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‘The Times They are a Changin’ – Fundamental Structural Change in International Relations as a Challenge for Germany and Europe

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Abstract: The international system is going through a period of fundamental change, which has similarities with earlier periods in history. Such periods of change might usher into war and instability if it turned out to be impossible to arrive at a new international order. The current period of change is characterized by the collapse of a liberal international order, which was established under conditions of Western hegemony. The coming anarchy is the consequence of unforeseen structural changes wrought about by globalization and other developments associated with the global spread of the liberal order.

Keywords: International relations, international system, strategic change, international order, globalization

Introduction

International Relations are currently undergoing a structural change of a fundamental nature. The last time such a fundamental change happened was in the years between 1989 and 1992. Such periods of structural shift have occurred time and again in modern history. This was the case during the French Revolution (1789–1795), after the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1814–1820), as well as after 1848, when modern, parliamentary democracies began establishing themselves throughout most European states; between 1890 and 1910, when a relatively peaceful, euro-centric world began to regress into a state of anarchy and nationalism; from 1925 to 1939, when the post-war order began to collapse; in the period between 1945 and 1955, during which the new Western world and the conflict between the East and the West emerged; and, finally, the turning point between 1989 and 1992 that put an end to the East West conflict. All these phases have in common that hitherto prevalent political, economic, and cultural structures of international relations gave way to entirely new

structures. The frequent occurrence of such transforming processes in the past 225 years is not only unprecedented in human history but also indicates that such changes are part of the dynamic that governs modernity.¹ What makes these periods of structural change so significant is that strategic decisions, taken by the most powerful leaders in reaction to those changes, have far-reaching implications. They often determine whether international relations are orderly and peaceful or, instead, are characterized by anarchy, instability and war to prevail. Consequently, both risks and benefits are extremely high during such phases.

The literature written during the first half of the 20th century, exploring the great catastrophes of their time, emphasizes the interrelationship between peace, war, and strategic political decisions taken by major powers. Authors, such as Carl Polanyi, Josef Schumpeter, John M. Keynes, Hajo Holborn, Harold Laski, and Norman Stamps, pointed to the self-destructive consequences of unregulated free-market economy (capitalism) and the consequent changes (failing parliamentary governmental systems, rise of nationalism, protectionism, militarism, social Darwinism, anti-Semitism, as well as radical and violent ideologies aimed at „improving the world“). According to these scholars, the catastrophes of the 20th century (two World Wars, national socialism, and Bolshevik totalitarianism) could have been avoided, had the politicians in the advanced (mostly Western) industrial states been willing to protect the large mass of poor people from existential risks and had politicians been able to address

¹ The term „modernity“ refers to a process which finds its origin in the period of Enlightenment and which, from the early 19th century onwards, evolved in to a hitherto unprecedented, dynamic process that has and continues spread across the world. In essence, modernity is characterized by the combination of industrialization and other elements of more or less „unleashed“ market dynamics (and the attempt to constrain them), the effect of technological developments and their industrial implementation, the secularization of social and political life, the transformation towards a mass society with the simultaneously rising autonomy in various social areas and increasing individualism, the subjugations and exploitation of nature, and the endeavor to democratically legitimize politics. On the breakthrough of modernity in the 19th century see Gall 1989 und Osterhammel 2009.

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the fear the middle-class had of a redistribution of wealth.² However, more often than not, domestic stability was gained through nationalism and isolationism towards others, often by means of militarism and imperialism. As a result, the structures of international politics underwent fundamental changes. During the 1870s and 1880s, international relations had remained relatively amicable. There were high levels of economic and cultural integration as well as cooperation, and interdependencies in other areas. Moreover, the compliance with the general prohibition on the use of force was widely respected in international diplomacy. Merely twenty-five years later, the First World War broke out and was waged between the most highly civilized states in the world, by means that would later rightfully be called an excruciating breach of civilization („Zivilisationsbruch“).³

