more likely to exacerbate the problem. Is that truly to be Europe's answer?

The real challenge is of a totally different nature. It is one that concerns ourselves, albeit not exclusively. We will need to deal with the realisation that a small stable Europe will not be able to withstand a large chaotic and dynamic Africa at its gates for long. This realisation also means that we must accept that we will need to make changes to ourselves: changes to our lives and the way we live together, to our cultures. Many of us will find this

difficult, and it will produce rifts in our societies and in our political systems.



On the way to Europe: In view of increasing numbers of refugees a rethinking in politics and society is needed. | Source: © Jason Florio, Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS).

The streams of refugees, which have periodically spilt across the Mediterranean in recent decades, are therefore only a precursor of what Europe will have to deal with in the future. Against this backdrop, which some describe as a threatening scenario and others as a scenario of opportunities, many other political issues pale in significance. One thing is certain: Europe will not be able to evade its responsibilities much longer by sending a few extra rescue vessels out into the Mediterranean.

However, one also wonders about the lack of response from those with political responsibility for the refugees in their respective countries of origin. There is obviously currently no political discourse on this issue being conducted in the various regions affected by civil war. But what about the numerous African countries where many contemplate migration although there is no current crisis? Should the debate not be conducted far beyond Europe's borders? Which countries are losing people, often precisely people with better qualifications, whom they then sorely miss? Remember that education and knowledge used to be considered important development resources. In the current situation, offering these people in particular, who could make an important contribution to

the economic development of their home countries, a safe haven in Europe is a downright cynical act.

Particularly in view of the drama of the catastrophic events in the Mediterranean played out in the media, proposing lasting solutions is not easy. Especially when these would inevitably entail drastic consequences.

And yet – the search for such solutions must begin now; there is no time to lose.



In a camp of the British Ministry of Development: Europe's fight against the many problems in Africa seems almost hopeless. | Source: Marisol Grandon, UK Department for International Development, flickr ©¹.

How about, for instance, a Marshall Plan for establishing large-scale reception zones, or more appropriately economic zones in the African countries bordering the Mediterranean (and their neighbouring countries to the south), where decent economic and living conditions would be created for many? Obviously, these countries would need massive support. The hope would be that this would produce entirely new economic dynamics involving circular flows of income that would develop a stimulating effect on both North and South and thereby help to mitigate the causes of economic migration.² No doubt, this requires vision and courage.

2 | Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Gerd Müller also promotes a new approach in development policy, demanding a "European development concept for Africa". Cf. Claudia Ehrenstein/Karsten Kammholz, "Europa hat Afrika viel zu lange ausgebeutet", interview, *Die Welt*, 26 Apr 2015, <http://welt.de/140084006> (accessed 13 May 2015).

Funding should not be an issue; after all, virtually limitless funds were found to bail out all types of banks.

There is one further convincing argument: If the growth of the African population matches all the demographic forecasts, markets of unprecedented proportions will develop on the continent. Even if the sustainable reduction in poverty were not to make significant progress, these markets will grow rapidly purely in quantitative terms – while European markets will stagnate, at least demographically. A dynamically growing economic zone on Europe's doorstep would therefore in principle represent an opportunity for everybody. The Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global, the largest fund of this type worldwide, has realised this and is already investing a sizable proportion of its funds in Africa.³

Of course, this is a far cry from conventional development policy, be it in terms of content or magnitude. What is needed here is a European-African initiative to establish a large-scale development zone, which would initially focus on economic activities, involve public-private partnerships and give due regard to socio-political minimum standards.

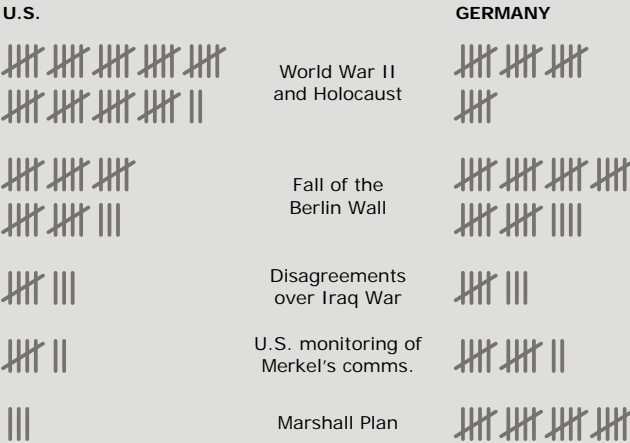
Admittedly an ambitious endeavour. However: what alternative is there?

3 | Cf. Bloomberg, "Weltgrößter Staatsfonds setzt auf Afrika", *Wirtschaftswoche*, 21 Apr 2015, <http://wiwo.de/11669874.html> (accessed 7 May 2015).

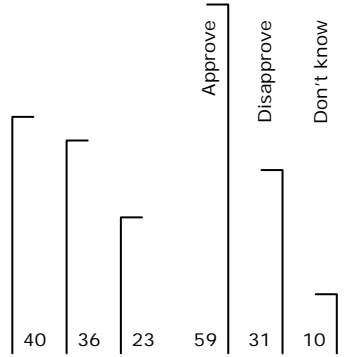
TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

1. ASSESSMENT OF EVENTS AND ATTITUDES

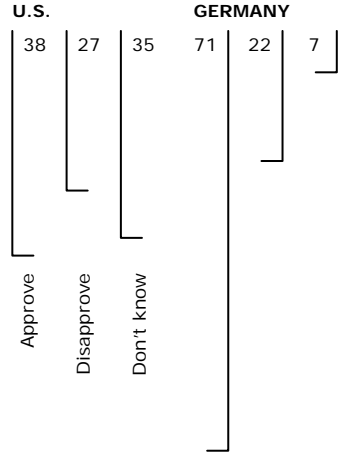
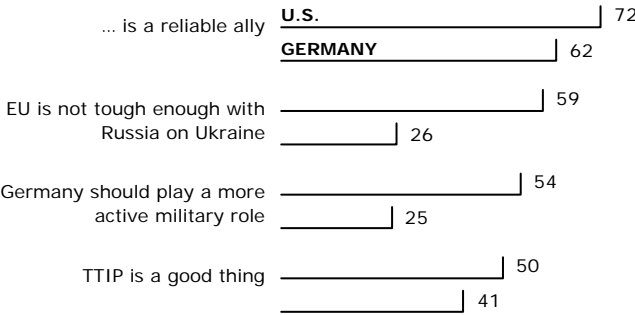
As you think about relations between the United States and Germany over the last 75 years, which one of these events is most important in your opinion? ⁽¹⁾



Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Obama is dealing with U.S.-German relations? ⁽¹⁾



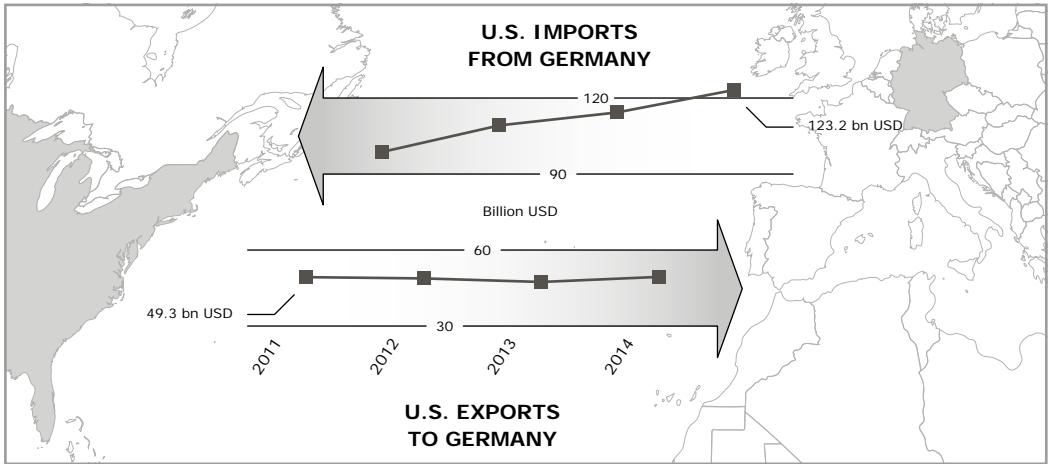
THE GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP ⁽¹⁾



Do you approve or disapprove of the way Chancellor Merkel is dealing with U.S.-German relations? ⁽¹⁾

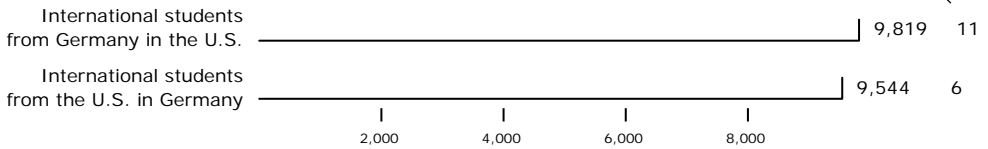
(1) Indications in per cent. Pew Research Center, "Higher Approval for Obama and Merkel by Germans than by Americans 2015", from: "Pew Research Center survey", Q1c, Q2a-b, Q5, Q8, Q10, Q11, <http://pewglobal.org/2015/05/07/germany-and-the-united-states-reliable-allies> (accessed 22 May 2015).
 (2) International Trade Administration, "National Trade Data. U.S. merchandise exports, imports, trade balances. Global Patterns of U.S. Merchandise Trade", <http://tse.export.gov/TSE/MapDisplay.aspx> (accessed 22 May 2015).
 (3) Institute of International Education, *Open Doors 2014*, "Fast Facts", <http://iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors> (accessed 22 May 2015).
 (4) Angela Brittingham/G. Patricia de la Cruz, *Census 2000 Brief*, U.S. Census Bureau, Jun 2004, <http://census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2004/dec/c2kbr-35.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2015).
 (5) Constanze Stelzenmüller et al., *Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2013*, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2013/09/TTrends-2013-Key-Findings-Report.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2015).
 (6) Camille Ryan, "Language Use in the United States: 2011", *American Community Survey Reports*, U.S. Census Bureau, Aug 2013, <http://census.gov/prod/2013pubs/acs-22.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2015).
 (7) Statista, "Anzahl der Ausländer in Deutschland nach Herkunftsland", as at 31 Dec 2014, <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1221/umfrage/anzahl-der-auslaender-in-deutschland-nach-herkunftsland> (accessed 22 May 2015).

2. ECONOMIC RELATIONS ⁽²⁾

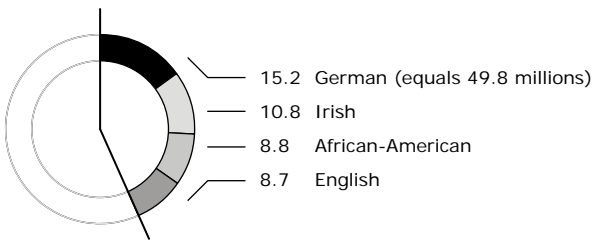


3. EDUCATION COOPERATION

EXCHANGES 2012/2013 ⁽³⁾



4. ANCESTRY IN THE U.S. (IN PER CENT) ⁽⁴⁾



1,083,637

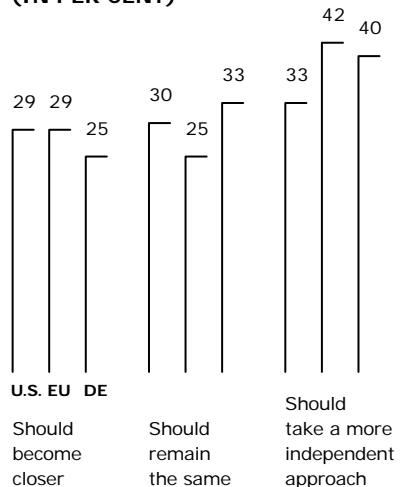
GERMAN SPOKEN AT HOME BY U.S. POPULATION FIVE YEARS AND OVER, 2011 ⁽⁶⁾

108,845

U.S. CITIZENS LIVING IN GERMANY, 2014 ⁽⁷⁾

5. FUTURE

OF U.S.-EU PARTNERSHIP (IN PER CENT) ⁽⁵⁾



THE SECURITY POLICY DIMENSION OF TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CSDP

Olaf Wientzek / Leonie Arzberger



Olaf Wientzek is Research Associate in the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's European Office in Brussels.

For decades, security cooperation has been a major or even key component of transatlantic relations. During the Cold War, NATO was the main guarantor of security for the free half of Europe. However, since the end of the Warsaw Pact politicians and experts alike have regularly called into question the role of NATO in particular and the future of security cooperation between the USA and Europe in general.

At its Lisbon summit in 2010, NATO decided to adopt a new strategic concept.¹ This decision set a course for making the organisation more effective at dealing with new security challenges such as cyber warfare and terrorist attacks. This seemed to shift the focus away from the alliance's traditional deterrent and collective defence role.



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At the same time, over recent years discussions about roles and burden sharing have been intensifying between the United States and their European NATO partners. In his famous speech in Brussels in 2011, former U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates called on Europe to take its fair share of the responsibility for transatlantic security, both politically and financially. Gates also warned that future leaders in the USA who had not grown up during the Cold War might start to question the huge investment that the United

1 | NATO, "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Active Engagement, Modern Defence", <http://nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf> (accessed 30 Apr 2015).

States was making in NATO.² His speech generated a great deal of media coverage at the time, but many observers believe there has been little change in the basic imbalance between the contributions made by the two sides since then. Indeed, many experts continue to refer to an atmosphere of mutual estrangement within the Alliance.³

The international situation has also changed significantly for the transatlantic alliance. A number of major security policy challenges have arisen in the immediate vicinity of Alliance territory. The war in Libya served to highlight the discord that existed between European partners and revealed the limitations of even “major” military powers such as Britain and France. The biggest shock to the Alliance in recent times, however, has been the conflict in Ukraine. Having said that, this conflict has also brought with it a growing recognition that the basic principles underlying the Alliance – some of which many experts believed had become obsolete – are in fact still relevant today, including the principle of deterrence and the contents of Article 5 on the collective defence of Alliance territory. While the issue of crisis management had long been the main topic for discussion within the Alliance, the resolutions passed at the NATO summit in Cardiff in September 2014 brought the issue of the defence of the Alliance firmly back into the spotlight. Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen suggested the Ukraine crisis had been a “wake-up call” for the whole Alliance.⁴ Within Europe, these crises have resulted in an intensification of efforts to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy.

But to what extent have these recent developments – the Ukraine crisis and a reconfirmation of the importance of the CSDP – resulted in greater cohesion within the Alliance? Or have they in fact led to (increased) estrangement?

2 | Robert Gates, “The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO)”, 10 Jun 2011, <http://defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581> (accessed 30 Apr 2015).

3 | Nikolas Busse, “Entfremdung im Bündnis”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31 Mar 2011, <http://faz.net/aktuell/nato-entfremdung-im-buendnis-1610653.html> (accessed 30 Apr 2015).

4 | Anders Fogh Rasmussen, “Keynote Remarks at Atlantic Council’s Future Leaders Summit”, Newport (Wales), Atlantic Council, speech, 4 Sep 2014, <http://atlanticcouncil.org/events/webcasts/future-leaders-summit-opening-and-keynote-remarks-by-anders-rogh-rasmussen> (accessed 30 Apr 2015).



Return of a plane of the U.S. Air Force from Africa: The United States repeatedly called for a stronger EU involvement in the Libya intervention. | Source: Marc I. Lane, USAF, flickr © ⓘ

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

The North Atlantic Alliance has faced a number of major challenges in recent years. This has happened because of some fundamental changes to the international playing field. One of these challenges is Russia's unpredictability, which has effectively removed one of the cornerstones of peace within Europe. Another is the fact that the security policy preferences of some of the new actors on the international security stage, such as India, China and Brazil, are not necessarily the same as those of the Alliance itself.⁵ A further challenge has been the "hybrid" way that Russia has waged war in Ukraine, where the actors in the conflict and their long-term goals are difficult to define. The security strategies which the EU and NATO have traditionally relied upon do not seem particularly well-equipped to deal with this new form of warfare. In light of these latest challenges, closer transatlantic cooperation has now become more important than ever. However, even before Gates made his speech, there was clear evidence of a growing disillusionment or even estrangement between the Alliance partners on both sides of the Atlantic:

5 | Johannes Thimm, "Herausforderungen für das transatlantische Bündnis: Die Ukraine-Krise und die NSA-Affäre", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ)*, No. 50-51/2014, 2 Dec 2014, <http://bpb.de/apuz/197165> (accessed 30 Apr 2015).

1. Representatives from the other side of the Atlantic have complained about the lack of a common security strategy within Europe. The Libya crisis, for example, served to highlight the very different security and foreign policy perspectives of the various European countries and brought home the limited ability of some EU countries to respond effectively. Although the 2001 Treaty of Nice laid the foundations for a common security and defence policy at EU level, Europe lacks a renewed European Security Strategy and the appropriate instruments or political will to implement such a strategy without comprehensive support from the USA. Indeed, in 2011 and in 2012 many experts had already given up on the Common Security and Defence Policy within the framework of the EU⁶ and declared it to have failed.

Europe still lacks a renewed European Security Strategy and the political will to implement such a strategy without comprehensive support from the USA.

2. The United States have repeatedly accused European Alliance members of refusing to take leadership responsibility, especially for military operations – even during conflicts that were taking place in the immediate vicinity of Europe itself. During the Libya crisis, for example, they consistently asked Europe to bear a greater share of the burden. France and Britain quickly assumed a leadership role both politically and militarily, but most of the remaining European Alliance members held back. In the end, only nine European countries took part in the international military operations in Libya. It quickly became apparent at the time that the willingness of two of Europe's major military powers to get involved – Britain and France – was not sufficient in itself. Finally, NATO took command of the military operations in Libya in March 2011. The USA hoped that this would allow them to indirectly hand over control of operations to Europe. A U.S. Senator at the time, current U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry suggested that European NATO members in particular should take on a more active role in Libya.⁷ The USA basically accused Europe of being a security consumer rather than a security provider. It believed that many European capitals were too focused on the civil aspects of combating the crisis and relied far too heavily on the USA when it came to

6 | Jan Techau, "Forget CSDP, It's Time for Plan B", Carnegie Europe, 26 Aug 2011, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/publications/?fa=45439> (accessed 4 May 2015).

7 | "Libya and War Powers. Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 112th Cong, 2011", Senate Hearing 112-89, proceedings, <http://gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112shrg68241/html/CHRG-112shrg68241.htm> (accessed 4 May 2015).

military operations. The financial and economic crisis had tended to foster an inward-looking attitude in Europe and forced many European countries to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of long-term foreign policy commitments against those of short-term domestic policy considerations.

3. The USA also called on its European partners to make a greater financial commitment to common defence policies. In his speech, Robert Gates pointed out that the USA had to bear 75 per cent of the financial burden within NATO. And this at a time when most EU states had actually significantly reduced their own defence budgets because of the financial crisis. Between 2011 and 2015, for example, Britain and

At the NATO summit in Wales, the USA urged its allies to commit to spending two per cent of their domestic budget on defence expenditure.

Germany cut their defence budgets by up to eight per cent, while other countries such as Spain made even more drastic reductions.

Overall, European defence budgets were cut by approximately a fifth between 2006 and 2013. As a result, the gulf in technological and military capability between the USA and its European allies has grown substantially over the last ten years, and initiatives to promote the common use of resources and to avoid duplication such as Smart Defence have not succeeded in narrowing the gap. At the NATO summit in Wales in September 2014, the USA urged the European members of the Alliance to commit to spending two per cent of their domestic budget on defence expenditure. Three months earlier during a press conference in Poland, President Obama said NATO members could not simply rely on their NATO membership when they needed defence while ignoring their responsibilities the rest of the time.⁸

EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN EUROPEAN CAPACITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CSDP

Against the backdrop of these developments, the last decade has seen a fundamental change in the American view of the development of a Common Security and Defence Policy. Initially, the USA, and even other pro-Atlantic countries such as Poland, interpreted the CSDP as a potential threat to the transatlantic defence alliance.

8 | Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama and President Komorowski of Poland in a Joint Press Conference", 3 Jun 2014, <https://whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/03/remarks-president-obama-and-president-komorowski-poland-joint-press-conf> (accessed 4 May 2015).

This was because the CSDP was seen as an attempt to counter the hegemony of the United States or even as a deliberate attempt to disrupt the unity of the NATO member states.⁹ At the Munich Security Conference in February 2001, former U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld even warned of a European duplication of the NATO alliance. For his part, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair tried to reassure both the Clinton and Bush administrations that better defence cooperation in Europe would not present a threat to NATO.

Today, there are fewer people on both sides of the Atlantic who view the CSDP as a competing project. Indeed, in recent years the USA have increasingly tried to convince its European alliance partners of the actual benefits of implementing and expanding such a common European defence policy. In light of past elections in the UK, U.S. government officials have been trying to convince the Conservative government of the potential value of a European defence strategy. Experts have also noted a change in the language being used in Washington. While documents in the past would refer to “the USA and its allies”, now they increasingly refer to “the USA and the EU”, with all the higher expectations of Europe this implies. There has also been a noticeable shift in the views held by pro-Atlantic countries within Europe. In recent years, Poland, for example, has become one of the most vocal advocates of strengthening the CSDP. It launched several initiatives aimed at increasing levels of defence cooperation in Europe during its EU Presidency in 2011.

Sceptical in the beginning, the USA now tries to convince its European alliance partners of the actual benefits of implementing and expanding a common European defence policy.

The December 2013 summit of EU leaders was to prove pivotal to the strengthening of the CSDP, as defence policy was once again the subject of discussions following a five-year hiatus, and EU leaders agreed on a program to revitalise the CSDP. However, this program is first and foremost focused on the largely technical issues of capability development and the strengthening of the defence industry (including the development of certification procedures for defence-related products). There was no mention of a potential common white paper on security policy, although the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton was instructed to produce

9 | Stanley R. Sloan, “The United States and European Defence”, The Institute for Security Studies of Western European Union, *Chaillot Paper* 39, Apr 2000, p. 43 f., <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp039e.pdf> (accessed 21 May 2015).

an analysis of security issues facing the EU by June 2015. It was interesting that the summit declaration made several references to the need for closer alignment with NATO.¹⁰ In the run-up to the summit, both NATO Secretary General Rasmussen and the USA welcomed the idea of strengthening the CSDP. However, it seemed that the U.S. were less interested in the process of how an integrated security and defence policy could be further developed but were rather focused on the end result itself: an improved capacity to act amongst its fellow Alliance members. As a result, reaction to the December summit on the political front was somewhat muted.

Not surprisingly, implementation of the plans agreed upon in December 2013 has proven to be difficult, and a comprehensive debate that might lead to a common understanding on European security is unlikely to take place before June 2015. Nevertheless, the newly invigorated CSDP already contains some important provisions that could ultimately serve to strengthen the North Atlantic Alliance:

1. The measures aimed at strengthening common standards and certification processes, for example, are an important step towards developing a strong European industrial and defence base, something that is essential if Europe is to close the technology gap with the Americans in the long term.
2. Also, the decision to reform Europe's as yet unused rapid response forces (EU Battlegroups) in order to make them more suitable for use in civil-military operations, will make them a useful addition to NATO's military capabilities. Indeed, attempts are already being made to combine EU Battlegroup exercises with those of NATO: the Battlegroup from the four Visegrád countries, for example, is due to take part in NATO's major Trident Juncture exercises in autumn 2015.¹¹

10 | European Council, "European Council 19/20 December 2013. Conclusions", 20 Dec 2013, http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140245.pdf (accessed 4 May 2015).

