

RE:THINK

ACADEMY-MAGAZINE #02

ACADEMY
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
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NRW

International
Politics in a
New World Order

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE PARLIAMENT



Dear readers,

In times of ever more rapid change in almost all living environments, ongoing discussion between politics, society and science is more essential than ever. It not only lays the foundations for us to be able to respond to the issues of these turbulent years with clever concepts and strategies. But at the same time, it enables us to shape the present day and our future on this planet proactively and with foresight, in the interest of future generations too.

The Academy of International Affairs is a highly renowned player based in the UN-City of Bonn, which promotes precisely this dialog, networking and, above all, interdisciplinary scientific excellence in the field of international politics. The Academy's good and many contacts with the State Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia and its members of parliament are good examples of this. As reflected in the second issue of the "Re:Think" magazine published here, presenting the latest research results.

This issue focuses on Russia's terrible and ongoing war of aggression in Ukraine and the roles Eastern and Central European countries play. The authors also refer to other conflicts and threats in world politics and to possible solutions, as well as to the nature and further development of political diplomacy in the 21st century.

Research, as initiated and promoted by the Academy, is not carried out in isolation from the worries all around the world, including multiple crises, wars, and conflicts. Its findings can offer valuable contributions and provide food for thought to overcome them. It is also an expression and hallmark of our liberal democracy, which must be defended and protected from its many opponents more than ever in this day and age.

I would like to thank the Academy, its team and all the Fellows involved for their work and wish them continued successful research! I am sure it will provide many opportunities for international discussion beyond our own areas of practice in future too.

I hope all readers find it an informative read!

André Kuper
President of the State Parliament of
North Rhine-Westphalia

EDITORIAL



International politics are characterised by conflict and competition but also the potential for cooperation beyond the narrow interests of states, on earth as well as increasingly in outer space. The second edition of AIA Magazine highlights the innovative and future-oriented research on these questions conducted at the Academy of International Affairs in Bonn.

The world is currently witnessing an unprecedented surge in political violence, reaching a 30-year peak last year. Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine is reverberating throughout Europe, raising the specter of a broader global conflict. Simultaneously, turmoil in the Middle East is destabilizing an already fragile region, while sub-Saharan Africa faces new crises as Europe withdraws from the Sahel, leaving a power vacuum for other actors to fill. In this volatile climate, the advent of new weapon systems introduces unknown risks of escalation.

In such precarious times, the need for qualified expertise and scientific insight is paramount. The Academy of International Affairs (AIA) has been expanding its activities and capacity, establishing itself as a vital platform for research and outreach to academic and political institutions. Operating from North Rhine-Westphalia—a region with deep economic, socio-cultural, and political ties to many parts of the world—we aim to address complex international issues with innovative solutions.

Our fellows from Africa, South and East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, the Pacific, and the Americas come to Bonn with fresh ideas and leave with enriched professional and personal experiences. AIA has thus become a vibrant hub for discussing the future of our world, grappling with its intricate challenges, risks, and opportunities.

AIA's recent research focus on the Geopolitics of Outer Space underscores our commitment to addressing new dimensions in international relations. This research provides unique perspectives on global conflicts and highlights the intersections of science and politics in a rapidly changing world order.

Reflecting AIA's spirit of finding solutions to global political challenges, Associate Fellow Kai He's analysis of the China-U.S. geostrategic conflict not only outlines the confrontational aspects but also explores potential avenues for cooperation. Similarly, Associate Fellow Abiodun Egbetokun extensive research project on the Political Economy of Chinese Investments in Africa sheds new light

on its Implications for development—a critical yet under-researched area.

Additionally, our focus on the evolving nature of diplomacy features insights from experts with combined experiences as diplomats and academics. They discuss emerging challenges to traditional diplomacy and the growing importance of sub-national diplomacy. Other contributions in this issue explore the dual role of religion in international relations, serving both as a source of conflict and as a means of reconciliation.

These global political conflicts are deeply rooted and have been evolving over decades. We believe that traditional approaches are insufficient; the world requires new frameworks and foundations for dialogue and problem-solving. AIA aims to contribute to building a new community of knowledge, partnering with numerous stakeholders in Bonn and globally. Our efforts are supported by the extraordinary commitment of AIA's Academic Board and the dedication of my team, to whom I am profoundly grateful.

I hope you find this latest issue inspiring and thought-provoking.



Dr. Maysoun Zein Al Din
Executive Director of the Academy
of International Affairs NRW



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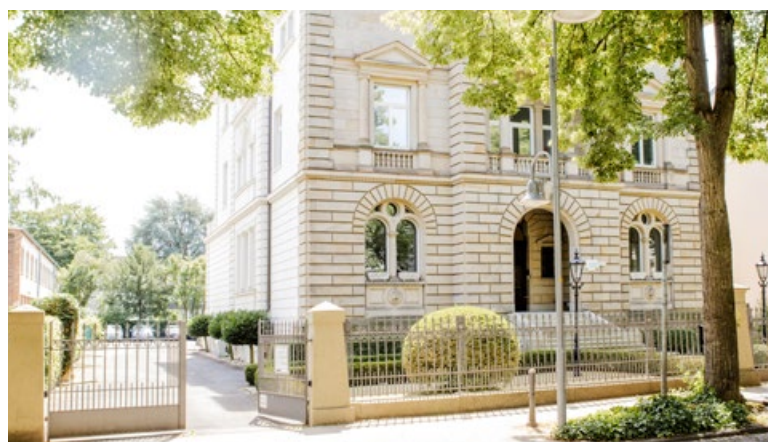


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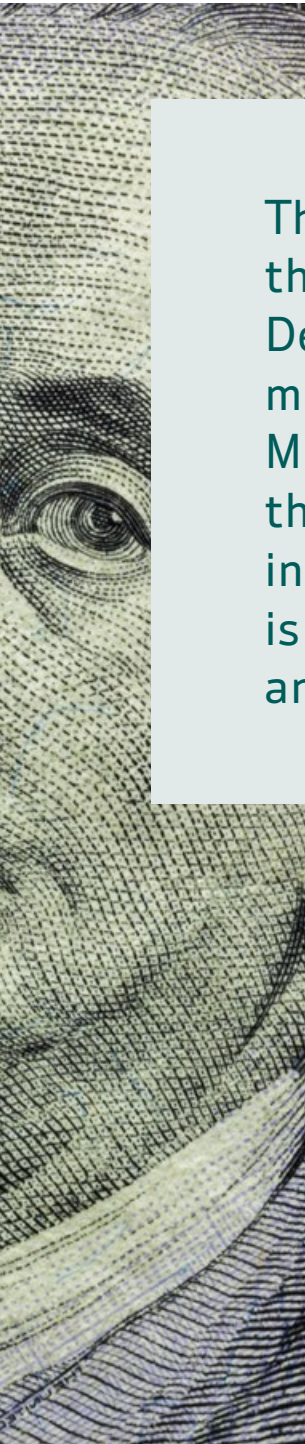
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN A NEW WORLD ORDER

Global relations are in a process of re-ordering, both through ongoing conflicts and new geopolitics. Focusing on key regions and important challenges, the authors in this section reflect on the potential for cooperation or even further escalation with perspectives from beyond Western Europe.



Discerning US-China Competition and Order Transition





The competition between the US and China is one of the most significant topics in today's world politics. Despite ongoing conflicts like the Ukraine War and the military conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Middle East, the US continues to publicly label China as the “most consequential geopolitical challenge” to the international order in the 21st century. This perspective is not limited to the US alone; some European leaders and governments also share similar views about China.

Conventional belief suggests that the US and China are more likely to fall into the so-called “Thucydides trap”— an inevitable military conflict between a rising power like China and the existing hegemon, the United States, during a period of international order transition. However, this negative outlook stems from misunderstandings regarding international order transitions and US-China competition. More nuanced perspectives on international order transitions and US-China competition propose that constructive competition between the US and China, facilitated through international institutions and effectively managed, could potentially lead to unintended positive consequences, enhancing regional stability and a more peaceful order transition.

International Order Transition

The concept of international order is a subject of debate among scholars and practitioners. By synthesizing various schools of thought, we can

define international order based on two pillars: the power pillar and the institutional pillar. The power pillar is determined by the distribution of power in the international system, while the institutional pillar comprises prevailing rules, norms, and ideas.

An international order transition occurs when both the power and institutional pillars undergo significant changes. If only one pillar changes, it does not constitute an “order transition”. For instance, the end of the Cold War witnessed a shift in the power pillar from bipolar to unipolar, but it was merely a power transition, not an order transition.

Historically, order transitions often occurred through hegemonic wars between rising powers and existing hegemons, as observed in WWI and WWII. This path involved a “power transition” leading to a “hegemonic war”, with the winner becoming the new hegemon and establishing new rules, essentially re-establishing the institutional pillar.



However, in the current nuclear age, the possibility of a great-power war between nuclear-armed states is deemed unthinkable, if not impossible, as it could lead to global destruction. Consequently, order transitions in this era involve simultaneous power and institutional transitions, with both transitions influencing each other.

Institutional Competition: Three Unintended Consequences

While military competition between the US and China will persist and may even intensify, the existence of nuclear weapons places certain limitations on the nature of this rivalry. President Biden has highlighted that the core focus of the competition between the US and China will revolve around “international rules of the road.” In other words, the competition between

the United States and China extends beyond merely military power, encompassing the realm of international institutions as well. This competition involves determining who has the authority to set the rules and norms that govern the world.

Institutional competition between these two global powers need not be seen purely in a negative light. Managed effectively, it can yield three notable positive outcomes for the international order transition. First and foremost, institutional competition injects dynamism into international institutions, ensuring their continued relevance and effectiveness within the global system. This dynamism often results from what can be termed as “institutional Darwinism”, a process where underperforming institutions are gradually supplanted by more efficient counterparts.

In response to the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), for instance, a clear challenge to the US-dominated global financial governance, both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank underwent internal reforms aimed at streamlining their practices regarding infrastructure loans for developing countries. Consequently, the competition brought about by the AIIB, which reflects the economic arena of US-China rivalry, has contributed to global financial improvements related to infrastructure development in developing nations.

Second, institutional competition encourages both the United States and China to prioritize regional cooperation. In their pursuit of followers and supporters in the institutional competition arena, both nations find themselves heavily investing in and fostering positive relations with various regional powers. As a result, both countries begin to place greater emphasis on issue areas that might have previously been low on their respective agendas with these regional powers.

Take, for example, the Pacific island countries, which were historically overlooked by the US and Australia. Due to China’s recent charm offensive in the Pacific islands, the United States and Australia have reinvested significantly in these nations, both economically and diplomatically. The unforeseen yet positive consequence of this revived investment competition between the US

“While the US and China bear significant responsibility for constructing a peaceful order transition, secondary powers play a crucial role in its maintenance.”

Kai He

and China is the substantial economic and social benefits accrued by the Pacific islands.

Third, the concept of “public goods competition” emerges as both the US and China vie for the support of their followers by providing public goods. Initiatives such as the “Blue Dot Network” and President Biden’s “Build Back Better World” (B3W) initiative are prime examples of this phenomenon. These initiatives primarily target countering China’s expanding influence through its ambitious “Belt and Road Initiative.” The primary beneficiaries of this infrastructure competition are the developing countries within these regions.

Ensuring a peaceful order transition

While recognizing the presence of “negative externalities” in US-China relations, it’s crucial to address the potential consequences of escalating competition. Mishandling this competition can lead to diplomatic disputes, heightened strategic rivalries, and, in the gravest scenario, full-fledged military conflicts. Historical examples, such as Japan and Germany before World War II, demonstrate that states have resorted to military means when dissatisfied with institutional arrangements.

To effectively navigate these challenges, maximize the positive outcomes of institutional competition, and secure a peaceful transition in the international order, two essential conditions must be considered. First, the United States and China should collaborate to maintain Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) deterrence. Both nations must exercise restraint to ensure that nuclear weapons remain tools of deterrence rather than war. Second, they should manage ideological disparities between them. Escalating ideological tensions risks polarizing the world into opposing blocs.

Secondary powers, like European countries and those in the Global South, should actively shape the US-China competition rather than blindly following any single nation. They can align with either the US or China on specific issues but should use their influence to discourage their major allies from escalating into a new Cold War characterized by “nuclear war”, “economic decoupling”, and “ideological antagonism”. While the US and China bear significant responsibility for constructing a peaceful order transition, secondary powers play a crucial role in its maintenance. ■



FELLOW

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Cooperation Potentials in Light of the Ukraine War

Parliamentary Meeting at the Bundestag,
29th November 2023



FELLOW

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The Academy
of International Affairs NRW
at the Bundestag in Berlin

Over the past 50 years, political tensions in economic relations between Germany and China have tended to be the exception. This has changed as a result of flaring international conflicts such as the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the associated geostrategic consequences. China's open claim to power is changing the geopolitical situation, to which the German government must respond. For this reason, the German government has agreed and published its own China strategy for the first time in history.

Against this backdrop, a parliamentary meeting on "Europe-China Relations and Cooperation Potentials in light of the Ukraine War" took place in the Bundestag (the German Parliament) on November 28. After being welcomed by our Director, Dr. Mayssoun Zein Al Din, Dr. Hans-Peter Friedrich, Chairman of the German-Chinese Parliamentary Group, and Mr. Michael Müller, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, gave brief introductory speeches.

This was followed by a lecture by AIA Fellow Prof. Xin Zhang from the Faculty of Politics and International Relations at East China Normal University in Shanghai, where he is also Deputy Director of the Center for Russian Studies. As part of his research project at the Academy, he will address the topic of "Critical geopolitics of connectivity and coordination between China, Russia and Turkey".

There was a lively debate with an international group of guests from politics, business, science and research. Different perspectives and assessments of the current situation were shared and there was an open discussion of individual approaches to solutions. ■





“It is important that we critically examine our relationship with China. We need to reduce our dependence on China and diversify our economic relations. At the same time, we should continue to seek cooperation with China that is in our mutual interest. Because without dialogue and collaboration, we will not be able to successfully address many global challenges.”

Michael Müller, MP



“China has become stronger and more powerful and its role in world politics carries more weight than before. It is therefore right that China must be given more space within the National Security Strategy than before. The focus is on Germany-China and Europe-China relations and the responsibility for stability that Europe and China have on the Eurasian double continent.”

Dr. Hans-Peter Friedrich, MP

Chinese Foreign Direct Investments in Africa

INTERVIEW with **Abiodun Egbetokun**

With massive Chinese investments in Africa, there are risks but also the potential for economic growth. The Economist and Associate Fellow **Abiodun Egbetokun** explains the perspective of African states.

For some time now, China's activities in Africa have been gaining a lot of global attention. What do you think is the reason for that?

This is due to two main factors, in my opinion. First, the scale and scope of China's investments and aid has increased significantly in recent years. Now, it is singularly one of Africa's largest donors, and has given aid to virtually every African country. Second, in comparison to aid from other sources, Chinese aid is somewhat unconventional because it comes with fewer conditions attached. When we combine these two factors, it becomes easy to see why there is a lot of attention. Take the Belt and Road Initiative, for example. It is appealing to many African countries because of the opportunities for international trade that come with it. But some commentators argue that it is China's strategy to reduce Western dominance by gaining a strong diplomatic foothold in Africa. Some even argue that China's substantial foreign direct investments (FDI) in infrastructure, mining, and manufacturing are merely strategic moves to secure natural resources, expand markets, and enhance geopolitical influence. So, China's growing presence in Africa is a complex phenomenon that continues to attract global attention due to its strategic implications for both African development and global power dynamics.

Your research is focused on Chinese foreign direct investments (FDI) in Africa, and thus bears very important political implications. Could you explain the nature of Chinese investments in African states –

and also how they differ from the approaches of Western investors?

Chinese investments in African states are characterised by large infrastructure projects, concessional loans, and FDI. Although it is commonly believed that China's investments in Africa are focused solely on resource extraction, a closer examination of the data reveals that while Chinese FDI is largely concentrated in construction and mining, it also extends into manufacturing and services. The talking point is the relative weight of each sector in the total FDI portfolio, which I am currently exploring. Additionally, China operates a model of offering aid and investment with fewer political and economic conditionalities compared to Western donors. This has generated debates about the long-term implications for debt sustainability and ultimately, the sovereignty of the recipient countries. Notwithstanding, Chinese aid and investments tend to focus on a clear strategic mix of pragmatic development needs in the destination country and politico-economic interests of China. In contrast, Western donors and investors tend to mask their political and economic interests under a development agenda.

Your project brings together several important geo-economic and geopolitical issues as well as two major geographical regions, namely states in Africa and the economic giant China. How have such large-scale questions inspired you to pursue your very exciting research project?

I was inspired by observing the nuanced and often conflicting



evidence surrounding Chinese investments in Africa. While some researchers argue that Chinese FDI enhances firm-level productivity in Africa, others suggest the opposite. Similarly, Chinese aid is sometimes labelled as 'rogue aid' due to the absence of traditional conditionalities, yet empirical support for this notion is limited. My interest deepened when I encountered studies suggesting that while Chinese and traditional aid may individually offer benefits, their combination can have a mutually harmful effect on certain aspects of development in recipient countries. Moreover, I noticed that in the broader discourse, the agency of African countries is frequently overlooked. For me, this raises concerns about what has been termed 'the new rush for Africa' or 'the second colonisation'.

Why do African states choose to cooperate with China rather than with an EU state? What is China doing right?

I think each country is unique in its offering to African countries. However, compared to other countries, China's pragmatic approach that focuses on immediate development needs without imposing stringent conditions seems to be working, even if it comes with its own consequences. One of such consequences are the increased CO2 emissions that sometimes accompany energy projects. There is also the fact that Chinese investing is clever; what really happens is sometimes different from what is being said. For example, if we only count the number of loan or investment deals, it appears that services and manufacturing are the top priorities. Everything changes once we look at how much

is really going into these sectors. In 2021, for example, 33 percent of all Chinese FDI went into construction and 24 percent went into mining. These activities often create environmental hazards and distort the livelihoods of local populations. Yet, as China seems more willing to accept the high risks that come with African investments, some African countries see it as a viable alternative to other aid sources like the EU.

As one of your main questions, you try to show in what ways massive Chinese investments in the infrastructure of key African states actually create tangible benefits. You especially look at what employment opportunities Chinese investments create. This is important because of high youth unemployment rates in many African states. From your perspective, why is that such a central question for the future of African states?

Most African countries grapple with high rates of youth unemployment, which affect social stability and economic growth. Employment creation is therefore a key development issue for these countries, not just for political reasons but also because unemployment seriously threatens sustainable development. Take a look at the first three SDGs, for example. They are all related to what people do, what they eat and how they live. One way or another, these are connected to decent employment. So, from a policy perspective, understanding the sources of employment is crucial. Given that FDI is a driver of employment and China is a leading source of FDI in Africa, it is logical to question



whether Chinese investments are indeed creating jobs. This question is important for African countries considering existing reports of labour exploitation associated with Chinese employers.

As part of its Belt and Road strategy, China has been pursuing large infrastructure projects, using Chinese equipment and labour to realise them. But is this the case in the countries that you study? What other policies have they applied to individual states, e.g. concerning culture, education, politics etc.?