The abovementioned authors provide a better foundation with which to analyze the current structural changes in international politics than the more prevalent theory-based literature of the political sciences. In this literature, the aim of scientific research is to identify basic rules that can be claimed to govern international politics, both today and in the past.⁴ The scientific discourse within the field of international relations is currently dominated by analyses either wanting to prove that institutional provisions contribute to peace or by studies that argue the exact opposite. Both schools of thought (liberal institutionalism and realism) raise interesting questions. However, they do not offer a meaningful tool with which to analyze structural changes in the international order because these changes can best be described by historically unique economic, technological, societal, demographic, and political trends.⁵

What then could a scholarly discussion regarding current structural changes look like? As part of an article

this question can only be touched upon. Nevertheless, every study of the topic should include four basic tenets.

- 1) *The nature of the structural change must be closely examined.* Thereby, the most significant structural elements of previous periods need be analyzed in order to ascertain if, in fact, they remain applicable today.
- 2) *The causes for these changes need to be analyzed.* It is of little value to overemphasize and highlight single variables. Rather, it is necessary to understand and describe complex dynamics. Historical parallels can be of help in identifying the causes for today's structural changes.
- 3) *It is necessary to study the possible and probable consequences of the structural changes.* Such an analysis should mainly focus on the extent to which international peace and international trade are being affected.
- 4) *General recommendations for action are needed.* It is important to define a new strategic framework that includes the key challenges but also the opportunities for political action. Only then, can Western democracies retain or acquire capacity to take comprehensive measures.

1. The Nature of the Current Structural Changes in the International System

In order to describe the current international structural change, at first, the core elements of the last structural change (1989/1992) and the resulting *strategic framework* need to be outlined. With the end of the conflict between East and West and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a structural change took shape, which was characterized by two main elements⁶:

1. *The absence of strategic competition as a shaping element of international politics.* The strategic and ideological competition between the Soviet Union on the one hand and the community of Western states, led by the U.S., on the other, reaching its apogee in the nuclear-strategic competition, had developed into the dominant pattern of international politics. The end of this competition was felt to be an enormous relief, es-

² See ground-breaking work by Keynes 1936; Schumpeter 1943; Polanyi 1944; Laski 1943; Holborn 1951; also see Speier 1952; Stamps 1957, regarding its relevance and background see Katznelson 2003.

³ See Friedrich 2014.

⁴ For criticism regarding this idea (theory of democratic peace) see Krause 2003.

⁵ The debate between „realism“ and „liberal institutionalism“ still reveals the basic ideological world-views of both theories and it is unlikely that the gap between the two can be overcome anytime soon. These theories perceive international structural changes as either a confirmation or a challenge to their theses. While liberal institutionalists were confirmed in their beliefs by the global developments during the 1990s, today's representatives of the realistic school of thought point to a number of developments that they had previously predicted. Neither concept, however, constitutes a satisfactory tool to analyze the strategic transformation processes on a global scale.

⁶ The description of the strategic situation at the time is based on contributions in Heydrich/Krause/Nerlich/Nötzold/Rummel 1992.

pecially in Germany. In both German and wider European history, such a period without strategic lines of conflict had never before existed.

2. *Strength, cohesion, and hegemony of the Western community.* The „West“ was a strong and relatively closed group of like-minded states, which together formed a zone of peace, cooperation, and prosperity. The East-West conflict had also been a conflict over which side's political, economic, and social system was better. Western democracies, with their regulated capitalism, their social and legal status, and their political systems based on freedom, effectiveness, compromise, and democratic transparency proved to be far superior to the authoritarian communist system. This triumphant victory of the „West“ was only possible because there were political elites in these countries who, in the light of two horrific World Wars, emphasized moderation, practicality, and cooperation, despite existing ideological differences. The American effort to create and promote an international order provided the framework for this process, as did the joint reconstruction and integration of Europe after the Second World War.⁷ It was thus possible to put an end to a phase of European self-destruction (both domestically and internationally), which had plagued the continent since the beginning of the 20th century, and which had led to the catastrophes of the two World Wars.⁸ In the „Western world“ it was possible to create a model of peaceful domestic politics and civilian relations, something that was unique in history. As Francis Fukuyama famously noted, Hegel's vision of an „end of history“ had become a realistic possibility.⁹