11 | Visegrád Group, "Visegrad Countries May Turn EU Battlegroup into Permanent V4 Rapid Reaction Force", Atlantic Council, 3 Jul 2014, <http://atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/visegrad-countries-may-turn-eu-battlegroup-into-permanent-v4-rapid-reaction-force> (accessed 4 May 2015).

Today, the U.S. tend to view a Europe with stronger security and defence policies as a reliable partner rather than a potential competitor within the North Atlantic Alliance. Above all, this becomes obvious in the fact that the CSDP is barely discussed in its principles. Rather, the questions of the allies revolve around issues of the alliance's arrangement – such as the relevance of the creation of permanent command structures within the CSDP. So while for some the creation of the CSDP 15 years ago may have appeared to be a potential threat to transatlantic relations, its strengthening may actually provide these relations with long-term stability.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS AS A TURNING POINT?

The former Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen suggested that the Ukraine conflict had served as a wake-up call for the Alliance.¹² But to what extent can Europe's role in the Ukraine crisis be considered a new beginning for the transatlantic partnership?



At the NATO summit, the USA called on its European partners to make a greater financial commitment to common defence policies. | Source: Arron Hoare, MoD, flickr ©1130.

The USA and its European Alliance partners have been affected by the conflict in the Ukraine in very different ways and therefore see it from very different perspectives. Because of their close ties with Russia on the economic and energy supply front the conflict has forced some European NATO members such as France and Germany to adopt fundamentally different policies towards Moscow.

12 | Gates, n. 2.

Meanwhile, other Alliance members, and especially those that are Russia's immediate neighbours, perceive that the conflict poses a very real threat to their security. This is especially true of the Baltic States, but also of Finland, Poland and Romania. For its part, however, Washington is more concerned about the implications for the global balance of power, including the impact the crisis may have in Asia, for example. While some observers stress that the USA now regard Russia as little more than a medium-sized player on the world stage, they recognise that it also has the potential to have a disruptive effect, not only in Eastern Europe, but also in Asia. Washington will also be carefully analysing the annexation of the Crimea and Russia's war in Eastern Ukraine from the perspective of how these events and the West's reactions to them are being perceived by their Asian Alliance partners.¹³

At the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, many experts feared that it might actually lead to greater misunderstandings between the transatlantic partners rather than to a renaissance of the partnership.

At the beginning of the crisis, many experts feared that it might actually lead to greater misunderstandings between the transatlantic partners¹⁴ rather than to a renaissance of the partnership itself. Up to the summer of

2014 there were repeated complaints – including from the United States – that the European response to Russia's aggression had been too slow, that the EU had not shown itself to be capable of adopting a common approach and that the necessary leadership in dealing with the crisis had been lacking. These complaints were also certainly directed at Germany, which had been expected to make a much firmer response on account of the strength of its economic and political position within the EU. In the meantime a number of developments have pointed to a shift in the dynamic of the transatlantic partnership, even though some fundamental problems have still not been fully resolved:

13 | Jo Coelmont, "Cardiff: Birthplace of a new Transatlantic Narrative?", *Security Policy Brief*, No. 57, Jul 2014, <http://egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/SPB57-jo-Coelmont.pdf> (accessed 4 May 2015).

14 | Stewart M. Patrick, "NATO: Suddenly relevant, deeply divided", *The Internationalist*, 28 Aug 2014, Council on Foreign Relations, <http://blogs.cfr.org/patrick/2014/08/28/nato-suddenly-relevant-deeply-divided> (accessed 21 May 2015); Jan Techau, "How to take the pains out of transatlantic relations", Carnegie Europe, 24 Jun 2014, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=55987> (accessed 21 May 2015).

1. The development of a common security policy

If nothing more, the Ukraine conflict has helped to bring the European allies' views on the Alliance closer together. Before the crisis, many countries viewed the defensive nature of the Alliance as somewhat out of date and felt its role as a deterrent was no longer relevant. The regular warnings by representatives from the Baltic States in particular, but also from Poland, were often seen as largely exaggerated. But, as the NATO summit in Cardiff clearly showed, Russia's aggression in Ukraine created a notable consensus within the Alliance with respect to retaining NATO's deterrent and common defence elements.

There was also a growing consensus when it came to adopting a clear position towards Russia. The Russian annexation of the Crimea actually served to strengthen the cohesion of the Alliance itself.¹⁵ According to well-informed observers, a learning process has been taking place since June last year – as evidenced by the discussions held within the European Council, for example. European heads of state and government are now no longer under any illusions when it comes to the motivations and reliability of the current Russian government on the international stage. To a certain extent they have been able to agree on a common European approach and, for the time being at least, to put this approach before national economic and energy interests. Or, as the President of the European Council Donald Tusk put it following the meeting of heads of state and government in February 2015: “This is not just about the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The whole geopolitical order in Europe after 1989 is at stake.”¹⁶ For now at least, it would appear that the European tendency to look inwards is diminishing.¹⁷

In the context of the Ukraine crisis, the European countries managed to agree at least temporarily on a common European approach.

In this context it is also interesting to note how Europeans and Americans have very similar perceptions of Russia. In 2014, 71 per cent of Americans and 68 per cent of EU citizens had a negative

15 | Thimm, n. 5.

16 | Cf. Peter Ludlow, “December 2014: A New Beginning? Juncker’s Investment Plan and Ukraine”, Preliminary Evaluation 2014/6, EuroComment, <http://eurocomment.eu/preliminary-evaluation-20146> (accessed 22 May 2015).

17 | Donald Tusk, “Press statement by President Donald Tusk after the informal meeting of heads of state or government”, 12 Feb 2015, <http://consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/02/150212-remarks-tusk-after-informal-euco> (accessed 4 May 2015).

perception of Russia's role in the world – although there are still noticeable differences of opinion within Europe itself.¹⁸

2. The willingness of the European allies to take a leadership role

For years, European heads of state and government avoided discussing foreign policy issues at their meetings in Brussels. Now, however, the search for a solution to the Ukraine conflict has become the main focus and an absolute priority at these meetings.

Despite some initial disagreements, Europe has shown itself to be increasingly willing to take on a leadership role in the Ukraine crisis and to act as an important mediator on a range of key issues. This willingness to take the lead was largely down to the heads of state and government, and in particular the German Chancellor. In contrast to earlier crises – such as the Arab Spring and the Libya conflict – the heads of government chose to act within the official European mandate and in close consultation with the President of the European Council and EU High Representative. At various key stages during the efforts to settle the conflict in the Ukraine, it was European actors and not U.S. representatives who played the decisive role. A good example of this is the joint mission undertaken by the three Weimar Triangle foreign ministers, initiated within the framework of the EPP, who went to Kiev in February 2014 to mediate between Janukowicz and representatives of the Euromaidan. The compromise agreed upon during these negotiations was the spark that led to the victory of the democratic forces. The second Minsk Agreement aimed at finding a solution to the conflict in Ukraine, which was also recognised by Washington as being the key instrument for resolving the crisis, was negotiated by two European heads of government – German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President François Hollande. The EU Commission also played a decisive role in mediating between the two countries on the issue of gas supplies. At the same time, EU institutions demonstrated an unprecedented willingness to approve financial and administrative support for what is a third country in EU terms. Unofficially, Vladimir Putin and Petro Poroshenko both view the German Chancellor as the key interlocutor in the crisis.

18 | The German Marshall Fund of the United States, "Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2014", http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf (accessed 4 May 2015).

Central to Europe's decisive role in the Ukraine crisis is the fact that Germany has been willing to take on the leadership role that the USA have been encouraging Europe to adopt for so long. The Federal Republic has adopted this role in close cooperation with other countries such as France, Britain and Poland and regular close consultation with the U.S. President. There is general agreement on how things should now be taken forward, including the implementation of the Minsk Agreement and the strengthening of the OSCE Mission.



A combined training conference in Oberammergau in 2014: Joint exercises of squads from more than 35 countries were conducted in the framework of the Readiness Action Plan. | Source: Jesse Granger, U.S. Army Europe, flickr @Q.

3. Choice of instruments for resolving the crisis

So far, there has been close consultation and agreement between the USA and the EU on the civil instruments to be used (sanctions) as well as on the issue of potential military support for Ukraine. One of the reasons why the sanctions¹⁹ against Russia have been so effective has been the regular consultations between the EU and USA. The most important steps in the sanction process have for the most part been carried out in parallel, while the EU has taken on the necessary leadership role on these issues. The decision made at the European Council meeting in March 2015 to link

19 | The joint sanctions are widely seen as a powerful signal, see Roland Freudenstein/Ulrich Speck, "The Renaissance of the West: How Europe and America Can Shape Up in Confronting Putin's Russia", Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, Brussels, 17 Mar 2015.

the lifting of economic sanctions to the fulfilling of the terms of the Minsk Agreement shows that the European allies are prepared to stick to their agreed joint approach. So far, sceptics who assumed the EU would back down on the issue of sanctions and that this would lead to the partners on either side of the Atlantic drifting apart have been proven wrong. However, this should not blind us to the fact that there are still fundamental differences of opinion on the strategy adopted towards Russia. Many countries such as Italy, Hungary, Greece, Cyprus and Slovakia are not particularly in favour of the sanctions policy, while others such as Sweden, Poland and the Baltic States would like to see a tougher response.

The vast majority of government heads on both sides of the Atlantic agree that the solution to the conflict must be a political one.

So far, however, there has been no significant dissent when it comes to the issue of military support for Ukraine. The vast majority of government heads on both sides of the

Atlantic agree that the solution to the conflict must be a political one. However, there is some disagreement on the issue of supplying arms to Kiev. Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. Army and John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State, made it clear at the beginning of March that they were in favour of supplying arms to Kiev,²⁰ and on this issue they count on at least the tacit approval of a number of their European allies, especially the Baltic States and possibly also Poland and Britain. However, for France and Germany the idea of supplying arms remains a taboo subject. It is still unclear what line both sides would need to see crossed before lethal military materials could be delivered to Ukraine. Russian attacks on Kharkiv or Mariupol could lead to this becoming a much more urgent subject of debate.

4. The question of burden-sharing

At the NATO summit in Cardiff in 2014, agreement was reached on a number of measures to support NATO countries that border Russia. According to observers, it was the European representatives, and especially those from Germany, who were the driving force behind forming the appropriate resolutions.²¹ One of the key elements of the reaction to the Ukraine crisis was the passing of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP). This includes strengthening assurance measures, such as air-policing patrols over the Baltic,

20 | Cf. *Europe Diplomacy & Defence*, No. 775, 4 Mar 2015.

21 | Claudia Major, "Die strategische Anpassung der Nato", *SWP-Aktuell* 20, Feb 2015, http://swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2015A20_mjr.pdf (accessed 4 May 2015).

more marine patrols and joint exercises as well as measures to enhance the Alliance's operational readiness and response capability. Raising the capabilities of regional command and control centers should also allow these enhanced readiness levels to be extended over a much larger sphere of influence. A key aspect of these plans is the enhancement of rapid response capabilities, including the creation of a very quick reaction force of up to 4,000 troops, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The new force should be in place by the time of the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016 at the latest.

On the one hand, the Cardiff summit served to underscore the usual reflexes, divides and limited readiness for military deployment of some European Alliance members, but also demonstrated a willingness on the part of Europeans to take a larger share of the Alliance's military burden. There is currently no consensus within the Alliance on the permanent stationing of NATO troops in the Baltic States. While the Baltic States themselves, together with Poland, are in favour of such a move, Germany and the majority of European NATO member states are against a permanent deployment. Either way, the USA sent 3,000 troops to the Baltic States in March this year in order to carry out military exercises over the coming months. Moreover, in a much-publicised visit to Estonia, President Obama declared that the security of the Baltic States was just as important as that of Paris, Berlin or London.



In a much-publicised visit of President Obama to Estonia in 2014, he declared that the security of the Baltic States was just as important as that of Paris, Berlin or London. | Source: Johan Viirik, flickr ©¹.

By creating the VJTF the European members of the Alliance also demonstrated an increased willingness to shoulder their share of the military burden. Germany will take on the leadership of the new task force this year, make a major contribution to building it up and play an important role in the other measures agreed upon by providing financial and material support.²² After that, leadership of the task force will pass to other European allies. The European Alliance members will also be called upon to make a higher contribution to strengthening regional bases in Central Eastern and Southeast Europe.

At the moment, it is still too early to say what influence the Ukraine conflict might ultimately have on the transatlantic partnership. What can be said however is that, contrary to what many experts were suggesting in the first half of 2014, the conflict has at least served to strengthen people's awareness of the importance of the Alliance when it comes to security issues.

While it seems unlikely that Sweden and Finland will become members of NATO in the next few years, the signing of Host Nation Support Agreements by both countries was a step towards closer cooperation.

The growing attractiveness of the Alliance can be seen in some of the discussions in Sweden and Finland about their neutral status. However, while it seems unlikely that the two countries will become members of NATO

in the next few years, the signing of Host Nation Support Agreements by both countries in the run-up to the Cardiff summit²³ was a step towards closer cooperation and is evidence of a desire to work more closely with the Alliance in future.

CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Will the development of the CSDP and in particular the Ukraine crisis lead to a transatlantic partnership of equals in the medium term and to a lasting renaissance of the importance of the Alliance in security matters, as has been demanded by so many? This will no doubt depend on a number of important factors over the coming years. What is certain is that it is going to be a long haul for all concerned.

22 | Ibid.

23 | NATO, "Finland and Sweden sign Memorandum of Understanding with NATO", 5 Sep 2014, <http://aco.nato.int/finland-and-sweden-signing-a-memorandum-of-understanding-with-nato-for-operational-and-logistic-support.aspx> (accessed 4 May 2015).

For a start, it will be necessary to stick with the strategy put in place by the Europeans to deal with the Ukraine and Russia, including strictly linking the lifting of sanctions with the fulfilment of the terms of the Minsk Agreement and maintaining a united front. There will be an ongoing need for European and German leadership on general strategies for dealing with Russia and on the issue of arms supplies to Ukraine in close consultation with Alliance partners. It remains to be seen whether this tendency for Europe to take the lead will become a permanent feature and whether it can survive potential political changes in key European countries. The willingness of the European allies to continue to pull in one direction will also have a significant influence on whether Europe continues to take a leading role in the conflict in the future. Several member states such as Slovakia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary and Italy have close economic ties to Moscow or have a dependency on Russia for energy supplies and feel their own security is not necessarily being threatened by the Russians. As a result, they are currently toeing the European line with some degree of reluctance.

In the years to come, some kind of NATO presence – even if it is simply more military exercises on the Alliance's north eastern flank – will be of central importance. Guaranteeing the security of NATO's north-eastern flank will be a major test of the Alliance's credibility and therefore of the transatlantic partnership itself.

In the long-term, a transatlantic partnership of equals is essential and can be achieved by Europe taking a political lead and through the implementation of the decisions made in Cardiff. According to a number of experts, this must necessarily include the commitment to spend two per cent of GDP on defence. So far, however the enthusiasm of the European allies has been somewhat limited when it comes to this issue. Immediately after the end of the summit, a major debate started on both sides of the Atlantic as to just how binding this commitment to a two per cent goal really is.

Poland and Estonia, who are both looking to increase their defence budgets in 2016, were the exceptions. One major test for the European allies will be the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan and particularly the creation of the quick reaction force. This will no doubt involve a long-term restructuring of national armed forces. The Alliance members will also have to juggle the new tasks and responsibilities defined in their 2010 strategic concept

One major test for the European allies will be the creation of the quick reaction force. This will no doubt involve a long-term restructuring of national armed forces.

and traditional security measures, whose ongoing relevance has been brought into sharp focus by the current crisis.

As the new NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stressed when addressing the European Parliament at the end of March this year, NATO and the EU are facing the same threats and challenges, including how to deal with new forms of warfare, strengthen the resilience and stability of NATO members and increase European investment in defence.²⁴ There also needs to be close consultation and agreement between both parties on a joint strategy for dealing with Russia.

One main area of focus will therefore need to be an improvement in EU-NATO relations – in spite of some well-known sticking points, such as the Turkey-Cyprus problem. Some voices²⁵ are calling for a clear signal in the form of a joint official declaration on the strengthening of relations at one of the upcoming summit meetings. What would be more important, however, would be closer cooperation on specific projects, such as how to deal with the challenge of new types of hybrid warfare, where there is a definite need for closer transatlantic cooperation and consultation. Meetings between NATO and EU representatives to discuss this matter at the end of March were an important first step in this direction.

Coming to an agreement on the main security challenges in June would put in place a key foundation on which to build a European strategy for the future beyond the current Ukraine crisis.

The strengthening of the CSDP would also be an important step towards putting the Alliance members on both sides of the Atlantic on an equal footing. Coming to an agreement on the main security challenges in June would put in place a key foundation on which to build a coherent, European strategy for the future beyond the current Ukraine crisis. Increased efforts to create joint military capabilities, especially in the Baltic region, would also send an important signal.

Many observers also believe that Germany's commitment will be a deciding factor in creating an effective transatlantic partnership for the future. Germany's willingness to play an active role, especially militarily in the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan, but also at political level, would appear to be of major importance.

24 | Europe Diplomacy & Defence, No. 783, "NATO and EU must raise three challenges together, says Stoltenberg", 1 Apr 2015.

25 | Freudenstein/Speck, n. 19.

The successful rejuvenation of the transatlantic security alliance will also depend upon closer cooperation in other political areas. Many experts believe that concluding a transatlantic free trade agreement could be decisive in strengthening future transatlantic relations.²⁶ In addition to the added value created, such a political project would also send a clear message on the cohesion and stability of the international alliance. Politicians are well aware of the importance of such an agreement and have once again set themselves the goal of concluding the necessary negotiations with the USA this year, whatever obstacles may stand in the way.

In light of the many common challenges that have to be faced, it would seem that regular consultation and exchange between the partners will be essential in order to continue to strengthen cooperation within the Alliance in the long term.

The mentioned steps could lead in the long run to the often invoked “renaissance” of the transatlantic alliance. The approaches of the revitalization of the CSDP are still too recent to already affect the transatlantic alliance. However, this development would have the potential to strengthen the Alliance sustainably. By contrast, the joint management of the Ukraine crisis appears already today to contribute to an enhancement of the Alliance – despite the still widespread skepticism of many experts. However, this positive trend is not irreversible; a failure in dealing with the Ukraine crisis would be a serious blow to the Alliance as a whole.

26 | Judy Dempsey, “Entering 2015, Europe Is Losing America”, Carnegie Europe, 19 Dec 2014, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=57569> (accessed 22 May 2015).

THE TIES THAT BIND

GERMAN AND AMERICAN YOUTH, AND THE FUTURE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP

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Though no one could have predicted it at the time, the attacks of September 11th 2001 have become a symbol for a change in the relationship between the United States and Germany, through the alienation of young Americans and Germans from one another. The political conflicts between the United States and Germany over Iraq, the NSA, and human rights in the years following the attacks have masked a far more serious erosion in the foundations of the transatlantic relationship. Each generation since the Second World War has faced crises in German-American relations, including the occupation and subsequent NATO integration of West Germany in the 1950s, and the War in Vietnam; but previous periods of tension between the U.S. and Germany were followed by a restoration of ties based on the deep, fundamental connection between the two countries. The current crisis has been different, because it has occurred simultaneously with an accelerating deterioration of nearly all that has previously bound the United States to Germany. Young Germans in their 20s can hardly remember a time when Germany and the United States were genuinely close, let alone depended on each other, like during the Cold War. Americans of the same age see Germany as one nation among many, instead of as one of its most important allies and an opportunity for economic advancement.

The relationship between Germany and the United States since the Second World War has been undergirded by ethnic, economic, linguistic, and political links that have weakened and become marginalised in a multi-polar world and an increasingly multi-cultural America. Young Americans are not engaging in exchange with Germany or learning its language; their ethnic links to Germany have become diluted or non-existent. Simultaneously, more aggressive criticism from sectors of German society and the

media have created a space for anti-American activists to oppose the transatlantic relationship more strongly, and has made it more difficult for Germany to cooperate with the United States on issues such as TTIP, or Russian aggression. Because of this, restoration of the relationships strained by American actions in the Global War on Terror has been made extremely difficult, even in the face of great dangers that require German-American cooperation. However, as the post-war relationship between the United States and Germany fades, there is an opportunity for this younger generation to build a new relationship based on international-political equality, increasingly shared values, and new opportunities for business in a globalised world.



U.S. Soldier in Shula, Iraq: Germans and Americans hold strong negative opinions of one another over the issue of Iraq. | Source: Charles W. Gill, U.S. Army, flickr ©®.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT...

The foundations of the American view of Germany, and the German view of America, can almost be described as exact opposites. Germans have historically viewed the United States through its direct actions in relation to Germany and the rest of the world. Because of its massive military, cultural, and economic footprint, the United States has occupied a disproportionate measure of the German imagination. By contrast, American opinion of Germany is best described as founded on nostalgia. Americans who have ancestral ties to Germany and/or have served in Germany in

the U.S. military have been critical in shaping German-American relations. This foundation has lent a strong resiliency to American affection towards Germany. For example, opinion polls in 2003 demonstrated a considerable mutual disdain between America and Germany over the issue of Iraq, with both citizenries holding quite negative opinions of one another.¹ However, by 2004, American opinion of Germany was nearly back to its 2002 high and hasn't decreased since. By contrast, German opinion of the United States has still not completely recovered.²



The Mardi Gras Society Rheinischer Verein in Chicago: The German-American heritage lost most of its former relevance. | Source: spablab, flickr ©.

The German-American community is the foundation of American affection towards Germany. Germans themselves don't regard German-Americans as kin in any meaningful way, but German heritage in America drives most studies of German as a language, celebrations of German culture and holidays, and American public opinion in favour of Germany. There are 46 million Americans who claim German ancestry and they comprise the plurality ethnic group from Ohio across the north all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

- 1 | Cf. "Perceptions Of Germany And The Germans Among The U.S. Population", Magid, Dec 2013, http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.aatg.org/resource/resmgr/GermanisCritical/PerceptionsOfGermany2013_Mag.pdf (accessed 15 May 2015).
- 2 | Cf. Pew Research Center, "Global Indicators Database", 2014, <http://pewglobal.org/database/indicator/1/country/81> (accessed 15 May 2015).

America once had hundreds of German-language newspapers, and a vibrant German-speaking culture.³ During the First World War, the German language was banned and the culture suppressed, but this was unable to permanently squelch German-Americans' nostalgia for the land of their ancestors. Following the war, hundreds of thousands of American soldiers were stationed in Germany, experiencing German culture and building connections with German people, and forming an important link between the United States and Germany in the American imagination. These soldiers and Americans of German descent formed the backbone of German language study in the United States. American businessmen and tourists flocked to Germany and vice versa.

Politically, the Cold War and defense of Europe against the threat of Communism bound Germany and the United States together. However, these times were not without controversy and tension. German traditionalists were suspicious of American values and morals brought by the soldiers after the war, peaceniks were suspicious of integration into NATO, and some young Germans were so incensed by the American War in Vietnam that they attacked U.S. bases and murdered several young American soldiers.⁴ American affection for Germany, on the other hand, never waned. This, coupled with a Germany that was both dependent on and grateful for American economic and military assistance, enabled the transatlantic relationship to weather many storms.

German traditionalists were suspicious of American values brought by the soldiers after the Second World War. American affection for Germany, on the other hand, never waned.

In the early 2000s, a combination of a strong economic downturn and political alienation had a strong negative effect on most aspects of the transatlantic relationship. Superficially, the German-American relationship seems to have recovered from its absolute lows in 2003. Trade, tourism, and public opinion polls have all dramatically recovered: tourism from Germany to the U.S. has doubled since 2003, trade is up dramatically since 2000, and German approval of the United States has risen to about half.⁵ However, despite the raw numbers, the most important aspects of the German-American relationship have withered. German

3 | Cf. "German-Americans: The Silent Minority", *The Economist*, 7 Feb 2015, <http://econ.st/1xs1yQF> (accessed 15 May 2015).

