



EDITORIAL

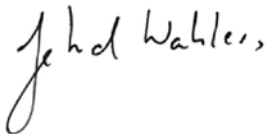
Dear Readers,

Since September 11, 2001 at the very latest, international terrorism has moved into the front rank among global threats. Even if attacks and foiled plans do not always define the headlines, the risk remains constant. This puts the state in a difficult position. On the one hand its primary function – indeed its *raison d'être* – is to ensure the safety of its citizens. On the other, protecting its citizens from terrorist attacks holds many pitfalls, since accusations of intrusions into privacy and scare tactics are quickly made. German interior ministers such as Wolfgang Schäuble and Thomas de Maizière have experienced this no less than have those entrusted with internal security in America.

Some observers resolve this dilemma by arguing that Germany is far less at risk from terrorism than is commonly assumed. Indeed, there has not been a single victim of international terrorism on German soil in the past ten years. While major European cities such as Madrid and London have been shaken by attacks, Germany has thus far been spared. Yet by no means do we live on some magical island; indeed our liberal, Western outlook keeps us within the sights of violent fanatics along with our allies. Nor can a country such as Germany, which profits disproportionately from globalization and complex international interactions, remain indifferent when terrorists destabilize the prevailing order in other parts of the world.

The contributions in this issue argue how Germany and the West can appropriately engage in combating terrorism – from both European and transatlantic perspectives. Crucial in this respect are not only the international networks that threaten us from without, but also “homegrown terrorists” – those who radicalize within European societies. In Germany the spectacular case of the Sauerland Group demonstrated that a decisive political challenge lies at the interface of integration and internal security. It is however also necessary to tackle Islamist terrorism within its various regional contexts. Its different characteristics in, for example, Pakistan, Thailand, and Indonesia call for different approaches in combating it. Our task is to draw lessons for our own strategy from what are also very different levels of success. Thanks to its exceptional presence in the Asian-Pacific region, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung can support this process with information and analyses at first hand.

At its core, however, the fight against international terrorism is a task for the political leadership. This is true in terms of both consistent and responsible coordination of the work of police and intelligence services and steadfast commitment to our partners in civilian and military stabilization operations, such as are currently taking place in Afghanistan. This very example shows us that international terrorism, as one of the downsides of globalization, is a highly complex phenomenon that requires continual, patient explanation through those with political responsibility. Notwithstanding the deployment of political instruments, however, the fundamental dilemma remains that in a liberal, open society there can be no absolute security. As free citizens we have to learn to bear the unavoidable risk with “heroic composure” (Herfried Münkler) – while resolutely continuing to defend and assert our values.



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