Accordingly, the expectations were that the internal political order (state of law, representative democracy, protection of human rights, market economy, and the welfare state) found within the Western world and the corresponding cooperative intergovernmental order could serve as a model for a global world order. This order should have been one in which states cooperated within the framework of multilateral institutions and solve problems together. Moreover, it was hoped that it would be characterized by states respecting the rule of non-violence and by a growing juridification of international relations – which, again, would bring about lasting pacification. Non-state actors, particularly those from civil society, would also participate in the international effort to solve problems that range

across borders or are of global relevance (*global governance*).

The strategic objectives pursued by the Western community were: to extend and consolidate the area of peace and cooperation (eastward enlargement, partnerships, neighborhood policy of the E.U.), to continue the policy of multilateralism in a multitude of problem areas (trade liberalization, human rights, climate change, environmentalism, wildlife conservation, migration, combating crime, etc.), the development of an effective multilateral framework to address security challenges outside the Western zone of peace and co-operation (crisis prevention, crisis management, resolving crises, and peacebuilding), reducing the remaining military stocks of the previous strategic confrontation and, finally, avoiding the emergence of new strategic lines of conflict.

A quarter of a century after the most recent turning point in history (1989–92), the strategic situation has fundamentally changed. *Again, strategic conflict lines are emerging.* However, rather than a repeat of the former East-West conflict, there are three developing strategic lines of conflict that directly affect European security and a fourth that has at least indirect consequences for Europe.

1. First and foremost, it should be noted that since the Color Revolution in Ukraine (beginning in late 2013 and culminating in the events of March 2014), Russia has been seeking a strategic confrontation with the West. This confrontation has loomed large for some time; however, it was a declared goal of Western (and especially German) policy to avoid such a contest. Unfortunately, this policy was unsuccessful, not least because it has proven to be incompatible with Russia's basic tenets regarding international order. The West sees the non-use of force, the territorial sovereignty of states¹⁰, the equality among all states (regardless of their size), multilateral co-operation, and the rule of law within international relations as the foundation of international order. This universal approach is confronted with Russia's understanding that great powers have the inherent right to determine – if need be, by using force – what states within their regional sphere

⁷ See Trachtenberg 1999, Ikenberry 2001, Ikenberry 2011.

⁸ Sheehan 2008.

⁹ Fukuyama 1992.

¹⁰ This also includes the right of each state to decide for itself on its affiliation towards an alliance, which was reaffirmed by both the Soviets as well as the Russians. It was already documented in 1975, in the final act of the CSCE in Helsinki, as well as in the agreements signed between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in November 1990, in which the East-West conflict was formally laid to rest, see the Joint Declaration on the new East-West relations in Europe adopted by 22 states at the CSCE on 19 November 1990. Text in: Krause/Magiera-Krause 1997, p. 110.

of influence are allowed to do and what not.¹¹ The Russian concept of „order“ reflects the political preferences of a new nomenclature (power-vertical), which has adopted typical Soviet-style attitudes with regard to international politics.¹² These include Russia's reflexive tendency to claim that the West is responsible for Russia's own mistakes and crises as well as a highly militarized understanding of power. Russia is pursuing classical geopolitics akin to that at the end of the 19th century and, due to a lack of other instruments, it is mainly based on military intimidation and confrontation. Not only does the country understand itself as an antipode to the Western policy of multilateralism and transnational order but it is now leading a more or less „hybrid war“ with the aim of destabilizing Western societies and democratic political systems. The anti-Western sentiment of Russian politics can be understood as an attempt of a kleptocracy to divert attention from internal problems. It resorts to external political aggressiveness and prevents a democratic reform within the country itself, all the while portraying Western democracies as external and internal enemies.¹³ Russia's strategic competition with the West is not a temporary aberration but will be a lasting challenge. There may be doubts as to whether NATO and the E.U. have always pursued the right policy (and used the right tone) vis-à-vis Russia in the past twenty-five years. But, at the end of the day, Russia and its President Vladimir Putin are largely responsible for the emergence of this current strategic competition.

