

Editorial

Dear Readers,

The “golden age of security”, as the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig characterised the time before the First World War, ended just over 100 years ago. After the atrocities of two world wars and the end of the so-called Cold War, many hoped that the cessation of the East-West conflict would herald the beginning of a new era of security – but those remaining hopes were shattered no later than the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

In this issue’s opening interview, Patrick Keller points out that it is not entirely without reason that many believe the world to be less secure today than ever before. The simultaneity of various crises is primarily a consequence of power shifts in the international system leading to conflicts in many regions of the world.

One of these regions is the Indian Ocean, where tensions between China and India are increasing. This conflict is by no means merely regional – in addition to India and China, the U.S. has concrete economic and security interests in the region. A stronger commitment to stability in the Indian Ocean is therefore in Germany’s interest as well, as Peter Rimmele and Philipp Huchel point out in their article.

If Germany also wants to contribute to stability and security in the crisis-ridden Middle East, it is heavily reliant on strategic partnerships. One of these is with Jordan, which is regarded as an “anchor of stability” in the region. But the country itself faces enormous economic and domestic challenges. Jordan’s jihadist scene in particular could develop into a serious threat, as Annette Ranko and Imke Haase explain in their article.

Mali provides a cautionary example of the devastating consequences of the rise of Islamists for a country’s stability. As the heartland of the Sahel, the country plays a crucial role in the entire region’s security. The tense situation in Mali means that sustainable strategies are required for lasting peace there, as Tinko Weibezahl states in his article.

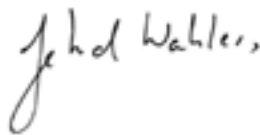
Organised crime in Latin America poses a completely different kind of security threat, especially when it forms an almost symbiotic link with state structures, as it does in Brazil. Using the example of the illegal drug economy, Thiago Rodrigues shows that the current image of organised crime as a kind of parallel state is not only inaccurate, but even obscures our view of the actual problem.

Finally, Daniela Braun looks at pandemics and epidemics, which in her view must ultimately be regarded as a security risk, too. The danger of the rapid spread of infectious diseases is greater than ever before. Although epidemics have the potential to destabilise a state or even entire regions, only a few countries are sufficiently prepared for the outbreak of a pandemic. But such an outbreak is only a matter of time.

As varied as the security policy challenges in the different regions of the world may be, their consequences cannot be limited to those individual regions. Instead, as the articles in this issue make clear, the world is also interconnected in this respect as well as being urgently dependent on cooperation.

I wish you a stimulating read.

Yours,

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 is Editor of International Reports, Deputy Secretary General and Head of the Department European and International Cooperation of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (gerhard.wahlers@kas.de).