4 | Cf. Stefan Aust, *Baader-Meinhof: The Inside Story of the R.A.F.*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009.

5 | U.S. Census Bureau, "Trade in Goods with Germany", 3 Apr 2015, <http://census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4280.html> (accessed 15 May 2015); Pew Research Center, n. 2.

language study, once a respectable 20 per cent of total American foreign language study has declined to six per cent of the total.⁶ Backed by extensive efforts through the Chinese government, Mandarin language study has displaced German as the third language of instruction at many American high schools (Spanish and French being the first two). German programs have difficulty in appealing to non-white American students, who now make up a much larger proportion of the American student body.⁷ Aging German teachers are not being replaced, and the proportion of schools with any German program at all has dropped from 1/4, to 1/7. Mainly due to ignorance, young Americans think of Germany primarily as the land of Nazis and the Holocaust⁸, and their imaginations stretch not towards Europe, but Asia, with its promise of spectacular profits, and its dangers of conflict. The engine of the world economy and center of global military power is moving East, and young Americans are following.



Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Del Rosario with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in 2013: Due to America's pivot to Asia the transatlantic economic ties are becoming less important. | Source: U.S. Embassy Manila, flickr ©©©.

- 6 | Cf. Nelly Furman/David Goldberg/Natalia Lusin, "Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2009", Modern Language Association, Dec 2010, http://mla.org/pdf/2009_enrollment_survey.pdf (accessed 15 May 2015).
- 7 | Cf. Sam Dillon, "German in a Multicultural World", *The New York Times*, 13 Apr 2012, <http://nyti.ms/193TQbm> (accessed 15 May 2015).
- 8 | Cf. Pew Research Center, "Germany and the United States: Reliable Allies", 7 May 2015, <http://pewglobal.org/2015/05/07/germany-and-the-united-states-reliable-allies> (accessed 15 May 2015).

The U.S. government is of a similar mindset as its young people, and intends to “pivot to Asia”. Traditionally America has a “Two Ocean Navy” in the Atlantic and the Pacific. America will continue to have a two ocean navy, but those oceans will be the Pacific and the Indian. America’s economic, diplomatic, and military resources are going to be stretched to the limit across the region between Jerusalem and Shanghai, leaving little for Europe. Even the tourism and economic numbers that have recovered so well since the early 2000s are a shrinking piece of the overall pie. Trade with Germany has almost doubled, but as a percentage of America’s total foreign trade, it has slightly declined.⁹ Similarly, while tourism has technically doubled, as an overall share of the total it is less than three per cent, virtually the same as in 2002. In business dealings, vacations, alliances, and most importantly, imaginations, Germany and America occupy ever smaller spaces in each other’s worlds.

CHASMS IN THE GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP

Despite America’s changing focus and attention, Europe is still beset with economic instability, faces Russian aggression, and the ongoing threat of Islamist terrorism. The German-American relationship will be critical

The German-American relationship will be critical to facing problems like economic instability, Russian aggression and Islamist terrorism, and must be repaired.

to facing these problems, and must be repaired. Americans have difficulty understanding the anger Germans felt over the invasion of Iraq, and the deep disappointment of many Germans over Guantanamo Bay, CIA black sites in Eastern Europe, and drone warfare across the globe. But German-American cooperation is still required for the security and prosperity of the world. Russia is still engaging in violent aggression against its neighbors and undermining democracy, Afghanistan continues to require Western support, and ISIS is continuing its rampage across the Middle East, despite its recent setbacks. The world needs German-American cooperation, but some actions of the United States – especially the NSA scandal – in addition to the ongoing negotiations about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) have been detrimental to proponents of the American relationship in Germany, and have created an opening for opponents of the transatlantic relationship to undermine its foundations.

9 | Cf. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), “U.S. International Trade by Selected Countries and Areas”, 6 Mar 2015, http://bea.gov/newsreleases/international/trade/trad_geo_time_series.xls (accessed 21 May 2015).

When evaluating the NSA scandal, it is important to note that no excuses can be made for the United States' recklessness. Germany is a long-standing ally of the United States, and such efforts to spy on the Chancellor's private phone and collect signals intelligence on German targets were categorically undeserved and unwarranted. The response of the United States was equally inconsiderate with President Obama refusing to apologise for the malfeasance. A congressional delegation sent to Germany at the time ended in acrimony when the Congressmen argued that America was justified in spying in Germany because 9/11 was planned in Hamburg. They claimed that Germans needed to understand the 9/11 experience to comprehend why America felt the need to spy so extensively, even on allies.¹⁰

But many people in Germany concluded that not only was America reckless with its actions in the Middle East, it was violating their privacy and perhaps even the privacy of the whole world. Young Germans, who lack the same sense of danger from world affairs as those who lived through the Cold War, are even more unsympathetic to America's espionage efforts.

That being said, countries spy on each other as a matter of course. America spies because it has the capability, and many of the countries protesting the United States would do the exact same things if they had an agency as capable as the NSA.

For young Americans and the group of Americans entering college this year, the defining event of their childhood was 9/11. They can't remember a year when the United States were not at war

in Afghanistan or Iraq. The experiences of young Americans and Germans could not be more different in this respect, and the malfeasance of the United States has contributed to the widening chasm between German and American youth. In addition some German

Some German media exercised a strong reaction to the NSA scandal without giving it proper historical perspective, which when viewed correctly, allows for a more sober evaluation.

media exercised a strong reaction to the NSA scandal without giving it proper historical perspective, which when viewed correctly, allows for a more sober evaluation of the exact scale of America's crime against Germany. While it is the duty of the media to reveal the damage caused by America's irresponsibility in its spying and the potential effects of large scale trade agreements, the reporting

10 | Cf. Raniah Salloum, "Non-Apology Tour: US Lawmakers in Berlin over NSA Scandal", *Spiegel online*, 26 Nov 2013, <http://spiegel.de/international/germany/a-935664.html> (accessed 15 May 2015).

of some German media outlets has contributed to the alienation of the two partners.

Another issue that reveals different approaches in the German-American relationship is the discussion over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. This treaty, which often gets bad press in Germany, has the potential to expand European-American trade dramatically, and bring together a new generation of young American and German businessmen and women. The deal will probably benefit Germany more than any other party involved in the deal; almost 52 per cent of German GDP comes from international trade, compared to a mere 14 per cent for the United States. Despite the clear advantages for German exports, many in the German media have responded to the negotiations with paranoia and pessimism.¹¹ While a majority of EU

citizens are in favour of the deal, the current climate in Germany means that Germans are some of the least supportive of TTIP, despite its enormous potential benefits to the German economy.¹² While discussion of TTIP's merits for the German economy is warranted with a trade deal of this magnitude, some of the commentary from mainstream German newspapers is downright vitriolic. The reality is that while there may be some instability following TTIP, any deal that allows Germany to export even more goods can be nothing but a good thing for German people and the German economy. With the relatively weak Euro buoying German exports, any improvement of access to foreign markets will be a net gain for Germany.

While there may be some instability following TTIP, any deal that allows Germany rise in exports can be nothing but an advantage for its economy.

Obviously the German media isn't the only party to blame for the German suspicion of TTIP. At the onset of the NSA scandal, Germans overwhelmingly desired to cut off trade negotiations until the NSA scandal was properly concluded.¹³ Trade deals like these require a great deal of trust, and the United States' actions and some unbalanced German media coverage have created an environment

11 | Cf. Matthias Bauer, "How Anti-TTIP Groups Dominate Online Media in Germany", Atlantic-Community.org, 24 Feb 2014, <http://atlantic-community.org/-/how-anti-ttip-groups-dominate-online-media-in-germany> (accessed 15 May 2015).

12 | Cf. Daniel Tost, "Malmström: Germany's TTIP debate 'more heated'", *EurActiv*, 24 Feb 2014, <http://euractiv.com/sections/trade-society/malmstrom-germanys-ttip-debate-more-heated-312354> (accessed 15 May 2015).

13 | Cf. "Embassy Espionage: The NSA's Secret Spy Hub in Berlin", *Der Spiegel*, 27 Oct 2013, <http://spiegel.de/international/germany/a-930205.html> (accessed 15 May 2015).

among Germans of paranoia directed against a deal that will probably benefit them more than any other party involved. With German-American trade comprising an increasingly small percentage of both countries' economies, this deal has the potential to create new connections among up-and-coming German and American businessmen and women seeking a profit. There will of course be some displacement within the German economy, and compromises made in the field of industry standards and other areas; this is certain. However, the effects will be nowhere near as negative as what is currently propagated by sectors of German society.¹⁴



For the German Chancellor, here in conversation with the U.S. President, there is no question that European standards will be preserved within the TTIP. | Source: Nikki Short, European Council, flickr ©©©©.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is one of the greatest opportunities of the post-Cold War era to bring these two continents together, and if TTIP is squandered through the carelessness of the United States with the NSA scandal and the short-sightedness of some Germans regarding TTIP and German-American relations in general, this opportunity to invigorate

14 | Cf. "We can't protect every sausage,' says German agriculture minister over TTIP deal", *Deutsche Welle*, 1 Jan 2015, <http://dw.de/p/1EEem8> (accessed 15 May 2015).

relations between a new generation of Germans and Americans will be squandered.

A NEW HOPE

So we are left with a discouraging picture of the new era of German-American relations. Young Americans will have hardly any ethnic links with Germany, won't do as much business with Germans compared to their fathers, won't have been stationed in Germany as soldiers, and will probably not have studied German in school, even if they were lucky enough to have the opportunity to do so. In polls, Americans are enthusiastic in their affections for Germany, but without actual contact between the people, it's not clear that this affection matters. Germans are, by far, more reticent about their allies across the Atlantic,

but it's not clear that this is relevant either.

While Germans will continue to learn English to improve their access to the global economy, and, politically, Germany will still be

While Germans will continue to learn English to improve their access to the global economy, their actual contact with Americans will diminish.

allied with the United States through NATO, their actual contact with Americans will diminish. The American attention is turning to Asia, and the political and military resources of the United States will focus on Middle Eastern oil and East Asian trade routes, leaving Germany and Europe on the relative periphery of the American mental and political orientation. However, Germany is not unimportant simply because young Americans and parts of the American government believe it to be so. America is shifting its resources to Asia; but this creates a marvelous opportunity to build a new political relationship between Germany and the United States based on political equality, and the enormous shared values of the new generation of Americans and their German counterparts.

For the first generations of the post-war German-American relationship, the bonds between the United States and Germany were close, but the people grew gradually distant as Germans turned away from the nationalism, conspicuous religiosity, and extreme individualism of their American counterparts. The political relationship between Germany and the United States was close by necessity, but given America's overwhelming military and economic might, the two nations were far from equal. Americans learned German because their grandparents did, and tourism and trade were high because during the Cold War, there were few other options.

The new generation of Germans and Americans will experience a different world in all of these respects. The values of young Americans line up increasingly closely with their German counterparts.

Regarding the importance of religion, social values, and the role of government, young Germans and Americans are closer in values than any previous generation.

While young Germans vote in ways not entirely dissimilar to older generations, there is an incredible dissonance between the values of the youngest generation and the oldest in the United States.¹⁵ Regarding the importance of religion, social values, and the role of government, young Germans and Americans are closer in values than any previous generation. America's increasingly multi-cultural identity is in turn appealing to more and more Germans, as American society embraces the cosmopolitan characteristics represented by President Obama, who is still personally popular among many Germans. And while far fewer Americans are learning German, we are likely to see a significant return to the language because of its importance for doing business in Europe. In Russia, there are more students learning German than English, and the German language is important for business across Eastern Europe. While Americans may have stopped learning German for sentimental reasons, the potential renaissance in German-American trade under TTIP will cause a resurgence due to the sheer economic benefit of knowing the language.

Politically, America's interests are focused on other parts of the world, which means there is an opportunity for a new relationship of equality with Germany. America is going to depend on Germany for the peace and prosperity of Europe. As its energies will be elsewhere, and it is incumbent upon Germany to take responsibility for Europe. In the past, some have seen Germany as a bridge between East and West, balancing the excesses of the Western democracies of America, France, and Britain while attempting to bring Russia into the family of nations. Such a naive view can no longer be entertained. Germany will have to take its place at the heart of the West as the indispensable leader of the democratic societies of Europe, prepared to confront any threat to their peace and freedom.

15 | Cf. Jocelyn Kiley, "As GOP Celebrates Win, No Sign of Narrowing Age, Gender Gaps", Pew Research Center, *Fact Tank*, 5 Nov 2014, <http://pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/11/05/as-gop-celebrates-win-no-sign-of-narrowing-gender-age-gaps> (accessed 15 May 2015); "AfD: The party of the youth?", Open Europe blog, 25 Sep 2013, <http://openeuropeblog.blogspot.de/2013/09/afd-party-of-youth.html> (accessed 15 May 2015).

The German Federal Government has already boldly taken steps toward filling this new role. It has embraced Germany's economic leadership in Europe and has taken on responsibility for security policy by rapidly and efficiently arming Kurdish fighters in Northern Iraq. It has assumed a leading role in the negotiations over Ukraine, taken a patient line against Vladimir Putin's aggression in parts of Ukraine. Previous generations of Americans have looked condescendingly upon Europeans for not providing for their own security. But now Americans will grow up seeing Germany responsible for and protective of its own continent, and as an international equal.

The German Government has assumed a leading role in the negotiations over Ukraine, taken a patient line against Vladimir Putin's aggression in parts of Ukraine.

With all of these factors combined, we can see more clearly the future of the relationship between young Germans and Americans. In an increasingly globalising world and multi-cultural United States, Germans and Americans occupy an increasingly small space in each other's lives. While trade and tourism between the two nations are growing, they are now a much smaller percentage of the whole, while German language study in the U.S. has declined dramatically in recent years. Because of post-9/11 American policies and overblown German fears of American hegemony on issues like the NSA or TTIP, young Americans and Germans have grown up alienated from one another compared to decades past.

However, there are several factors that suggest American youths will change this, and that new political realities will bind the United States and Germany. Young Americans share far more of their social and political values with their German counterparts than their elders, from religion to social engagement and organisation. Young American entrepreneurs seeking to do business in Europe will find German an important language in those markets. The boom in trade following the passage of TTIP in Europe and America could underwrite a new expansion of German language study, founded on economic need rather than ethnic links, which will run through a Germany whose youths' values have never been closer to their American counterparts. And American foreign policy will learn to regard Germany as an equal, as it relies on Germans to responsibly maintain peace and prosperity in Europe. This change in the German-American relationship is not a crisis, but an opportunity. Young Americans and Germans will have the chance to

build a new relationship based on their deeply held values as they seek to advance democratic values and economic opportunities in our new multi-polar, pluralistic, and economically growing world.

OPEN MARKETS, PROSPERITY AND GLOBAL STANDARDS

THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

Gunter Rieck Moncayo

Few statements cause less controversy in the field of economics as the idea that free trade increases the world's prosperity. At the same time, the negotiations between the European Union and the United States of America over a comprehensive trade and investment agreement are met in Germany with criticism at best and hostility at worst. This seems paradoxical, as Germany itself has achieved considerable wealth through its high degree of integration in world trade. Put simply: "Globalisation has made Germany rich."¹

The enormous importance of open markets for Germany is also reflected in the large number of jobs dependent upon them. Directly and indirectly, more than nine million people alone work in exporting German products in this country.² According to BDI calculations, foreign direct investment creates nearly 2.6 million jobs in Germany.³

The value creation chains have become increasingly complex and above all intertwined in recent decades. For a long time now the simple formula of importing raw materials and exporting finished products has ceased to hold true; our exports are heavily dependent upon preliminary products from abroad. These



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- 1 | Maximilian Weingartner, "Eine Mischung aus Angst und Zufriedenheit", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 Mar 2015, p. 24.
- 2 | 9.6 million people were employed in 2007. Cf. Prognos, "Globalisierungsreport 2011. Welche Arbeitsplätze in Deutschland hängen von welchen Ländern ab?", p. 8, http://prognos.com/uploads/tx_atwpubdb/Prognos_Globalisierungsreport_2011_web.pdf (accessed 27 Apr 2015).
- 3 | Cf. The Voice of German Industry (BDI), "Ausländische Direktinvestitionen in Deutschland. Investitionsfreiheit fördern und öffentliche Akzeptanz schaffen", p. 6, http://bdi.eu/download_content/GlobalisierungMaerkteUndHandel/Auslaendische_Direktinvestitionen_in_Deutschland.pdf (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

globalised production chains have seen the proportion of foreign intermediate inputs for German exports rise to more than 40 per cent.⁴ At the same time, German exports themselves occasionally represent intermediate inputs for foreign products. Some 3.5 million jobs are created in the EU alone by the demand for preliminary inputs for German industry.⁵

INCREASE PROSPERITY, FIGHT POVERTY

Integration into international trade flows is an incomparably successful way for emerging and developing countries to free people from poverty.

Yet trade is capable of more than just creating well-paid skilled jobs in Germany; integration into international trade flows is an incomparably successful way for emerging

and developing countries to free people from poverty. In these past decades of increasing globalisation, the number of people forced to live in absolute poverty has declined sharply – not only relatively speaking, but also in absolute terms despite overall growth in the world's population. Development did not proceed in the same way everywhere: regions with a high level of integration in world trade were particularly successful in reducing poverty, as the example of East Asia shows, where the percentage of absolute poverty was reduced from nearly 80 per cent in the early 1980s to less than ten per cent within 30 years.⁶ The economic rise of China, which has freed some half a billion people from extreme poverty, occurred simultaneously to the transition from a closed economy towards one that is heavily intertwined with international trade relations. Sub-Saharan Africa, however, which makes up only a very small portion of world trade, has remained stagnant during the same period, with extreme poverty hovering around 50 per cent.⁷

- 4 | In 2010 this was 43 per cent. Cf. German Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt), "Deutscher Außenhandel. Export und Import im Zeichen der Globalisierung", p. 9, <https://destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Aussenhandel/Gesamtentwicklung/AussenhandelWelthandel5510006139004.pdf> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).
- 5 | Cf. The Bavarian Industry Association, "Die Bedeutung der deutschen Industrie für Europa", p. 1, http://prognos.com/uploads/tx_atwpubdb/140417_Prognos_Studie_vbw_Bedeutung_dt._Industrie_EU_DE.pdf (accessed 27 Apr 2015).
- 6 | Cf. The World Bank, "Poverty & Equity. Regional Dashboard East Asia & Pacific", <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/region/EAP> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).
- 7 | Cf. The World Bank, "Poverty & Equity. Regional Dashboard Sub-Saharan Africa", <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/region/SSA> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

The free flow of goods and services and favourable conditions for foreign direct investment enable the development of an international division of labour, which in turn allows efficient use of our scarce resources through fair competition. Innovation, better products and lower prices are tangible benefits seen by those involved in free trade.⁸



The Port of Hamburg is the third largest container port in Europe. International trade relations are an essential factor for the economic success of Germany. | Source: Jens Auer, flickr ©©©©.

The large number of EU trade agreements already in force demonstrates the economic benefits of reducing trade barriers. Because of this, the European Commission was able to present an impressive balance in late March 2015 after three years of free trade agreements with South Korea: EU exports to South Korea have increased by 35 per cent. In places where all trade restrictions could be abandoned, this increase amounted to up to 46 per cent. The automotive industry reached peak values with 90 per cent increases.⁹

8 | Cf. Ronald Clapham, "Die Internationale Ordnung in wirtschaftlicher, sozialer und ökologischer Sicht", *Zukunft der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, Lucius & Lucius, Stuttgart, 2006, vol. 8, p. 13.

9 | Cf. European Commission, "Jährlicher Bericht über die Durchführung des Freihandelsabkommens zwischen der EU und Korea", 26 Mar 2015, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/march/tradoc_153279.pdf (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

It is simply untrue that only corporations benefit from trade liberalisation. On the contrary, protectionist restrictions on free trade are intended to benefit domestic enterprises. However, the consumer must ultimately pay for these economic policies, resulting in foregoing innovation, product improvements and lower prices.¹⁰ By contrast, trade liberalisations result in benefits to both parties: businesses and consumers.



TTIP is perceived by many consumers in Germany as a “deal for corporations” – and a great contradiction to democracy, environmental protection and fair trade. | Source: Christian Mang, Campact, flickr ©©©

The TTIP would lower trade costs, enabling additional trade. This would result in cost savings from the reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers (NTB).¹¹ Whilst, on average, the level of customs duties in transatlantic trade is already relatively low,¹² NTBs lead to an average cost impact, which corresponds to a tariff rate of 20 per cent. It is therefore easy to see that the transatlantic trade agreement promises great potential for further growth,

10 | Cf. Clapham, n. 8, p. 13.

11 | This term includes all trade restrictions that are not customs duties but are also designated as tariffs.

12 | The high volume of trade between the EU and the U.S. nevertheless results in large possible savings. The annual customs duties in the German automotive industry alone for export trade with the U.S. amount to more than one billion euros. Cf. German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), “Deutsche Automobilindustrie sagt ‘Ja zu TTIP!’”, 28 Jan 2015, <http://vda.de/de/presse/Pressemeldungen/20150128-Deutsche-Automobilindustrie-sagt--Ja-zu-TTIP--> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

particularly in terms of NTBs (non-tariff barriers). Criticism is once again being raised that, with the goal of reducing NTBs, the TTIP is surpassing the actual trade policy and thus gaining a new quality. However, the fact remains that NTBs have found themselves on the trade policy agenda at least since the Tokyo Round of the GATT negotiations in the 1970s, and have been intensively debated ever since.¹³

A whole host of different technical standards means products that need to be manufactured differently for European and American markets are more expensive. Not infrequently, the effort that would be expended for this is so high that exporting is no longer possible. It is often the case that these different technical standards are intended to provide the same level of protection and simply employ different methods of doing so. It quickly becomes clear that these regulations can be mutually recognised without disadvantaging consumers. This also includes regulations that are not so readily apparent to consumers, such as the famous example of different indicator colours.¹⁴ For example, different rules apply in the EU and the U.S. as to the height at which an emergency shut-off must be placed on a machine. This seemingly insignificant difference results in a great expense, since machine components must then be designed and manufactured differently.

CONSUMER PROTECTION – NOT ONLY IN EUROPE BUT WORLDWIDE

Public opinion has been far more sensitised regarding regulations relating to approvals for food or the use of actually or potentially hazardous substances. It was rightly noted during the debate on the TTIP that the EU

and the U.S. take a divergent approach to potential hazards for consumers. Whilst a risk must be ruled out before a product is approved in the EU on the premise of the precautionary principle, in the U.S. a product can be sold until evidence is found of a specific risk. The liability for this then lies with the company, which must pay substantial compensation in the event of any damage.

Whilst a risk must be ruled out before a product is approved in the EU on the premise of the precautionary principle, in the U.S. a product can be sold until evidence is found of a specific risk.

13 | Cf. Clapham, n. 8, p. 18.

14 | Direction indicator lights on vehicles in the EU must be orange, but in the U.S. these are generally red.

Both in Europe and in the U.S., consumers remain convinced of the superiority of their own consumer protection standards. Just as some European consumers fear a supposedly lower level of protection in the U.S., some U.S. consumers fear supposedly lax regulations in the EU. And the truth is that examples can be found of both. It is therefore not at all the case that the European level of protection is higher per se than that in the U.S., and vice versa.



The different regulations on limits of lead in children's toys in the EU and the U.S. show that consumer protection in Europe is not necessarily higher than in the U.S. | Source: woodleywonderworks, flickr ©¹⁵.