The Belt and Road Initiative is a classic case where Chinese companies and workers dominate. This is not surprising, given the strategic geopolitical nature of the initiative for China. Within individual African countries, Chinese infrastructure projects often use Chinese equipment and labour, but there are cross-country variations. Some countries negotiate better terms than others, depending on the amount of agency they bring to the table. In the Addis Ababa Light Rail project, for example, a significant amount of local labour and materials was used. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway

The interview with *Abiodun Egbetokun* was conducted on August 8th, 2024, by *Maysoun Zein Al Din, Executive Director, AIA NRW*

project also used a good number of Ethiopian workers. The contract for the Abuja-Kaduna railway project in Nigeria included provisions for the use of local labour and resources. The challenge, however, is that a non-negligible share of the employment created is seasonal in the sense that it disappears once the projects are over. Moreover, while Chinese contractors sometimes engage in training programs for local workers, the transfer of skills and technology to the local workforce has been limited in many cases. This is largely because the more skilled and technical jobs are often reserved for Chinese workers, leaving lower-skilled positions for locals. Besides infrastructure, China engages in cultural exchanges, educational programs, and political dialogues to foster bilateral relations. For instance, there are currently around 60 Confucius Institutes spread across Africa.

Perhaps you could give us an example about how you managed to get the necessary data for an individual country for your project. Is there reliable data or is there a lack of reliable data on the country level?

The problem of data deficit in Africa is not unique to the topic of China-Africa relations. I have faced a lack of adequate data at different points in my research. Sometimes, it is straightforward to overcome the problem by simply collecting your own data. I have done this, for example, through a survey of undergraduate student entrepreneurship that has run for about a decade and a half now. For my current project, I am relying on multiple data sources, including the China Africa Research Initiative (CARI) and World Development Indicators, to compile a comprehensive country-level dataset. I am also able to get firm-level survey data on Ethiopia and Nigeria from CARI, so my fieldwork will be limited to a few key informant interviews with well-known experts and investigative journalists. These are sufficient for my research questions for now. In the future, I will have to do more extensive fieldwork for a larger research agenda.

And what broad lessons can countries in Africa, South-east and Central Asia or South America take away from your study?

There are three important lessons that I can point out readily. These lessons are relevant in the process of engaging with development partners, China or otherwise. First, agency is

“Agency is critical; countries must push for terms that align with their priorities.”

Abiodun Egbetokun

critical. It is extremely important for recipient countries to bring their agency into negotiations and push for terms that match their own priorities and do not just serve the donor’s priorities. For instance, countries can push for a minimum number and hierarchy of local workers within development projects. Second, there is a real need for strong domestic standards. Foreign economic players should have to operate within clear and fair rules and regulations. For instance, in mining activities, domestic regulations against pollution and environmental degradation should exist and be enforced. Finally, I think recipient countries and regions need to diversify their investment partners and balance relationships with both Chinese and traditional donors to optimise development outcomes. This is important considering that each partner comes with different strategic options and risks. For example, private investments from China primarily target manufacturing and services while state-led projects focus on construction and resource extraction. Understanding this distinction will help countries to shape their portfolio of development partnerships efficiently.

Finally, if you were invited by European actors to propose concrete strategies for their policies towards African states, which have recently become more acknowledged as valuable partners, e.g. for the EU Green Deal or in trade relations, what would you recommend?

European policies need to be a bit more pragmatic when engaging with African states, especially considering the competitive presence of other global players like China. This can be done in several ways. One is to offer more practical and immediate benefits to African countries. For instance, trade agreements must go beyond the export of raw materials and focus instead on value-added goods and services. This is more consistent with Africa’s need for industrialisation. Another way is for the EU to align its revealed goals with the development priorities of African countries. A focus on partnerships and projects with direct social impact, such as those in energy, health, education, entrepreneurship and trade facilitation infrastructure will help to establish the EU as a valuable and distinct partner. The €150 billion Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package is a good one, but it is a few steps behind other players like China and the UAE. So, the EU needs to double down on its efforts. Finally, many African countries risk

falling into the ‘middle-income trap’ and need strategies beyond investment-led growth. The EU, with its strengths in modern technologies and innovation, will have a distinct advantage in technology transfer rather than competing with China’s investment-driven approach. ■

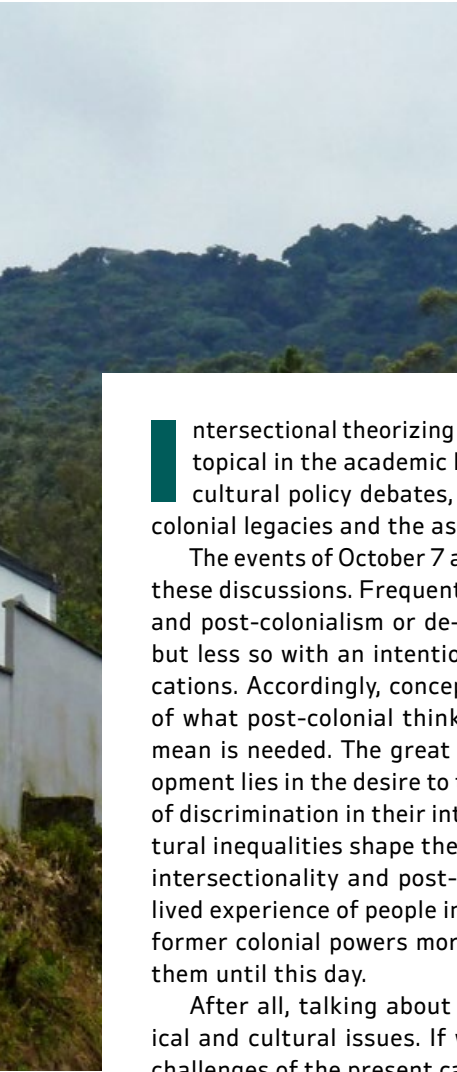


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Decolonizing Transnational Humanitarianism: Intersections between Germany and Africa

WORKSHOP In December 2023 AIA Fellows **Cecelia Lynch** (University of California, Irvine) and **Nadine Machikou** (University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon) invited participants from several African and European academic, non-profit and political organizations to address a topic that is as complex as it is controversial.



Intersectional theorizing and post-colonial discourses have become topical in the academic landscape as well as in feature pages and cultural policy debates, evidencing a new or renewed interest in colonial legacies and the asymmetries they produced.

The events of October 7 and their consequences further intensified these discussions. Frequently, the concepts of both intersectionality and post-colonialism or de-coloniality are used as political rhetoric but less so with an intention of actually thinking about their implications. Accordingly, conceptual clarity and a better understanding of what post-colonial thinking and intersectional theorizing really mean is needed. The great strength of intersectional theory development lies in the desire to think and interpret different experiences of discrimination in their intersecting nature, underlining how structural inequalities shape the lives of many in the world. Talking about intersectionality and post-coloniality, therefore, means taking the lived experience of people in the post-colony and their relations with former colonial powers more seriously to understand how it affects them until this day.

After all, talking about colonialism cannot be limited to historical and cultural issues. If we start from the premise that political challenges of the present can only be meaningfully addressed on the basis of a well-informed picture of the past (and its legacies), then these discourses are also necessary to produce more meaningful politics of the present. The debates were meant to focus on the role of reflecting and learning from the colonial past, particularly of the German partners, in cooperation projects with African partners. On the one hand, the aim was to clarify on a theoretical-academic level what decolonizing partnerships can specifically mean against the background of various historical and historical-political experiences in Germany and in African countries. The different historical trajectories, discussions showed, of Germany and other former colonial powers resonate in their approaches until today. For instance, hierarchies of guilt that have long prioritized addressing the era of national socialism over Germany's colonial past are a main reason why debates about post-coloniality lag behind and are only recently becoming more central in German development cooperation and foreign policy. From a practical-political perspective, the aim of the debates was thus also to examine how the past influences the conditions of German development cooperation. Specifically, questions that were raised by many were to what extent German aid organizations reproduce inegalitarian practices, for example in funding, decision-making, policy implementation, etc., which are associated with the current aid regimes. Even when egalitarian language is used, conditions continue to be highly unequal, and many further steps need to be taken to overcome the trajectories of asymmetric relations.



FELLOW

NADINE MACHIKOU is an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW and Tenure Professor in Political Science at the University of Yaoundé II (Cameroon). She is co-editor-in-chief of the French journal *Politique africaine*. She has been a Seminar Director at the Cameroon International War College since 2012. Since 2021 she has been the Vice-president of the African Association of Political Science. Her research today focuses on the practical and symbolic expressions of violence, autocratization, the political and moral economy of emotions (compassion in foreign policy, anger, agency). She is visiting professor at several institutions.



FELLOW

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“For AIA, the close cooperation with participating institutions remains a challenging but worthwhile goal.”

Cecelia Lynch

During the workshop, the participants, who are familiar both with the conceptual underpinnings and the practices of development agencies, discussed the trend in the field of development cooperation overall that take up potent calls by scholars of decolonial thought and of humanitarian action to “decolonize humanitarianism” and to “decolonize development”. Aid agencies based in the Global North in general, and Germany in particular, are beginning to respond to this call, but in uncoordinated ways, each with their own interpretation of what this would entail. Moreover, it is unclear whether, in attempting to respond, aid agencies and NGOs/FBOs in the Global North are



cognizant of their own colonial past and how to address this. While claims are often heard in German discourse that its colonial history was less influential, compared to other European powers, this view is not shared in the former colonies. After World War I, Germany was forced to give up administrative areas in Africa it had colonized (e.g. today’s Cameroon, Namibia, Tanzania, Togo, etc.) to French and British control under the League of Nations Mandate System, which formed a discursively powerful interpretation in the German public of a short, unremarkable period of colonialism in spite of a track record of violence and oppression. This legacy has echoed in German academic debates only very recently, and today, several arguably decolonial moves exist simultaneously that take the colonial legacy seriously. There is little connection between the different approaches, including the debate about providing reparations to Namibia for the genocide of 1904–1908 and apologising for colonising Tanzania; the move to



restore African cultural and religious artifacts to the continent; the local attempts to rid streets of names that are inherently connected to the German colonial project etc. Beyond these broader political implications, the more specific question remains how the past has or has not contributed to shaping the terms of German development cooperation. This examination includes whether or not the idea of a form of German hesitancy, to be involved in former colonies stems from a disinterest in supporting them or its difficulty to deal with its rapid, episodic and painful colonial history.

The heterogeneous composition of experts gathered at the workshop reflected these related, but quite diverse questions. Experts from universities and academic institutions as well as representatives from NGOs and development cooperation in general (Welthungerhilfe, Brot für die Welt, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Misereor) met to discuss the state of the debate and shed light onto the practices pursued by different actors in the field of development cooperation. Similarly, civil society actors and human rights activists as well as Jean-Pierre Bekolo, a filmmaker from Cameroon, raised questions about the best ways ahead that will continue to shape the debate in the future. For AIA, the close cooperation with participating institutions, many of which are based in Bonn and NRW, remains a challenging but worthwhile goal and the mutual exchange on these and related issues will remain firmly on its agenda. ■

State of the debate in Germany

Current developments in Germany include several moves to incorporate insights of post-colonial and decolonial debate, e.g. through

- decolonising development cooperation with partners in non-Western countries: German development agencies, both state and non-state actors, have expressed their intentions to decolonise their relations with partners, i.e. to acknowledge and overcome systematic asymmetries that emerged out of the colonial trajectories and go beyond practices of donors and recipients of aid;
- creating regimes of remembrance and new knowledge of German colonialism: state-led as well as bottom-up initiatives to educate a broader public about German colonial legacies, e.g. by re-naming public spaces such as streets, creating a broader culture of remembrance, founding new sites and symbols to commemorate colonial violence, particularly on the African continent;
- reparations and justice for communities of victims of German colonialism: the German state acknowledges the genocide committed by German soldiers against Herero and Naga communities 120 years ago and attempts to negotiate an agreement of reconciliation with Namibia, which is still seen as insufficient, and has made agreements with France to collaborate in research on the provenance of African relics, among other things.

While shaped by many controversies, e.g. on the potential danger of relativising the Shoah, the German debate is not isolated from the broader international context and has already gained momentum, also in the context of migration debates or decolonising German cultural policies.

The Role of the Baltic States in Framing German- Russian Relations

IN CONVERSATION Māris Andžāns and Farid Karimi



How was Russia viewed by the Baltic states before its attack on Ukraine?

ANDŽĀNS: Since regaining independence in 1991, Russia has always been considered the primary source of risks to the Baltic states' national security. Fear of Russia was among the primary motives to join both NATO and the European Union as soon as possible.

Despite the constant fear of Russia, there have been ups and downs over three decades, including attempts to improve relations. The three Baltic states also had slightly different approaches to Russia, most notably with Latvia trying to pragmatize and economize the relations shortly before Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia and after.

All in all, even before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia was a clear number one source of risks to all three Baltic states. They all were highly critical of Russia, especially following the 2014 occupation of Crimea and Russia's war in Eastern Ukraine. At the same time, economic cooperation and societal links to Russia remained notable.

KARIMI: From my perspective, Russia has long been perceived as a significant threat to the stability and democratic values of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), particularly by the Baltic states. The Putin administration has consistently pursued strategies that aimed to destabilize geopolitical regions in Europe, including Ukraine and the Baltic states, as well as beyond, such as in Syria and Libya. These actions have posed severe security threats to the broader European landscape.

On the other hand, it must also be said that despite these challenges, the Baltic states recognized the need to cooperate with Russia in order to maintain political stability in their countries. Given Russia's heavy reliance on energy exports to sustain its economy, energy trade emerged as a crucial avenue for diplomatic interaction, among others. This approach allowed the Baltic states to address their security concerns while fostering a more stable relationship with Russia.

However, a notable challenge in the Baltic states has been the absence of national Russian-speaking media, creating an information gap that gave Russian media a disproportionate influence, especially considering the significant Russian-speaking population in the region. This imbalance has introduced risks and potential conflicts within the Baltic states, highlighting the complex dynamics in their relationship with Russia.

What has changed since February 2022?

ANDŽĀNS: Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 was the most significant geopolitical shock in decades. All three Baltic states became one of the staunchest supporters of Ukraine, both in words and deeds. They are also one of the most critical of Russia. For example, they swiftly denoted Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism and accused it of committing genocide in Ukraine. All three have heavily invested in defence, with Estonia spending already above

3 percent of GDP for defence and Lithuania and Latvia approaching this landmark. All three ceased importing Russian natural gas. De-russification and de-Sovietization initiatives resulted in the demolition of remaining Soviet occupation monuments and the renaming of streets bearing Soviet and Russia-related figures and symbols.

KARIMI: Perhaps the Baltic states were not as shocked as some Western European countries by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They were seemingly more [mentally] prepared for such a crisis and were among the first countries who reacted proportionally, as Māris exemplified some of the actions. The Russian invasion actually led to the Baltic states expediting some of their longer-term plans for being independent of Russia as well as making more resilient societies. An example of this concerns the changes in the energy policy in these countries.

What expectations do the Baltic states have of Germany and its geopolitical role?

ANDŽĀNS: Baltic states expect Germany to lead Europe and play a more significant role not only economically and politically but militarily as well. Germany is expected to be able to fight a war with Russia over the Baltic states if it came to that. Of course, also supporting Ukraine as long as it takes.

KARIMI: It is reasonable to assume that the Baltic states would have preferred to place greater reliance on Germany during times of threats and crises than, for instance, on the US, not least given their proximity and membership in the EU. However, the reality, as evidenced by the Nord Stream projects, suggests that this may not always be a feasible option. However, the Baltic states' desire is to see Germany has learned from the past decade and consider the Baltic states' realistic needs and demands. Germany should support crucial institutions in the Baltic states and should also spend more on Russian-speaking media (e.g., DW) with a particular focus on the Baltic states.

Is Germany living up to this role?

ANDŽĀNS: Not entirely. Germany was widely ridiculed in the Baltics when the three provided military assistance, but Germany – only helmets and other non-lethal aid. Since then, Germany has immensely progressed, becoming one of the most notable supporters of Ukraine in real terms and sending various kinds of lethal aid, including tanks. Also, the turnaround of the German energy policy deserves praise. Despite the initial reluctance, Germany agreed to significantly increase its military deployment to Lithuania to number around 4.000 troops by 2026.

Nevertheless, the initial German response to the war in Ukraine did the damage. Germany is still criticized for being unable to reach 2 percent of GDP for its defence sector and for refusing to provide Ukraine with more advanced military kits, like fighter jets and Taurus missiles.



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For example, a nationally representative poll commissioned by the Center for Geopolitical Studies Riga in May 2023 explored whether German support for Ukraine was sufficient. 36 percent considered German support insufficient, and a similar share of 34 percent thought that the support was adequate (a considerable share, or 30 percent of respondents, could not answer this question). There were notable differences between Latvian-speaking and Russian-speaking respondents. Half (50 percent) of Latvian speakers considered German support insufficient, while only 13 percent of Russian speakers shared the same assessment.

KARIMI: I agree somewhat with Māris, but I would put it more clearly that Germany is not really fulfilling this role. However, in my opinion, depending on who will be in the White House, German policy and approaches will change in the future. Having said that, Germany should adopt a more proactive stance concerning the Baltic states and Ukraine, moving away from a largely reactionary approach. Currently, Germany plays a comparatively smaller role in addressing the crisis in Europe compared to the UK, the USA, and even Poland.

Is there space for further trilateral collaboration with Germany?

ANDŽĀNS: Definitely. Economic and political cooperation is strong, though progress could also be achieved here. Given the current German military deployment to Lithuania, the German-Lithuanian military partnership is strong but could be further enhanced with Latvia and Estonia. Germany should explore permanently stationing some of its air and navy forces in the Baltics.

KARIMI: There is actually a huge potential and opportunities here. Germany, for instance, could collaborate with the Baltic states in developing common energy infrastructure in the Baltic Sea (e.g. wind parks). Furthermore, in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the security of infrastructure, particularly energy infrastructure, has become a top priority on national security agendas. Germany has the potential to provide financial and military support to the Baltic states, ensuring the security of vital infrastructure in these countries.

How could perceptions between Germany and the Baltic states be further approximated?

KARIMI: Enhancing perceptions between Germany and the Baltic states requires a multifaceted approach. Initially, diplomatic channels should be fortified to encourage open dialogue and foster an understanding of each other's perspectives. The case of Nord Stream projects, for example, offers valuable lessons to be learned in this regard. Joint efforts to address regional challenges, particularly those related to Russia, can help align interests and cultivate a sense of solidarity.

Collaborative projects, especially in areas of shared interest such as energy infrastructure, technology, and security, can create common ground. For instance, Germany must advance its digitalisation rapidly, and Estonia could be one of the most qualified partners for Germany in this area.

Moreover, media engagement is essential. Germany should collaborate with the Baltic states in advancing public media in these countries, not least Russian-speaking media, considering all four countries have considerable Russian-speaking citizens. Media plays an integral role in shaping perceptions.