2. Apart from Russia, Iran also has to be considered a strategic challenge and competitor to the West. Again, the strategic competition seems to be of lasting nature. It is true, that the international community was able to strike a preliminary deal with Iran in 2015, which put a hold on Iran's uranium enrichment program as well as the project of a constructing a natural-uranium-fueled reactor.¹⁴ However, the hopes of a fundamental change in Iran's foreign and security policy have thus far not materialized.¹⁵ Rather, Iran continues to be-

have in a hostile manner towards the U.S. and Israel, actively challenging the West throughout the Greater Middle East and pursuing a primarily militarized foreign policy. It has contributed to the escalation of the Syrian civil war by providing weapons to the Assad regime and by sending fighters of the Pasdaran and Lebanese Hezbollah to fight alongside the Syrian government. In Iraq, Iran has decisively contributed to the destabilization of the country, both during and after the U.S. occupation and, in particular, under Prime Minister Maliki. In the Persian Gulf and on the Arabian Peninsula, Iran is a factor of destabilization and violent change. To explain the Iranian behavior, a closer look at the country's domestic politics is warranted. Iran's Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) form a dense network of economic and military power which has so far successfully prevented all attempts of reform. The oppositional (green) movement within Iran, which stands for far-reaching reform and openness towards the West, has not been able to remove the existing „power vertical“ or at least limit its influence. President Rouhani, who is considered to be a moderate, obviously has few options to significantly influence the political situation within the country. Moreover, it remains to be seen if he can win the upcoming election in 2017.

3. A further strategic line of conflict and one that is only just emerging could be that between the Western world and a backward-looking and revolutionary Sunni (Salafist) Islamism. Al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State are the most well-known political-religious movements, which essentially want to restore the social order, prevalent more than a millennium ago when the Islam was founded and which seek the associated violent spread of fundamentalist understandings of religion. In Europe and elsewhere, this violent and backward-looking Islamic extremism is often merely perceived as „terrorism“. However, in reality it is a broader movement by both organizations and their affiliated networks and has to be understood as a new extremist challenge that spreads totalitarian ideas.¹⁶ Currently, there are likely well over 170,000 jihadists worldwide, fighting under the leadership of al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, or in one of the many other Islamic militias who cooperate with the aforementioned organization in one way or the other. As long as these movements are not able to develop and maintain statehood, the strategic threat that they pose will be

¹¹ This basic geopolitical idea is not new but can be traced back to the work of Carl Schmitt 1939.

¹² See article by Hannes Adomeit in this issue. Regarding Russia's power vertical see Mommsen 2007; Mommsen/Nußberger 2007; Heinemann-Grüder 2009; Gel'man/Ryzenkov 2011; Monaghan 2012. For patterns of Russia's foreign policy see Hill/Gaddy 2015.

¹³ See Dawisha 2014.

¹⁴ Regarding the arrangement from various different perspectives see Shirvani/Vukovic 2015; Inbar 2015; Khalaji 2015; Fikenscher 2016, Adebahr 2016.

¹⁵ See Karagiannis 2016.

¹⁶ See also CSIS Commission on Countering Violent Extremism 2016.

limited. The Islamic State, which was proclaimed in the area of eastern Syria and northern Iraq in 2014, is a first and largely failed attempt to establish such statehood. However, similar attempts to create an Islamic Caliphate, either in the region or elsewhere, could be more successful in the future. The strategic nature of this challenge lies in the fact that in most Muslim countries Islam is increasingly being reinterpreted as a political religion which defines itself as an anti-Western ideology. This creates a dynamic that could make for further political frictions with countries that are still regarded to be moderate Islamic states (such as Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia) possible.