For example, limits on lead content in children's toys that apply in the United States are significantly stricter: the surface of the toy is only permitted to contain 90 milligrams of lead per kilogram, whilst in the EU 160 milligrams per kilogram is permitted.¹⁵ Another example can be found in the food industry: by now it has become common knowledge through the TTIP debate that growth hormones are used in U.S. cattle farming, which is not permitted in the EU. Less well known is the fact that the use of antibiotics is more restrictive in the U.S.: whilst European farmers may use antibiotics to treat sick cattle and nevertheless sell the affected meat as an organic product, antibiotic use is not permitted in the United States for meat that will later be sold as organic.¹⁶

15 | Cf. Nicola Abé et al., "Im Säurebad", *Der Spiegel*, 22/2014, 26 May 2014, p. 21, <http://spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-127194895.html> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

16 | Cf. *ibid.*

The political will to maintain the level of consumer protection they have achieved is present on both sides of the Atlantic. Decision makers have repeatedly expressed corresponding opinions.¹⁷ Lowering these standards is therefore out of the question. The EU's existing trade agreements and the requirements of the Member States' negotiating mandate also contain a wide range of exceptions, which relate mainly to the field of culture and regulation at the local level. The State's room to manoeuvre is thus not unduly restricted. The TTIP even has the potential to export our high level of protection to third countries: countries wishing to make use of the additional market opportunities a common transatlantic economic area would afford them, or even those who wish to join this transatlantic economic area will have to abide by its rules in the medium term and will have to adapt their production processes accordingly. This would also benefit consumers outside of the EU and the U.S., and would instead lead much more to a race to the top than a race to the bottom.

REASONABLE INVESTOR PROTECTION IN PLACE OF A SPECTRE

One of the 24 sections planned in the TTIP is meant to contain protection for investors. This protection, and particularly the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) it includes, have ignited harsh criticism from some. This criticism is aimed, on the one hand, at issues surrounding the actual design of ISDS, but is also criticism of a very fundamental nature on the other.

The TTIP has the potential to export our high level of protection to third countries that want to make use of the additional market opportunities.

All issues regarding the actual design of an ISDS in the TTIP are the subject of the current negotiations. For example, these include the selection of the arbitrators, the option of an appeal or the transparency of the proceedings. Different proposals are offered

17 | For example, as Angela Merkel stated in her podcast: "Es geht hier nicht, wie oft gesagt wird, um die Absenkung von Standards – im Gegenteil." Angela Merkel, "Merkel gegen Wachstum auf Pump", *Die Kanzlerin direkt*, The Federal Government, 10 May 2014, http://bundesregierung.de/SiteGlobals/Forms/Webs/Breg/Suche/DE/Solr_Mediathek_formular.html?cat=podcasts&id=869332 (accessed 27 Apr 2015). Or Barack Obama in a press conference on 26 Mar 2014: "I have fought my entire political career and as President to strengthen consumer protections. I have no intention of signing legislation that would weaken those protections." Barack Obama, "Press Conference by President Obama, European Council President Van Rompuy, and European Commission President Barroso", European Council, Brussels, 26 Mar 2015, <https://whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/26/press-conference-president-obama-european-council-president-van-rompuy-a> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

for all these issues, so a fundamental rejection of ISDS in the TTIP on the basis of these issues – before any negotiated outcome even faces any parliamentary debate – would be misguided.

The fundamental criticism levelled at an ISDS being part of the TTIP includes the allegation that ISDS would create a parallel justice system with special privileges for foreign investors and concerns that it would create a so-called regulatory chill. It should first be noted that courts of arbitration would be in no way foreign to German legal culture as implied by this allegation of a parallel justice system. On the contrary, the German Code of Civil Procedure (Zivilprozessordnung) explicitly stipulates that “any pecuniary claim...” may “be the subject of an arbitration agreement”.¹⁸ The reality is therefore, which should be no surprise, that courts of arbitration are frequently encountered in Germany regardless of ISDS.



Chinese representatives from politics and economy taking part in the World Economic Forum 2014 in Tianjin: Asian countries are becoming increasingly important in the shift of the world economic order. | Source: Sikarin Fon Thanachaiary, World Economic Forum, flickr ©①②③④.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) that the EU has already negotiated with Canada is often referred to as a blueprint for the TTIP. And indeed, as the EU’s most recently negotiated agreement, CETA can provide us with insight as to

18 | Cf. German Code of Civil Procedure (Zivilprozessordnung, ZPO), para. 1, “Paragraph § 1030 ZPO”, <http://zivilprozessordnung.net/paragraph-1030> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

the state of affairs. It is useful to base a fundamental evaluation of ISDS in the TTIP on this state of affairs rather than on older agreements now considered obsolete. It is against this backdrop that we can safely abandon concerns over alleged privileges for foreign investors: specifically, a legal opinion commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economy and Energy (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie) demonstrates that European Union law and German constitutional law in particular already offers investors a level of protection that extends well beyond those contained in the CETA.¹⁹

Investment protection agreements aim at providing foreign investors with protection against expropriation without compensation, arbitrariness and discrimination. Without effective enforcement options, such guarantees would be worthless. The notion of selecting a neutral enforcement body seems quite appropriate here. Ultimately, the fair treatment of investors before just a national court of the State, which stands accused of arbitrariness or discrimination, is not automatically given.

We know that the EU is not a homogeneous area of justice and that the rule of law is not always as advanced in other Member States as it is in this country. We also know that, in the past, an investor's foreign background has been made the subject of proceedings in the U.S. and has likely influenced the decisions of juries. This makes clear that ISDS can be a reasonable instrument in the TTIP. Rather than fundamentally rejecting it outright, we should instead take an interest in further developing ISDS in accordance with the principles of our own rule of law in order to create a model for future agreements. On the contrary, it would likely be impossible to establish such an approach in agreements with China, for example, if it were dispensed with in the TTIP.

We should aim at further developing ISDS in accordance with the principles of our own rule of law in order to create a model for future agreements.

German constitutional law guarantees basic rights, which we hold dear. Investor protection in the TTIP secures rights that do not extend beyond what we as Germans are already guaranteed. It is

19 | Cf. Stephan Schill, "Auswirkungen der Bestimmungen zum Investitionsschutz und zu den Investor-Staat-Schiedsverfahren im Entwurf des Freihandelsabkommens zwischen der EU und Kanada (CETA) auf den Handlungsspielraum des Gesetzgebers (Kurzgutachten)", Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, http://bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/C-D/ceta-gutachten-investitionsschutz,property=pdf,ber_eich=bmwi2012,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

quite the opposite. In light of this, we should not fear a possible regulatory chill through ISDS in the TTIP, we should instead welcome it. If states dispense with unjustified interference in property rights for fear of costly claims for damages,²⁰ a great deal will have been accomplished for freedom and the rule of law.

PROACTIVE DESIGN WITH THE TTIP

The ninth round of negotiations took place in New York from 20 to 24 April 2015. By the end of 2015, a political accord on the core elements of the agreement should be reached at the very least. Further work on the negotiating text and the subsequent ratification process will extend beyond 2016 according to Ignacio Garcia Bercero, Chief Negotiator of the European Commission.²¹ The transparency of these TTIP negotiations was and is one of the main points of criticism. However, the fact remains that so much more information is publicly available on the state of the negotiations than for any other trade talks that have come before.²² Stakeholders are regularly involved on both sides of the Atlantic, and it must not be forgotten that before any entry into force of the TTIP a parliamentary and therefore a public debate and decision must take place.

In summary, many fears and anxieties stirred up in the debate surrounding the TTIP are unfounded. They should not hinder us from taking an active role in shaping a world in which strategic alignment is due to the global trade order. A transatlantic economic area would emerge through a TTIP which, because of its economic significance, would impact the future world trade order. Given Europe's dwindling economic influence on the world it is imperative that we seize the opportunity to create an economically significant transatlantic economic area. The world ultimately still turns without us and other stakeholders, the People's Republic of China in particular, are taking greater steps to shape the global order for themselves according to their own rules and without Western

Given Europe's dwindling economic influence on the world it is imperative that we grasp the opportunity of creating an economically significant transatlantic economic area.

20 | It is precisely this dispensation that the term regulatory chill refers to.

21 | Cf. Thomas Ludwig, "Nicht mehr während Obamas Amtszeit", *Handelsblatt*, 23 Apr 2015, <http://handelsblatt.com/my/politik/international/ttip-unterhaendler-garcia-ignacio-bercero-nicht-mehr-waehrend-obamas-amtszeit/11675670.html> (accessed 27 Apr 2015).

22 | However, the demand for the published text proposals on the European side is very low, thus forming a strong contrast to previous demands for publication. Cf. Hendrik Kafsack, "Kein Interesse an TTIP-Dokumenten", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 Apr 2015, p. 17.

leadership. The establishment of the new international development bank under China's direction is an impressive indicator of this. The European Union and the United States can contrast this development with the TTIP and thus reaffirm their own design standards.

The TTIP can be an important building block for a multilateral world trade order that corresponds to our principles and values. Since the beginning of the deadlocked Doha Round in the WTO, changing value chains and new production methods have placed new issues on the trade agenda, which will be the subject of multilateral negotiations in the future. The past has demonstrated that regional initiatives, such as the TTIP, not only brought the necessary momentum to multilateral rounds of negotiations, but also provided direction in terms of content.²³ With the TTIP, Europe has the opportunity to take an active role in shaping "reliable market economy conditions for the growing prosperity in countries involved in world trade".²⁴ If Europe does not use this opportunity, others will impose their rules upon us.

23 | For example, the establishment of the EC customs union at the so-called Kennedy Round in the 1960s and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) agreement at the so-called Uruguay Round in the 1990s.

24 | Clapham, n. 8, p. 15.



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TAKING CONFUCIUS TO AFRICA

HOW CULTURAL DIPLOMACY CONVEYS CHINA'S VOICE AND PERSPECTIVES TO THE WORLD

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BACKGROUND

Cultural Diplomacy has become an integral part in the foreign relations of modern states. Often described by the terms soft power, smart power or public diplomacy,¹ it has also become an increasingly important concept in emerging nations since the 1990s.² One revealing example is the People's Republic of China, which has deployed significant financial resources in an ever-increasing scope worldwide in order to flank its economic and political ascent with cultural policy as well. The most visible symbol of this strategy are the more than 430 Confucius Institutes in more than 100 countries, as well as the establishment of correspondent networks and scholarship programs for students from developing countries.



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- 1 | Joseph S. Nye, "Get Smart – Combining Hard and Soft Power", *Foreign Affairs*, 07-08/2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65163/joseph-s-nye-jr/get-smart> (accessed 14 Apr 2015); in the academic field and political consulting in China, the terms soft power (*ruan shili*, 软实力), smart power (*qiao shili*, 巧实力) or public diplomacy (*gonggong waijiao*, 公共外交) are used in the same sense. For a detailed discussion of the concepts soft power and public diplomacy in a Chinese context, see Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, 2008, pp. 257-273. The term smart power is (still) predominantly used in China in terms of the U.S. foreign policy concept that became popular under Obama and Clinton. Yiwu Zhang provides insight into the inner party considerations for the concept of smart power in Chinese foreign relations on the Communist Party of China's website, "*qiao shili, ying shili, ruan shili*" (Smart Power, Hard Power, Soft Power), 2010, <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/10954545.html> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).
- 2 | For Germany cf. Kurt-Jürgen Maaß (ed.), *Kultur und Außenpolitik. Handbuch für Studium und Praxis*, Baden-Baden, 2009.

This foreign policy tool has a long tradition in Europe: be it through language institutes, organising artistic and cultural exchanges or granting scholarships to promote scientific/educational exchange. In addition to the German Goethe-Institutes, important and internationally renowned institutions include the Alliance française and the Spanish Cervantes Institutes, which focus on language promotion. With its globally active British Council, the British approach is characterised by the promotion of cultural and creative industries, and has thus contributed to the strong international recognition of its pop music and film industries.

What these approaches have in common is the desire to convey the fundamental values of the respective political and societal system using culture, to strengthen the bilateral and multilateral dialogue and exchange between societies and individuals and to ultimately increase the weight and influence of their own nation worldwide.

These efforts are therefore considered part of the concept of soft power, which originated with the American political scientist Joseph Nye. Soft power is defined as the "power of attraction",³ referring to the attractive force of cultural norms, symbols and goods. These are created and communicated not only through education and culture, science and innovation, but also well-known brand products. Since the 1990s, this approach has increasingly been incorporated in foreign policies of emerging countries. In contrast to traditional diplomacy, it is not just a nation's government, but also its respective national public sphere, that are seen as the "target". In more recent times, if this involves the interaction between government institutions and a foreign public, the term public diplomacy is often used. In Germany, for example, in 2007, the departments of communication and culture of the Federal Foreign Office were merged.⁴

Soft power is defined as the "power of attraction", referring to the attractive force of cultural norms, symbols and goods.

3 | Joseph Nye, *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, 2004, p. 11.

4 | Britt Inga Karten, "Staatliche Imagearbeit: Die Public Diplomacy des Auswärtigen Amtes", in: Thomas Jäger/Henriette Viehrig (eds.), *Die amerikanische Regierung gegen die Weltöffentlichkeit? Theoretische und empirische Analysen der Public Diplomacy zum Irakkrieg*, Wiesbaden, 2008, pp. 163-190.

The German organisations for cultural policy include the Goethe-Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, the Humboldt Foundation, Deutsche Welle and German schools abroad.

The German Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy (AKBP) is based on an “expanded concept of culture”⁵ and is used alongside traditional diplomacy and foreign economic policy. Here, a pluralistic approach is undertaken, which institutionally is characterised

by numerous intermediary organisations and a broad number of program approaches. These include the Goethe-Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, ifa), the Humboldt Foundation, *Deutsche Welle* (DW) and German schools abroad. The German AKBP’s aim is to provide the foreign public with a realistic image of Germany in a courtship of “trust and values”.⁶ The aim is to foster long-term common values and interests with these foreign multipliers. From a German perspective, these activities should be based on the Federal Republic of Germany’s core foreign policy objectives and fundamental values, yet should not impinge upon the autonomy of these host institutions in their specific implementation.

CHINESE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

The political field of cultural diplomacy only became an important cornerstone of foreign policy in the People’s Republic of China around the turn of the millennium.⁷ This timing was not coincidental: the backdrop was formed by the global debate about what role China would play in tomorrow’s world given the impressive increase in its economic and political importance. Whilst academics like Richard Bernstein, Ross Munro and Martin Jacques identified China as a threat to the world as a whole or the Western world

5 | The “expanded concept of culture” introduced into the debate on foreign cultural policy by the German sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf goes beyond the understanding of culture in the narrower sense, instead placing the term in the context of social life and social exchange. Cultural exchange and the principle of relations on an “equal footing” thus became the focus of foreign cultural policy.

6 | Cf. Foreign Ministry, “16. Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Auswärtigen Kultur- und Bildungspolitik 2011/2012”, foreword, p. 5, http://auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/634528/publicationFile/175854/130109_16.pdf (accessed 11 May 2015).

7 | The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the State Council and supporting academic institutions play a coordinating role at the central level. Cf. Culture in EU external relations, “China Country Report”, 2014, p. 14, <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/country-report-China-20.05.2014-bis.pdf> (accessed 20 Apr 2015).

in particular (China threat)⁸, the communist leadership under Hu Jintao in Beijing emphasised the peaceful nature of this ascent (*heping jueqi*, 和平崛起). It is against this backdrop that current Chinese cultural diplomacy can be seen as part of the unresolved challenge of how the People's Republic will position itself within the structure of global regimes and whether it can decisively influence its future design.



Strong international criticism on former US President George W. Bush's foreign policy induced the Chinese government to focus particularly on soft power. | Source: Chris Beckett, flickr ©①③③.

The discourse on cultural diplomacy in China and its ideological assumptions

The political leadership in Beijing and the academic elite were (and are) very aware of these reservations about the rise of China. Chinese academics intensively grappled with the debate on the importance of soft power and its impact on the role of their country.⁹ They came to the conclusion that China would not be able to match the U.S. in terms of hard power in the coming decades, but the United States would face deficits in its soft

8 | Cf. Richard Bernstein/Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York, 1997; Martin Jacques, *When China Rules The World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World*, New York, 2012.

9 | For a good overview on the Chinese discourse on soft power cf. Hongying Wang/Yeh-Chung Lu (2008); Joel Wuthnow (2008); Sheng Ding (2008).

power.¹⁰ In addition, Beijing registered strong international criticism of U.S. foreign policy under George W. Bush¹¹ and concluded that a (potential) comparable criticism of China would enormously impede the peaceful rise they sought. Hu Jintao's report to the 17th National People's Congress in 2007 therefore explicitly held fast to the goal of "culture as part of the soft power of our country".¹² How important then is soft power to China? And what role does this foreign cultural policy instrument play? Is it (still) not so much a matter of influencing other countries and societies on the basis of a country's own attractiveness, as Nye had once formulated, or is it instead a matter of protecting one's own soft ascent? Is China's primary goal therefore "to get the outside world to accept its rising power"?¹³

The Chinese understanding of "foreign", "culture" and "diplomacy"

It is not just the current political-ideological framework that is critical to fully understand the cultural diplomacy of the People's Republic of China. The culturally specific and historically deep-rooted notions of "domestic" and "foreign", "other" and "self" considerably influence concepts and instruments of modern Chinese foreign cultural policy. Whilst a clearly visible division between "self" and "other" can be drawn in the West, the traditional Chinese understanding of "domestic" and "foreign" is rather more diffuse. Chinese culture has developed its own way of dealing with outside influences. The far-reaching sinicisation of foreign rulers, such as the Mongols (Yuan Dynasty) and the Manchu (Qing Dynasty) on the one hand, and the adoption of Buddhism on the other, show typical forms of both assimilation and the inclusion of foreign values. At the same time, however, Chinese culture traditionally lacks the typical Western tendency of highlighting their own culture in a

Whilst a clearly visible division between "self" and "other" can be drawn in the West, the traditional Chinese understanding of "domestic" and "foreign" is rather more diffuse.

10 | Cf. Joshua Kurlantzick, "China's Charm: Implications of Chinese Soft Power", *Policy Brief* 47, 2006, pp. 1-8.

11 | Cf. Lai Hongyi, "China's Cultural Diplomacy: Going for Soft Power", in: Lai Hongyi and Yiyi Lu (eds.), *China's Soft Power and International Relations*, New York, 2012, p. 83.

12 | Hu Jintao, "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects", *Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China on Oct. 15, 2007*, <http://china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

13 | Cf. Wang, n. 1, p. 267.

somewhat missionary fashion, an implication of the universalist claim of their own values. China has instead always opted more towards projecting its own cultural appeal, or as the intellectual Zhao Tingyang puts it in terms of the Confucian mindset: “Look for self-transformation in attempts to convince or convert others.”¹⁴

However, China was and is unwilling to move away from the self-proclaimed central role it plays within human culture and civilisation. In this respect, what the West calls the rise of China is merely a renaissance from a Chinese perspective – a return to its legitimately respected position in the world order. The reason for this self-perception is China’s strong pride in its own history and its erstwhile cultural, technical and economic (alleged) prominence over the rest of the world. It is against this backdrop that aggressive “(cultural) diplomacy” directed towards the foreign public is largely uncharted territory for China. The first decades after the communist takeover and internationalist propaganda notwithstanding, public diplomacy played a merely subordinate role in the foreign policy of the PR China before the new millennium. However, this has since changed with the new Chinese FCP strategy.¹⁵

ACTORS AND STRUCTURE OF CHINA’S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Two key instruments in China’s cultural diplomacy are in the focus of the following analysis: the Confucius Institutes and the China Cultural Centers on the one hand and

Unlike countries like Germany, China’s cultural diplomacy is as yet almost exclusively under the control of State actors.

the internationalisation of Chinese media on the other.¹⁶ Unlike countries like Germany, China’s cultural diplomacy is as yet almost exclusively under the control of State actors. This leads to a great deal of political control and consistency with regard to the agenda on the one hand, but also to numerous problems on

14 | Cf. Zhao Tingyang, *Tianxia System (All Under Heaven): Introduction of the Philosophy of World Institutions*, Nanjing, 2005.

15 | Cf. Wang, n. 1, p. 259 ff.

16 | These foreign cultural policy instruments were first mentioned explicitly in the 11th Five-Year Plan (2005 to 2010): Year of Chinese Culture celebrations, Chinese culture weeks, Chinese film weeks, Chinese art weeks, book exhibitions, film festivals, art exhibitions, expos, scientific exchanges, tourism and sports (cf. Lai, 86). The internet has played an increasingly important role in recent years. See: Nele Noesselt, “Internationale Dimensionen des ‘chinesischen’ Internets”, *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 21, 1/2014, pp. 161-177.

the other, not least because these institutional responsibilities are rather fragmented.¹⁷

Confucius Institutes: controversial stars of China's cultural diplomacy

Since the first opening in Seoul in 2004 Confucius Institutes expanded rapidly. In 2014 already 436 Institutes have been operating.

The Confucius Institutes¹⁸ are the most important, most visible and financially most important instrument of Chinese cultural diplomacy.¹⁹ These facilities have expanded rapidly since the first such institute was opened in Seoul in 2004. There were already 436 Confucius Institutes and 646 Confucius Classrooms in more than 100 countries and all regions of the world by early 2014 (an institute was opened every five days in the first four years on average).²⁰ By 2020, the government aims to have built 1,000 institutions.²¹ This ambitious project is possible only through joint ventures, usually with foreign universities, in rarer cases with other foreign public or social organisations or even companies.²²

17 | The "power of diplomacy", as Yiwei Wang calls it, is not centralised in China. Individual party and government bodies share responsibilities. The Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs are in charge of core initiatives of China's cultural diplomacy. The State Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are more involved in media diplomacy; the Central Committee of the Communist Party handles party-to-party diplomacy with other countries; the Confucius Institutes are administered by a separate institution called *Hanban* (see above). Cf. Wang, n. 1, pp. 264 ff.

18 | Confucius merely plays the role of its famous namesake, however, and is in no way indicative of the specific content of the institute.

19 | The China Cultural Centers are the proper, official cultural institutions operated exclusively by the Chinese abroad (in Germany: Berlin). In return, the Federal Republic of Germany operates a Goethe Institute in Beijing and a Department of Culture and Education of the German Consulate General in Shanghai. Its status was contractually established in 1988 and once again regulated in the agreement on cultural cooperation concluded between Germany and China in 2005. Nevertheless, the Confucius Institutes are generally much more often the subject of worldwide interest due to their much larger number. For this reason they are addressed in greater detail here.

20 | Cf. Hanban, "About Confucius Institutes, 2014", http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm (accessed 14 Apr 2015); Zhe Ren, "The Confucius Institutes and China's Soft Power", *IDE Discussion Paper* 330, 2012, p. 1.

21 | Cf. Gong Yidong, "Confucius Institute: promoting language, culture and friendliness", *Xinhua*, 19 Sep 2006, <http://www.china-botschaft.de/det/jj/t272620.htm> (accessed 11 May 2015).

22 | Cf. Zhe, n. 20, p. 5 ff.



Confucius Institutes, which are present worldwide, are usually sustained by the Chinese government and foreign organisations, companies or universities, as depicted here. | Source: Scott C. Soderberg, University of Michigan, flickr ©①③③.