ANDŽĀNS: There is a lot in common between Germany and the Baltic states, but unfortunately, it is not widely known in Germany. Between the 13th and 16th centuries, present-day Latvia and Estonia were governed by the Livonian Confederation, which the Teutonic Knights and the Catholic church created. After Livonia, the Baltic-German nobility retained significant influence and autonomy even under other rulers, including during the rule of the Russian Empire until the early 20th century. While Lithuania was subject to less German influence, the present-day Klaipėda region (the East Prussian Memelland) only became part of Lithuania in the 1920s. Owing to friendly Soviet and East German relations and earlier historical grounds, the German language was rather commonly known even during the Soviet occupation of the Baltics. For those and other reasons, the imprint of the German culture in the Baltics is notable today.

According to the poll mentioned above, Latvian views towards Germany are overwhelmingly positive. 63 percent of the respondents held a generally positive view, 29 percent had a neutral assessment, and only 6 percent held a negative view of Germany.

For these and other reasons, there is a lot of space in Germany to increase awareness of the common heritage and promote the German culture and language more actively. ■



FELLOW

FARID KARIMI is a senior lecturer at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. His main research interests are in the social sciences, with a particular focus on issues related to energy transition and energy politics. Farid has several years of international work experience in various interdisciplinary fields, both in and outside academia in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Finland. He is an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW.



Russian Strategic Narratives in North-Eastern Europe

Through diplomatic communication, countries tell stories about what they do in international relations – and try to convince others that their actions are justified. Russia is a very skilled player at crafting such stories or strategic narratives. However, since mis- and disinformation play a major role in Russian diplomatic communication, it is important to recognize falsehoods in Russian strategic narratives and develop strategies for countering them.

In advancing their interests in global politics, countries often use a combination of hard and soft power to achieve their goals. One important soft power tool for states is diplomatic communication through which they seek to “win the story” as they frame issues, seek to advance their objectives, and convince others of their rationale for actions in global affairs. In the process, countries often develop strategic narratives, or stories that are told through the speeches of key leaders and diplomatic communication more broadly. They aim to persuade both other states as well as the public at home. Successful strategic narratives can become binding and can both shape and constrain countries’ actions. The ability to convince others and win the story is crucial to reaching their objectives in the long term on topics ranging from war to human rights to economics.

In conceptualizing Russian strategic narratives, it is important not to overlook the role of deception, disinformation and information warfare. Current Russian Information Security Doctrine calls for information aggression against perceived opponents including the West, the US and NATO. During the Cold War, Russian operatives spread fake news and even forged US governmental documents in attempts to discredit the US. Since then, some have argued that contemporary Russia represents the most sophisticated case study of how a country can strategically develop and use diplomatic narratives to subvert their perceived opponents diplomatic messaging abroad and political stability at home. Representatives of Putin’s administration are known to have spread dis- and misinformation abroad aimed at justifying their aggression in global affairs (such as the invasion of Ukraine in 2022) and undermining political stability at home of their perceived adversaries (such as misinformation spread through the Russian-linked media, social media, and messaging boards in the lead up to recent elections in the US and Western Europe).

I study Russian strategic narratives in North-Eastern Europe to see how it has attempted to gain support for its justifications for interventions in Ukraine – and how it is currently targeting smaller countries vulnerable to Russian meddling. Russian strategic narratives towards Ukraine have changed over the last two decades from focusing on establishing a strategic partnership between the two countries to delegitimizing the Ukrainian government. As early as 2008, Russia accused the Ukrainian government of harboring fascist sympathies – and similar false accusations of the rebirth of fascism (along with false claims that Russia

is intervening to prevent a genocide of Russian-speakers in Ukraine – and dubious claims that Ukrainian leaders are incapable drug addicts) were amplified in days leading up to the 2022 invasion. They played a major role in Russian justification for the invasion. Such strategic war narratives on Ukraine have been commonly accepted by significant segments of people in Russia but rejected by audiences abroad. More broadly, Russia has spread baseless claims aiming to delegitimize and discredit its perceived adversaries in North-Eastern Europe beyond Ukraine by portraying them as fascist sympathizers or even by equating anti-Russian sentiment with Nazism.

Two additional countries that are particularly vulnerable to Russian meddling in North-Eastern Europe are the Republic of Moldova and Latvia. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, some called Moldova the country most vulnerable to Russian involvement due to the complicated historical relationship between these two countries, Moldova’s proximity to Ukraine, and the ongoing Russian patronage for the breakaway Moldovan region of Transnistria. In recent years, Russian narratives on Moldova have been focusing on creating internal divisions, encouraging Moldova to seek closer ties with Russia and articulating the perceived threat that NATO represents. The overall Russian strategic narrative on relations with Moldova have evolved from articulating a search for a partnership through shared culture and history to highlighting growing tensions amidst Moldova’s growing embrace of the West. Moldovan narratives on relations with Russia have evolved from a pursuit of closer relations with the European Union while simultaneously emphasizing cultural connections with Russia to condemnation

of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and a search for ever closer relations with the West. Meanwhile, Russian-Latvian relations have remained mostly tense during the last three decades with Russian narratives commonly accusing the Latvian government of mistreatment of Russian-speakers, and characterizing Latvia as a failed state.

Finally, to successfully counter Russian strategic narratives – and dis- and misinformation in them – it is first important to understand how states develop and utilize information warfare strategies. During the Cold War, Western politicians commonly identified and addressed deception in Russian narratives and information operations abroad. Falsehoods in current Russian strategic narratives should be countered similarly to ensure that such stories are not taken at their face value and reported as objective facts in the media. ■



FELLOW

JURIS PUPČĒNOKS, PhD, is an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW, and an Associate Professor of Political Science at Marist College, NY, USA. He is the author of 30 research publications. His recent research and publications deal with strategic narratives, military intervention, and minorities and security in North-East Europe.



Relations of the Republic of Moldova with Germany on its Way to the EU

IN CONVERSATION Ambassador Aureliu Ciocoi and Inna Şupac

With the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova has also become increasingly caught up in the lines of conflict between Russia, Ukraine and the West. Here, Moldovan Ambassador to Germany **Aurelio Ciocoi** and Associate Fellow **Inna Şupac** provide insights into the situation in their home country.

What is your opinion about the relationship between Germany and Moldova?

AMB. CIOCOI: Well, in one word it is a brilliant one. Indeed, there is also place for better relations. But as ambassador of my country here in the Federal Republic of Germany I have to do my job in order to improve it permanently and to push it in a better way again and again and again. Well, just as concerning our bilateral relations politically it is no better as it was previously now. We are in the process of consolidating our position, and the start of EU accession negotiations, which finally began last December, is helping us enormously. And indeed, Germany is our crucial partner, our key partner in our development with the European Union. Therefore, on behalf of my government, I am very grateful and may I convey our deepest appreciation to the German authorities for supporting Moldova in this way.

ŞUPAC: In our region, there is a proverb that can be translated as "A friend is known in trouble". The year 2022 was challenging for the Republic of Moldova as a result of the Russian full-scale aggression against Ukraine. Energy prices have doubled and put significant pressure on the national budget. Germany was one of the most important donors

helping the Moldovan government mitigate the impact of this increase. Germany is also one of the initiators of the Moldova Support Platform, launched in 2022, which aims to mobilize, concentrate and coordinate the political, technical and financial support from developed countries for Moldova. This adds enormous value to the ongoing German support provided through GIZ (the German Association for International Cooperation) and KfW (a state-owned German development bank) in the areas of urban development, water supply and sanitation, energy, sustainable economic development, and good governance. We are very grateful to Germany for all its help.

That already sounds very positive. But what can still be improved?

AMB. CIOCOI: Well, what we can improve is indeed the economic cooperation in the field of investment. Germany was always and permanently in the top of foreign investors in the Moldovan economy. Now, Germany is, if I remember well, in the top 5 of foreign investors in our national economy. So I would be happy to see Germany as No. 1 in that ranking, which is why we have to do our best in order to achieve this goal.

“And indeed, Germany is our crucial partner, our key partner in our development with the European Union.”

Ambassador Aurelio Ciocoi



ŞUPAC: I think there is a strong need for Germany, as well as for the EU as a whole, to implement a better communication campaign regarding its support for Moldova. I mean, for example, the listing and visualizing of localities and infrastructure facilities which were modernized in at least the last decade due to your support. Many Moldovan citizens still wonder what the huge European aid was spent on, doubting its effective distribution and use. Do you think it is well-known in Moldova that 70 percent of the governmental program of direct bill compensation for household consumers' energy consumption for the cold season 2022–2023 was covered by development partners, where the German contribution of 40 mn euros was one of the most generous? I doubt it. In this regard, I would suggest working more closely with the regions with more skeptical populations and establishing a direct dialogue with them. At the same time, as another old saying goes, every good relationship should be a two-way street, where both parties equally contribute and feel they benefit from each other. So, in this regard, Moldova and its government still have to do their homework in making qualitative progress in internal modernization and consolidating national consensus around the idea of EU accession.

Why is it worth investing in Moldova now?

AMB. CIOCO: Because Moldova has a brilliant geographical position: Firstly, it might be a bridge between the European Union and the Eastern market but definitely when the war in Ukraine will be over, because nowadays it is quite impossible to pass through Ukraine to the Eastern market. However, as soon as the war is finished – hopefully with positive results for the Ukrainian friends – Moldova will play the role as a hub of goods transportation to Ukraine in order to rebuild Ukraine after the war. Secondly, Moldova offers an excellent opportunity for any European company to take advantage of our so-called free economic zones, which have a zero-tax policy. These allow any European company to reduce production costs by up to 20 percent, which is indeed a huge saving for production. In this way, there is a greater competitive opportunity for this very production, which in the final stage could be manufactured in Moldova.

ŞUPAC: To what Mr. Ambassador emphasized, I would like

to add that Moldova has signed more than 40 Free Trade Agreements, including with the EU, the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Turkey and the UK. Together with access to maritime transportation through the port of Giurgiulesti, this puts Moldova in a favorable position to attract foreign investment. Secondly, Moldova has an advanced information and communication technologies infrastructure and developed E-Government experience, where you do not have to wait for the postman to deliver a letter to you from a state institution. Last but not least is the multilingual workforce. It is also good to know that in January 2024 the Moldovan Government expanded the list of countries whose citizens can work in Moldova for up to 90 days without a work permit to 47 countries.

How about the relationship between Moldova and the EU? How can this relationship be improved?

AMB. CIOCO: Well, we don't actually need to improve it. We already have very good relations and we are very grateful for the support we receive from both the European Commission and the member states of the European Union. And by the way, indeed, thanks to Berlin and thanks also to Paris, whose decision made it possible to grant candidate status to both Moldova and Ukraine. We now have to deliver, we have to deliver our reforms to make Moldova ready as soon as possible to go from a candidate to a full member of the European Union. Our President, Mrs. Maia Sandu, is monitoring the D-Day for such accession to the European Union for the Republic of Moldova exactly in 2030. We will be happy if we manage to join the European Union very soon.

ŞUPAC: Indeed, two years ago no one expected that the EU would open accession negotiations with Moldova in June 2024, this is an outstanding achievement. Nevertheless, I would expect a few important things from the EU. First, the European Union must be an impartial arbiter when it comes to domestic reforms in a candidate state. When an illegal act occurs, even if it happens under the auspices of a pro-European government, the EU has to react immediately by declaring the need to respect the rule of law. There have been recent cases where Moldovan civil society orga-

nizations have expressed concern regarding the inability of the authorities to motivate their decisions, but on each occasion, the EU institutions remain silent without public criticism. This silence from the EU is perceived by the government as a green light with no limits, by a significant part of Moldovan society as a sign of double standards on the part of the EU, and by the opposition as a precedent that they can follow if they win elections in the future. Second, there must be a common understanding that dialogue with different parts of society and national consensus is the only way to make Moldova's integration into the EU an irreversible process. Attempts to monopolize the EU idea by one person or one political party could lead to a complete change in the political landscape as a result of the next parliamentary elections in 2025, undermining the continuity of the European integration process of Moldova. Third, the EU should make very clear in its public statements that Moldova's constitutional neutrality status is compatible with the EU membership, thereby following the opinion of the majority of Moldovan citizens that neutrality can best guarantee Moldova's security, and undermining Russia's narrative about the correlation between EU and NATO membership.

The idea of our Academy is to connect countries and institutions globally. From your point of view, why is it important to have such independent institutions in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany?

AMB. CIOCI: In my opinion, it is very good that North Rhine-Westphalia has such an Academy for International Affairs. It would be much better if every federal state had its own Academy for International Affairs, because foreign policy in the Federal Republic of Germany, with its federal state structure, is indeed a matter for the central authorities. But at the same time, each federal state has its own opportunity to use its own foreign contacts to make itself more visible on a broad scale and also more attractive to foreigners.

ŞUPAC: I am very grateful to the Academy of International Affairs for selecting me and providing me with an exceptional opportunity to conduct a research fellowship program in 2023. An attractive feature of the Academy is that it accepts applications for two tracks – researchers and practitioners, which means diplomats, former politicians and civil society activists are included in its inspiring atmosphere. Networking and collaborating with other fellows from different parts of the world and on various interdisciplinary topics gives a great chance to gain a broader understanding of global development trends as well as the regional context. The off-the-record format of many events inside the Academy opens up a unique perspective for researchers to obtain valuable insight from former and current officials, which is not always found in open sources. The Academy also provides the opportunity for its fellows to convene an international workshop and invite experts on research topics from around the world. The organization

of fruitful meetings in the Bundestag is also part of the Academy's research life. So, the Academy is a perfect place both for fellows and German decision-makers for helpful debates, honest exchange of ideas and excellent networking possibilities. ■

Aureliu Ciocoi is a Moldovan diplomat. Currently he is the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Germany. He worked as Ambassador to Germany and Denmark from 2010 to 2015, as well as to China and Vietnam from 2015 to 2017. He also briefly served as Ambassador to the United States in 2017. In April 2018 to November 2019 and March–November 2020 he was an adviser to the President of the Republic of Moldova on foreign policy issues. In November 2019 to March 2020 and November 2020 to August 2021 he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. On 31 December 2020, President Maia Sandu appointed him as interim prime minister. He was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2015.



INNA ŞUPAC is a political analyst, specializing in the EU enlargement process and Russia's policies in EaP countries. In 2023, she is an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW. Since 2019, she has been working at the Institute for Strategic Initiatives (IPIS) from Moldova, first as Executive Director for 3 years and currently as an expert in good governance and public policy. Before this, Inna was involved in politics as a member of parliament for ten years. At various stages of her parliamentary activity, Inna was chair of a parliamentary group, vice-chair of the EU–Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, and member of the PACE.

A photograph of a space station in orbit above Earth. The station's white, modular structure is visible at the top, with a long, white, cylindrical component extending horizontally across the middle. Below the station, the Earth's surface is visible, showing a blue ocean, white clouds, and a brownish landmass. The text 'SUMMER ACADEMY: THE GEOPOLITICS OF OUTER SPACE' is overlaid on the image in a white box with a dark green border. The text is arranged in four lines: 'SUMMER', 'ACADEMY:', 'THE', and 'GEOPOLITICS OF OUTER SPACE'. The words 'THE', 'GEOPOLITICS', 'OF OUTER', and 'SPACE' are in a larger, bold, dark green font, while 'SUMMER' and 'ACADEMY:' are in a smaller, dark green font. The background of the text box is white, and the text is centered within it.

SUMMER
ACADEMY:
THE
GEOPOLITICS
OF OUTER
SPACE



Outer Space Affairs - A Critical Key Domain of International Politics



AIA's third **Summer Academy** took place from September 3 to 7, 2023. 31 academics and young diplomats from 18 countries discussed the topic "Outer Space Affairs – A Critical Key Domain of International Politics".

Debates on outer space in the social sciences were driven for a long time by a focus on the space race and great power competition, but have now become much more nuanced and broadened. The importance of space-related activities in international relations has increased, both from a legal and security perspective as well as with regard to environmental and sustainability issues. Space activities and space exploration were traditionally linked to military and strategic interests and were long ruled by the rivalry between the two super power blocs led by the US and the Soviet Union. During the period of international relaxation, scientific and civilian goals temporarily came to the fore. For example, the International Space Station (ISS), which was initially planned as a military station by the US, is now operated and further developed as an international cooperation project by 16 states and five space agencies, showing the potential of space exploration as a joint effort.

Recently, however, the battle for space supremacy has once again gained momentum. The US established a national space army, Space Force, in 2019 under the Trump administration. A first space maneuver was conducted by France together with Space Force and European partners in early 2021. Russia signaled its ability to use space as a combat zone with a satellite fired in 2021. China, which remained excluded from using the ISS at the instigation of the US, has been operating its own space station since June 2022 and has established itself as a new player in the ranks of the major powers in space. In addition, with SpaceX, Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic, a number of private space companies are entering the market and driving forward the commercialization of space.

The background to this current development are recent, major technological advances in space and cyberspace. Space-bound technological infrastructure has become a critical factor in our increasingly digitally controlled everyday lives and makes us vulnerable to attacks. The development of important resources through moon or asteroid mining, is coming within reach and has fueled the commercial interest of private investors. In view of this rapid development, the effectiveness of international agreements in regulating associated problems such as the dangerous littering of outer space is increasingly limited. The difficult assessment of space as a sphere of geopolitics and geo-economics (a contradiction in itself) has reached its limits and creates a demand for regulation and re-conceptualization.

Many institutions in this field are also located in North Rhine-Westphalia, such as the German Aerospace Center in

Cologne-Wahn and the German Armed Forces Space Command in Uedem. The German Space Agency at DLR implements the Federal Government's space strategy. It also represents the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany in space-related international bodies. It advises and supports the Federal Government and develops initiatives and strategic approaches for space policy. The German Space Agency organizes a national meeting of experts every year. Exchanges take place on topics such as: the contribution of space data and technologies to climate change research and climate protection, and the sustainability and safety of space operations.

Many renowned speakers were invited to give keynote speeches. A highlight of the Summer Academy was the excursion to the German Aerospace Center in Cologne, where, in addition to a tour of the facility, a discussion with the Director General of the German Space Agency, Dr. Walther Pelzer, was also on the agenda. On the last day, a public online discussion on European space policy was held with the former President of the European Space Agency ESA Prof. Dr. Jan Wörner, the Advisor for Space at the French Embassy in Berlin Dr. Gilles Rabin and the political scientist Professor Mai'a Davis Cross from Northeastern University, Boston. In the afternoons, the participants were given the opportunity to present and discuss their research projects in working groups. ■



The “Outer Space Affairs” Summer Academy lectures

SIMONETTA DI PIPPO: The Future of Global Space Governance – Proactive Multilateralism at UN Level

“We have a growing space economy. Space economy is defined by the OECD as the combination of the space sector itself, plus all the value created by the use of space data, space-based data and infrastructures in all the other fields from global health to education, from disaster management to agriculture. Its value is highly underestimated because you can measure today quite well the space sector, but not all the other activities which are benefiting from space data. This is extremely important for global governance because the private sector will have a key role.”