4. In Asia, China is increasingly emerging as a strategic competitor and challenger to the West. The more the People's Republic of China gains in economic strength and technological prowess, the more these strengths are converted into military power. In East Asia, China is expanding its imperial dominance which has led to numerous conflicts with its neighbors; not least due to China's extensive territorial claims over vast areas of littoral space. While many other states in the region are seeking support from the U.S., others, such as the Philippines, are trying to „find arrangements“ with China. In the area around Taiwan, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea there is currently a situation of military competition, which, from the U.S.' point of view, is considered a harbinger of a larger and lasting strategic competition and one with considerable risk potential.¹⁷ The reason to choose strategic rivalry, like in the case of Russia, is founded in China's domestic politics. On the one hand, nationalism and militarism are welcome mechanisms with which corrupt elites can distract from internal problems and the lack of legitimacy the Communist Party of China enjoys. On the other hand, many political and military leaders remain susceptible to the narratives based on enmity and opposition towards the West.

Secondly, „the West“ is in the process of losing its cohesion, its strength, and its hegemonic charisma. „The West“ is no longer what it was twenty-five years ago. Especially within the last ten years, a process of internal disintegration has begun. This poses enormous strategic problems:

1. The European Union is drifting apart at a rate hardly conceivable only fifteen years ago. The Eurozone crisis

has weakened the Union to such a degree that fundamental differences and breaking points of the integration process have been laid bare. The increased freedom of movement, agreed upon in the 1990s, is now, if anything, a cause for skepticism within and towards the „European Project“. Two dividing lines are taking shape: one between the North and the South, another between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. Anti-European parties, right-wing populists, and nationalist movements, as well as a growing number of leftwing populist trends (e.g. the Labor Party in Great Britain) are threatening the broad consensus of domestic policies oriented towards the political center. For decades, strategic decision-making, both in domestic and foreign policy, was based on mutual understanding and the willingness to make compromises in order to reach common goals. Furthermore, only in very few European states the idea of integration is still supported by a clear majority of the population. Britain's decision to leave the Union could conceivably be repeated in other countries. Europe is on the path to a re-nationalization, which will be of detriment to its position on the international stage and create numerous starting points from which strategic opponents can exploit these weaknesses.

2. The United States is increasingly pursuing a new course in both domestic and foreign policy. More than twenty years of continued polarization between the two parties and the political debate has led to a lasting weakening of the government's as well as the individual states' capacities to act. The inability to pass a number of necessary reforms can also be ascribed to growing partisanship and the unwillingness to find common ground (especially not being able to balance the national budget and reduce the deficit). The fact that in the most recent presidential elections a candidate who ran both a populist and largely disruptive campaign won the race epitomizes the deep rifts within the American political arena. This polarization within the U.S. is likely to intensify in the future. In terms of foreign policy, the U.S. is clearly withdrawing from some of its international security policy obligations; a measure which has already been pursued with great consistency by the Obama administration. In Europe this withdrawal is primarily perceived as a shift to Asia. In fact, the U.S. is increasingly hesitant to take on stabilization efforts in any region of the world. As a direct consequence, there is less faith in America's willingness to take on responsibility and to buttress its security promises, not only in Europe but also in the Middle East and East Asia. This lack of trust is unlikely

¹⁷ Significantly different analysis to this question, see Friedberg 2014; Krause 2014; Steinberg/O'Hanlon 2014; Goldstein 2015; Christensen 2015; Rosecrance/Miller 2016.

to diminish under President Trump. As a result, regional security regulations are at risk and there is high potential for escalating dynamics in all three of the abovementioned areas.