The Confucius Institutes are overseen by Hanban (Office of Chinese Language Council International, 汉办), which manages not only the institutes, but is also responsible for Chinese language policy as a whole, including teaching materials, teaching staff, teaching quality, evaluation and the Chinese language proficiency test, HSK. Hanban officially operates as a non-profit organisation, but is under what amounts to close political control and is directed by a committee that represents the State Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, the latter of which takes the leading role. A total of twelve ministries are involved. The partnerships between the Confucius Institutes and local institutions are based on standard agreements between Hanban and the foreign partner, which generally span an initial period of five years.²³

The distribution of financial responsibilities follows a specific principle: in most cases, Hanban provides seed funding for the first five years, including staff salaries and funding for teaching materials. The foreign partner institution pays for the physical facility and bears the administrative and infrastructure costs.²⁴ The financing is thus split in a 1:1 ratio, and Hanban initially bears all costs in developing countries. Funding by Hanban is discontinued

23 | Don Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: The Confucius Institutes", *European Journal of Education* 44, 1/2009, p. 71.

24 | Cf. *ibid.*, p. 71.

after the first five years, and the institutions are then meant to fund themselves through cultural and language services. Although no exact figures are available, the initial financing made by China probably amounts to anywhere from 100,000 to 400,000 U.S. dollars per institute per year.²⁵ With a total budget of around 145 million U.S. dollars per year, these institutes are still considerably less financially equipped than the German Goethe Institutes or the British Council, for example, whose annual budgets amount to 217 million and three billion U.S. dollars, respectively.²⁶

The global demand for Chinese language education undoubtedly continues to increase, with some 40 million people currently learning Chinese. This trend is largely a result of China's growing economic importance.

Programmatically, the Confucius Institutes are comparable to the Spanish Cervantes Institutes, as both place a strong focus on language instruction.²⁷ The global demand for Chinese language education undoubtedly continues to increase, with some 40 million people currently learning Chinese. This trend is largely a result of China's growing economic importance. Furthermore, the institutes offer a range of events on Chinese culture, such as exhibitions, lectures, film screenings, intercultural training sessions, business seminars, tea ceremonies, calligraphy events, tai chi classes and Chinese painting.²⁸ Their main target audience is therefore a rather broad segment of the public that is less familiar with China.

The institutes generally design their programs independently. However, conflicts are known to arise from the Hanban constitution and by-laws. According to these by-laws, institutions must "abide by the laws and regulations of the countries in which they are located, respect local cultural and educational traditions and social customs, and they shall not contravene concerning the laws and regulations of China".²⁹ Falk Hartig notes a "delicate balance" in practice here:³⁰ the balance the institutions must strike between issues that are controversial discussed in the West but sensitive for China is often difficult to achieve.

25 | Cf. Falk Hartig, "Konfuzius-Institute – Stars der chinesischen Kulturdiplomatie", in: Helmut K. Anheier / Bernhard Lorentz (eds.), *Wege der Verständigung. Wie Kulturdiplomatie mehr Vertrauen zwischen China und dem Westen schaffen kann*, Essen, 2012, p. 106.

26 | For the figures cf. *ibid.*, p. 106.

27 | Cf. Zhe, n. 20, p. 18.

28 | Cf. Hartig, n. 25, p. 106; also to the following.

29 | Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institutes, http://english.hanban.org/node_7880.htm (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

30 | Cf. Hartig, n. 25, p. 107.

The China Cultural Centers

The Confucius Institutes undoubtedly form the center of Chinese language and cultural education. However, they are not the first Chinese cultural institutions to be located abroad. Since the end of the 1980s the PRC has maintained official cultural representative offices around the world with its nine China Cultural Centers (*zhongguo wenhua zhongxin*, 中国文化中心). Much like the Confucius Institutes, the Cultural Centers offer extensive programs in language and cultural education, organise exhibitions, readings and performances by artists, writers and theatre groups from China and about China. However, they do not consider themselves to be educational institutions, which are meant to maintain and intensify exchanges between universities. They instead focus primarily on cultural exchange and cooperation with creative artists and the public in their host countries³¹ and are intertwined with the state cultural institutions in China to a greater extent.³² This enables them to feature current domestic programs and exhibitions more quickly abroad. This can and should represent the work and diversity of the contemporary Chinese cultural scene to audiences abroad. This objective is also served by the increasing promotion of the cultural and creative industries in China, providing increasingly attractive resources for the country's external image from and for the contemporary art and cultural scene. A crucial point is that these available cultural "products" can be developed into a credible brand.³³

Already since the end of the 1980s the PRC has maintained official cultural representative offices around the world with its nine China Cultural Centers.

The Cultural Centers also play an important role during visits by government officials. For example, the Cultural Center in Berlin often receives visitors, including the highest-ranking Chinese officials. It is currently unclear how and whether a strict division between the Cultural Centers and the Confucius Institutes can be

31 | Cf. "Cultural Centers and Confucius Institutes help promote understanding between China and the world" (*wenhua zhongxin he kongzi xueyuan you zhu cengjin zhongguo he shijie renmin liaojie*, 文化中心和孔子学院有助增进中国和世界人民了解), 12 Mar 2009, http://china.com.cn/news/2009-03/12/content_17432834.htm (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

32 | There are nine China Cultural Centers in Mauritius, Benin, Cairo, Paris, Malta, Seoul, Berlin, Tokyo and Ulan Bator, cf. <http://berlin.cccweb.org> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

33 | Cf. Zhu Legeng, "Chinas Kultur der Welt präsentieren", 23 Mar 2011, <http://munich.china-consulate.org/ger/whjy/t808944.htm> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

achieved.³⁴ Domestic inter-ministerial competition over responsibilities and resources likely plays a major role here.



Hu Jintao's state visit to the USA in 2011: The former Chinese Head of State complained several times that the Chinese view is not represented enough in the global media landscape. | Source: Gregory Jones, U.S. Army, flickr ©📷.

Chinese media, or how China makes its voice heard internationally

The internationalisation of Chinese media is another key objective of China's cultural diplomacy. Former head of state and Communist Party general secretary Hu Jintao lamented in 2008 that far too little attention was paid to Chinese opinion in the global media landscape, evidenced in the reporting on the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.³⁵ An expansion of China's public diplomacy efforts should therefore particularly enable an expansion into the "international ideological and cultural markets"³⁶ and establish a direct channel of communication with foreign populations. It is on this basis that the Chinese government has invested some 8.7

34 | For example, the Cultural Center in Paris is closely intertwined with the local Confucius Institute.

35 | Cf. Wang Dandan, "Das westliche Meinungsmonopol knacken", *Kulturaustausch. Zeitschrift für internationale Perspektiven*, 3/2012, http://cms.ifa.de/index.php?id=magazin&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=16253 (accessed 28 Jan 2014).

36 | Quoted in Anne Nelson, *China's Grand Strategy for Media? A report to the Center for International Media Assistance*, 22 Oct 2013, p. 17, http://issuu.com/cima-publications/docs/cima-china-anne_nelson/3?e=3797659/5326397 (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

billion U.S. dollars in the *CCTV* television channel, international broadcaster *Radio China International* (CRI) and the English-language newspaper *China Daily* (with several regional editions) since 2009.

CRI covers 43 languages. Plans are in place for the Xinhua news agency to serve some 80,000 customers with 1,000 foreign correspondents in 180 offices by 2020. *China Daily* has published an American edition since 2009, a European edition since 2010 and an African edition since 2012. *CCTV* currently airs in English, French, Spanish and, since 2009, in Arabic and Russian as well. The newly created *CCTV America* format has a main Washington studio, with seven other sub-offices in North America.³⁷ *CCTV* also has seven news offices in South America. It is the only foreign channel in Cuba that provides the population with (official) access to foreign news.³⁸

***China Daily* has published an American edition since 2009, a European edition since 2010 and an African edition since 2012. *CCTV* currently airs in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian.**

China's media involvement in Africa

China's media strategy is particularly well illustrated in Africa. Similar to its major infrastructure projects, China is filling a (media) gap in Africa after many Western news agencies have withdrawn. *CCTV Africa's* main studio has been situated in Nairobi, Kenya since 2012. It also sees itself as a global voice for the African continent, aiming to change its media presence to also highlight potentials and solutions to problems and crises, and not only simply presenting them.³⁹ State news agency *Xinhua* ran more than 20 news offices in Africa in 2012. The government is increasingly establishing investment incentives in Africa for Chinese telecommunications companies, is offering the African media sector technical expertise and has been inviting African journalists to training programs in China since 2004. This intensification of media coverage in Africa is accompanied by China's increasing economic involvement in the continent. As Africa's largest trading partner, the trade volume between China and Africa exceeded 200 billion U.S. dollars for the first time in 2013.⁴⁰

37 | New York, Toronto, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston and Miami. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

38 | Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

39 | Cf. Mark Masaai, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 26.

40 | "Chinas Regierungschef sagt Afrika Partnerschaft auf Augenhöhe zu", Reuters, 4 May 2014, <http://de.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idDEKBN0DK06Z20140504> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).



The headquarters of *CCTV* in Beijing: For several years the largest Chinese TV station has had a new head office and now broadcasts in the six official languages of the United Nations. | Source: Jamie Barras, flickr ©1133.

Along with the quantitative growth of international reporting, the format of programming has also changed. *CCTV* has been able to hire local and foreign journalists and presenters from well-known news agencies and television stations; the number of foreign correspondents has multiplied, and particularly young foreign trained junior journalists are promoted. Unlike in domestic broadcasting, critical interviews, debates between experts and the involvement of public opinion help to strike a new tone at *CCTV News*, the English-language news channel. The channel airs under the banner of “objective reporting”. It seems that foreign programming is subject to a lesser degree of political control than those in China itself. The uprisings in Tahrir Square in Cairo, the student protests in Turkey, secession demands in eastern Ukraine: issues of territorial integrity and the questioning of the social and political order are no longer taboo subjects – as long as they do not concern China directly. So far, China’s international radio and television broadcasting are focusing on economically important markets.

Economic engagement and intensive media relations as well as student exchange programs complement each other here.⁴¹

China is being increasingly heard and is on the way to become an influential competitor in the international media world. However, the lack of real political independence remains a major stumbling block in being able to compete with Western news agencies and global programs, such as *CNN* or *BBC*.

CHINA'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: A STUDY IN CONTRADICTIONS

Numerically speaking, the expansion of foreign cultural policy institutions and programs by the PRC is rather impressive. The country has become a major global player in the field of cultural diplomacy within a short

China has become a major global player in the field of cultural diplomacy within a short period of time. The well-attended language courses at the Confucius Institutes demonstrate that.

period of time. The well-attended language courses at the Confucius Institutes in particular demonstrate that this expansion has been a response to an increasing demand. However, the institutes are sometimes faced with fierce criticism: as being instruments through which China is conveying its communist propaganda to the world⁴² and which are intended to influence research on China worldwide to suit the ruling Communist Party.⁴³ The former criticism can often be regarded as excessive. Yet controversial issues, such as the situation in Tibet and relations with Taiwan, remain ignored by the institutes. Instead, the traditional culture of ancient China is to be used to create a positive image of the modern People's Republic, as the media and creative scene in modern China remains less significant when compared with Japan, Korea or even Taiwan.

If modern cultural diplomacy is intended to be an open and critical dialogue between societies and not an instrument of interest-driven politics of a single state, it must reflect a nation's entire pluralistic spectrum. However, this plurality must be "verified", both institutionally and in terms of content. An image of a nation presented as universal by the government contradicts this. Joseph Nye rightly warns that "information that appears to be propaganda [...] may [...] turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines

41 | Cf. Nelson, n. 36, p. 26.

42 | Cf. Hartig, n. 25, p. 107.

43 | Cf. *ibid.*, p. 108.

a country's reputation for credibility".⁴⁴ China's de facto social pluralism must therefore also be present in its cultural diplomacy. Only then can China counter any suspicion of attempting to generate soft power exclusively through State power.



South African President Jacob Zuma with Chinese Head of State Xi Jinping 2013 in Durban: Chinese cultural diplomacy, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, goes hand in hand with development aid, which is allegedly without preconditions. | Source: Siyabulela Duda, GCIS ZA, flickr ©[1](#)[2](#).

This underlines the domestic dimension of public diplomacy in China. Soft power is used here for more than just foreign policy objectives. It is also intended to foster domestic social cohesion in terms of culture and national identity. In China, broadcasting the country's strengths (zonghe guoli, 综合国力) abroad supports the legitimacy of Communist Party rule. China's current vision of a "harmonious society" was expanded under the new leadership of Xi Jinping to include the "Chinese dream" (zhongguo meng, 中国梦) as new national ideal.

Nevertheless, the PRC's current State-oriented cultural diplomacy strategy has proven quite successful. This is especially true in developing and emerging countries.⁴⁵ This is part of a systematic approach, particularly in Africa, in which foreign and development policy objectives are synchronised, integrated and pursued with "hard" and "soft" measures: (seemingly) unconditional

44 | Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, Jan 2008, pp. 100-101.

45 | Cf. Kurlantzick, n. 10.

development aid, especially in the infrastructure sector and in terms of commodity agreements, is flanked by an increasing presence in the form of cultural projects, Confucius Institutes and Chinese media.⁴⁶ China's media presence is perceived as a counterweight to that of the West in Africa – especially as their common role as developing countries is highlighted.⁴⁷ Tens of thousands of young Africans are now studying at Chinese universities thanks to State scholarships. In doing so, Beijing is deliberately seeking to embrace future young elites from developing countries. Despite all these efforts under the framework of cultural diplomacy, the Chinese engagement is not entirely beyond dispute. For instance, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang was forced to respond to increasing criticism from Africa shortly before starting a multi-day trip to Africa in early May 2014. In this context he stated that China “will not pursue a colonialist path”.⁴⁸

Despite considerable efforts financially and personnel-wise, the impact of China's cultural diplomacy will also in the future reach limits. The exclusive character of its own culture will likely be an obstacle to a cultural dialogue held on an “equal footing”. The high degree of attractiveness and connectivity of Western

The exclusive character of China's own culture will likely be an obstacle to a cultural dialogue held on an “equal footing”. The high degree of connectivity of Western culture is not least originating from its openness to foreign cultural influences.

culture, is not least originating from its openness to foreign cultural influences, but also by its claim to represent universal values. China's cultural diplomacy currently aims to essentially cushion global concerns and fears regarding the rise of China. In fact, worldwide public opinion polls show a mixed picture: although soft power is difficult to measure directly, various investigations point to regionally divergent views on the general issue of the positive influence of a country. The Pew Global Attitudes Project shows a significant gap between a largely positive public image of China in Africa and Latin America and a significantly more negative image in

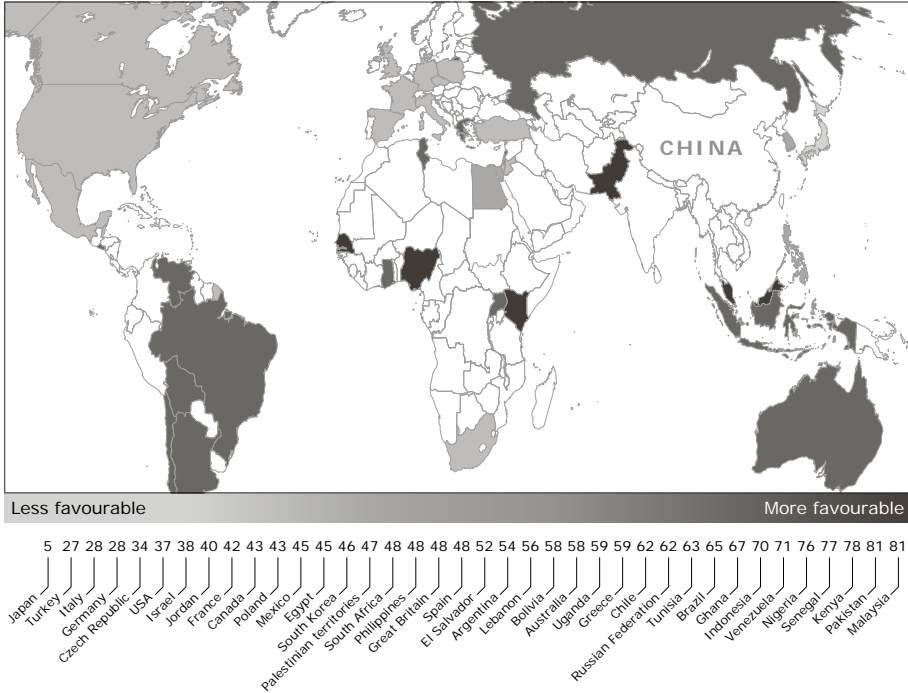
46 | Cf. *BBC Online*, “Ying mei: Zhongguo dui Feizhou meili waijiao bingfei zhi wei ziyuan” (English media: China's charm diplomacy towards Africa is not just about resources), 30 Apr 2013, http://bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/pressreview/2013/04/130430_press_china_africa.shtml (accessed 14 Apr 2015); cf. Markus M. Haefliger, “Chinas Soft Power in Afrika”, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 4 Jan 2013, <http://www.nzz.ch/aktuell/international/uebersicht/peking-bringt-den-afrikanern-chinesische-kultur-bei-1.17919726> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

47 | Cf. *BBC Online*, n. 46.

48 | “Chinas Regierungschef sagt Afrika Partnerschaft auf Augenhöhe zu”, Reuters, 4 May 2014, <http://de.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idDEKBN0DK06Z20140504> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

Western countries.⁴⁹ China's growing geopolitical importance and its intense cultural relations efforts have therefore not yet resulted in a distinctly positive image of the country to the desired extent.

Fig. 1
International Image of China
Per cent of those who have a favourable view of China



Source: Own illustration based on: Pew Research Center, n. 49.

Europe should take this development seriously and scrutinise its own instruments of cultural diplomacy critically. We cannot afford that a continent like Africa is increasingly turning away from Europe. At the same time, however, Europe must actively represent fundamental values towards China. An appropriate cultural diplomacy strategy is a key resource to this end.

49 | Cf. Pew Research Center, "Global Image of the United States and China", 18 Jul 2013, <http://pewglobal.org/2013/07/18/global-image-of-the-united-states-and-china> (accessed 14 Apr 2015).

COOPERATION AMONG ANTAGONISTS

THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GULF STATES AND IRAN

Gidon Windecker / Peter Sendrowicz

Have there been indicators of efforts to normalise Iranian-Saudi relations? Considering decades of rivalry for dominance in the Middle East, the fact that Iranian Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif travelled to Riyadh on 24 January 2015 to pay his respects following the death of Saudi King Abdullah certainly supported this idea. Particularly as Iran's President Rouhani had explicitly stressed the need for improving relations with all the Gulf states after he took office in August 2013.¹ But distrust on the part of the Gulf monarchies, originally triggered by the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, is deeply engrained. The declared intention to export the revolution beyond the Iranian borders prompted the Gulf states to establish the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981 in order to counter the threat of a destabilisation of their monarchies. The subsequent decades were consequently characterised by mutual suspicion. Iran made repeated attempts to interfere in the internal affairs in the Gulf, for instance in connection with the attempted coup in Bahrain in 1981 and with the provision of support to the Shia minority in the majority Sunni Saudi Arabia. But the Gulf states were also disconcerted by Iran's various efforts to subvert the status quo in places like Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, and not least in Yemen.

The preliminary agreement in the nuclear dispute was concluded in Geneva in November 2013 between the E3+3 (Germany, France, the UK, China, Russia and the USA) and Iran, following mediation conducted in large part by Oman. This agreement has also provided an opportunity for the GCC and the Islamic Republic to revive their relationship. It has since been followed by successful negotiations on a framework for a nuclear deal held in Lausanne in early



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1 | Cf. Abdullah Hamidaddin, "A window for Iranian-Gulf relations?", *Al Arabiya News*, 20 Sep 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2013/09/20> (accessed 20 Apr 2015).

April of this year. The two sides now have to review the status quo, which has persisted for over three decades. This is no easy challenge in view of the very different lines the individual Gulf states have been pursuing with respect to Iran over the last thirty years. While Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been most critical of Iran, pragmatic relations have developed with Oman, Qatar and Kuwait.

The time has come for the GCC to devise a joint foreign policy line for dealing with Iran in order to prevent a further split between the GCC members. No doubt the latter would be in Iran's continuing interest as it might help to distance the smaller Gulf states from Saudi Arabia. However, Iran also appears to have realised over time that engaging in dialogue with Saudi Arabia is essential, particularly in view of the threat posed by the self-styled Islamic State (IS). This prompted the Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif to meet his Saudi counterpart Saud bin Faisal on the occasion of the UN General Assembly in September 2014 after years had gone by without any direct talks being held at such a high level.²



Given current developments in the nuclear dispute and threats such as the organisation IS, the 1981 founded Gulf Cooperation Council has to reconsider its policy towards Iran. | Source: Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo, U.S. DoD, flickr .

2 | Cf. "Saudi, Iran foreign ministers meet in New York", *Al Arabiya News*, 22 Sep 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/09/22/Saudi-Iran-foreign-ministers-meet-in-New-York> (accessed 20 Apr 2015).

This article on the relationships between the Gulf states and Iran is therefore intended to illustrate where the historical, geopolitical and ideological rifts lie between the two poles in the Gulf region and that these do not preclude individual Gulf states engaging with Iran for reasons of their own.

SHADOW OVER THE GULF: THE RIVALRY BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN

With Saudi Arabia being the political and ideological power center of the Arabian Gulf states, the ructions in the Saudi-Iranian relationship over the last three decades have inevitably also affected the relationships of Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman with the Islamic Republic. This must be borne in mind when considering the fundamental antagonism in the Gulf region, which serves as a starting point for further analysis. After all, the original purpose of the GCC was to act as a joint bulwark against the Iranian threat.

While there had been no deep friendship between Saudi Arabia and Iran even before 1979, a good working relationship was in both their interests, particularly against the backdrop of the rising power of the Baathist

Due to Iran's aggressive foreign policy following the Islamic Revolution, incidents involving Iran and the Gulf states proliferated, which placed a lasting strain on relations.

Iraq, which both states viewed with distrust. Within U.S. President Nixon's "Twin Pillar" strategy, Saudi Arabia and Iran also figured as joint guarantors of stability in the Gulf after the withdrawal of the British in 1971.³ Following the Islamic Revolution, Iranian foreign policy became characterised by the aggressive ambition to take the revolutionary ideology beyond the national borders, which represented a threat to the status quo in the Gulf. Incidents involving Iran and the Gulf states proliferated, which placed a lasting strain on relations. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980 to 1988), the oil monarchies in the Gulf supported Iraq, first and foremost Saudi Arabia, with only the Sultanate of Oman remaining neutral.⁴ Ever since, there has been a battle for supremacy in the region between Saudi Arabia, claiming to act as the guardian of the holy sites of Mecca and Medina as well as representing Sunni interests, on the one hand and Iran, claiming to defend Shia interests on

3 | Cf. F. Gregory Gause III, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 16-25.

4 | Cf. Jean-Christophe Victor, "Islam: Der Konflikt zwischen Sunniten und Schiiten", in: "Mit offenen Karten", ARTE, via YouTube, 11:50, 28 Jan 2015, <http://youtu.be/Knm2qKZU-84> (accessed 20 Apr 2015).

the other. However, the battle is, in fact, predominantly a political rather than a religious one.