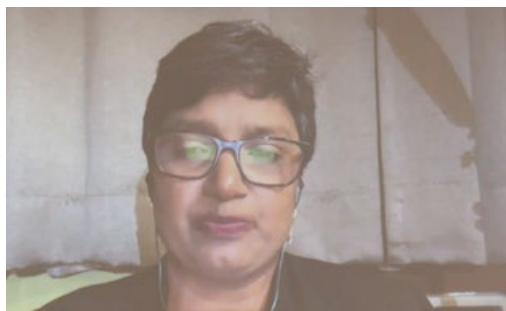


ALEXANDER GEPPERT: Militant Astroculture and the Geopolitics of Outer Space in the 20th Century

“Many of the terms that are around, ‘dual use’, ‘space age’, the ‘conquest of space’, the ‘final frontier’, the ‘Sputnik shot’, then become interesting as ideas of their time, but don’t help us to understand what’s going on now, because these are all terms that were ‘tainted’. These were never innocent terms.”

MARTIN SCHWAMBORN: Problems and Challenges of Space Law

“Article 3 of the Outer Space Treaty opens the outer space law, or the law concerning outer space also to general public international law. This, first of all, concerns the United Nations Charter and peaceful use, but also public and environmental law. So the principles of public environmental law like ‘precaution, prevention, polluter pays or the prohibition of transboundary damages are maybe also part of outer space law. And this may be used for a more sustainable future concerning the space traffic and the space traffic management.”



RAJESWARI PILLAI RAJAGOPALAN: Arms Race in Outer Space

“There is no exact definition for what “arms race” really means. It is a typical example of the action and reaction between states based on a mutually assessed feeling of uncertainty. And there is a high level of distrust between the big power states, and this will continue to grow in the future.”



SARAH LIEBERMAN: The Commercialization of Outer Space

“Space has always been a geopolitical marker for states, but space is a mixed economy and at this point the state only contributes, or is only in charge of, we might say 20 percent of that global space economy; 80 percent is commercial.”

IMPRESSIONS AND LECTURES AS VIDEO

**SUMMER ACADEMY 2023:
“Outer Space Affairs”**



Impressions from the Summer Academy 3rd-7th September 2023





A highlight of the Summer Academy was the visit to the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Luft- und Raumfahrtzentrum, DLR) in Cologne. The group was given a guided tour at the Institute of Aerospace Medicine. They also visited the Microgravity User Support Center and had the opportunity to see how activities are coordinated on the International Space Station (ISS).



RETHINK
POLITICS

The World needs Space Diplomacy at its Best

This is the era of astropolitics. In practice, we are shifting from differences and conflicts on Earth to, due to a clear path towards the expansion of humanity on other celestial bodies in our Solar System, differences and conflicts which could easily arise out-of-this-world if we, collectively, are not able to maintain the safety, security, predictability, and sustainability of outer space activities.

Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, the foundation of International Space Law, is very clear on military activities in space: “States Parties to the Treaty undertake not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner. The Moon and other celestial bodies shall be used by all States Parties to the Treaty exclusively for peaceful purposes. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies shall be forbidden. The use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited. The use of any equipment or facility necessary for peaceful exploration of the Moon and other celestial bodies shall also not be prohibited.”

In other words, military activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies are forbidden, but in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) or in Geostationary Orbit (GEO), for example, they are not. At the same time, outer space has to be considered as the province of (hu)mankind, in accordance with Art. I of the OST, and it must be preserved for future generations, mean-

ing, it has to be sustainably used for peaceful purposes. It is therefore a global common good, and emerging and developing countries, and not only the spacefaring ones, have the right to use space resources to the same extent. With that, we mean frequencies, orbit, location on other celestial bodies, and elements which can be found on them such as rare earths, water, cobalt, nickel, etc. Most of these elements are key for the digital transformation we are going through

and they will become more and more needed on Earth.

The 4th of October 1957 marked the start of astronautics. Sputnik 1, the first ever humanmade satellite, was launched on that day by the Soviets in the midst of the Cold War. The USA had to wait until the 31st of January 1958

to launch Explorer, after another Sputnik had already been launched. In the same year, the United Nations decided to create the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), and a small office of the UN Secretariat in support of its activities. Today, COPUOS counts more than 100 members, and the small office is now the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs. Both have a very important role: exercising space diplomacy.

After several decades of development, advancement and innovation, some technologies became mature, and the com-

“This is the era of astropolitics.”

Simonetta Di Pippo



mercial sector started to bloom. This is indeed a recent development, but it is already a strong reality. I would call it phase two. During phase two, the commercial companies developed new technologies and introduced innovation, but the strategic directions on goals and objectives were still under the purview of the relevant government. This new wave has been created specifically by the USA, while other countries are lagging a bit behind. Recently, commercial companies have started to deviate from this path and have decided to go ahead with bold and ambitious plans without specific instructions or decisions coming from the government or the relevant space agency. That is the case, for example, with Elon Musk's SpaceX and the mega constellation Starlink which seeks to bridge the digital divide, and Starship, the biggest rocket ever built which, if successful, will be a gamechanger without precedent. Aside from bringing people and tons of mass into LEO or to the Moon or Mars, it will also be able to transport passengers from London to L.A. in about 30 minutes. A revolution.

At the same time, Space Forces have been created around the world in different countries. Orbits are becoming congested and contested, and defense is entering into the loop incrementally. This expanding attention for security applications together with an expanding presence of commercial interests in space are ushering in phase three: new paradigms, new rules – not yet approved – new requirement for space diplomacy. We experienced: ASAT tests – a UN resolution (A/RES/77/41) was approved in December 2022 inviting Member States to avoid such destructive tests in orbit, which also create a huge amount of debris; nesting dolls satellites (a single satellite is launched, and when in orbit, smaller satellites are released, one after the other); spoofing and jamming practices to disable satellites in orbit from performing their duties; active debris removal activities which can be transformed in active offense

acts if the same abilities are applied to satellites of a non-allied country. The main spacefaring countries have all of these technologies available at the same time: an ASAT missile takes about 10 minutes to strike in LEO, hours to reach GEO, and if one or more satellites in a mega constellation are destroyed, they can be easily replaced and in the meantime the functionality of the service is not jeopardized. Technologies are being

developed to allow for the construction and launch of new satellites to replace the damaged ones within just one day.

In such a scenario, we need diplomacy back at its best. The United Nations is the platform we need, and we always have to keep in mind that global challenges call for global solutions, which can be found only through a global platform and global discussions, where all voices are heard, and no one is left behind. Escalation is turned back and peace is restored. We must rethink decision-making processes, inside and outside the UN. We must consider private companies, interests and review the mechanisms to make the UN to become more relevant than ever before.

These are times of historical danger and according to the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists it is still 90 seconds to midnight. In their 2024 report they assess the situation as follows: "As the first step, and despite their profound disagreements, three of the world's leading powers—the United States, China, and Russia—should commence serious dialogue about each of the global threats outlined. At the highest levels, these three countries need to take responsibility for the existential danger the world now faces. They have the capacity to pull the world back from the brink of catastrophe. They should do so, with clarity and courage, and without delay."

Outer space is not mentioned, but it underpins our lives, and must quickly become part of the conversation. It's 90 seconds to midnight. ■

Simonetta Di Pippo is an astrophysicist, Director SEE Lab and Professor (SDA Bocconi), NYUAD professor, IAA Academician, WEF GFC on space. She is also the former Director of UNOOSA, ESA Human Spaceflight, ASI Observation of the Universe.

International Space Law: Origins, Challenges and the Role of Space Traffic Management

The international community is once again faced with the question of how to effectively regulate the use of outer space. While existing international treaties provide a general framework, particularly for state activities in outer space, they are not sufficient to adequately regulate the increasing activities of private entities. In the light of this regulatory gap, it is worth considering the potential of Space Traffic Management.

Old Space: Space Law by and for states

The history of space exploration and space law is inextricably linked to state activities. The first launches of space objects were conducted by states. However, this development has been accompanied by a regulatory process under the umbrella of the United Nations (UN). The UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUS) was already established in 1959. UNCOPUS played a leading role in the drafting and implementation of the five core international treaties on space law: The Outer Space Treaty (OST, 1967), the Rescue Agreement (1968), the Liability Convention (1972), the Registration Convention (1975) and the Moon Agreement (1979). Since then, states have failed to agree on binding rules and have focused on non-binding UN General Assembly resolutions on space activities.

The main principles governing the use of outer space are laid down in the OST starting point is the freedom of exploration and use of outer space (Art. I OST). However, this freedom is subject to several restrictions. All space activities must be carried out for the benefit and in the

interests of all countries (Art. I OST). In addition, Art. II OST bans any form of national appropriation, so no national sovereignty can be claimed in space. Finally, the freedom of exploration is limited by the emphasis on peaceful use in accordance with international law (Art. III, IV OST) and – at least in part – by the need to protect the environment (Art. IX OST). Other important rules include the duty to register space objects (Art. VIII OST) and regulations on liability (Art. VII OST). These and the other provisions of the OST are primarily addressed to the (launching) state, even if the space object is operated by private actors. Overall, 'Old Space' and its law can be characterised as strongly state-centred.

New Space: The increase in (private) use and its consequences

In recent years, the exploration and use of space has been driven forward by a growing number of private initiatives. This 'New Space' is characterised by commercialisation and a wide range of innovative approaches to space utilisation.

“It is time for an international approach on Space Traffic Management that ensures a sustainable and safe use of outer space.”

Martin Schwamborn

These include activities such as: space tourism, launching of numerous (small) satellites, not least through mega-constellations such as Starlink, and the exploitation of space resources.

The freedom of outer space includes its commercial use by private individuals. Art. VI OST clearly provides for private space activities by making them subject to state authorisation and supervision. Nevertheless, these activities may come into conflict with some of the restrictions of the OST, in particular: the prohibition of exclusive use (Art. II OST) and the requirement of use for the benefit of all (Art. I OST).

In any case, the increasing number of space actors leads to considerable problems. While the universe may be infinite, favourable orbits around Earth are a limited resource. The availability of the latter is further reduced by the sheer number of new space objects and the increasing risk of space debris associated with them. Due to their speed, even small pieces of debris, just a few millimetres in size, can cause immeasurable damage. As collisions between space objects create new debris, there is also the potential for a cascade effect. Another aspect leading to more space traffic and risks is the (re)discovery of space as a military domain by many nations.

While space activities of private and governmental entities are becoming increasingly dynamic, the evolution of space law remains rather static. Many issues, such as space debris or the use of space resources remain barely regulated. This does not mean that private activities are prohibited or take place in a legal vacuum. Nevertheless, they pose a challenge to the existing legal framework.

The central role of Space Traffic Management

In view of the transition from ‘Old Space’ to ‘New Space’, there is a need for more effective regulation. A first crucial step are national space laws which implement the state’s mandate to authorise and supervise (private) state activities (Art. VI OST). However, given its limited scope, national legislation is not sufficient.



It is time for an international approach on Space Traffic Management that ensures a sustainable and safe use of outer space. Based on the general principles of the OST and its embeddedness in general international law (Art. III OST), the new framework could provide the necessary ‘rules of the road’ for the various space actors and objects. Comprehensive regulations on collision avoidance, the exchange of information as well as space debris mitigation and remediation are particularly important. This includes not only legal but also technical issues, such as the sustainable design of satellites or dealing with the risks and potential of cyberspace.

If these rules are well balanced and coordinated with national initiatives, they are not an obstacle but the basis for future accessibility and sustainable use of space. Moreover, as space technology also contributes significantly to addressing global challenges such as climate change, Space Traffic Management can support sustainability not only in space, but also through space. ■

Martin Schwamborn is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Air Law, Space Law and Cyber Law at the University of Cologne. Besides European Law and International Economic Law, his research focuses on current challenges in Air, Space and Cyber Law.

A row of international flags on tall poles against a grey building facade. The flags include the flag of Chile (red, white, and blue), the flag of Argentina (light blue and white), the flag of India (saffron, white, and green with the Ashoka Chakra), the flag of the United Kingdom (Union Jack), and the flag of India (saffron, white, and green with the Ashoka Chakra). The flags are flying in the wind. The background is a grey building facade with a grid-like pattern of windows.

THE CHANGING FACE OF DIPLOMACY

International politics are shaped by a diversification of actors in many fields and are increasingly closely observed by a broader public. Our experts shed light on the different types of national and subnational practices that emerge and what this means for the established institution of diplomacy.



Trends in Modern Diplomacy in the 21st Century

INTERVIEW with **Ambassador (Ret.) Hans-Ulrich Seidt**



You have had a very long career in the diplomatic service and we wondered whether there is such a thing as one core insight that you would like to share with us.

A diplomat acts on behalf of their government. They have to follow instructions and represent their political positions of country. Thus, a diplomat's room for maneuver should not be overestimated. During my first posting I had the honor to serve under Ambassador Jörg Kastl at the German embassy in Moscow. After his retirement he wrote a book under the title "Am kurzen Zügel", which can be translated by "On a Short Rein", on Bismarck's ambassadors to St. Petersburg. As a rule, diplomats, in particular in sensitive postings, are given a short rein by their governments. Whether they like it or not, they are an instrument of politics.

Following on from this historical look back: If you compare the very first station of your career with the last one what would you describe as the biggest changes during this time in terms of day-to-day business and where do you perhaps also see continuities?

Let's start with the continuities. Continuity is embodied by the institution – in Germany by the Federal Foreign Office, which can now look back on a history of more than one hundred and fifty years. Although this institution has not changed per se, the political and social framework conditions have changed enormously. My first posting abroad was in Moscow still during the Cold War. At that time, diplomats in the Soviet Union were under constant surveillance as

they are, unfortunately, again today.

After the end of the Cold War the new era of a globalized society also changed the working practices and living conditions of diplomats. Take for example the growing importance of international organizations. During the last three decades, the focus of diplomatic relations shifted from traditional bilateral work to multilateral diplomacy. But I have the strong feeling that in recent years this trend has slowly been reversed. The multilateralization of diplomacy is receding step by step and is being replaced by traditional practices, in particular the formation of competing coalitions. Clearly, crisis management of armed conflicts is also becoming more important.

But there is one very positive difference between today and the time when I entered the foreign service. Over the past four decades, the female element has largely been able to assert itself in international relations - think of the European Union with Ms. von der Leyen or the European Central Bank with Madame Lagarde.

If you look into the future from today, based on the experiences you have had – and we're sure you always follow developments on a daily basis – what do you see as the major challenges on the horizon right now?

Whether it's in Ukraine, in the Middle East or in Africa, violent conflicts are on the rise. It will be a Herculean task to contain and stop these crises in the years to come.

I see two megatrends: One megatrend is climate change. The second megatrend is overpopulation. Take, for example, a country I know a bit about, namely Afghanistan. The population of Afghanistan, a landlocked country with no access to the sea, with limited water resources and fertile land, has more than doubled in the last 30 years. Even a country like the Kingdom of Jordan, which is on what I consider to be a good development path, is facing considerable problems due to the megatrends of climate change, overpopulation, and water shortages.

And if you think about it now, what would you say are the potentials, but also the limits of diplomacy to address these challenges?

“My experience is that many people in international diplomacy have chosen the diplomatic career because they want to work together with others for a peaceful and better world.”

Ambassador (Ret.) Hans-Ulrich Seidt

The potential of diplomacy lies in its mission to contribute to a better understanding. A diplomat has to provide their home government or the international organization for which they work with a realistic picture of the interests and the goals of others. At the same time, a diplomat must explain the positions of their country in a way that avoids misunderstandings and fosters cooperation.

The limits of diplomacy are determined by the political actors who use it as an instrument. It is, therefore, important that a diplomat also succeeds in pointing out essential political problems to their superiors and is able to persuade them to act in a pragmatic and reasonable way. My experience is that many people in international diplomacy have chosen the diplomatic career because they want to work together with others for a peaceful and better world.

This is of course also the field that classical diplomacy claims and defends for itself. At the same time, there is something like subnational diplomacy. How would you assess the potential of subnational diplomacy?

The potential of subnational diplomacy is enormous, although often not very clearly defined. There is, for example, the sometimes very useful track-B diplomacy, i.e. the opening up of channels parallel to the governmental strands in which informal attempts are made to find solutions for difficult problems.

Sometimes, however, subnational diplomacy may also lead to the sudden emergence of non-state actors in grey areas where they exert a negative influence. I am thinking for example of terrorist organizations which are able to act, like the drug cartels in Latin America, in the field of international relations through their political relationships and networks. We must make sure that in the field of subnational diplomacy we always strengthen those forces and organizations that pursue positive goals. At the same time, we have to identify the spoilers that pursue unscrupulous interests in a ruthless manner.

Finally, we would like to ask you to consider the following thought experiment: Imagine a young female diplomat who has just completed her training and now comes to

you and asks: “What recommendations would you give me for the future? What tips and advice do you have from your own experience that you wish someone had told you when you were setting out at the beginning?”

I would recommend that any young diplomat should first learn diplomatic practice in her or his home ministry or in the headquarters of an international organization. Young diplomats should get acquainted with opinion-forming and decision-making processes within these institutions. But two years are enough for this basic experience.

They should pursue a first assignment abroad, and I would recommend young woman to move into areas that were considered male domains in the past. These are, for example, the areas of traditional security policy, but also international economic policy and trade. A major bilateral embassy would be the best choice as first foreign posting followed by the transfer to an international organization. After that you will be well prepared for the next career leap. It will lead you to new and challenging opportunities. ■

Ambassador (Ret.) Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Hans-Ulrich Seidt was a guest of the director at AIA NRW and is a non-resident fellow of the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination (LISD) at Princeton University and senior advisor with Friedrich30, a Berlin based political consultancy firm. His focus is on geopolitics and crisis management. He served in Moscow and was posted to Germany's NATO-delegation in Brussels. During the Balkan wars, Ambassador Seidt served as deputy head of the German government's Special Task Force Bosnia (So-Bos). In 1998, he was transferred to the German embassy in Washington, D.C. Ambassador Seidt served from 2006 to 2008 as Germany's ambassador to Afghanistan and from 2009 to 2012 as German ambassador to the Republic of Korea. In 2012 Ambassador Seidt became Director-General for Culture and Communication in the German Foreign Office in Berlin and ended his career as Inspector General of the German Foreign Service in 2017.

European Conflicts and the Solution for Crimea

The annexation of Crimea in 2014 marked a pivotal moment in the international security architecture leading to the current war in Ukraine and necessitating a reevaluation of the continent's security framework. To restore, restart or reshape this structure addressing the status of Crimea is imperative. At the same time, two key prerequisites for any Crimean strategy have to be outlined: a regime change in Russia, fostering a willingness to compromise, and the readiness of regional players, especially Ukraine and Turkey, to utilize Russia's vulnerability for long-term peace and cooperation rather than reinforcing their national positions on the peninsula.

However, the main prerequisite for seeking such a solution is the formal and factual return of the Crimean peninsula to the Ukrainian state, as only safeguarding its territorial integrity will comply with international law and therefore is indicated without reservations.

Europe after World War II provides us with many examples of territorial conflicts and their resolutions, with different methodologies and measures of effectiveness, as well as ample evidence of success factors that may resonate but also show differences with the situation in the Crimean peninsula. Conflict resolution formats such as the historical conflict of South Tyrol in Italy or in the Åland Islands that belong to Finland are usually considered success stories and can thus provide insights for the case of Crimea. Yet, there are further opportunities to learn from the partly positive experiences of resolving territorial conflicts in Northern Ireland, Catalonia and even in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In general, the success of resolving such conflicts has always been

conditioned by the willingness of the state that owns the disputed territory and controls it to compromise with ethnic communities by granting them broad autonomy, whereas the specific modalities of such autonomies varied from

one case to another. Freezing territorial-ethnic conflicts, particularly with the involvement and mediation of Russia in the territory of the former USSR - Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh - has had absolutely negative consequences, as the public has been witnessing at least in the current case of Ukraine.

An important aspect in searching for parallels and differences is defining the main characteristics of the conflict situation in the territory of Crimea, determining similar characteristics of territorial and ethnic conflicts in Europe, finding analogies and studying the corresponding methodology. Obviously, a conflict is considered resolved positively if its resolution ensures not only the onset of peace but also the achievement of social consensus, the unification of different strata of society and optimal economic and cultural development in the short and medium term.

There are no two identical conflicts in the world, just as there are no two identical models for their resolution. However, there are similar elements of conflicts that we should focus on. For

instance, the presence of a Russian ethnic majority on the peninsula is comparable to the German-speaking majority in South Tyrol or the Swedish majority in the Åland Islands. The Crimean Tatar factor—the indigenous population of Crimea, which is in the minority but feels supported by Turkey—is comparable to the presence of Albanian communities in some states in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.



FELLOW

DMYTRO SHEVCHENKO was born and grew up in Crimea. After graduation from the University in Dnipro (2004) and Freie Universität zu Berlin (2006) he has been working for 15 years in the Ukrainian diplomatic service (2007 to 2022) on the positions in Kyiv, Washington, Berlin and Munich. In November 2022 he became the Chancellor of the Ukrainian Free University in Munich. He is an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW.

Issues relevant to Crimea regarding the balanced use of multiple languages, equal representation of ethnicities in government bodies and equal rights to cultural development have extremely positive resolution models in a number of European conflicts.

Thus, the main characteristics of the interethnic conflict situation in Crimean society, excluding the factor of the military occupation of Crimea by Russia, are:

The disagreement of the Russian ethnic majority in Crimea with the policy of promoting Ukrainian language and culture, rejecting the historical reality, instead of focusing on Russian historical and geopolitical narratives, caused by Russian propaganda. Policies around the use of and education in different languages have been underlying conflict issues in many comparable cases.

Another factor is the perception that Russia provides an inadequate protection of their national and linguistic identity of Crimean Tatars as well as their political goal to create a National Crimean Tatar Autonomy on the peninsula. Again, the lack of respect towards indigenous groups and their specific cultural identity is a typical conflict factors. As a further dimension, the conflict between the Crimean Tatar and Russian communities that resulted from the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944, the confiscation of their property and the absence of state programs for the return of confiscated property, primarily real estate, continues to shape the view of the relationship with Russia. Furthermore, the Russian community in Crimea has expressed worries over their safety due to the strengthening of military cooperation between Ukraine and NATO against the Russian invasion. Finally, while the Ukrainian community in Crimea is by far the largest majority, they are characterized by marginalization and disorganization, which has resulted in the absence of clearly defined interests of Crimean Ukrainians. This lack or perceived lack of agency shows that the foundation for a solution of the conflict cannot easily be achieved through actors in Crimea.

As political measures, which we can derive from studying successful cases of conflict resolution, I propose the following to address the challenges just laid out:

- Ensuring language and cultural rights for the German-speaking community in South Tyrol—in the context of ensuring rights for the Russian community in Crimea;
- Ensuring language and cultural rights for the Swedish community in the Åland Islands—in the context of ensuring rights for the Russian community in Crimea;
- Decision on demilitarization in the Åland Islands—in the context of reducing tension due to military presence in the region;
- State programs aimed at cohesion in the society of Northern Ireland—in the context of mutual integration of Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar communities;

- Ensuring language and cultural rights for the Albanian community in North Macedonia and Montenegro—in the context of ensuring rights for the Crimean Tatar community in Crimea;

- State programs aimed at integrating the Russian-speaking community in Latvia and Estonia—in the context of safeguarding the interests of the Ukrainian state in Crimea;

- Administrative autonomy models of South Tyrol Italy, Catalonia and the Basque region in Spain—in the context of ethnic quotas for representation in government bodies, financial-economic organization distribution of competencies between autonomies and central governments.



By studying these mechanisms and modeling their use to the conditions of Crimea, we can generate a political and social model for Crimea leveraging European success stories while considering the unique circumstances. Acknowledging the controversial nature of this task, a condition that would allow for an opportune moment to initiate such a process would be a brief power balance moment where Russia relinquishes Crimea and Ukraine lacks the resources for effective reintegration, presenting an ideal time for external powers to stabilize the Black Sea region.

To give a brief scenario: ignoring the legitimate aspirations of the local population in Crimea, we risk encountering a complex of interethnic problems after Ukraine regains control of the peninsula. This could start with the simmering separatist movements within the Russian community, which have been fueled by the (more than) ten years of Russian occupation and could escalate to interethnic clashes between Russians and Crimean Tatars within Crimea. Instances of freezing or forcibly resolving conflicts in Europe and around the world have shown that such methods inevitably lead to new armed clashes and humanitarian catastrophes, as for example evidenced by the recent escalation of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Only a balanced model that allows for an autonomy of all actors and the cohesion of Crimean society can create an environment of peace and security on the peninsula, which in turn will create prerequisites for stabilizing the entire Black Sea region. ■

Navigating Diplomacy's Gender Divide: Challenges Faced by Women

Few social changes have been as rapid and profound as women's enhanced representation and participation in international affairs.

Over the last decades, women have made significant inroads into the historically masculinized bastions of diplomacy and global politics, and have become better represented and more visible as diplomats and foreign policy agents. The gender diversification of diplomacy is evident by the fact that in many countries, female diplomats currently comprise between 40 percent and 60 percent of the foreign offices' workforce.

These optimistic numbers notwithstanding, various barriers persistently impede women's effectiveness in diplomatic roles globally. Gender hierarchies and gendered divisions of labor continue to impact women's place, status and performance in the diplomatic services across the globe. Breaking the glass ceiling and promoting more women to leadership roles remains a key challenge. Women are still underrepresented in high-ranking diplomatic positions and are often excluded from high-level decision-making on the international scene. Gender equality, even though increasingly prioritized in foreign policy agendas, is far from being achieved on the level of everyday diplomatic practices and foreign policy-making. The exclusion of women



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remains entrenched within foreign policy institutions, practices, and outcomes worldwide.

The challenges encountered by women in diplomacy are frequently attributed to the characteristics of the institutions they operate within. It is widely asserted that merely changing the number of women in diplomacy (the “add women and stir” approach) is not likely to change patterns of gender inequality in organizations. Many diplomatic institutions have long-standing traditions and norms that favor male representation. Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) still operate as heteronormative elite institutions, with practices that benefit male diplomats in terms of recruitment, allocation along policy domains, and career advancement. Gendered divisions of labour channels men and women in different directions in diplomacy, as reflected in the lower number of women in charge of portfolios of higher status, visibility and importance. The gendered nature of foreign policy institutions has proved resilient to change, despite women's major influx into the field.

A key factor contributing to maintaining male dominance and obscuring gender change in foreign policy insti-



tutions is the influential role of informal rules, norms, and practices. It is widely perceived that informal institutions have the potential to shape formal institutional rules and outcomes by creating incentives, or constraining gender change. Created, communicated and enforced via invisible channels, informal institutions have gendered effects shaping the opportunities afforded to men and women in diplomacy. They function within well-established homosocial networks, which are frequently intertwined with the diplomacy-intelligence nexus. These networks wield considerable influence over decision-making processes in diplomacy, both overtly and behind the scenes. In this regard, a distinct challenge that has remained outside the scope of public attention is the significant role of intelligence services in distributing positional power in the diplomatic domain. Intelligence services, especially in countries, carrying the institutional legacy of non-democratic regimes, still play a pivotal role in navigating the daily routines of foreign policy institutions, impacting women's status, networking opportunities, and diplomatic performance. Gender and power hierarchies persist not only in the relationships between diplomats and intelligence officers, but also in the broader interdependencies between MFAs and national intelligence structures.

Furthermore, the informal politics of male dominance affect not only women's status and performance in diplomacy, but also the content and implementation of foreign policy. From an institutionalist perspective, the agency of institutional actors informs their behavioural patterns in everyday processes of foreign policy-making and hence impacts the content and outcomes of foreign policy. Foreign policy institutions with a lower degree of women's substantive representation are less likely to introduce gender-sensitive foreign policy. Diplomats and foreign policymakers operating in a gender-blind environment do not have relevant incentives to work towards advancing pro-gender norms and strategies in foreign affairs. The gendered nature of foreign policy institution thus conditions the lack of "women-friendly" foreign policy initiatives in many countries across the globe.

Another source of concern that affects women's place, status, and experiences in the diplomatic domain remains the politicization of diplomacy. Claims suggest that diplomacy and diplomats are increasingly politicized, affecting their ability to fulfill their roles effectively. While female career diplomats are often deprived of access to "homo-social" capital and remain under-represented in decision-making and leadership roles, other women are fast-

tracked in diplomacy through informal channels for reasons that suit male-dominated elites. In some cases, women are quickly promoted to top diplomatic roles because of what is known as "emphasized femininity". This term refers to the perception by male leaders that women are more compliant and easier to manage. Thus, even when women break the glass ceiling and occupy high ranking positions in diplomacy, the question of their authority and impact on decision-making processes remains.

Advancing women's role in diplomacy depends on broader societal attitudes, institutional support, and the commitment to dismantling gender-based barriers in the foreign policy apparatus. Policy measures, such as setting targets and quotas to ensure a minimum percentage of women in top diplomatic positions (ambassadors, negotiators, mediators, and peacekeepers); adopting training and mentoring programs to enhance women's skills, confidence, and networks; or creating a designated position to support the mainstreaming of gender equality (e.g. envoys for gender equality), can pave the way toward a more inclusive and equitable diplomatic landscape. Overcoming the challenges that women face in diplomacy requires navigating an intricate interplay of structural changes, cultural shifts, and individual agency. ■

Limited Transparency: Hungary and the EU's Rule of Law Procedures

Amid government practices that restrict freedom of information, it is difficult to get a clear picture of how the EU's rule of law procedures are playing out in Hungary. I explored the feasibility of a 'back channel': access to information about the procedures through EU institutions.

One facet of the declining level of press freedom in Hungary manifests itself in the fact that access to public information has become increasingly cumbersome in recent years. Public authorities routinely refuse to grant interviews to independent news outlets or reply to their written questions, and on occasion they also exclude journalists from press conferences and other events.

While statutory rules on freedom of information requests exist on paper, their implementation is often limited to a formal invocation of one of the exceptions in the legislation that allows the public body not to disclose the information sought. I have submitted a number of freedom of information applications to Hungarian ministries regarding EU rule of law procedures. I requested access to preparatory documents for meetings between Hungarian ministers and EU commissioners, as well as messages exchanged between the Hungarian government and the European Commission. The answer I received was always the same: ministries argued they cannot release the information since it relates to the preparation of a decision. The replies never designated concretely the decision-making processes to which the requested information related, nor did they explain how

disclosure of the information would jeopardize the decision-making. That is why the refusals were formalistic and arbitrary.

Luckily, the EU's own 'Freedom of Information Act', Regulation 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents recognizes the right of EU citizens to request access to documents held by EU institutions. Turning directly to EU institutions could, in theory, be a suitable way to uncover information about the EU's rule of law procedures targeting Hungary. But how much information the EU is willing to disclose, and in what depth? In my research project, I am trying to answer precisely this question.

Study design

I focused on two EU procedures directly related to the rule of law: the Article 7 procedure and the procedure pursuant to the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation. I included two other processes that have a link with the rule of law: how the European Commission assessed the fulfilment by Hungary of a 'horizontal enabling condition' in cohesion policy concerning judicial independence; and how the so-called 'milestones' with rule of law implications were formulated in Hungary's Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Apart from the Hungarian government, the main players in these procedures are the European Commission and the Council of the EU, so I addressed my applications to them. I requested access to documents related to high-level

meetings and exchanges between the Hungarian government and EU institutions, and the Council's deliberations in the framework of the above procedures. From October to December 2023, I submitted ten requests, but since the Commission splits requests in several parts when they concern more than one directorate-general, these resulted in 21 cases under Regulation 1049/2001.

I then analysed the documents disclosed or the reasons put forward by institutions to justify the refusal of disclosure. I also made confirmatory applications challenging the institutions' initial answers or complaints to the European Ombudsman challenging the final position of an institution.

Findings

Most importantly, my requests have yielded some results, and I have received documents that I would have had a hard time obtaining through the Hungarian government.

A peculiarity of the access process is that sometimes one can find information they were not even looking for. I requested access to the Commission's 'observation letters' about draft Hungarian cohesion policy programmes because I wanted to see what the documents said about judicial independence. As it turned out, they contained no new information in this respect, but the Commission's comments on Hungarian education policy proved to be newsworthy.

Another key takeaway is that after an initial refusal, it is worth the time and effort to challenge the institutions by submitting a confirmatory application. When I asked for the Council's deliberations in the context of the Conditionality Regulation, it first refused to disclose three working documents that contain the Commission's answers to member states' questions regarding the proposed suspension of certain funds in Hungary. Following my confirmatory application, the Council granted partial access to the three documents, with some limited redactions. The released parts reveal what member states thought of the proportionality of the suspensions and how they assessed the so-called 'remedial measures' Hungary committed to implement.

I also got hold of some audit reports, a study of the Hungarian public procurement system ordered by the Commission, as well as exchanges of letters between the Commission and Hungary regarding the fulfilment of some thematic enabling conditions linked to cohesion policy.

That said, I came across more refusals than disclosures, and the case study made it clear that the EU's access to documents regime, as applied in practice by the institutions, suffers from fundamental shortcomings. I will now tackle

the three most important limitations.

The process is painstakingly slow. According to the law, institutions must reply to initial requests and confirmatory applications within 15 working days. The time-limit can be extended by a further 15 working days in 'exceptional circumstances'. However, the extension seems to be the norm rather than the exception, and the Commission regularly fails to observe the extended deadline as well. In two extreme cases, the Commission has failed to provide even an initial answer in five months.

Institutions tend to interpret the exceptions broadly. The purpose of Regulation 1049/2001 is to give the 'widest possible access' to documents held by EU institutions. That means the exceptions contained in the regulation should be interpreted and applied strictly. Sometimes just the opposite happens in practice. For instance, the Commission refused to disclose its letters sent to the Hungarian government regarding the question of judicial independence, arguing the publicity of the letters would undermine its decision-making process. However, the 'decision-making exception' in the regulation covers internal documents only, not documents officially sent to a member state.

Institutions overprotect member states' documents. While Regulation 1049/2001 encompasses all documents held by EU institutions, member states have the right to ask an institution not to disclose the documents

originating from them. However, this should not be understood as an 'unconditional right of veto' and the institutions must assess the validity of the member state's reasons for opposing disclosure. This assessment is often missing in practice, and the Commission also interprets broadly what counts as a 'document originating from a member state'. For example, in an audit report, they redacted all parts that quoted or even referred to information given by Hungary.

Conclusion

Some of these deficiencies could be remedied by administrative improvements like better record-keeping or more staff dedicated to dealing with access to documents requests. The system would also benefit from a change of attitude within EU institutions and targeted modifications in the regulation. But as freedom of information is an open-ended policy, its ultimate drivers are the applicants themselves. I hope I was able to demonstrate that even in the current circumstances, citizens are not powerless faced with opaque procedures and secretive decisions. ■



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Subnational Diplomacy. Practices, Challenges and Chances



districts. A particular advantage of these forms of diplomacy is that they complement or even pre-empt national efforts, since local actors often become aware of challenges that happen under the radar of national governments and push new, pragmatic approaches to concrete problems.

In OECD countries, a majority of citizens live in cities and experience often highly specific living conditions that are not adequately addressed by national governments and resonate with the experience in many urban environments in other countries. Economic growth, technological innovation or availability of affordable housing and staple foods have been simultaneously under discussion in many different urban spaces. Beyond Europe, the number of large or even mega-cities that house tens of millions of inhabitants and face very particular risks

Cooperative endeavours between local, i.e. municipal and regional, levels have long been an important building block of bilateral or even multilateral relations between states and can, in some cases, be regarded as instances of subnational diplomacy. Their goals can be different and vary between problem-driven attempts generating issue-specific exchange or support networks and more abstract attempts at establishing long-term relations that pave the way for further cooperative spillovers. In particular, big cities have emerged as important players in the field, with prominent mayors such as Anne Hidalgo (Paris, France) or Sadiq Khan (London, UK) who address wide-ranging problems in their policies that mirror those on the national level. Similarly, medium-sized cities, federal states and sub-regions have also become actors who advocate and manage particular interests and show the potential to act beyond the narrow confines of their administrative

that often lack clear national policies has increased and needs special attention.

For that reason, outreach between cities is often the most promising route to finding solutions, and cities – as well as other subnational actors – have understood the potential of this subnational cooperation. Migration, sustainable water and energy supply, and climate change are among the issues that have been regarded as particularly urgent in many regions of the world. To that end, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reflect these challenges in their Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, which resonates with the experience in many cities around the world, which is partially independent of their national context. Additionally, more specific experiences like war or natural disaster may also become drivers of cooperation, as subnational entities face situations of scarcity and emergency.

“Subnational diplomacy has no formalised status in international politics and is not bound by strict, historically evolved rules and principles.”

The practice of subnational diplomacy

What distinctions can we make between the multitude of activities of subnational actors and the more narrowly defined practice of subnational diplomacy? Unlike the established institution of state diplomacy, subnational diplomacy has no formalised status in international politics and is not bound by strict, historically evolved rules and principles. While different in these regards, a similarity to state diplomacy can be seen in the effects of subnational efforts in that they contribute to establishing and maintaining mutual relations between political and other actors in different countries. The scope of such activities can include the socio-cultural sphere, where, for example, regular bilateral orchestra exchanges take place, the economic sector, where e.g. local businesses may pool resources and strategise in key sectors, the political sphere, where an exchange on experiences with disinformation may create best practices, and many others. To give a broad definition which of these activities actually can be understood as subnational diplomacy, we would suggest that when we talk about an intentional outreach for strategic reasons, for instance the exchange of expertise or mutual support in addressing shared challenges, we can distinguish subnational diplomacy from other, more generic forms of international cooperation of sub-state actors.

Ideally, such endeavours can lead and have led to long-standing cooperation and close ties in very different areas, which ideally can also help to overcome moments of crisis at higher levels of politics, e.g. between state governments. At the same time, there are limitations to what subnational diplomacy can achieve if bilateral state relations have considerably deteriorated, as we currently witness with the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which has undermined longstanding partnerships with Russian (even oppositional) partners. However, a somewhat implicit hope for longer term effects, such as a quick revival of contacts when relations improve, can be a further driver for cooperation. In the relationship between the US and Germany, for instance, the establishment and continuation of city partnerships has been an important factor in sustaining good mutual relations on many different levels even under some administrations that were less close with each other than others. When looking at subnational diplomacy, we can even point to best practices in areas where nation states lag behind or have not yet developed systematic policies. For instance, cities and regions have become testing grounds

for new approaches to energy supply and are crucial actors in countering the negative effects of climate change.