In this regard, the 1987 Mecca massacre has to be seen from a political perspective. This incident involved bloody clashes between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi security forces in front of the Grand Mosque, which left 402 people dead, 275 of them Iranian pilgrims.⁵ Mutual assignments of blame further escalated the situation, culminating in the storming of the Saudi embassy, the death of a Saudi diplomat and documents being set alight in the Kuwaiti embassy in Tehran. In response, King Fahd broke off diplomatic relations with Iran and imposed a visa ban on Iranian haj pilgrims.⁶ While the Shia opposition movement Organization for the Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula, which had the support of the Iranian leadership elite, was a thorn in the side of Saudi Arabia in the 1980s, it was Hezbollah Al-Hejaz that posed a threat of overthrow in the 1990s. This militant Shia organisation,

Recurring territorial disputes between Iran and the UAE over islands in the eastern Gulf provided further conflict potential in the Iran-GCC relationship.

which operated in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, pursued a pro-Iranian course and is held responsible for the attack on the Khobar Towers in 1996 in the Saudi city of Dhahran.⁷

Recurring territorial disputes between Iran and the UAE over the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs located in the eastern Gulf provided further conflict potential in the Iran-GCC relationship, at the latest by 1992, which saw the annexation of the islands by Iran and the expulsion of UAE citizens.⁸

During the presidencies of Rafsanjani (1989 to 1997) and particularly Khatami (1997 to 2005), Iranian-Saudi relations improved somewhat and made for a more relaxed atmosphere in the Gulf region, even though the distrust on the part of the Arabian monarchs was not dispelled. This was because they realised "the major decisions on Iranian security policies were taken not by the

5 | Cf. Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia*, London, 1998, p. 471.

6 | Cf. Amin Khorami, "Iran, Saudi Arabia, Mid-East arch-rivals find common ground on IS", *Middle East Eye*, 7 Oct 2014, <http://middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/iran-saudi-arabia-mid-east-arch-rivals-find-common-ground-1199136280> (accessed 20 Apr 2015).

7 | Cf. Toby Matthiesen, "Hizbullah al-Hijaz: A History of The Most Radical Saudi Shi'an Opposition Group", *The Middle East Journal* 64 2, 2010, pp. 179-197.

8 | Cf. Forough Hossein Pour, "Eine Insel mit zwei Erben", *zenith*, 24 Apr 2012, <http://zenithonline.de/deutsch/politik/a/artikel/eine-insel-mit-zwei-erben-002833> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

President, but by the religious leader Khamenei⁹. Visits by members of the Saudi and Iranian leaderships to one another's country were of historic significance. Then Crown Prince Abdullah travelled to Tehran in December 1997 as the highest-ranking Saudi since the Islamic Revolution. Two years later, Khatami was the first Iranian president since the 1979 events to set off on a visit to Saudi Arabia.¹⁰

However, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003 upset the balance of power in the Gulf, which affected the Saudi-Iranian relationship. The era of détente came to an end, in part due to the fact that U.S. military presence stirred up the competition between the two rivals for the leadership role in the Middle East. The Iranians considered the withdrawal of all foreign, i.e. American, troops from the region the main condition for security and stability in the Gulf. The Gulf states, on the other hand, considered the American military presence an indispensable shield against potential encroachments by the powerful neighbour and therefore intrinsically linked to their own security.¹¹ To the Saudis, it was consequently inconceivable "for

[their country as] an ally of the United States to be close to its rivals"¹². Iran's regional ambitions "consequently threatened Saudi security, creating a vicious circle."¹³ Saudi Arabia's concerns about a Shia-dominated government in Baghdad as an Iranian pup-

Arabia's concerns about a Shia-dominated government in Baghdad resulted in the Wahhabi kingdom pursuing a more aggressive anti-Iranian course following the years of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

pet resulted in the Wahhabi kingdom pursuing a more aggressive anti-Iranian course over the following years. Further incentive for this course was provided by reports about an Iranian nuclear program, which emerged in 2002. Rather than the possibility of a nuclear attack on the Gulf states by Iran, Saudi Arabia's concerns centered on the fear that the Islamic Republic would try to undermine Gulf security by proxy wars, immune to outside pressure under a nuclear umbrella.¹⁴ In response, the Gulf states sought to

9 | Guido Steinberg/Nils Woermer, "Exploring Iran & Saudi Arabia's Interests in Afghanistan & Pakistan: Stakeholders or Spoilers – A Zero Sum Game? Part 1: Saudi Arabia", *CIDOB Policy Research Paper*, Apr 2013, p. 8, http://swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/fachpublikationen/Steinberg_Woermer_SaudiArabia_Interest_April2013.pdf (accessed 15 May 2015).

10 | Cf. "Iran and Saudi leaders in key talks", *almotamar.net*, 4 Mar 2007, <http://almotamar.net/en/2121.htm> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

11 | Cf. Christin Marschall, *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami*, New York, 2003.

12 | Hamidaddin, n. 1.

13 | Ibid.

14 | Cf. Steinberg/Woermer, n. 9, p. 8.

strengthen their collaboration through the West, for instance with the 2004 Istanbul Cooperation Initiative with the NATO.¹⁵

The election of Ahmadinejad to president and the accession of King Abdullah in Saudi Arabia in August 2005 did not bring about a change in the situation. On the contrary: “[...] the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran was galling; with his poisonous rhetoric, he constantly reminded his neighbors of Iran’s hegemonic goals.”¹⁶ That this was the case was brought home once again by Ahmadinejad’s controversial visit to the disputed

Fears of the Shia insurrection spilling over were particularly strong in the Gulf states that are home to large numbers of Shia: 30 per cent in Kuwait, 15 per cent in den UAE and ten per cent in Saudi Arabia.

island of Abu Musa. The affront the Iranian president caused was all the more explosive as the GCC was already holding the Islamic Republic responsible for inciting the majority Shia population of Bahrain against the Sunni monarchy since protests had broken out in

2011. Shia make up more than half of the Bahraini population, and there are undoubtedly some sympathisers with the ideology of the Islamic Revolution among them.¹⁷ Fears of the Shia insurrection spilling over were particularly strong in the Gulf states that are home to large numbers of Shia: 30 per cent in Kuwait, 15 per cent in den UAE and ten per cent in Saudi Arabia.

Disregarding occasional cyber-attacks on the oil producer Aramco or on websites of the Saudi government,¹⁸ the Cold War between Iran and Saudi Arabia is played out above all in a number of proxy wars in the Middle East. Be it in Lebanon, where the Islamic Republic funds the Shia Hezbollah militia and where Saudi Arabia provides generous funding for military hardware to the Lebanese army;¹⁹ in the battle for influence in crisis-riven Iraq; and in Syria, home to the main bone of contention between Saudi Arabia and

15 | The signatories to the agreement includes the countries of Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE. Cf. Pierre Pierre Razoux, “What future for NATO’s Istanbul Cooperation Initiative?”, *NATO Research Paper*, Jan 2010, http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/112378/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/17c7202f-a80a-40cc-9a61-b20d8bf156e2/en/rp_55en.pdf (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

16 | Yoel Guzansky/Sigurd Neubauer, “Saudi Arabia and Iran’s Uneasy Friendship”, *Foreign Affairs*, 28 Jan 2015, <http://foreignaffairs.com/articles/142787/yoel-guzansky-and-sigurd-neubauer/saudi-arabia-and-irans-uneasy-friendship> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

17 | Cf. Thomas Birringer, “Four Scenarios and no Recourse? Saudi Arabia and Iran’s Nuclear Program”, *KAS International Reports*, 11/2010, pp. 7-22, <http://kas.de/wf/en/33.21074> (accessed 12 May 2015).

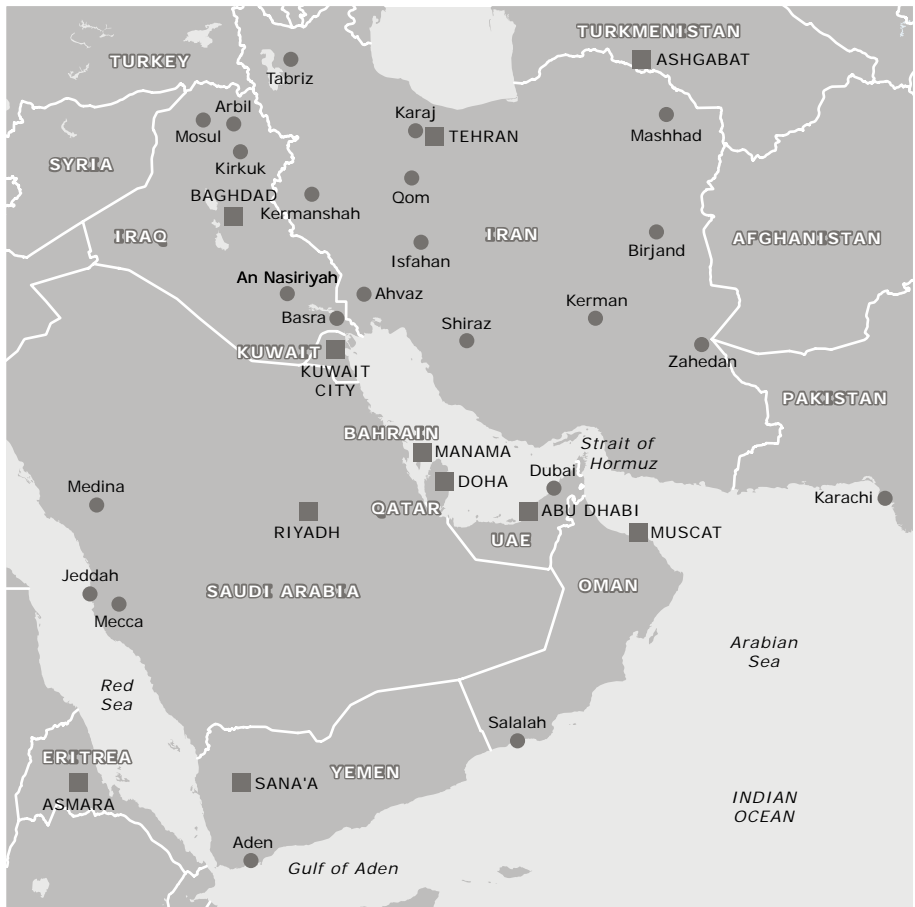
18 | Cf. Guzansky/Neubauer, n. 16.

19 | Cf. Rainer Hermann, “Frankreich und Saudi-Arabien rüsten Libanons Armee auf”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30 Dec 2013, <http://faz.net/-1qk-7kw1t> (accessed 12 May 2015).

Iran: Bashar Al Assad, whom Iran continues to support and whom Saudi Arabia wishes to see ousted. This is one point on which Saudi Arabia and Qatar agree. And not least in the Yemeni civil war, where Shia Houthi rebels, allegedly with Iranian support, are fighting against the Sunni government, which, for its part, is supported by a Saudi-led military coalition of Arab states. While Saudi Arabia may have the political say among the Gulf states and is the most important player influencing the antagonism in the Gulf, the Kingdom has so far not been able to create a coherent anti-Iranian front among the Gulf states.

Fig. 1

Iran and its Arab Neighbours



Source: Revised illustration based on mapz.com, Data OpenStreetMap (ODbL).

SPECIFIC INTERESTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL GULF STATES

While the Saudi Kingdom likes to give the West in particular the impression that the countries of the GCC stand shoulder to shoulder – specifically with respect to the Islamic Republic – this is far from being the case. The specific interests and national agendas of the smaller Gulf states are too diverse, especially where economic matters are concerned, for them to accept Saudi Arabia's diktats. Apart from Bahrain, all the smaller Gulf states have expanded their functional relations with Iran on a pragmatic basis. This is due in no small part to the geopolitical dialectic they are exposed to. The tension caused by simultaneously feeling distrust of and attraction to Tehran is complemented by a dichotomy of loyalty and distance towards Riyadh. The latter caused by the continuous efforts of the Saudi royal dynasty to not only strengthen but expand its hegemony over the region – to which the monarchs of the smaller states were vehemently opposed.

The Kingdom of Bahrain

Of all the Gulf states, the Bahraini dynasty is closest to the allied ruling family in Riyadh. The geographic location of what is by far the smallest of all the Gulf states can be considered symbolic of its geopolitical role. The kingdom lies to the immediate east of Saudi Arabia, opposite Iran. Since 1986, the King Fahd Crossway has connected the island state to the Saudi mainland via a 25-kilometer bridge.

Although the recurring protests of the last few decades were predominantly social and political in nature, the conflict has increasingly developed religious overtones.

Bahrain is ruled by the Sunni Khalifa family, while approx. 60 per cent of its indigenous population is Shia.²⁰ Although the recurring protests of the last few decades were pre-

dominantly social and political in nature, the conflict has increasingly developed religious overtones, strengthening fears particularly in conservative royal circles of Iran that gain influence by inciting Shia opposition activists. Things came to a head on 17 February 2011, when security forces quashed protests in Pearl Square, which had the effect of radicalising the Shia opposition, already incited by Iranian propaganda. After further bloody confrontations, Saudi Arabia and the UAE dispatched some 1,500

20 | Some sources even mention up to 70 per cent. Cf. David D. Kirkpatrick, "Power Struggles in the Middle East Exploit Islam's Ancient Sectarian Rift", *The New York Times*, 5 Jul 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1zguEXA> (accessed 12 May 2015).

soldiers and police to the island in the frame of Peninsula Shield Force.²¹ Since then, there have been indications and reports of Tehran not only providing ideological but also financial and logistical support to the Shia opposition on the island.²²

United Arab Emirates

Despite being one of Saudi Arabia's closer allies, the UAE's relationship with Iran is totally different to Bahrain's. In terms of political differences, the previously mentioned territorial conflict concerning the three islands in particular plays a symbolic role.

With respect to a nuclear dispute and a potential military campaign against the ayatollah regime discussed in 2010, UAE government representatives gave an unequivocal answer when asked about their support: "We cannot live with a nuclear Iran."²³ That said, the seven emirates are by no means entirely united in their positions. While it is the territorial and geopolitical conflict dictating the stance taken in the capital Abu Dhabi and in the Emirate of Sharjah, which claims sovereignty over the disputed islands, the neighbour Dubai is more focused on the island of Abu Musa, and the emirate maintains close, historically evolved trade relations with the Islamic Republic. Nor should the fact be ignored that a considerable number of its citizens are of Iranian extraction, Iranian-Arab or Iranian citizens.²⁴ Some ten per cent of Dubai's inhabitants are ethnic Persians. There are over eight thousand Iranian companies and over one thousand trading firms operating in the

21 | The Peninsula Shield Force is a joint intervention force, which was set up in 1982 by the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the purpose of mutual military assistance in the event of a state of defence. With an original troop strength of 10,000 soldiers, this has now increased to over 40,000, with plans to increase it further to up to 100,000 under a joint command structure. Cf. Michael Rubin, "Is the Bahrain Uprising Sponsored by Iran?", *Commentary*, 2 Feb 2012, <https://commentarymagazine.com/2012/02/02/bahrain-uprising-iran> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

22 | Cf. "Opposition Figure: Bahrain's Uprising Inspired by Islamic Revolution", ABNA, 10 Feb 2015, <http://abna24.com/english/service/bahrain/archive/2015/02/10/670346/story.html> (accessed 23 Apr 2015); Jonathan Spyer, "Iran's silent war in the Gulf", *The Jerusalem Post*, 6 Apr 2013, <http://jpost.com/Features/Front-Lines/Irans-silent-war-in-the-Gulf-308735> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

23 | Eli Lake, "U.A.E. diplomat mulls hit on Iran's nukes", *The Washington Times*, 6 Jul 2010, <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jul/6/uae-ambassador-endorses-bombing-irans-nuclear-prog> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

24 | Cf. "Iranian expats in the UAE see polls as pointless exercise", *Gulf News*, 1 Mar 2012, <http://gulfnews.com/1.988403> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

emirate, generating a trading volume of approximately ten billion U.S. dollars in 2009.²⁵ Of course Abu Dhabi is also aware of these huge sums and tries to tread a careful path in its dealings with its powerful neighbour. On the one hand, the capital frequently calls upon Dubai – under pressure from the U.S. – not to undermine the U.S.-led sanctions against Iran through trade and smuggling. On the other hand, Abu Dhabi tries to avoid additional confrontation with the Islamic Republic, most recently indicated by the fact that the list of designated terror organisations published in November 2014 did not include any organisations with close ties to Iran, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah.²⁶

Kuwait

As the third smallest Gulf state, Kuwait is in the crossfire of its two powerful neighbours. With a 30 per cent Shia minority among the population, the Sunni Al Sabah ruling family depends on good relations with both sides, even though, unlike the situation in Bahrain, most of the Shia represent wealthy, unpolitical trading families, who are close to the ruling dynasty. Political opposition and potential for sectarian tensions emanate above all from the Salafists, who are mostly of Saudi extraction, and from Muslim Brothers. To guard against sectarian conflict, it is therefore in Kuwait's interest to avoid

To guard against sectarian conflict, it is in Kuwait's interest to avoid arousing displeasure in Tehran and among its own Shia population, despite its relative closeness to Saudi Arabia.

arousing displeasure in Tehran and among its own Shia population, despite its relative closeness to Saudi Arabia. Tensions increased during the period of protests in Bahrain in 2011, when Kuwait was asked to dispatch troops to the neighbouring country as part of the Peninsula Shield Force. Like its allied dynasty in Riyadh, the rulers feared that democratic concessions in Bahrain would increase pressure for reform in their own country as well. The Sabah family therefore echoed the Saudi line that Iran was behind the protests. The situation escalated when Kuwait expelled three Iranian diplomats for alleged espionage in March 2011 and recalled its ambassador from Tehran.²⁷ Nevertheless, it is in Kuwait's interest not to test its relations with its

25 | Cf. Simeon Kerr, "Dubai eager to capitalize on Iran opening", *The Financial Times*, 21 Jan 2014, <http://ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/4acb7a40-7f6b-11e3-b6a7-00144feabdc0.html> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

26 | Cf. Awad Mustafa, "Questions, Praise for UAE's Terrorist List", *Defense News*, 20 Nov 2014, <http://archive.defensenews.com/article/20141120/DEFREG04/311200045> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

27 | Cf. "Iran and Saudi Arabia Spar over GCC Troops in Bahrain", *MEPC Middle East in Focus*, 5 Apr 2011, <http://mepc.org/articles-commentary/commentary-0> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

large neighbour unnecessarily as it continues to be closely linked to Iran economically. Plans for a gas deal between the two states consequently remained unaffected.²⁸

Qatar

The ambitious micro-state with the highest per capita income worldwide has pursued its own strategy within the web of regional diplomacy for a long time. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has always sought ways and means to keep his two extremely powerful neighbours out of his backyard. For this purpose, he developed a number of soft power tools to make the emirate an essential cog within the international machine and thereby secure its independence. The U.S. Al Udeid Air Base established the facts on the ground. Qatar thus increasingly went its own paradoxical way in the 2000s, much to Saudi Arabia's annoyance. It was the only Gulf state to allow Israel to operate a trading agency in Doha for some time, yet it continued to support Hamas and Hezbollah. In 2007, Qatar even invited Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad to a GCC summit without informing the other rulers.²⁹



The U.S. military base Al Udeid in Qatar established the facts on the ground for the micro-state to pursue its own interests in the region. | Source: instapinch, flickr ©.

28 | Cf. Andrew Hammond, "The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait: The Gulf front weakens", *ECFR Gulf Analysis*, Dec 2014, p. 15.

29 | Ibid.

While Qatar is allied with Saudi Arabia formally through the GCC alliance as well as through its Wahhabi tradition, it too is tied to Iran through economic interests. After all, the emirate's immense wealth depends to a large extent on the huge North Dome Field, one of the world's largest gas fields, which it shares with Iran. Doha has demonstrated its independence further by supporting factions fighting Iran's ally Assad in Syria.³⁰



President Hasan Rouhani (l.), here together with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (r.), with Sultan Qaboos (m.): Oman has historically close ties with Iran and is developing increasingly into an intermediary between the GCC and Iran. | Source: © AP Photo, picture alliance.

The Sultanate of Oman

Traditionally, Oman has maintained the historically closest links to Iran among the Gulf states. As far back as 1973, Reza Shah Pahlavi had supported the young Sultan Qaboos bin Said in his efforts to end the Dhofar Rebellion. But even after the Islamic Revolution, the Sultanate did not see any reason to break off the beneficial relations. After all, the two countries share sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, through which 17 billion barrels of oil (20 per cent of global volume) are transported every day.

30 | Cf. Gidon Windecker/Peter Sendrowicz, "Qatar between Marketing and Realpolitik – A Smart Business Model for a Microstate?", *KAS International Reports*, 01/2014, pp. 83-102, <http://kas.de/wf/en/33.36582> (accessed 12 May 2015).

Oman is unique within the region in terms of its demography, with a majority of close to 75 per cent Ibadis and small Sunni and Shia minorities. Against this backdrop, the Sultanate attempts to guard against Wahhabi ideology from Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it pursues a strategy of securing its position between the two major powers through the presence of U.S. troops. The country has made its air bases and sea ports available for use by U.S. units from as far back as the 1980s.

As regards the dispute over Iran's nuclear program, Muscat takes a stance that could not be diametrically more opposed to that of Riyadh or Abu Dhabi. Yusuf bin Alawi, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, is said to have stated that a "nuclear-armed Iran would not constitute a destabilising force for the region".³¹ Similar to Dubai, Oman has also allegedly profited from the U.S.-imposed sanctions against Iran by turning a blind eye to smuggling.³² The two states are also linked closely by legitimate economic ties. Iran imported close to 441 million U.S. dollars' worth of goods from Oman, while the Sultanate is highly dependent on Iranian gas deliveries for its energy supply.³³

This high level of independence causes frequent annoyance in Riyadh. At the same time, the Sultanate has proved to be a reliable mediator between various conflicting parties. Beginning with the negotiations between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s, Muscat has acted as a fair mediator in several conflicts with the Islamic Republic. Most recently, Oman demonstrated its good connections with Tehran in the dispute over the Iranian nuclear program, repeatedly performing the role of mediator between the E3+3 and the Islamic Republic. Ever since the beginning of the negotiations, Muscat has hosted clandestine talks between U.S. and Iranian representatives, and in November 2014, the first official high-ranking consultations between the conflicting parties also significantly took place in the Omani capital. Omani

Starting with the negotiations between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s, Muscat has acted as a fair mediator in several conflicts with the Islamic Republic.

31 | Giorgio Cafiero, "Can Oman and Iran's 'Special' Relationship Last?", *The Huffington Post*, 5 Sep 2014, <http://huff.to/1HgnWXz> (accessed 12 May 2015).

32 | Cf. Juliane von Mittelstaedt, "Smuggler's Paradise: Iran Sanctions Good Business in Tiny Omani Port", *Spiegel Online*, 20 Jan 2012, <http://spiegel.de/international/world/a-810165.html> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

33 | Cf. "Iran, Oman explore new avenues for increasing trade", *Customs Today*, 6 Jan 2015, <http://customstoday.com.pk/iran-oman-explore-new-avenues-for-increasing-trade-ties> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

mediators also played an essential role in ensuring the success of the mediating efforts which led to the Geneva interim agreement in November 2013.³⁴

ROUHANI'S CHARM OFFENSIVE – ARAB-IRANIAN RAPPROCHEMENT OR GCC SPLIT?

As a matter of fact, Rouhani's election in June 2013 and the efforts made in Muscat towards an agreement between Iran and the E3+3 in the nuclear dispute have left their mark on the Gulf states and have caused a decided shift in Arab-Iranian relations. The ground-breaking developments since the

In 2013, the Gulf states reacted with unease to the "Phone Call That Shook the Middle East" between Obama and Rouhani. To them, it appeared that their fears were being realised.

end of 2013 can therefore serve as the basis for further analysis of the Iran-GCC relationship. In September 2013, the Gulf states reacted with unease to the "Phone Call That Shook the Middle East"³⁵ between Obama and Rouhani. To them, it appeared that their fears, which analysts had first observed back in 2010, were being realised: to prevent Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon, the West would concede the Iranian regime greater influence in the region. "The country's [Saudi Arabia's] importance would be weakened proportionately to any increase in Iran's status [...]. The smaller Gulf States in particular fear becoming objects of a compromise, through which increased external power will be exercised."³⁶ The Gulf states, which felt their hand was being forced, were even more alarmed by the Geneva interim agreement of November 2013, which buoyed Iran politically. For this reason, the GCC members arranged a summit meeting in Kuwait in December 2013 to express their discontent about the fact that they had been excluded from the negotiations of the E3+3 and Iran. However, Saudi Arabia's goal of developing the GCC beyond mere cooperation into a political union as a sign of strength against Iran amounted to nothing because of Oman's threat that it would then leave the GCC.³⁷ The latest framework

34 | Cf. Marc Valeri, "Oman's mediatory efforts in regional crises", *NOREF Expert Analysis*, Mar 2014, http://peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/c3f2474284d7aaeadeb5a8429ef64375.pdf (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

35 | Kirk H. Sowell, "Saudi Arabia and Iran: Rouhani fades as Riyadh focuses on containment", *European Council on Foreign Relations Gulf Analysis*, 11 Dec 2014, http://ecfr.eu/publications/summary/post_nuclear_the_future_for_iran_in_its_neighbourhood325 (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

36 | Birringer, n. 17, p. 17.