Actors may have very different goals when they enter into subnational diplomacy efforts. They may strive to achieve prosperity, fight poverty, regulate migration, attract foreign experts, support the rule of law at home and abroad, support democratisation, help partners in times of crisis, identify future issues and coalition partners to become stronger, and many others. As a first step in the efforts and strategies by sub-state entities, making agreements with prospective sister cities can be both important symbolic acts, e.g. to show solidarity with partners in need or to strengthen existing ties in a specific arena. Even though these relations are formal, they do not necessarily evolve into close relationships - whereas other, more functional ties between cities or regions often lack an official framework.

However, since subnational diplomacy is a practice field without a clear mandate and which depends very much on the resources and engagement available in each case, it is perhaps too optimistic to see it as a constituted, let alone unified level of political action and decision-making. Particularly since efforts below the state level are regarded as supplementary, they usually lack strategic consideration for a long-term perspective, experience a scarcity of personnel and financial backing, and are dependent on the goodwill of such individuals as mayors or other administrative leaders, making it hard to plan ahead. ■

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Dynamics of Economic Paradiplomacy

INTERVIEW Vivek Anand

AIA NRW Associate Fellow **Vivek Anand** provides interesting insights into his theoretical perspectives on and practical experiences with paradiplomacy.



Could you kindly summarize the research project that you have been conducting on paradiplomacy and tell us about what you have been doing?

My basic objective was to understand what paradiplomacy is and then to look at it from different angles: “Who are the actors? What are their motivations? What are the activities they undertake as part of their subnational diplomacy?” My focus was on Germany and India, encompassing actors from NRW, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and regions in India, but extended beyond these to a range of stakeholders across different regions and sectors. The overarching goal was to uncover best practices that could be adapted by actors facing similar challenges in various contexts.

Which players are involved and how did you proceed with your project?

When we talk about subnational diplomacy, we are not talking about the typical international relations. It’s like stepping into a bustling marketplace – from city governments to industry groups and cultural associations, each with their own unique role. So, I reached out to actors from places like Düsseldorf, Essen, Karlsruhe, and Freiburg, just to name a few, to understand how they navigate their relationships, especially with countries like India. My curiosity led me to ask – How do they figure out who to interact with in India, for example? What are their priorities? What kind of initiatives do they have? Once we know this, we can try to find out what works and what doesn’t work. That’s the question I asked all the stakeholders: “How do they rate the success of a particular initiative?” But there’s no one-size-fits-all measure of success in subnational diplomacy. It’s like a wild frontier of experimentation, which is both exciting and challenging. Through my experiences in Germany, I’ve picked up some fascinating insights into how paradiplomacy is evolving.

What have you learned while engaging with experts and practitioners in the field? What is new and what has maybe confirmed your views and where were you surprised? Are there any learnings, things you wouldn’t have expected?

Engaging with experts and practitioners across Germany, India, and even in places like Sweden and Spain has been eye-opening. One thing that really struck me is how his-

torical ties can still shape present-day subnational politics. Take colonial legacies, for instance – they can subtly influence diplomatic relations even at the regional level. And then there are external factors like the Ukraine conflict, which ripple through different German states in varying ways, depending on their economic profiles. It’s fascinating to see how regions like NRW, with a strong foothold in energy, are particularly sensitive to global events impacting their industries. But what’s really intriguing is how some regions go beyond just economic ties – they’ve cultivated deep cultural connections over decades. Stuttgart and Mumbai, for instance, have been in cahoots for nearly seven decades, organizing everything from film festivals to wine galas. And here’s the kicker: those long-term relationships pay off big time. Just look at the influx of Baden-Württemberg companies into Maharashtra over the years – nearly half of all German companies in India hail from that region! It’s a testament to the power of sustained engagement, showing how a long-term commitment to building relationships can have a long-term positive impact on investment.

How do you assess the role of town twinning in this context? And in particular, can you give us an overview of how NRW is involved in India?

Town twinning, or city partnerships, are like slow-cooked curries – they take time, but boy, do they develop rich flavors of friendship and collaboration over the years. Just look at Stuttgart and Mumbai, or Karlsruhe and Pune – they’ve been twinning for ages, building strong bonds along the way. And it’s not just them; Hamburg, Bavaria, and NRW are all jumping on the bandwagon, realizing the immense value of these partnerships. Now, when it comes to NRW’s involvement in India, the picture’s a bit nuanced. Sure, NRW has longstanding ties with India, mostly through heavyweight industrial players like DHL and Volkswagen. But lately, there’s been a shift towards city-level engagement. The NRW government is leading the charge with an initiative to ramp up city partnerships with India. Recently, delegations from Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria made the rounds in India, and you bet NRW’s planning a similar delegation soon. Plus, cities like Essen and Düsseldorf are already rolling up their sleeves, getting involved in exchanges – they were here for my workshop in January. It’s all about building those personal connections, one handshake at a time.

“Traditional diplomacy tends to prioritize national and strategic interests, while paradiplomacy hones in on the specific needs and aspirations of sub-national actors like cities, regions, and industries.”

Vivek Anand

Do you have the impression that a structured approach is being taken here or are such activities always somewhat chaotic in nature?

From what I have observed, it's a bit of a mixed bag. Some cities have got their ducks in a row, so to speak, with a well-oiled machine of city partnerships, trade fair collaborations, and Chamber of Commerce engagements. They've got a clear roadmap and they stick to it. Then there are cities like Düsseldorf and Essen, still finding their feet in the India game, figuring out the best approach. But you know what? That lack of a rigid structure isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it's kind of their superpower. Being decentralized and flexible means they can pivot quickly, adapting to whatever curveballs come their way. Since these initiatives aren't dealing with high-stakes stuff like national security, it's easier for everyone to get on board. And if there are any kinks to work out – say, disagreements over bureaucratic hoops – they can usually smooth them over with a bit of flexibility. What's cool is that they're not afraid to dip their toes in the water – it's easy to start a pilot project to see how it goes down and then expand it.

How can we imagine the course of such a pilot project?

Imagine NRW or Düsseldorf embarking on a pilot project with Bangalore. Before taking the plunge, they need to meticulously plan three critical aspects. Firstly, they must define their priorities. What do they want to achieve? More IT companies? We already have the big IT companies like Infosys and TCS in Germany doing big things for all the big companies here, but maybe they are too big for the SMEs. So maybe they are looking for partners for the mid-sized companies in the Indian IT environment. Defining this 'priority' involves engaging all stakeholders to determine the overarching goal. Secondly, they need to manage expectations. Do you expect that a delegation you send will already lead to reciprocal investment and migration of skilled workers? It may not, because you don't really know if the people you will be meeting with as part of the delegation are the right people to meet with. Will they fol-

low up or will you follow up? It's vital to establish realistic outcomes. This is also where seeking guidance from other German regions with similar experiences can provide valuable insights. Thirdly and lastly, they must assess the resources required. Initiatives like this demand substantial investment, especially considering the significant economic benefits associated with successful collaborations. By carefully considering these factors, NRW or Düsseldorf can effectively navigate the complexities of launching a pilot project.

Is there anyone who would call themselves a “paradiplomat”? And if so, how would they define the world? And based on this, how would you generally differentiate between the terms paradiplomacy and sub-national diplomacy?

The term 'paradiplomat' may not be commonplace yet, but it's a concept worth exploring. At our Academy, we've engaged in many discussions dissecting the differences between paradiplomacy and sub-national diplomacy. When we look at these concepts, it's crucial not to view them as inferior to traditional national diplomacy. They simply play different roles, often offering fresh perspectives on familiar issues or addressing entirely new ones. Paradiplomacy, in particular, can be seen as a form of supportive diplomacy, providing an alternative lens through which to approach diplomatic relations. Unlike short-term national priorities that may dominate international relations between countries like India and Germany, paradiplomatic initiatives, especially at the city level, tend to prioritize long-term partnerships and sustained exchanges. Take Bangalore, for example – it's not about quick wins but rather nurturing enduring relationships, fostering the exchange of ideas, people, and investments over the long haul. In this sense, sub-national diplomacy, and by extension paradiplomacy, are inherently geared towards long-term economic interests, offering a more tangible and enduring impact compared to traditional diplomatic channels.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT: Five key findings

1. Enhancing integration mechanisms: Strengthening integration mechanisms in Germany to foster cultural understanding and inclusivity among both local organizations and newcomers, ensuring smoother integration processes.

2. Streamlining immigration processes: Simplifying visa and immigration procedures, particularly for business travellers and entrepreneurs, to facilitate seamless international collaboration and support Germany's innovation ecosystem.

3. Promoting inter-regional collaboration: Encouraging dialogue and collaboration among German regions to share best practices and insights, leveraging collective knowledge and experiences for more effective engagement with international partners.

4. Leveraging cross-cultural expertise: Engaging experts with a deep understanding of both German and Indian cultures and bureaucracies to guide international initiatives, ensuring strategic and culturally sensitive approaches.

5. Aligning engagement with cultural contexts: Adapting engagement strategies to align with cultural nuances and contextual factors, such as avoiding major festivals like Diwali for official visits, to optimize the effectiveness of international interactions.

How do practices of paradiplomacy overlap or compete with other forms of classic traditional official state diplomacy?

In essence, while there may be moments of overlap and even competition between paradiplomacy and traditional state diplomacy, their underlying goals and approaches diverge significantly. Traditional diplomacy tends to prioritize national and strategic interests, while paradiplomacy hones in on the specific needs and aspirations of subnational actors like cities, regions, and industries. This distinction not only shapes their focus but also influences their methods and engagement strategies. Take the example of Germany and India's engagement around migration of skilled workers – while national diplomacy may cast an overarching net in terms of negotiations and policy, paradiplomacy employs a more targeted approach, pinpointing specific organizations, individuals, and regions to advance these interests. It's a dynamic interplay between the macro and micro levels of diplomacy, each with its own unique contributions

to the ever-evolving landscape of international relations. In the tapestry of international relations, paradiplomacy adds vibrant threads of local perspectives and interests, enriching the broader diplomatic landscape. For stakeholders ranging from city governments to industry associations, understanding and engaging with paradiplomacy offers a unique opportunity to amplify their voices on the global stage, forge meaningful partnerships, and drive sustainable development. By embracing the dynamism of paradiplomacy, we pave the way for innovative solutions to shared challenges and foster a more inclusive, interconnected world. ■



FELLOW

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THE IMPACT OF RELIGION IN GLOBAL POWER SHIFTS

Religion has an important influence on international politics, and religious actors can be influential in different ways – as drivers but also as mediators of peace or violence. This section looks at religion as one important determinant of shifts in global power constellations.



Weapons, Religion, and the Ukraine War

Pope Francis provoked strong criticism when he appealed to Ukraine to have the courage to show the white flag. “Do not be ashamed to negotiate”, Pope Francis appealed to the Ukrainian government in an interview in February 2024, two years after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Yet even though the Pope has been consistent in praying for peace, calling for dialogue, and showing solidarity with the innocent who have suffered throughout the war, in 2022 he also confirmed that “(t)o defend oneself is not only licit, it is also an expression of love toward one’s homeland.” What does this mean for the Catholic approach to the German debate on arms deliveries to Ukraine? And, more generally, how have the Christian Churches in Germany been positioning themselves?

Germany’s debate on supplying weapons to Ukraine

In what has come to be known as his “Zeitenwende” speech, Chancellor Scholz spoke of the Russian invasion as a turning point not just for Europe but also for Germany. In his speech, which he held three days after the invasion, the Chancellor confirmed that on the previous day, the decision had already been made that “Germany will supply Ukraine with weapons for the country’s defence”. According to the German defence ministry, as of April 2024, Germany had provided military assistance amounting to EUR 6.6 billion, including armoured fighting vehicles, artillery, drones, and military engineering capabilities. There has been strong opposition to providing weapons which is not limited to individual parties represented in parliament, but spans party divides (the left-wing party Die LINKE and the far-right wing party AfD both voted against military assistance). And there has also been a heated debate as to what type of weapons should be provided. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the debates surrounding weapon deliveries mirrors the divide in parliament.

Roman Catholic positions

The Conference of German Catholic Bishops (DBK) was very quick to respond to the Russian invasion and issued a declaration in March 2022. In the document they, clearly state that arms deliveries to Ukraine which serve the purpose of

enabling a state under attack to defend itself according to international law and Christian peace ethics is principally legitimate. Half a year later, Pope Francis followed suit and indicated that supplying arms “may be morally acceptable”. In the following year, the lay organization of Catholics in Germany, the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) also came to a similar conclusion, asserting that “weapons deliveries as support and protection are justified and necessary”. All of these positions appear to be on the same page, although there are other voices within the Catholic Church, which take a far more pacifist approach, organisations such as “Pax Christi” being a case in point. Traditionally an international movement for peace, especially the German chapter has repeatedly faced a conundrum on whether it could uphold its pacifist demands. In light of the full-scale Russian invasion, Pax Christi was once again confronted with a dilemma. It therefore chose not to explicitly condemn military assistance, but rather focused on calling for a ceasefire and peace negotiations.

Protestant positions

From the beginning of the Russian invasion, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) was very transparent about the ongoing church-internal debate on whether or not to support military assistance to Ukraine. Arguably, this debate reflected the factions within German society. The EKD published both sides of the argument and representatives with very different opinions took part in public debates. Bishop Kramer, the EKD Commissioner for Peace, positioned himself against Germany delivering weapons, thus representing the more pacifist approach within the EKD. Although he stated that Ukraine had a right to defend itself, the only way to achieve peace was without weapons. Prominent figures within the EKD, including Bishop Bedford-Strohm, the former head of the EKD Council, and Katrin Göhring-Eckardt, former head of the EKD synod and currently vice president of the German Bundestag, have both spoken out in favour of military assistance. The former even published an essay on “Just Peace and Military Violence” in which he explains that it is not only morally acceptable to defend oneself



with weapons but that it is also justified to support those under attack. As the short overview reveals, the question of whether or not to provide weapons to Ukraine divides political parties and Christian churches alike. When looking at other religious groups within Germany, many have refrained from taking a political stance. The Russian Orthodox Church in Germany, for example, has offered aid to Ukrainian refugees and published general prayers for peace, but does not explicitly position itself either way regarding weapons. The same applies to the Central Council of Jews in Germany and Muslims representatives. By focusing on the debate within Germany as one specific case, this article offers some insight as to the diverging opinions but also the active debating culture within the Christian churches in Germany. More generally speaking, the Ukraine War has confronted religious communities within and beyond Russia and Ukraine with fundamental moral dilemmas. There is the issue of violence and how to justify it, as partially outlined in this article. Another dilemma is that faced by members of the Russian Orthodox Church, regarding the position of Patriarch Kirill who has actively supported the Russian invasion. His authority has been questioned within the church's own ranks, for example when over 300 Russian Orthodox priests signed an open letter contradicting his stance on the Russian invasion. Finally, there is the dilemma as to what role religious groups should assume in such a war – should they pray for peace or become active in national and international politics? Individuals have expressed their disappointment in the perceived lack of pressure religious leaders have been exerting, for example on the Russian regime or the Russian Orthodox Church. The debate within the Christian Churches in Germany and the interaction between religion and state can, therefore, be interpreted as a positive sign of political deliberation. It indicates that, despite strong hierarchies, especially in the Catholic Church, there is a pluralism of voices that partake in the public debate within and beyond religious spaces. ■



FELLOW

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The Importance of Religion, History, and International Relations for “Rethinking Politics”

The Rhineland is known for its natural beauty as well as its architectural glory, reaching back through medieval religious history. It was here that Charlemagne was crowned; here that the powerful Archbishop of Cologne extended his political as well as ecclesiastical sway; here that territory moved back and forth among the primary sovereign powers of the continent for centuries; here that spires pointing to heaven were built, sometimes destroyed, and rebuilt.

In addition, it was not only here, but across much of Europe, that Indigenous spiritualities were absorbed by Catholicism, to be rejected later by Protestantism, and that both Jews and Muslims were construed as “other”, outside of the proper bounds of religious and political power and practice, with the numerous mechanisms of war and exclusion that such construals entailed. This occurred throughout the Middle Ages, culminating in the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and Treaties of Westphalia (1648), which, step-by-step, institutionalized what became first a Catholic-Protestant rivalry of “divine-right” monarchs, and later a gradual secularization of European political governance. Yet, in recent years, scholars have shown that secularization was never complete, even in Europe. Examples of the ongoing relevance of religion include the Catholic universalist underpinnings of German-French rapprochement in what became the European Union, German and European reparations to Jews for the horrors of the Holocaust, new openings to Muslim populations in the “Gastarbeiter” programs of the 1970s vis-à-vis Turkey, and more recently, the growth of religious diversity via increased migration across Europe from both the Middle East and Africa.

Fast forward to today, where there are hugely differing patterns of memory and history, in the Rhineland, across Germany, and beyond, regarding Indigenous peoples, Jews, Muslims, and the relative impact of Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) versus secularism. “Rethinking Politics” requires a re-examination of the contradictions of the leg-

acies that have led to these differences, in order to move forward to address the constellation of issues that religion brings to the table.

Scholars tended for a while to treat religion as one “variable” among others that might influence predominantly “secular” forms of governance. This led to studies of, for example, whether religion fosters conflict, or whether it can contribute to peace. In contrast, a number of more historically-oriented scholars, including myself, have worked towards a more contextually-nuanced understanding of religion vis-à-vis secularism, arguing that the term religion has no fixed boundaries through time or across the world (for example, there are monotheistic religions, there are religions with many deities and religions without any, religions that focus on humanity and religions that conceptualize all of creation as intertwined, there have been and are today forms of governance that include religion implicitly or explicitly, etc.); and that religion’s inevitable intertwining with political and economic practices in different temporal eras and geographic situations is an important object of study.

How does history matter today in rethinking religion, politics, and international relations? I assert that it matters a great deal, in how we conceptualize the intersections among religious, ethnic, and political others, and in how we think through the ethics of inclusion in our societies and globally.

For example, secularization in Germany (and Europe) was never a fully-realized project, with numerous implications for politics today. Even while the Treaties of Westphalia presumably instantiated the idea of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“whose realm, their religion”), to be followed by enlightenment ideals of self-realization (as opposed to obeying deities), both Protestantism and Catholicism were integral components of European transnational exploration and colonizing projects. The “three C’s” – conquest, colonization, and conversion – did not always work in com-

plete harmony, but conversions (coerced as well as occasionally more benign) to competing branches of Christianity became common from the 15th through the 20th centuries in the Americas, Africa and much of Asia. Moreover, within large parts of Europe itself, both Jews and Muslims were marginalized, forced to convert, or expelled.

Today, the “Doctrine of Discovery,” one of the primary ecclesiastical and legal justifications for colonization, has become a major source of embarrassment and guilt for many Christian denominations. This doctrine, promulgated as a Papal Bull by Pope Alexander VI in 1493, legitimized the “discovery” and violent conquest of any land not inhabited by Christians. While primarily concerning the Americas at the time (especially South America), similar justifications (e.g. the idea of “terre nulius” – that “undeveloped” swaths of the world were “empty” and ripe for the taking and “developing”) were used in exploring and conquering Africa and other parts of the world. (In contrast, Christian Europe viewed Muslim-majority areas of the world, epitomized at the time by the Ottoman Empire, not as “undiscovered” but as fair game for balance-of-power conflict.)

The Doctrine of Discovery was incorporated into both international and U.S. law, with repercussions for Indigenous People’s rights in the U.S., Canada, and elsewhere today. However, many Christian denominations have recently renounced it, culminating in the Vatican’s repudiation in March 2023. The renouncing of this doctrine has become part of Christian religious denominations’ historical self-examination and desire to understand and repent the forms of violence of the past that have given rise to “othering” of Indigenous peoples in the present.

Of course, such a religious and political rethinking is occurring amidst the rise of right-wing groups across Europe, the U.S., and elsewhere in the world, who are rejecting historical re-examination in favor of xenophobia. Many groups cast opposition to immigration in both socio-cultural and religious terms, begging the question of whether there is a kind of “essential” European identity, and if so, whether it is Christian or secular. But the forms taken by European secularism have also often privileged the rights of Christians, leading some scholars of “secularism studies” to argue that secularism is merely an outgrowth of Christianity, especially in Europe, and that secular forms of



governance are hostile to other kinds of religiosity. The horrors of the Holocaust in World War II have carved a partial exception to such hostility for Jews and Judaism, although anti-semitism surely continues to exist. Regarding Muslims and Islam, despite “Gastarbeiter” programs of the recent past that encouraged mostly Muslim migration (e.g. from Turkey), and despite the influx of additional Muslim migrants, (often) from war-torn countries formerly controlled by European powers, there does not appear to be much of a consensus on a religiously-inclusive way forward.

Doing politics differently, therefore, requires first, an acknowledgement of the violence and legacies of the past and how they have helped to produce such contradictory policies for the present. Second, it requires a deep reflection on the ethics of inclusive governance and ongoing study of the richness of Indigenous, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and other forms of religiosity and governance that exist, in Europe and across the globe. Finally, it requires an openness to discovering innovative linkages between past and present. In my view, for example, European “secularism” is layered over not just Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions, but also Nordic/Sami, Celtic, and other forms of Indigenous ones. Delving into these connections and probing whether they should be understood not merely as cultural relics but also as possible forms of nourishment for inclusive socio-political formations is an exciting project for future rethinking. ■



Cecelia Lynch

Islam and the Cold War in Turkey

In the Turkish Republic, established in 1923, there were various political, economic, social, and cultural rivalries. In many areas, the adversaries stood almost irreconcilably opposed to each other. The authoritarian system of the state's founder was able to contain these, without, however, eliminating them from the world. Regardless of the rivalries, there was a small common denominator that allowed the rivals to cooperate with one another. One of these, or rather the most important factor, was the USSR. In short, the literature of recent years repeatedly refers to the notion that the "Cold War" between Turkey and the USSR had already begun by the end of the 1920s.

The perspective outlined above is substantiated by significant arguments that cannot be circumvented, even though the author of this text can only conditionally agree with the claim, which, of course, must first be contextualized. The deterioration in relations between Turkey and the USSR was, among other things, due to the fact that Turkey, under İsmet İnönü from 1939 onwards, interested in closer ties with Germany as well as other authoritarian and totalitarian systems. İnönü's anti-communist stance is a recurring topic in the literature and is recorded as an important factor in the worsening of relations between Turkey and Russia.

Interestingly, it was precisely the USSR under Lenin that also helped Turkey to its success in 1923, for example in the form of arms deliveries and other relevant support. The break with the Soviet Union came in the 1930s. Here, the changing political systems in Europe must be considered. The rise to power of the fascists and National Socialists shifted the foreign policy conditions and established new possibilities for different actors.

Relations with Moscow were not entirely neglected by İnönü and his government, which was impossible given the geopolitical situation, but they were pursued with less intensity. This did not escape Nazi propaganda in Turkey, and it can be read about in various Nazi publications that were produced and distributed in Turkey.

The ideological antagonisms, rivalries, and alliances of

the national states of the time were documented in various print media and continue to provide us with very important insights into the past. For instance, communism was portrayed as a Jewish invention intended to bring independent peoples under Jewish dominion.

With the consolidation of power by the Kemalist elites and their own conceptions of authority, power, state, religion, and society, interests in cooperation with the Soviet Union also changed. The communist ideology was not acceptable to the Kemalist elites. To generate a resilient Turkey or Turkish civil population, they relied on a nationalist-religious education. Even though the literature on Turkey often speaks of secular developments, the Kemalist elites, with the help of various Turkish nationalist thinkers, who harbored certain sympathies for religion and Islam, intertwined identity with their assumptions of 'Turkishness' and were thus able to dictate an Islam from above.

Religion only disappeared to a certain extent and possibly until 1938 from society in Turkey. Above all, a religious-nationalist concept was invented which recognized a certain diversity in the population, such as Jews and Christians, but apart from that, the remaining parts of the population were declared Turkish. For this purpose, Turkish nationalist historical institutions also developed different narratives.

The homogenization was not only driven by convinced followers of Kemalist ideology, but also by the help of Islamic forces.

Even though the role of Islamic groups was diminished by Kemalist reforms, the Kemalist elites resorted

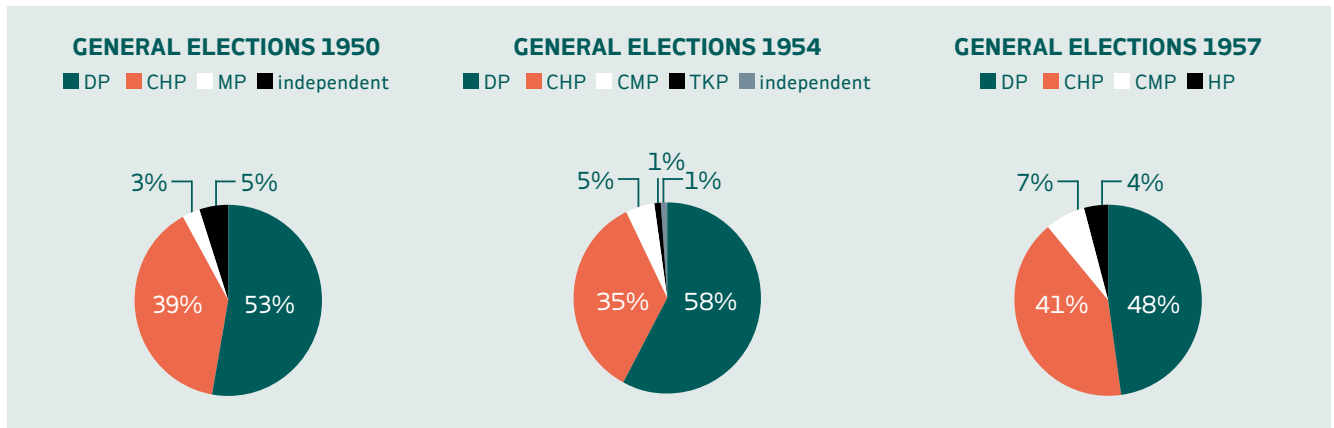
to Islam to expand their claim to power. The establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) is evidence of such a strategy, which was supposed to further strengthen their own convictions. Various daily newspapers also served the Kemalist elites and supported this endeavor. Islamic newspapers and weekly journals are no exception.

In this context, we approach my subject. I have been engaged since 2005 in the multifaceted history of Turkey among other themes, such as the emergence of authority,



FELLOW

HÜSEYİN ÇİÇEK holds a doctorate in Political Science and a habilitation in Religious Studies. He is an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW and currently affiliated with the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Vienna. His research interests include violence, religion, foreign policy, and secularization.



General Elections in Turkey 1950–1957, Source: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demokrat_Parti_\(1946\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demokrat_Parti_(1946))

norms, violence, etc. Through various studies on the subject, I have repeatedly questioned why the literature speaks of a strict separation of different political groups when, in certain contexts, entanglement and alliance formation are visibly prevalent. Somewhat aligned with the Böckenförde Diktum, I have repeatedly asked myself whether Turkey, too, lives on preconditions that it cannot fulfill itself. I focused on the difference between various political groups in Turkey and their agreements, entanglements, and certain indistinguishability from one another.

My initial work focused primarily on the discourse surrounding martyrdom in Turkey. During my doctoral research, I repeatedly noticed that the Turkish state uses religious terms in an inflationary way without considering their religious context, thereby pursuing a nationalist identity politics that serves to prevent questioning the homogeneity in Turkey. At the same time, it also blights a critical perspective on certain conflicts. More on this later.

The Cold War was both a curse and a blessing for Turkey. It allowed Turkey to escape consequences for its political actions in support of German troops in Russia. Turkey's geopolitical position ensured that the USA very quickly turned its attention to the Kemalist Republic after World War II. For Washington, there was little question that Turkey - due to its northern neighbor - should not be included in the various Western alliance systems. A condition set by the Americans was that Turkey's political system should be transformed from a one-party system to a multi-party system. As a result, Turkey had to gradually open its political system starting in 1947, leading to the first free elections in Turkey in 1950.

The consequences were not only free elections, but also that the press was no longer controlled by the state and thus could develop freely. Many members of the DP (Democrat Party) were former members of Atatürk's republican party (CHP). With the opening of the political system, they could now openly express their stance on religion and Islam. Politically, with the shift towards a democratic system, they could now also publicly present themselves as devout Muslims who believed that the Kemalist-colored religious identity politics during the Cold War needed to be modified.

Even though the USA began to count Turkey as an ally

early in the Cold War, Western European nation-states were skeptical about Turkey. It was one thing to prevent various states from a communist takeover – the communist victory in China in 1949 also did not go unnoticed in Europe – and another to integrate a Muslim state into the closer alliance policy of Western European states. Some Western European states feared that the historical and cultural differences would be too difficult to overcome. The Korean War offered Ankara an opportunity to dispel the skepticism of the Western European states and to present itself as an important partner of the West. At the government level in Turkey, it was even decided without the involvement of the Parliament, that Turkish troops should fight in the Korean War and defend the freedom of the West in Asia.

As previously mentioned, with the opening of the political system, the media was also freed from state restrictions. Many new print media emerged and dealt with domestic and foreign political topics in the context of identity, Islam, and the Cold War. Many Turkish nationalist and Islamic weeklies and dailies were not immune to these developments. Regardless of their ideological positions (Kemalist-secularist or nationalist and Islamic-conservative), they argued that Turkey propagated as a state of the rule of law and not hostile to a transcendent power, and must protect the world from "godless" forces. The fundamental values of secular and Islamic Turkey were at risk.

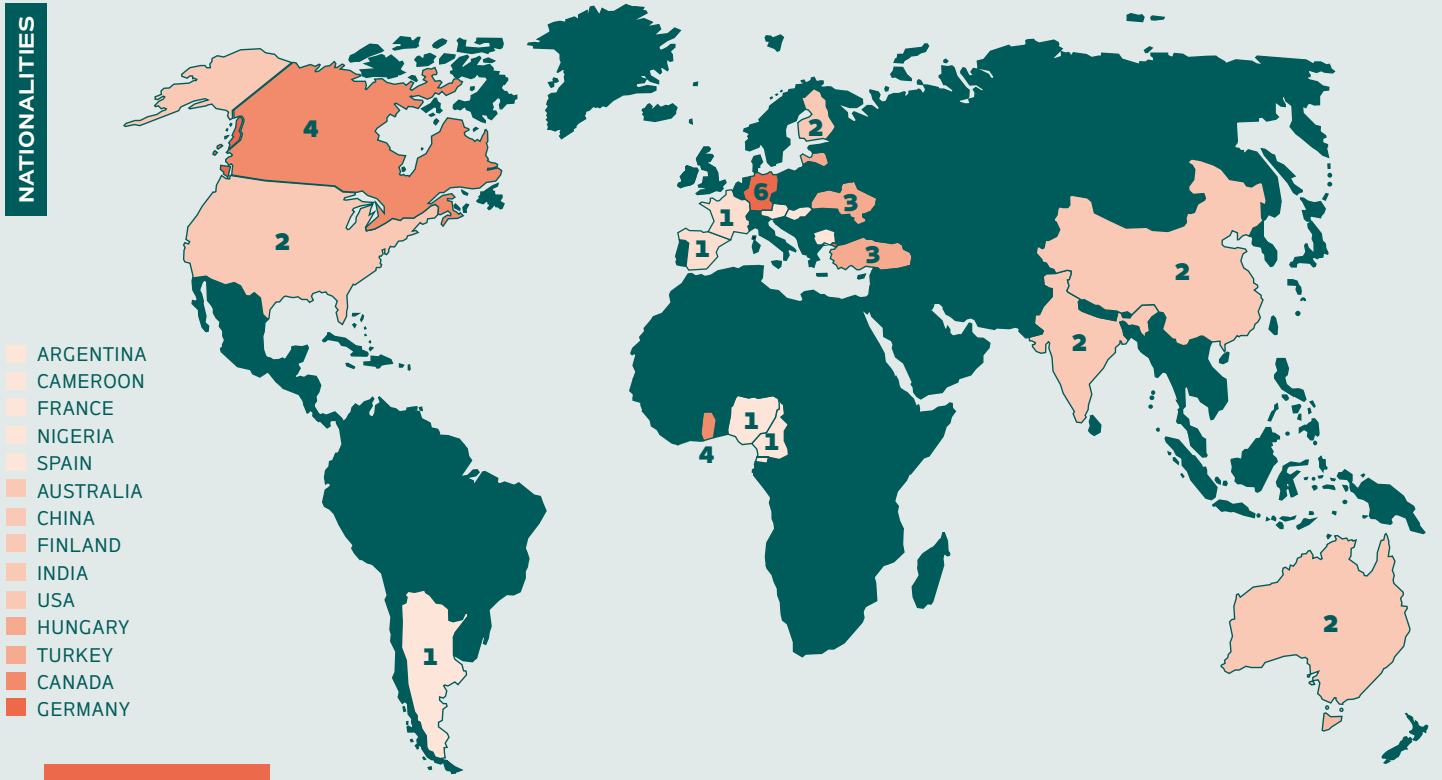
My project aims to examine the various discourses in the respective weekly papers and the communication among them. Kemalist-nationalist and Islamic weeklies frequently engaged with each other in the context of the Cold War, attempting to find – as suggested at the beginning – a small common denominator that allowed them to present a united front against the communist threat. It did not matter whether the adversary was immediately at one's own border or in Asia. There was a belief that the sphere of influence of the USSR had to be pushed back everywhere. The 1950s – the focus of my project – is not only committed to contemporary history but also attempts to look at the present. It seeks to identify which arguments are currently used in Turkish politics and the media landscape to establish an alliance between different political groups in the context of today's geopolitical challenges. ■



THE ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Academy of International Affairs NRW in the Federal City of Bonn is dedicated to the global challenges and structural changes in international politics in the 21st century. As the Academy's central focus, its Fellowship programme promotes scientific and scholarly excellence and builds international and interdisciplinary connections.





INSIDE AIA

Committed to Science and Rethinking Politics

The Academy of International Affairs NRW was established with the intention of embracing a truly interdisciplinary approach. At the core is an international and interdisciplinary fellowship programme, which invites outstanding thinkers to Bonn for several months. The Academy offers them ideal opportunities for work and cooperation.

THE ACADEMY'S FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME AFTER TWO YEARS

The Academy's fellowship programme is at the heart of its activities. It is aimed at outstanding and dedicated scholars and practitioners of all nationalities. Each year, scholars from the postdoc level onwards can apply to the academic track, whereas the practitioner's track invites applications from experts with professional experience in the fields of politics, diplomacy, business, NGOs or the media. The fellowship programme offers a platform for a unique exchange between research and practice and builds on a mutual openness to engage with the goal of creating new networks of knowledge between North Rhine-Westphalia and the world.

CONDITIONS AT THE ACADEMY

The fellows whose projects are selected by the Academic Board spend their time at the Academy doing research, exchanging insights in the bi-weekly colloquium and monthly research group meetings, and engaging with partner institutions in NRW and beyond. When they come to Germany, many fellows bring their partners and children, and the Academy's fellow management supports them with information on child care, (international) schools, or kindergartens. In the setting of the Academy as a work space, the disciplinary variety and international composition of each group creates a dynamic atmosphere of reciprocal learning. The goal of the fellowship programme is for fellows to find the time and a support infrastructure to conduct exciting projects and to initiate and foster joint projects that go beyond established disciplinary boundaries.

FELLOWS AT THE ACADEMY

As of 2024, two cohorts of guest researchers and practitioners already spent between three and ten months in Bonn to conduct projects on a variety of topics in the broader context of international politics, for instance with a focus on Artificial Intelligence (2022/23). The 2024/25 cohort has five fellows with a focus on The Geopolitics of Outer Space and will be followed by the 2025/26 cohort with a special focus on Translocalism and Subnational Diplomacy. Recurring themes among the projects invited to the Academy have been geopolitics with a focus on great powers and key regions such as the Baltics or East Asia, foreign politics and diplomacy, with a focus on communication, gender and societal actors such as religious groups or economic organisations, and geo-economics with a focus on such issues as energy security, trade relations or green growth. Among the key issues that several fellows focused on as emerging challenges for international cooperation, we also find disinformation and the growing impact of artificial intelligence, alliances beyond the global North and the broader question of global asymmetries for example in development cooperation or regionalism.

Looking back at the fellow cohorts of the first two years, fellows originated from 14 different countries in Europe, Africa, North and South America, South and East Asia and Australia (see world map to the left). The close ties between NRW and Ghana, for instance, are reflected in the growing

group of Ghanaian scholars at the Academy. Whilst being strongly rooted in social sciences such as international relations, international law, sociology and political science, many other disciplines are also represented including media studies, psychology, history, philosophy, and economics. Fellows in the practitioners' track include former diplomats, politicians, journalists and government officials. In practice, many fellows at the Academy have both longstanding professional experience and pursue an academic career, evidencing the importance of interlinking the two tracks in the Fellowship Programme.

Finally, fellows have always been the backbone of the social life at the Academy, for instance by introducing local foods and drinks of their home country, including such rare treats as Moldovan or Latvian wine or a lavish Ghanaian breakfast, and by organising events like game nights, an international Oktoberfest or dressing up for the local carnival. When fellows leave to return to their home institutions or move on to new challenges, they receive the status of associates and remain members of the growing family of the Academy. ■



The **Fellowship Programme** of the
Academy of International Affairs.