37 | Cf. Kersten Knipp, "Saudi-Arabiens einsamer Weg", *Deutsche Welle*, 12 Dec 2013, <http://dw.de/p/1AY4o> (accessed 12 May 2015).

agreement announced in Lausanne created further frictions in the region with Saudi Arabia announcing its own nuclear aspirations.³⁸

In view of Oman's special relationship with Iran as well as a fundamental scepticism on the part of Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE towards a Saudi predominance in such a political union, the diversity in the relationships between the Gulf states and Iran is becoming more pronounced in these times of Western-Iranian rapprochement. This poses great challenges to the disunited GCC in its dealings as a regional organisation. Despite the lingering distrust, the U.S.-Iranian rapprochement offers the smaller Gulf monarchies, which are not hostile to Iran in any case, an opportunity to improve their own relations with the Islamic Republic. The thaw in the Western-Iranian nuclear dispute has been conducive to their endeavours in this direction in recent times. Without appearing to stab the USA, their protecting power, in the back, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman have since benefited from the Geneva Plan of Action as a tacit go-ahead for new initiatives to cooperate with Iran. "But the Gulf states know they cannot fully normalise with Iran unless the United States also takes steps towards such normalisation. Thus, such news should sound favourable in the ears of Gulf players. They should welcome such a step and not consider it a threat."³⁹

Even though Rouhani's reconciliatory discourse and expressions of sympathy since he took office were addressed at all six Gulf states, one cannot dismiss the impression that where Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are concerned, Iran's charm offensive has so far been limited to lip service, a few interviews placed strategically in Gulf media and some courtesy visits. This could well be due to cold calculation on the part of Iran. Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar and Oman, on the other hand, are experiencing a new era of political, economic and cultural cooperation with Iran following intensive shuttle diplomacy over the last eighteen months. Kuwait, for instance, is planning to import natural gas from Iran. A deal to that effect was recently signed during the visit of Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed in Tehran in June 2014.⁴⁰ The UAE and Iran set up the

38 | Cf. "Arabia Keeps Hinting It Would Go Nuclear if Iran Does", *Newsweek*, 2 Apr 2015, <http://newsweek.com/saudi-arabia-keeps-hinting-it-would-go-nuclear-if-iran-does-319131> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

39 | Hamidaddin, n. 1.

40 | Cf. Anthony Dipaola, "Kuwait Wants to Buy Iran Gas as Energy Ties Trump Nuclear Fears", *Bloomberg Business*, 2 Jun 2014, <http://bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-06-02/kuwait-wants-to-buy-iran-gas-as-energy-ties-trump-nuclear-fears> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

Joint High Commission in the presence of their respective Foreign Ministers in April 2014, which envisages regular cross-departmental consultations at ministerial level. At one of these meetings, a decision was made to set up an Emirati-Iranian economic council and found a joint association of chambers of commerce and industry.⁴¹ Qatar and Iran established a Joint Political Committee headed by their Deputy Foreign Ministers, which has been meeting for political consultations every three months since March 2014.⁴² Furthermore, Iran's Justice Minister Mostafa Pourmohammadi and the Chairman of the Qatar Supreme Judiciary Council, Masoud Al Amri, signed an agreement on the extradition of Iranian prisoners to the Islamic Republic.⁴³ On the occasion of Rouhani's visit to Muscat in March 2014, Oman concluded an agreement with Iran to import 20 million cubic metres of Iranian natural gas per day. There are also plans to build a 260 kilometer pipeline between the two states for this purpose.⁴⁴ Following the meeting with Sultan Qaboos, Iranian-Omani naval exercises were held.⁴⁵

To Iran, the smaller Gulf emirates and the Sultanate of Oman do not represent a serious security threat, which is another reason for Iran to focus on them.

Iran's strategy, which is likely to lie behind this charm offensive, can be decoded as follows: Iran identifies and utilises disagreements between the GCC member states to sow discord between them and thereby prevent Saudi Arabia from uniting them under its leadership. Iran is attempting to thereby isolate Saudi Arabia politically. To Iran, the smaller Gulf emirates and the Sultanate of Oman do not represent a serious security threat, which is another reason for Iran to focus on them. And they are, in fact, responding to Iran's advances for a variety of reasons, which could provoke a split in the GCC. The GCC is coming under strain from the diverging interests of the Gulf states in view of

- 41 | Cf. "Abdullah bin Zayed and Iranian Foreign Minister discuss ties of cooperation and friendship", *UAE interact*, 16 Apr 2014, <http://uaeinteract.com/docs/Abdullah-bin-Zayed-and-Iranian-Foreign-Minister-discuss-ties-of-cooperation-and-friendship/61159.htm> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).
- 42 | Cf. "Iran – Qatar first ever joint political committee convenes", IRNA, 15 Mar 2014, <http://irna.ir/en/News/2650757/Politic> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).
- 43 | Cf. "Iran, Qatar Ink Several Judicial Agreements", *High Council for Human Rights*, 24 Nov 2014, <http://en.humanrights-iran.ir/news-22487.aspx> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).
- 44 | Cf. Ankit Panda, "India, Iran and Oman Open Talks On Deep Sea Gas Pipeline", *The Diplomat*, 1 Mar 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/india-iran-and-oman-open-talks-on-deep-sea-gas-pipeline> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).
- 45 | Cf. "Iran and Oman hold joint naval exercises", *Middle East Eye*, 8 Apr 2014, <http://middleeasteye.net/news/iran-and-oman-hold-joint-naval-exercises-493167941> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

Iran's new willingness to enter into dialogue and its increased respectability. All the more reason for the GCC to make efforts to create a common line based on compromise in its dealings with the Islamic Republic, assuming the GCC states "want to prevent the Council from becoming a dysfunctional organisation".⁴⁶



In contrast to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (I.), Iran's current President, Hassan Rouhani, strives for a new era in GCC-Iranian relations – through new forms of cooperation and a softer tone. | Source: © Parspix, abaca, picture alliance.

THE ISLAMIC THREAT: CATALYST FOR A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP?

Since the summer of 2014, frequent attempts have been made to use the rise of IS as a possible catalyst for the long-overdue discussion on a joint foreign policy line towards Iran and potentially an official rapprochement by the entire GCC under Saudi Arabia's leadership. When paramilitary IS units under Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi overran large parts of northern Iraq and Syria in the summer of 2014 and proclaimed a "caliphate" on 29 June, this not only sent shock waves through the Western world, it also caused huge concern in the Gulf states, particularly in Saudi Arabia, seeing that IS had announced that Mecca, the Prophet's birthplace, was among its next targets.

46 | Bulent Aras, "The Gulf and Iran: New realities, new strategies", *Al Jazeera*, 4 Feb 2014, <http://aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/gulf-iran-new-realities-new-st-2014131144646495245> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

It is therefore hardly surprising that Saudi Arabia dispatched 30,000 soldiers to the border with Iraq shortly after the collapse of the Iraqi military forces in Mosul and reports about the alleged withdrawal of Iraqi border guards. In view of the new threat from extremist groups, the date to begin construction of a 900 kilometer border fence, which was first discussed in 2006 and is due to be equipped with infrared cameras, motion detectors and the latest radar equipment from Germany, was advanced and the first section was unveiled in September 2014.⁴⁷ The genuine threat the porous desert border poses was illustrated in January 2015 by an IS attack on a Saudi border post, during which two border guards lost their lives.⁴⁸

However, the threat of extremist attacks does not come exclusively from Iraq but also from within the country. A media survey conducted in the summer of 2014 indicated that a large majority of young Saudis are IS sympathisers.⁴⁹ Besides the dissatisfaction of large parts of the population with social conditions, this can be explained above all by the fact that the ideology of the terror group is founded on similar religious teachings as are being preached in the Kingdom under the strict Wahhabi state doctrine. This provides an ideal breeding ground for the radicalisation of young people, who suffer from a lack of prospects.⁵⁰ Besides uncompromising anti-terror legislation, which imposes heavy penalties for joining or supporting IS as well as other extremist groupings, the Saudi rulers responded with a reintegration program for returning fighters.⁵¹ However, due to a large extent to Washington's original restraint and President Obama's

47 | Cf. Guido Steinberg, "Saudi-Arabien als Partner deutscher Politik", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ)*, No. 46/2014, 5 Nov 2014, pp. 48-53, <http://bpb.de/apuz/194442> (accessed 12 May 2015); "Saudi unveils 900km fence on Iraq border", *Al Jazeera*, 6 Sep 2014, <http://aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/09/saudi-unveils-900km-fence-along-iraq-border-201496154458789238.html> (accessed 12 May 2015).

48 | Cf. Richard Spencer, "Saudi general 'killed in attack on border with Iraq'", *The Telegraph*, 5 Jan 2015, <http://telegraph.co.uk/news/11325032/Saudi-general-killed-in-attack-on-border-with-Isil-held-Iraq.html> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

49 | Cf. Abdel Bari Atwan, "Will the US-Iran-Saudi Alliance defeat ISIS?", *Middle East Monitor*, 21 Aug 2014, <https://middleeastmonitor.com/articles/middle-east/13622> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

50 | Cf. Henner Fürtig, "Historisch gewachsene Symbiose: Das Haus Saud und die Wahhabiyya", *APuZ*, No. 46/2014, 5 Nov 2014, pp. 3-11, <http://bpb.de/apuz/194429> (accessed 12 May 2015).

51 | Cf. Jafar Alshayeb, "Warum ziehen saudische Jugendliche in den Dschihad?", *zenith*, 17 Jul 2013, <http://zenithonline.de/deutsch/gesellschaft/a/artikel/003727> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

fear of having to abandon his policy of a gradual withdrawal from the Middle East and being once more drawn into a lengthy conflict, Riyadh found itself forced to seek further partners in the region. With the former regional powers of Syria and Iraq facing total disintegration of the state institutions and Egypt into a state of disarray, Saudi Arabia's options were extremely limited and thus a strategic alliance with the arch rival Iran appeared to be an expedient solution. After all, IS also poses an indirect threat to Iran, not least because it is weakening the Shia-dominated government in Baghdad and the allied regime in Damascus. It was therefore ultimately the joint enemy who brought the antagonists closer together, at least for a time.

When the two countries agreed to endorse the Kurd Fuad Masum as the new Iraqi president in 2014, relations appeared to have reached an unprecedented high.⁵² During the meeting between the two foreign ministers on the occasion of the UN General Assembly in September 2014, Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif spoke of "a new chapter" in the relationship between the two countries. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Saud bin Faisal, on the other hand, pointed out that cooperation was necessary in order to "avoid the errors of the past".⁵³

However, it also soon became clear that even a joint interest where IS is concerned could not gloss over the decades of wrangling with the existence of hegemony in the Gulf region. One significant reason for the Saudis' willingness to negotiate was the realisation

One significant reason for the Saudis' willingness to negotiate with Iran was the realisation that the Syrian regime under Assad would not fall as quickly as had been assumed just the previous year.

that the Syrian regime under Assad would not fall as quickly as had been assumed just the previous year.⁵⁴ This meant the proxy war between the two major powers conducted in Syria could escalate further once the joint enemy was defeated. Mutual distrust as well as widely diverging interests are therefore preventing joint action against the extremists. Iran, for one, is only prepared to compromise if support for the Syrian rebels is abandoned. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, demands that the fights against the

52 | Cf. Hussein Dakroub, "ISIS brings Saudi Arabia and Iran closer", *The Daily Star*, 6 Sep 2014, <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Sep-06/269754-isis-brings-saudi-arabia-and-iran-closer.ashx> (accessed 23 Apr 2015); Ellinor Zeino-Mahmallat, "Saudi-Arabien Rolle im Nahen Osten", *APuZ*, No. 46/2014, 5 Nov 2014, p. 42, <http://bpb.de/apuz/194440> (accessed 12 May 2015).

53 | Guzansky/Neubauer, n. 16.

54 | Cf. *ibid.*

Syrian dictator continue as a condition of its joining the international coalition against IS.⁵⁵



The "Islamic State" poses a common threat to Iran and the Gulf states. | Source: © AP Photo, picture alliance.

The prevailing differences manifested very clearly in December 2014, when Iran conducted its first separate air raids against IS fighters, refusing to coordinate these with the USA or Saudi Arabia.⁵⁶ And a high-ranking meeting between diplomats from Riyadh and Tehran in Oman, which had been convened to discuss a joint strategy to fight IS, broke up because of the dispute about the low oil price. Iran accuses Saudi Arabia as the most powerful OPEC state of keeping the oil price low not only because of fracking in the U.S. but particularly in order to weaken the Iranian economy.⁵⁷ In a speech held on 13 January 2015, President Rouhani warned:

55 | Cf. Jürg Bischoff, "Zwei Allianzen gegen den Islamischen Staat", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 18 Oct 2014, p. 3.

56 | Cf. Julian Borger, "Iran air strikes against Isis requested by Iraqi government, says Tehran", *The Guardian*, 6 Dec 2014, <http://theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/05/iran-conducts-air-strikes-against-isis-extremists-iraq> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

57 | Cf. "Iran minister's Saudi visit delayed due to oil price fall: Tehran", *The Fiscal Times*, 18 Jan 2015, <http://thefiscaltimes.com/latestnews/2015/01/18/Iran-ministers-Saudi-visit-delayed-due-oil-price-fall-Tehran> (accessed 23 Apr 2015); Matthew M. Reed, "How Iran Is Coping With Sagging Oil Prices", *Newsweek*, 30 Jan 2015, <http://newsweek.com/how-iran-coping-sagging-oil-prices-303298> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

“Those that have planned to decrease the prices against other countries will regret this decision.”⁵⁸

A further contentious issue, which has come to the fore particularly since June 2014, is the influence the two major powers have in Yemen. Since the Zaydi Shia Ansar Allah, or Houthis, progressively gained power in Yemen, Riyadh has been losing the means of exerting influence in Sanaa. It was particularly the grip Saudi Arabia had on the powerful Hashid clan, including the family of former President Saleh and the formerly powerful Ahmar family, which guaranteed Riyadh control over the military and therefore over stability in the southern neighbouring country. With the ousting of the Hadi government, this power base has now been swept away, and Saudi Arabia is accusing Tehran of providing active support to the Shia Houthi rebels.⁵⁹ Open threats against the Saudi Kingdom by Houthi leaders confirm the impression in Riyadh that the country is increasingly being surrounded by hostile forces under Iran's control.⁶⁰ Added to this is the fact that there is also a small minority of Zaydis living in southern Saudi Arabia. They are considered a threat in Saudi Arabia and in Yemen and are suspected of supporting Iranian claims to power within the Arabian Peninsula.⁶¹ While Iran and Saudi Arabia were able to at least agree on a truce where dealing with IS is concerned, their battle for power and ideological supremacy elsewhere continues unabated, as the air raids on Houthi positions in Yemen by the Saudi-led military coalition illustrate.

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CONCLUSION

To summarise: the diversity of the stances the Gulf states take in their interaction with Iran, which had already begun to emerge during the last two decades, has become more pronounced since

58 | Mohammad Bazzi, “King Salman's War”, *Politico Magazine*, 25 Jan 2015, <http://politico.com/magazine/story/2015/01/saudi-arabia-king-salman-114583.html> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

59 | Cf. Khaled Fattah, “Saudi Troubles in Sanaa”, *Sada*, 10 Feb 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2015/02/10/saudi-troubles-in-sanaa/i1z8> (accessed 12 May 2015).

60 | Cf. Mohammed Ghobari/Noah Browning, “Battle lines drawn for a civil war in Yemen”, *Reuters*, 18 Feb 2015, <http://reuters.com/article/idUSKBN0LM1FR20150218> (accessed 23 Apr 2015).

61 | Cf. Peter Salisbury, “Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian ‘Cold War’”, *Chatham House Research Paper*, Feb 2015, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150218YemenIranSaudi.pdf (accessed 12 May 2015).

the Geneva Plan of Action of November 2013. A complex web of different interests and expectations, some lingering concerns about lost opportunities, as well as scepticism and distrust, and not least the enemy narrative that had become institutionalised over almost four decades – all this is turning the individual relationships between the Gulf monarchies and Iran into a real test for the Arab states affiliated under the

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the decision-makers and the population in Saudi Arabia have been socialised as cold war actors in a constant rivalry with Iran.

GCC umbrella. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the decision-makers and the population in Saudi Arabia have been socialised as cold war actors in a constant rivalry with

Iran – a psychological factor that cannot easily be eradicated. Although the USA as their protecting power has given the Gulf states the go-ahead to make further steps towards Iran and use the momentum of the rapprochement to their advantage, they are still prevented from realising the full potential of interaction with the Islamic Republic by the dominant position of the Saudis within the GCC. From the Saudi perspective, a substantial improvement of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran would only have strengthened Iran's position in the negotiations with the E3+3, which the Kingdom would have seen as damaging to its own power. On 24 November 2014, the Geneva Plan of Action was extended for a further seven months, namely to 30 June 2015. While Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE already viewed the 2013 interim agreement as having initiated a new era in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia was not interested in following the trend towards détente prematurely. Should the E3+3 and Iran succeed in agreeing to a comprehensive deal following on from the successful Lausanne framework agreement of April 2015 and the sanction regime against Iran be lifted, this would allow the smaller Gulf states to further intensify their relations with Iran. At the same time, Saudi Arabia would run the risk of losing its supremacy in the Gulf. It remains to be seen, however, which further exogenous factors, such as previously the rise of the common enemy IS, may inject new dynamics into the relationships between Saudi Arabia and the other five Gulf states with Iran. The question remains whether these will be successful in bringing about a partnership that will not declare the GCC obsolete but effect a fundamental renewal of its *raison d'être*; or whether they may even, in total contrast, cause a return to viewing the GCC as a suitable bulwark against Iran in view of the current situation in Yemen.

AN END TO THE STATUS QUO?

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE NORMALISATION AND ANTI-NORMALISATION DISCOURSE IN PALESTINIAN SOCIETY

Hans Maria Heyn / Bastian Schroeder

Normalisation is a major topic of discussion in Palestinian society. Opinions as to whether and in which form Palestinians should engage in dialogue with Israelis vary greatly and split Palestinian society into different camps.¹ The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) has coined the most common definition of normalisation as "the participation in any project, initiative or activity, in Palestine or internationally, that aims (implicitly or explicitly) to bring together Palestinians [...] and Israelis (people or institutions) without placing as its goal resistance to and exposure of the Israeli occupation and all forms of discrimination and oppression against the Palestinian people."² This definition has also been adopted by other anti-normalisation organisations such as the internationally active Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.³

It has been noticeable that the willingness to engage in dialogue has declined markedly in recent years at virtually all levels of Palestinian society and that the anti-normalisation movement is increasingly gaining in influence. A similar development – namely a clearly reduced interest in the Palestinians and in the willingness to engage in dialogue – can also be observed in Israeli



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- 1 | Cf. Walid Salem, "The Anti-Normalization Discourse in the Context of Israeli-Palestinian Peace-Building", *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 12, Jan 2005, p. 107.
- 2 | PACBI, "Israel's Exceptionalism: Normalizing the Abnormal", 31 Oct 2011, <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1749> (accessed 21 Apr 2014).
- 3 | Cf. The BDS movement has made it its aim to exert international pressure on Israel to end the occupation of the Palestinian Territories through boycott, the withholding of finance and sanctions, modelled on the measures used in the case of South Africa.

society.⁴ This was demonstrated most recently in the course of the parliamentary elections on 17 March 2015.⁵ Generally speaking, anti-normalisation in its present form is a relatively recent phenomenon, linked closely to the stagnating peace process. Events in 2014 have illustrated once again that Israelis and Palestinians are nowhere near a resolution of the conflict; and the first months of 2015 are not promising any improvement either. This prevailing lack of positive prospects is helping to swell the following of the dialogue detractors.

One needs to take into account that the anti-normalisation activists are not a homogenous group. The movement is far more heterogeneous than it appears at first glance.

To gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, it is therefore important to briefly recapitulate the political context. One also needs to take into account that the anti-normalisation

activists are not a homogenous group. The movement is far more heterogeneous than it appears at first glance, for which reason its different manifestations will be analysed below. Some opponents of normalisation are not entirely averse to engage in dialogue with Israelis under certain circumstances and they manage their activities accordingly. To provide a better understanding, these different manifestations will be illustrated by several short case studies. The question that ultimately needs to be addressed is how the international community should deal with the anti-normalisation phenomenon. This applies in particular to those institutions and organisations working on the ground, which finance and manage dialogue projects. It has become a relatively frequent occurrence for anti-normalisation activists to disrupt dialogue events. Not only does this interfere with the planning of such activities, it is also disruptive to the proceedings themselves. One must assume that the anti-normalisation movement will remain active as long as there is no sustainable resolution to the Middle East conflict within reach. It is therefore important to gain a better understanding of their arguments and motives. The ultimate objectives of the debate must be to ensure

4 | Cf. Moshe Arens, "Five Blows That Shrank Israel's Peace Camp", *Haaretz*, 26 Oct 2010, <http://haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/1.321190> (accessed 13 May 2015). However, the present article deals exclusively with the anti-normalisation movement in the Palestinian Territories.

5 | The conflict with the Palestinians was only a marginal issue in the election campaign, and the re-election victory of Netanyahu, who rejected Palestinian statehood during the election campaign, is an illustration of the waning interest in the Palestinian neighbours. For a detailed analysis see Michael Borchard/Evelyn Gaiser, "Schockstarre versus Euphorie. Israel nach den Wahlen zur 20. Knesset", <http://kas.de/israel/de/publications/40770> (accessed 13 May 2015).

that Israelis and Palestinians can once again engage in purposeful dialogue and to provide the conditions for the two sides to work out a sustainable solution in direct talks.



The European Parliament enacts a resolution on Palestine statehood in its 1967 borders: It supports “in principle recognition of Palestinian statehood and the two state solution, and believes these should go hand in hand with the development of peace talks”. | Source: Pietro Naj-Oleari, European Parliament, flickr @ @ @ @.

NORMALISATION IN LIGHT OF CURRENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The year 2014 brought about many momentous decisions that influenced the framework of the normalisation debate. The failed peace negotiations under the aegis of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at the beginning of the year were followed by the formation of a Palestinian government of national unity between Fatah, which rules the West Bank, and Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, in April 2014. Almost immediately afterwards, Israel and Hamas clashed in the most devastating Gaza War to date, which lasted from 8 July to 26 August.⁶ As a result of these developments,⁷

6 | According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2131 Palestinians and 71 Israelis lost their lives in the course of the war. Over 100,000 people were made homeless and are currently living in emergency shelters provided by the United Nations (UN). Cf. OCHA, “Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency Situation Report”, OCHA, 4 Sep 2014, http://ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_04_09_2014.pdf (accessed 13 May 2015).

7 | The Gaza War was triggered by a chain of events, which started with the abduction of three Israeli teenagers close to Hebron. This ▶


there did not seem any hope for political talks to resume in the foreseeable future. During the second half of 2014, the Palestinians received diplomatic encouragement and new hope from the fact that the parliaments of several EU Member States recognised Palestine as a state in the borders of 1967.⁸

Buoyed by this development, the Palestinian leadership around President Mahmoud Abbas surprised everyone shortly before New Year's Eve 2014 by realising its intention to induce the UN Security Council to set a deadline for an end to the Israeli occupation. The resolution, which was put forward by Jordan on behalf of the Palestinians, called for an end to the Israeli occupation by July 2017. The resolution did not, however, receive the required majority of nine votes in a Security Council Meeting on 30 December 2014.⁹ In response to the failure of the resolution, the Palestinian leadership decided to aim for membership of numerous international agreements and treaties. The signing of the Treaty of Rome in particular, the contractual basis of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, caused considerable diplomatic rows with Israel and the USA.¹⁰ There was, however, a statutory period of 60 days before the accession to the ICC would officially come into force. The Palestinian Territories became an official state party to the ICC on 1 April 2015, and the Palestinian leadership is already considering lodging complaints against Israeli government representatives or members of the armed forces.¹¹ These steps are indications of the Palestinian leadership's new strategy aimed at internationalising the conflict with Israel and putting it on a legal footing.¹²

prompted the Israeli military to carry out a massive search and military operation (Brothers' Keeper) against Hamas in the West Bank. In addition, air attacks were carried out against numerous Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip, which in turn elicited repeated rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip.

- 8 | Sweden recognised Palestine as an official state in October 2014. Recommendations of Palestine's recognition have been put forward in the parliaments of the UK, Spain, France and Ireland, but the respective governments have not yet followed these.
- 9 | Cf. Michael R. Gordon/Somini Senguptar, "Resolution for Palestinian State Fails in Security Council", *The New York Times*, 30 Dec 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1wzhDDj> (accessed 13 May 2015).
- 10 | Cf. John Hudson, "Israel US Slam Palestinian Bid to Join International Criminal Court", *Foreign Policy*, 31 Dec 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/12/31/israel-u-s-slam-palestinian-bid-to-join-international-criminal-court> (accessed 21 Apr 2015).
- 11 | The intention is to lodge complaints against Israel's illegal settlement policy on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem as well as its treatment of civilians during last year's Gaza War.
- 12 | The implementation of the strategy began in November 2012, when Palestine applied for observer status in the United Nations and this was granted by the General Assembly.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President Abbas met in New York on the occasion of the so called status reevaluation by the United Nations. On November 29, 2012, Palestine was accorded non-Member Observer State status in the United Nations. | Source: Hansine Korslien, Norway – Mission to the UN, flickr ©

This change in strategy is a clear indication of the fact that trust in negotiations is waning in the political establishment and among the population.¹³ President Abbas hesitated too long before taking action after his announcements, and this has diminished his political capital in the Palestinians' eyes. This became very obvious particularly after the Gaza War, when approval ratings for Fatah and President Abbas crashed and support for Hamas and Ismail Haniyeh improved considerably.¹⁴ Seven months on from the war, poll ratings have returned to the pre-war levels and Mahmoud Abbas's approval ratings have recovered.¹⁵ Be that as it may, President Abbas cannot assume that his position is secure, and he will have to continue asserting himself against Hamas.

The government's change in strategy can therefore be taken as an attempt to push beyond the status quo and to win back the population's support. This new political line is met with positive response from Palestinian society. People's hopes for the creation of a sovereign state of their own have been buoyed particularly by the recognition of Palestine by the parliaments of European states.

13 | Cf. Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No 54", Dec 2014, <http://pcpsr.org/en/node/600> (accessed 13 May 2015).

14 | Cf. PSR, "Special Gaza War Poll", Aug 2014, <http://pcpsr.org/en/node/492> (accessed 13 May 2015).

15 | Cf. PSR, "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No 55", Mar 2015, <http://pcpsr.org/en/node/605> (accessed 13 May 2015).

In an opinion poll in December 2014, 73 per cent of Palestinians supported the accession to the International Criminal Court,¹⁶ and 86 per cent are in favour of submitting a complaint.¹⁷ By contrast with their political decision-makers, large swathes of Palestinian civil society and many political movements performed this change in strategy some considerable time ago.

For Palestinians, the era since the Oslo Accords (1993 to 1995) has been characterised by disappointment and disillusion. While the frustration among the population about the continuing status quo erupted in violent resistance in the course of the Second Intifada (2000 to 2005), groupings calling for a renunciation of violence have become more prominent in recent years. This has manifested in phenomena such as the BDS movement, which is active at a national and international level.¹⁸ Anti-normalisation is a central component of BDS's agenda and it has also gained in popularity in connection with the growing boycott movement.

While some officials within the Palestinian Authority may be increasingly sympathetic to the anti-normalisation movement, anti-normalisation has not entered official politics.

However, there is still a clear discrepancy between the official political line and public opinion. While some officials within the Palestinian Authority (PA) may be increasingly sympathetic to the anti-normalisation movement, anti-normalisation has not entered official politics. BDS groupings and anti-normalisation activists do, in fact, regularly criticise the PA's cooperation with Israel.¹⁹ This applies to various direct political talks²⁰ as well as the very close security cooperation.²¹

16 | Cf. PSR, n. 13.

17 | Cf. PSR, n. 15.

18 | Cf. Omar Barghouti, "Is BDS' campaign against Israel reaching a turning point?", *Al Jazeera*, 22 Dec 2013, <http://aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/12/bds-campaign-against-israel-reaching-turning-point-201312225320764121> (accessed 13 May 2015).

19 | Cf. Daoud Kuttub, "At Mandela funeral, Abbas says he opposes boycott of Israel", *Al-Monitor*, 13 Dec 2013, <http://al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/abbas-attacks-bds.html> (accessed 13 May 2015); Omar Barghouti, "Israeli-Arab Normalization Hits a Snag", *Al-Akhbar*, 28 Apr 2012, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/6756> (accessed 21 Apr 2015).

20 | Cf. "Abbas to meet with members of Knesset in Ramallah", *The Jerusalem Post*, 15 Apr 2014, <http://jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Abbas-to-meet-with-members-of-Knesset-in-Ramallah-348567> (accessed 13 May 2015).

21 | Cf. Jessica Purkiss, "Will the Palestinian leadership really halt security cooperation with Israel?", *The Middle East Monitor*, 12 Dec 2014, <http://middleeastmonitor.com/articles/middle-east/15796> (accessed 13 May 2015).



A BDS demonstration in 2010: Anti-normalisation plays a central role of the BDS movement and became popular in the growing boycott movement. | Source: Stephanie Law, flickr [©](#)[1](#)[3](#).

ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES OF ANTI-NORMALISATION

As far back as the mid-1980s, Palestinian lawyer Jonathan Kuttab and Israeli political scientist Dr. Edy Kaufman were already engaged in a public debate about the nature of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. Kuttab had initiated the discussion with his article “The Pitfalls of Dialogue”²² in the *al-Fajr* newspaper. In this article, he criticised that any dialogue between oppressor and oppressed was necessarily asymmetrical, while in many cases it seems that the parties were meeting as equals. Furthermore, he maintained that dialogue events frequently ignored central conflict issues (such as the occupation, freedom of movement, natural resources) and were concerned with superficial matters instead. In his eyes, this entailed the risk of conducting the dialogue merely as an end in itself and ultimately in order to entrench the status quo instead of changing it.²³ Kaufman countered this with the argument that dialogue was not a series of isolated events, but a sustained, ongoing activity. He maintained that difficult issues required a dialogue conducted on a sustained basis over time, which could be controlled in an equitable manner. And that it was a central goal of any dialogue to create trust between the

22 | Jonathan Kuttab/Edy Kaufman, “An Exchange on Dialogue”, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, No. 2/1988, p. 84-108.

23 | Cf. *ibid.*, p. 85 f.

parties in order to allow even major hurdles along the way to be overcome.²⁴

Hope for a prompt resolution of the conflict during the Oslo Peace Process created a willingness on both sides to resume communication. This received generous support, particularly from the international community of states.

The dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians ceased almost entirely during the First Intifada (1987 to 1993), and so did the debate about its usefulness. It was not until the Oslo Peace Process (1993 to 1995) that there was a renewed rapprochement. Hope

for a prompt resolution of the conflict created a willingness on both sides to resume communication. This received generous support, particularly from the international community of states. Numerous dialogue projects were initiated and a veritable “peace industry” developed. One of the most prominent dialogue programs of that time was the “Seeds of Peace” program aimed at bringing together young people from areas of conflict in a peace camp.²⁵ The program still exists, but is now coming under heavy criticism from anti-normalisation activists – as are many comparable initiatives.²⁶

The Oslo Accords failed to satisfy the high expectations harboured by many of the actors involved. Initial enthusiasm was quickly followed by disenchantment and disillusion.²⁷ Palestinians have considered the Oslo peace process a failure for a long time.²⁸ High-ranking Israeli politicians have also come to a similar conclusion.²⁹ The frustration over the status quo culminated in the Second Intifada in the early 2000s. By the end of that period, many post-conflict dialogue programs going back to the Oslo era had become irrelevant. In addition, fear of further terror attacks caused the Israeli government to impose the physical separation

24 | Cf. *ibid.*, p. 94.

25 | The program was initially set up for young Israelis and Palestinians, but has since been expanded to include young people from areas of conflict worldwide.

26 | Cf. Omar H. Rahman, “Co-existence vs. Co-resistance: A case against normalization”, *+972*, 3 Jan 2012, <http://972mag.com/co-existence-vs-co-resistance-a-case-against-normalization/32076> (accessed 13 May 2015).

27 | Palestine is still not a sovereign state, the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem is increasing steadily, the Palestinians have no control over natural resources such as water, etc.

28 | Cf. Edward Said, *The End of the Peace Process. Oslo and After*, London, 2000; Salam Fayyad, “Oslo is Dead”, *Foreign Affairs*, 2 Oct 2014, <http://foreignaffairs.com/articles/142134/salam-fayyad/oslo-is-dead> (accessed 21 Apr 2015).

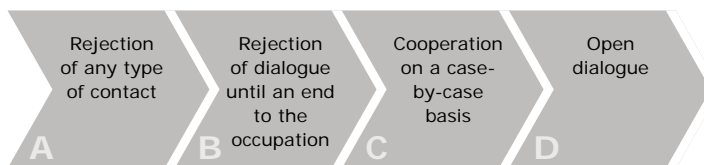
29 | Cf. Barak Ravid, “Lieberman: Palestinian moves at ICC show Oslo Accords have collapsed”, *Haaretz*, 4 Jan 2015, <http://haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/1.635216> (accessed 13 May 2015).

of Palestinians and Israelis, which has made the dialogue more difficult in practical terms as well. Consequently, there are now hardly any encounters taking place between the two conflicting parties outside specially organised dialogue events.

Based on the definition of normalisation mentioned at the beginning of this article, anti-normalisation activists have made it their purpose to publicly denounce, prevent or even reverse instances of normalisation. It is their declared aim to "[...] strip the conflict of many illusions and pleasantries in favor of exposing the raw truth."³⁰ In abstract terms, the opponents of normalisation can be divided into four camps (see Fig. 1).³¹

Fig. 1

Spectrum of the anti-normalisation and normalisation movement



Source: Own illustration.

- A. Rigorous proponents of anti-normalisation reject any contact with Israelis. They do not consider Israel an appropriate party to interact with and regard any dialogue with Israelis as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. This form of anti-normalisation does, however, not enjoy much support within the Palestinian population and can be regarded as a minority position.
- B. A more widespread view is that normalisation of relations with Israel should not be a condition but rather a consequence of negotiations. Supporters of this stance argue that it is simply impossible in the current situation to maintain that Israelis and Palestinians can meet on an equal footing. Any exchange between them would therefore have to be considered an exchange between occupiers and occupied. Acting as if that was not the case during joint events would thus be a waste of time. This view underlies the demand that any dialogue should be avoided until the occupation comes to an end. Once the

30 | Rahman, n. 25.

31 | Cf. Riman Barakat/Dan Goldenblatt, "Coping with Anti-Normalization", *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 18, Feb/Mar 2012, pp. 86-95.

occupation has ended, the sides should meet and enter into an exchange on an equal footing.

- C. The majority of the opponents of normalisation evaluate opportunities for dialogue with Israelis on a case-by-case basis. They stress that the problem is not with the dialogue with Israelis as such but with its quality. Many supporters of this group rely on guidelines devised by PACBI for evaluating projects and activities,³² based essentially on the recognition of fundamental rights for the Palestinians.³³ These guidelines/criteria represent a framework for the agendas and contents of the events.
- D. Proponents of open dialogue, on the other hand, stipulate no conditions for encounters with Israelis. To them, talks between the two sides represent an important channel to effect understanding and reconciliation.

ANTI-NORMALISATION IN PRACTICE

In practice, the boundaries between the different camps are fluid. The strictness with which the guidelines are applied also varies from person to person. Contradictory views are no rarity. To illustrate the above categorisation, here are some practical examples:

1. In 2014, PACBI put out a call for a boycott of the appearance of an Indian dance troupe, which had accepted an invitation to a Palestinian book fair in Ramallah.³⁴ As the troupe had already performed in front of members of the Indian Society in Tel Aviv beforehand, the event was denounced as a form of normalisation. Anti-normalisation activists called upon the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Culture to call the performance off. However, the PA did not comply with this call, whereupon BDS supporters took action to disrupt the performance. They shouted abuse not only at the organisers and the participants

32 | Further information on the "co-resistance framework" in: PACBI, "Israel's Exceptionalism: Normalizing the Abnormal", *PACBI*, 31 Oct 2011, <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1749> (accessed 21 Apr 2015).

33 | Criteria include the right to resistance against the occupation, the establishment of full and equal civil rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel and the right of return of the Palestinians driven out of Israel in 1948.

34 | Cf. Khaled Abu Toameh, "Palestinians' 'Anti-Normalization' Movement", *Gatestone Institute*, 14 Apr 2014, <http://gatestoneinstitute.org/4270/palestinians-normalization-dancers> (accessed 13 May 2015).

but also at Palestinian and Indian government officials. Several activists were arrested during the ensuing melee. The Ministry of Culture subsequently put out

It is becoming increasingly evident how far the position of the Palestinian government differs from that taken by the anti-normalisation activists.

an official statement, apologising to the organisers and participants for the incident. A spokesman for the BDS movement countered this by accusing the Authority of supporting the Israeli occupation by having the demonstrators arrested.³⁵ Not only does this incident demonstrate the different points of view in this area, it also illustrates how far the position of the Palestinian government differs from that taken by the anti-normalisation activists. This state of affairs has given rise to repeated clashes between the two sides.

2. Another incident, which was also picked up in the German media, involved disputes connected to the TV documentary *24h Jerusalem*.³⁶ After filming for the joint production of *Arte* and *Bayerischer Rundfunk* had begun, there were several attempts before it could be completed. To encourage an exchange and improve networking, the idea had been for both Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers to work on the production. However, the realisation of the project was repeatedly delayed by anti-normalisation activists who argued that the film did not show Jerusalem in all its facets and represented the occupation of the Palestinian East Jerusalem in a distorted light as something of a normal situation. In addition to calls for an immediate stop to cooperation, the Palestinian directors, film crews and protagonists also received direct and personal threats. And these took their toll, causing the Palestinians to withdraw from the project. Filming was stopped completely, as the producers did not want to make a film that presented the situation entirely from the Israeli perspective. While the project was given the go-ahead one year later, in April 2013, this was done on condition that Palestinians and Israelis would work in complete isolation from each other during the planning and filming. The film about Jerusalem thus unintentionally reflected a great deal of the city's everyday reality.

35 | Cf. Khaled Abu Toameh, "Palestinians: BDS Activists Are Troublemakers, Criminals", Gatestone Institute, 30 May 2014, <http://gatestoneinstitute.org/4334/palestinians-bds-trial> (accessed 13 May 2015).

36 | Cf. Hans-Christian Rössler, "Zwischen den Fronten des Nahost-Konflikts", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 Apr 2014, <http://faz.net/-gqz-7o8iw> (accessed 13 May 2015).

3. One example where cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis is not considered as falling into the category of normalisation involves the joint protests against the construction of the barriers. In this instance, Israeli and Palestinian organisations, representatives of civil society and frequently also religious representatives are working hand in hand. However, these instances represent exceptions rather than the rule. One of the reasons is the extensive list of criteria the anti-normalisation activists apply to their own evaluations. If interpreted strictly, these hardly leave any leeway, which means that even the slightest indication of normalisation is likely to provoke resistance. Also, opportunities for cooperation are very limited, as the group of Israelis prepared to engage in dialogue has also diminished steadily over recent years.

4. That said, there are groupings on both sides which deem the “cross-border” dialogue and cooperation necessary or which try to further them in their work. In many cases, this entails specialist events and projects promoting issue-specific dialogue, not so much for its own sake but usually to make progress in an area of joint interest. Issues that are of current interest to both sides, which should be discussed under consideration of political reality, tend to be at the forefront in this context. The Jordan River Rehabilitation Project is one example of successful cooperation between Palestinians, Israelis and Jordanians.³⁷ The organisers’ main goal is to protect the joint ecological heritage in the Jordan Valley, which would be of benefit to all sides. Initiatives of this type engage local scientists for relevant environmental projects in order to obtain a regional understanding of the problem and then develop a joint strategy of how to reach decision-makers, the media and the broad public. The argument in favour of this issue-specific cooperation is that acute problems, particularly in the area of the environment, cannot wait for a political solution and require prompt joint action. However, even in the case of issue-specific dialogue projects, the complex political reality frequently hampers smooth cooperation, with the result that the realisation of projects of this type always faces great challenges.³⁸

37 | Jordan River Rehabilitation Project / EcoPeace Middle East, http://foeme.org/www/?module=projects&record_id=23 (accessed 21 Apr 2015).

38 | On the one hand, there are logistical problems, on the other hand it is increasingly difficult to find suitable new willing parties. The issue is not only whether people are interested in taking part in such projects, but also whether this might label them as “normalisers”.



Members of the Young Group of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group find out about the situation of cross-border cooperation in the areas of environment and water on location at the Jordan river. | Source: © KAS Ramallah.

IMPACTS

In view of the current political stalemate and the widening gulf between Israelis and Palestinians, it is likely that the Palestinian anti-normalisation movement will gain further support. Also, there is no indication that the evaluation criteria for what is classed as normalisation will be softened any time soon. However, the influence of the anti-normalisation activists on the government remains ambivalent. While frustration over the failed peace process and the lack of political progress can also be felt at government level, as illustrated by the change in political strategy, this has not led to the PA excluding the possibility of future dialogue with Israel or Israeli organisations at a political level. President Abbas still expresses his willingness to engage in political dialogue, even though the government thereby incurs the displeasure of the Palestinian population. Particularly where issues of basic services are concerned, the Palestinian leadership will have to continue negotiating with Israel in the medium term as well. Existing agreements cannot simply be terminated, nor will the Palestinians be in a position to become self-sufficient in the foreseeable future, in large part due to the occupation: Palestinians import some 98 per cent of electricity from Israel, the water supply in the West Bank is linked to Israel, and the security cooperation between the two sides is in the interest of both the PA and Israel.

The anti-normalisation movement must give some thought to the question of whether and to what extent their position is weakening the peace camp on the Israeli side.

There is currently no way to foresee where the internationalisation strategy pursued by the Palestinians will lead. A lasting and sustainable resolution of the conflict can only be achieved in bilateral negotiations. By that time at the latest, it will be necessary for both sides to have a partner in the respective other camp. But that can only happen if the two sides enter into an honest and open dialogue at an early stage. The anti-normalisation movement must therefore give some thought to the question of whether and to what extent their position is weakening the peace camp on the Israeli side. Because that stance is only likely to strengthen the forces that wish to maintain the status quo.³⁹

The organisations involved in furthering Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, for their part, must be prepared to deal with the rise of the anti-normalisation movement. Dialogue projects have already become more complicated in terms of both planning and execution. For instance, it is increasingly difficult to find Palestinians prepared to take part in dialogue projects,⁴⁰ as this may make them direct targets of anti-normalisation campaigns. The resulting scepticism causes many Palestinians to refuse to participate in dialogue projects on principle. And those who are prepared to be less stringent in applying the evaluation criteria must reckon with hostility from anti-normalisation activists even if the government has officially approved their participation.

Ultimately, the willingness of Israelis and Palestinians to engage in dialogue can only be increased if a clear vision and willingness to find a resolution to the conflict are demonstrated at the political level. This is where external actors in particular – including Germany – can make a valuable contribution. As a recent survey conducted by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has shown,⁴¹ no other country surpasses Germany in popularity among Israelis and Palestinians. Despite the Palestinians' realistic assessment of the close German-Israeli relations, many people in the West Bank and particularly in the Gaza Strip would like to see closer bilateral

39 | Cf. Dan Goldenblatt, "On anti-normalization: Joint Israeli-Palestinian activism must continue", +972, 16 Feb 2012, <http://972mag.com/on-anti-normalization-joint-israeli-palestinian-activism-must-not-be-stopped/35524> (accessed 13 May 2015).

40 | It is similarly difficult to find participants on the Israeli side, even though the Israelis may be motivated by different reasons.

41 | Cf. Michael Borchard/Hans Maria Heÿn, "The Holy Land and the Germans", KAS Study, Jan 2015, <http://kas.de/wf/en/33.40104> (accessed 21 Jan 2015).

relations and a stronger German engagement in the Middle East. This important political capital and the high level of acceptance on both sides can be leveraged to reduce resentment on both sides, to strengthen existing channels of dialogue and to create new means of dialogue.

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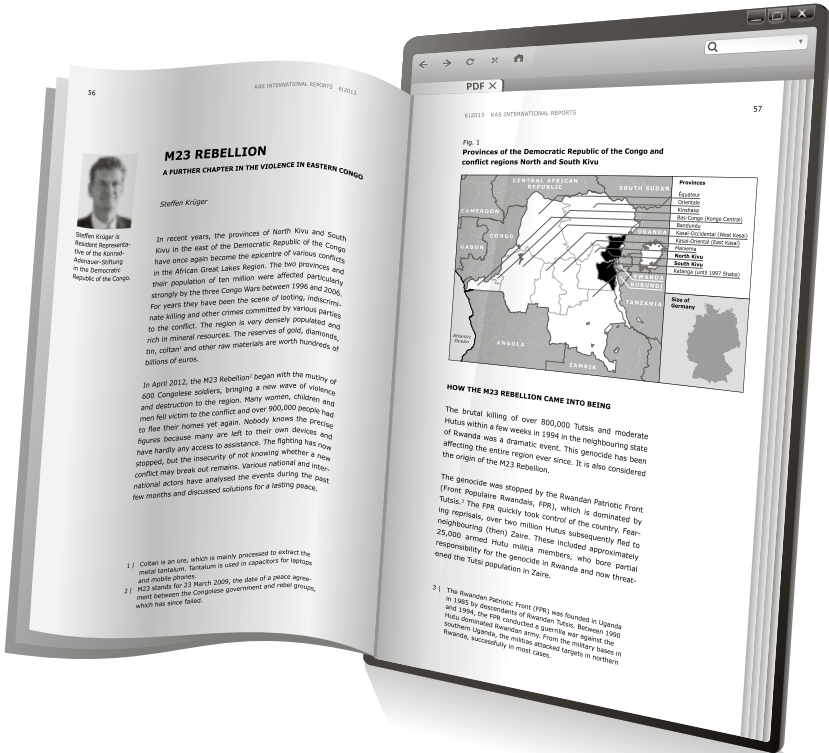


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