AIA Team



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ZEIN AL DIN**

Executive Director



STEPHAN MASSELING

Head of Administration



**PRIV.-DOZ. DR.
MANUEL BECKER**

Head of Scientific
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Academic Coordinator Fellowship
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SUREJA BEŠIREVIĆ

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MARTIN HILDEBRANDT

Fellow Management Officer



RAED MOKDAD

IT System Administrator



KERSTIN THIMM

Assistance to the Director
and the Team



CHARLOTTE BOCK

Student Assistent

The **Academy of International Affairs** in Bonn:
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RETHINK
POLITICS

Reservoirs of Knowledge: The Academic Board of AIA



From front left: *Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Jaclyn Neo, Angelika Nußberger, Maysoun Zein Al Din, Ulrich Schlie*
From back left: *Mark Speich, Róbert Spanó, Mikko Huotari*

The work of the **International Academic Board** of the Academy of International Affairs NRW

When a new institution is set up, an initial period of orientation is usually followed by a period of consolidation, during which the common mission is defined and the guidelines for cooperation are established. However, this phase can also be eventful and moving, as was the case for the Academic Board of the Academy of International Affairs, which was founded in 2020. Most of the members of the Academic Board already knew each other when they met for their selection meeting in fall 2023, although many of them were coming to the imposing villa in Bonn for the first time, having only participated in previous meetings online. The composition of the Academic Board has also changed. Adomako Ampofo from Ghana, Jaclyn Neo from Singapore, Robert Litwak and Monica Baumgarten de Bolle from the United States, Christopher Hill and Robin Niblett from the United Kingdom, Ulrich Schlie and Mark Speich from Germany, who were introduced in the last issue of the Journal, were joined by Mikko Huotari, Melanie Sisson, Robert Spano and Maya Yahya. Thierry de Montbrial and Branko Milanovic are no longer members of the Academic Board.

Mikko Huotari, who studied in Freiburg, Nanjing and Shanghai, is Executive Director of MERICS and brings specialized knowledge of European-Chinese relations to the Academic Board. Melanie W. Sisson is a Fellow at the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology. She is an expert on the use of armed forces in international politics, US national security strategy and military applications of new technologies. Complementary to her research areas is the field of European human rights protection, which the Icelander Robert Spano represents as a judge and, from 2020 to 2022, President of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg; he is currently a lawyer at the law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher (London). Last but not least, the

Academy was able to recruit Maya Yahya, Director of the Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, for the Academic Board, whose work focuses primarily on issues of political violence and identity politics and who is a voice on the Academic Board from the conflict-ridden Middle East.

As enriching as the cross-continental composition of the Academic Board is, it is also a challenge to reach consensus on issues relating to the Academy's thematic focus and the selection of Fellows. In recent years, despite the tense global political situation, this has been achieved in an outstanding manner. The Academic Board has been able to make a significant contribution to the work of the Academy and to fulfill its intended steering role.

The excellent preparation of the meetings by the Academy's Executive Director Dr. Maysoun Zein Al Din and her team as well as the sustained support of the work by the State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia, represented by State Secretary Mark Speich, also contributed to the successful work of the Academic Board. ■

Angelika Nußberger is legal scholar and professor at Cologne university. She holds the Chair of constitutional law, international law and comparative law and she heads the Institute for Eastern European Law and Comparative Law at the University of Cologne, where she is also Director of the Academy for European Human Rights Protection.



Members of the Academic Board

The interdisciplinary **Academic Board** decides on the awarding of fellowships and advises the Academy on scientific issues. It thus makes an important contribution to the Academy's profile and its central tasks.



PROF. DR. DR. H.C. DR. H.C. ANGELIKA NUßBERGER M.A. (CHAIR)

University of Cologne, Academy for European Human Rights Protection



STATE SECRETARY DR. MARK SPEICH (DEPUTY CHAIR)

State Secretary for Federal, European and International Affairs (North Rhine-Westphalia)



PROF. DR. AKOSUA ADOMAKO AMPOFO

University of Ghana, Institute of African Studies, Accra



PROF. DR. MONICA BAUMGARTEN DE BOLLE

Peterson Institute for International Economics, Washington D.C.



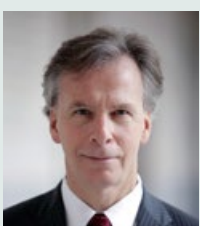
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University of Cambridge, Department of Politics and International Studies



DR. MIKKO HUOTARI

Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS), Berlin



PROF. DR. ROBERT S. LITWAK

Wilson Center, International Security Studies, Washington D.C.



DR. FLORENCE GAUB

Director of the Research Division at the NATO Defense College, Rome



PROF. DR. ASSAF MOGHADAM

Dean and Associate Professor at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy at Reichman University, Israel



PROF. DR. JACLYN NEO

National University of Singapore, Centre for Asian Legal Studies



DR. ROBIN NIBLETT

Chatham House – The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London



PROF. DR. ULRICH SCHLIE

University of Bonn, Center for Advanced Security, Strategic and Integration Studies



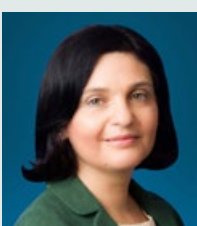
PROF. DR. MELANIE W. SISSON

The Brookings Institute, Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, Washington D.C.



PROF. RÓBERT SPANÓ

Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, London



DR. MAHA YAHYA

Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, Lebanon

ACADEMY EVENTS

09/23–07/24

2023

SUMMER ACADEMY

“Outer Space Affairs – A Critical Key Domain of International Politics”

03.–07.09.



Mai’a Davis Cross, Northeastern University; Simonetta Di Pippo, SDA Bocconi School of Management, Milan; Alexander Geppert, New York University; Martin Schwarmborn, University of Cologne; Sarah Lieberman, Canterbury Christ Church University; Gilles Rabin, French Embassy Berlin; Rajeswari (Raji) Pillai Rajagopalan, Centre for Security, Strategy & Technology (CSST), Observer Research Foundation New Delhi; Johann-Dietrich Wörner, National Academy of Science and Engineering (acatech), Munich

WORKSHOP

“Deconstructing Masculinities as the local meets the global”

13.–15.09.

Akosua Adomako Ampofo, AIA NRW Academic Board, University of Ghana; Edwin Paapa Kwaku hMensa, Composer, Portland; Aseye Fiagbe, Photographer/Filmmaker, Accra; Jude Obuama Addy, Graphics, Accra; Aseye Kokui Tamakloe, Assistant Producer, NAFTI; Kwame Crentsil, University of Ghana, Accra; Sabelo Mcinziba, University of Cape Town

WORKSHOP

“Challenges of the Neutrality Status of Moldova in New Realities”

25.–26.09.

initiated by Inna Supac, Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Aureliu Ciocoi, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Germany; Nadja Douglas, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), Berlin; Alexandru Flenchea, former Deputy Prime Minister for reintegration, Moldova; Heinz Gärtner, University of Vienna; Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC); Hans-Dieter Heumann, Ambassador ret., former President of the Federal Academy for Security Policy; Dominik P. Jankowski, NATO Headquarter, Brussels; Vladislav Kulminski, former Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration of Moldova; Tetyana Malyarenko, National University of Odessa; Vadim Pistrinciu, Institute for Strategic Initiatives from the Republic of Moldova; Juris Pupcenoks, Marist College, New York, and Fellow AIA NRW; Stefan Wolff, University of Birmingham

ISFB**International Security Forum Bonn (ISFB)
“Religious Extremism in a World out of Joint”
19.10.**

Syedeh Saqlain, Ambassador to the State of Pakistan in Germany; Andreas Zimmer, University of Bonn; Ulrich Schlie, University of Bonn; Nicole Unterseh, First Deputy Mayor, Bonn; Pauline Kao, Consul General for the United States in North Rhine-Westphalia; Beatrice de Graaf, Utrecht University; Phillips O'Brien, University of St. Andrew's; Sir Richard Shirreff, General (ret.) and former Deputy Supreme Commander NATO Europe, London; Damon L. Perry, Polica Exchange, London; Christine Schirmmacher, University of Bonn; Johann Schmid, Center for Military History and Social Science, Bundeswehr, Potsdam; Lisa Fellhofer, Austrian Fund for the Documentation of Religiously Motivated Political Extremism, Vienna; Thomas Weber, University of Aberdeen; Peter C. Flory, Former NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment; Jill Long, Embassy of the United States in Germany; Jochen Prantl, Australian National University; Evelyn Bokler-Völkel, University of Münster

BOOK LAUNCH**“Handbook of Political Islam in
Europe – Activities, Means and Strategies from
Salafists to Muslim Brotherhood and Beyond”
20.10.**

Thomas Jäger, University of Cologne; Ralph Thiele, European Institute for Counter Terrorism and Conflict Prevention, Vienna; Ulrich Schlie, University of Bonn

WORKSHOP**“Global Power Shifts and the World after the Wars”
15.11.**

Hans-Dieter Lucas, German Ambassador to Italy, Rome; Michele Valensise, German-Italian Centre for the European Dialogue Villa Vigoni, Rome; Armin Reinartz, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research; Luigi Estero, Italian Embassy in Berlin; Federico Castiglioni, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome; Thomas Weber, University of Aberdeen; Filippo Fasulo, Italian Institute for

International Political Studies, Milan; Joachim Bitterlich, Former German Ambassador to Spain and NATO, ESCP Europe, Paris; Ulrich Schlie, University of Bonn

CONFERENCE**“Europe’s Future Orders – Europe in Future International
Orders”
16.11.**

Wolfram Hiltz, University of Bonn; Andreas Marchetti, University of Paderborn; Domenica Dreyer-Plum, CASSIS/University of Bonn; Tomasz Lukaszuk, Ambassador ret., University of Warsaw; Landry Charrier, DLR Project Management Agency, Bonn; Iulian Romanyshyn, Fellow AIA NRW; Vanessa Vohs, University of the Bundeswehr, Munich; Juris Pupcenoks, Marist College, New York, and Fellow AIA NRW; Julian Plottka, University of Passau and University of Bonn; Rafal Ulatowski, University of Warsaw; Dirk Brengelmann, Ambassador ret.; Hans-Dieter Heumann, Ambassador ret., former President of the Federal Academy for Security Policy; Marcey Ras, University of Warsaw; Karsten Jung, Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences, Brühl; Julian Bergmann, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS); Moritz Brake, German Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies (GIDS); Joachim Weber, Kiel University

SEMINAR**“What are the Challenges and Opportunities in Inter-
Korean Relations?”
20.11.**

Uk Yang, Asan Institute; Sukhoon Hong, Changwon University; Daekwon Son, Sogang University; Heekyoung Chang, University of Duisburg-Essen; Remco Breuker, Leiden University; Hannes Molser, University of Duisburg-Essen; Frank Rövekamp, Ludwigshafen University of Applied Sciences; Minjee Kim, Ruhr University

COFFEE & CAKE**“The Future of EU-China Relations”
23.11.**

with Nils Hoffmann, Head of the Central Department at

the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Transformation and Digitalization of Rhineland-Palatinate

PARLIAMENTARY MEETING AT THE BUNDESTAG

“Europe-China Relations and Cooperation Potentials in Light of the Ukraine War”
29.11.



Hans-Peter Friedrich, MP, German Bundestag, Chairman of the German-Chinese Parliamentary Group; Michael Müller, MP, German Bundestag, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; Xin Zhang, Faculty of Politics and International Relations at East China Normal University, Shanghai, and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW

WORKSHOP

“Diplomatic Communication, Disinformation & Conflict”
04.-05.12.

initiated by Juris Pupcenoks, Marist College, New York, and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Katharina McLarren, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg, and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Dmytro Shevchenko, former Consul of Ukraine, Chancellor of the Ukrainian Free University, Munich, and Fellow AIA NRW; Ben O’Loughlin, Royal Holloway University, London; Joanna Szostek, University of Glasgow; Carolijn van Noort, Aalborg University; Hüseyin Cicek, University of Vienna and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Madlen Krüger, FEST Heidelberg; Cecilia Lynch, University of California, Irvine; Nukhet Sandal, Ohio University; Conrad Häbler, German Federal Foreign Office; Julian Plottka, University of Passau and University of Bonn; Māris Andžāns, Riga Stadins University and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW

COFFEE & CAKE

“The European Union and the Challenges in the Black Sea region”
06.12.

with Shuhsanik Minasyan-Ostermann, University of Bonn

WORKSHOP

“Decolonizing Transnational Humanitarianism: Intersections Between Germany and Africa”
12.-13.12.

initiated by Cecilia Lynch, University of California, Irvine, Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Nadine Machikou, University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon, and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Marthe Wandou, ALDEPA, Yaoundé; Jean-Pierre Bekolo, filmmaker, writer and critic, Yaoundé; Celestin Tagou, Protestant University of Central Africa; Friederike Odenwald, Hamburg’s Postcolonial Legacy and Early Globalization Research Center; Kum’a N’Doumbe III, Afrique Avenir; Akosua Adomako Ampofo, University of Ghana; Pierrette Lallah Missimana, Brot für die Welt, Cameroon; Ayoko Bahun-Wilson, Brot für die Welt, Berlin; Dirk Ebach, Welthungerhilfe; Maria Klätte, Misereor; M. Gabriel Ngwé, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Cameroon; Samantha Ruppel, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS); Anna Schwachula, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS); Roland Müller, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Romania; Bruno Berthier Garcia, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Mexico

2024

CONFERENCE

“Advancing Economic Paradiplomacy: Unveiling Opportunities and Best Practices”
18.-19.01.

initiated by Vivek Anand, Ministry of Finance, India, and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Jürgen Morhard, Ambassador (ret.), German-Indian Society; Winfried Mengelkamp, State Chancellery NRW; Anna Shpakovskaya, University of Duisburg-Essen; Ajita Agarwala, Government of India; Regina Summer, SISP, Sweden; Konstantin Kasakov, U.S. Consulate General, Düsseldorf; Huh Seungjae, Consul General for the Republic of Korea in North Rhine-Westphalia; Parul Mahajan, National Skill Development Corporation, India; Jordi Rafols, Innoget; Kathy Roussel, amfori; Kathrin Möslin, University of Erlangen-Nürnberg; Annette Klerks, Economic Development Office of the City of Düsseldorf; Ralf Eichhorn, Economic Development Office of the City of Karlsruhe; Go Theisen, EWG – Essen Economic Development Agency; Tasvvar Ali, Indian SMEs Consortium in Germany; B. S. Mubarak, Consul General for India; Michael Schmidt, UNIDO ITPO Germany; Yunus Arikan, ICLEI; Aleksandra Jaskólska, University of Warsaw; Thorsten Jelinek, Taihe Institute; Arvea Marieni, Regenerative Society Foundation

WORKSHOP

“EU Pipeline Politics, Energy Crisis, and the Nord Stream Projects: The Convergence of Energy Security Dilemmas”
01.-02.02.



initiated by Farid Karimi, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Benjamin Schmitt, University of Pennsylvania; Martina Kolanoski, University of Frankfurt/Main; Michael Rodi, University of Greifswald; Shushanik Minasyan, University of Bonn; Svitlana Gootsal, National Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Ukraine

ROUND TABLE

with the NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Group in the North Rhine-Westphalian State Parliament in Düsseldorf, “Integration. Perspectives for NRW and Germany”
29.02.

Hüseyin Çiçek, University of Vienna and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW

COFFEE & CAKE

“Afghanistan’s Road to Modernity 1880–1930”
05.03.

with Hans-Ulrich Seidt, Ambassador (ret.)

WEBINAR

“Is the EU’s Green Deal Leading the Future of Global Agriculture Trade?”
15.03.

initiated by Ana Stoddart, Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA), Mendoza, and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Fernando Brun, Argentine Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany

PANEL DISCUSSION

“Subnational Diplomacy as a Building Block of Meaningful Partnership NRW and US”
18.03.



Pauline Kao, Consul General for the United States in North Rhine-Westphalia; Paul Costello, US-American German Marshall Fund; Heike Maus, Office for Communication of the Duisburg City Council; Martin van der Pütten, International Relations Office of the city of Dortmund; Theresa Reymann, City partnerships and international affairs office at the city of Düsseldorf; Anna Shpakovskaya, University of Duisburg-Essen; Nicholas Goedeking, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS); Yunus Arikan, ICLEI; Vivek Anand, Ministry of Finance, India, and Fellow AIA NRW

WORKSHOP

“When Different Conceptions of Truth and Honesty Clash: Authenticity vs. Factuality in the Context of Northern Ireland”
25.-26.03.



initiated by Stephan Lewandowsky, University of Bristol and Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Andrew Dowling, Cardiff University; Paola Lo Cascio, University of La Sapienza, Rome; Mykola Makhortykh, University of Bern; Tetyana Malyarenko, National University of Odessa; Fintan O’Toole, The Irish Times and The New York Review of Books; Jon Roozenbeek, King’s College London; Jane Suiter, Dublin City University; Joanna Szostek, University of Glasgow; Vera Tolz, University of Manchester

PANEL DISCUSSION**“The Middle East in a Changing World Order”****24.04.**

Navid Kermani, Author, Laureate of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade; Nathanael Liminski, Minister for Federal and European Affairs, International Affairs and Media of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and Head of the State Chancellery; Maysoun Zein Al Din, Executive Director, AIA NRW

DIALOGUE FORUM**“Talking Peace in a World of Open Conflicts”****10.05.**

Franz-Josef Overbeck, Ruhrbishop, Military bishop and delegate of the German bishops to the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE); Jochen Sautermeister, University of Bonn; Ulrich Schlie, University of Bonn; Evelyn Bokler-Völkel, University of Münster; Martin Barth, Cörres-Gesellschaft; Reinhold Bartmann, Military Vicar General; Thomas R. Eißner, Catholic Military Bishop's Office Berlin; Hans-Georg Soeffner, FIW University of Bonn/ KWI Essen; Heinrich Peter Treier, Military Dean; Gregory Tutton, AI entrepreneur

WORKSHOP**“From Fringe to Forefront: Understanding Populist Parties and their Growing Influence in European Politics”****13.-14.05.**

initiated by Inci Öykü Yener-Roderburg, Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Philipp Adorf, University of Bonn; Mari-Liis Jakobson, Tallinn University; Lazaros Karavasilis, University of Bremen; Stijn van Kessel, University of London; Pelin Ayan Musil, University Prague; Panos Panayotu, Aarhus University; Sorina Soare, University of Florence; Mahir Tokatlı, RWTH Aachen University; Sebastian Umpierrez de Reguero, Tallinn University/Universidad Autónoma de Madrid; Sarah Wagner, Queen's University Belfast; Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi, University of Bonn

COFFEE & CAKE**“Hard Times for U.S. Soft Power in a Hostile World”****15.05.**

Michael F. Oppenheimer, New York University, Leader of the IR Futures concentration at NYU's Center for Global Affairs; Hendrik W. Ohnesorge, Managing Director of the Center for Global Studies (CGS), University of Bonn

WORKSHOP**“The Future of EU-China Relations”****10.-11.07.**

initiated by Reza Hasmath, Associate Fellow of AIA NRW; Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, Latvian Institute of International Affairs; Björn Alpermann, Julius-Maximilians-University of Würzburg; Raoul Bunskoek, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael; Rogier Creemers, Leiden University; Chloé Froissart, Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO); Matthias Hackler, Office of Reinhard Bütikofer (Greens/EFA); Timothy Hildebrandt, London School of Economics; Aurelio Insisa, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute; Maciej Kalwasiński, Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW); Eva Seiwert, Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)

PANEL DISCUSSION**“Afghanistan in the crossfire: between Taliban and geopolitics”****16.07.**

Brigadier General Michael Bartscher Institute for Security Policy, Kiel; Sara Nanni MdB (Green Party), Katja Mielke, Bonn Conflict Center for Conflict Studies (BICC), Evelyn Bokler-Völkel, University of Münster, Daniel Sidiqie, Young Society for Security Policy, Bonn

COFFEE & CAKE**“International Cooperation of ‘Coerced’ Returns of Migrants”****18.07.**

with Zeynep Şahin Mencütek, Senior Researcher at Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC)

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