3. The political trust between the United States and the E.U. has suffered severely in recent years, due to the dispute over the forced regime change in Iraq (2002/2003) and the NSA espionage crisis (2013). Europe and the U.S. are drifting further apart. What is more, over the last years there have not been any serious attempts by the political leadership on either side of the Atlantic to deal with the loss of trust and to bridge the growing divide, nor can this be expected under President Trump. Quite frankly, anti-Americanism is an important political currency in many Western European countries today. In Europe, the debates on the Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement (TTIP) (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) are increasingly being dictated by anti-American and anti-capitalist resentment and are symptomatic for the diffuse longing for the classic welfare state of the 1960s and 1970s. While NATO's military capabilities are being bolstered in the North – in particular to secure the Baltic states – in Southern Europe Turkey is gradually breaking away from the NATO and the E.U. thus establishing itself as a separate regional power. It is likely to distance itself even further from the Western alliance. As a result, the ability of the Western community of states to take action in the Middle East continues to decline.
4. The economic, technological, and demographic weight the Western world can wield is relatively low. Not only does Europe as an economic bloc hardly generate any growth compared to the Pacific countries, Europe's relative share in global economic activity is also continuing to decline, as is that of the United States. At the moment, the U.S. and the E.U. still account for almost 50 % of the global gross domestic product (the „broader West“, with Japan, Australia, Canada, add another 10 %). But the times in which „the West“ accounted for 80 % of the global economic output and could determine the world's economic rules have long passed.
5. Western states are less and less able to bring their considerable economic and military weight to bear because the established systems of representative democracy (parliamentarism, presidential systems, or semi-presidentialism) have functional problems and are increasingly incapable of political leadership and of generating enlightened political leaders. Most Western democracies today are characterized by inc-

reased political polarization or the fragmentation into many parties. Both are paralyzing the capacity to take political action – internally as well as externally. In the American presidential system the polarization between the extremely conservative right-wing, populist Republicans and an increasingly progressive, post-materialist Democratic party has led to a paralysis of the political system. France is deeply divided, despite its semi-presidential government system. Even in classical parliamentary democracies, a polarization of domestic policy is visible, with both right and left wing calling for more frequent popular votes on important matters. It is worth noting that the U.K. decision to leave the E.U. following a referendum, for which the British constitution has no provision, reveals the severe ramification a government's careless attitude towards such popular votes can have.

The waning internal strength and the decline of the global hegemony of the West will have far-reaching implications. Over the past 70 years, the Western community has successfully laid the foundation for a functioning international order; not only by creating social welfare states, functioning democratic systems, and by governments taking stabilizing economic efforts but also by a predominantly American-led benevolent hegemony. The success story of the West is that of a group of states which have reached both internal pacification as well as peace among each other. This development was only possible under the protective military and economic stewardship of the United States, which thus laid the foundations for a cooperative international order. Today's international order, based on Western ideas such as multilateralism and the rule of law has become subject to a process of erosion. This becomes distinguishable in four different areas:

1. *The European Security Order*, created together with the Soviet Union/Russia in the early 1990s, was *destroyed in the spring of 2014*. By forcefully destabilizing eastern Ukraine, occupying and annexing Crimea (in particular using hybrid forms of warfare in seizing parts of the Donbass and Crimea), establishing the military capabilities to invade the Baltic, and numerous other military provocations – including the blatant nuclear threat against non-nuclear states – have all but put an end to the established order. Frankly, Russia has called all principal elements of the European Security Order into question: to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of a state (according to the UN Charter, NATO-Russia Act of 1997, Budapest Memorandum of 1996), the prohibition on unilaterally altering borders (according to

the OSCE Final Act of 1975 and the Charter of Paris of 1990), respecting the state's right to decide on the membership of an alliance (according to the final act of the OSCE of 1975), the renunciation of the establishment of invasion capabilities (according to the CFE Treaties of 1990 and 1992), the provisions restricting the scope of military maneuvers, their timely announcement, and the invitation of observers (According to the CSBM Agreement), the ban on nuclear weapons (under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), and using them as a means of strategic threat and intimidation in Europe (INF Treaty of 1987).

2. But not only in Europe are these dramatic changes taking place. *Also in other areas*, in which Russia and China, as veto-powers in the U.N. Security Council, can limit the capacity of the „international community“ to act, *the notion of the non-use of violence and the collective security architecture are under attack*. In the Middle East and in East-Asia, international relations are heading towards a state of anarchy. The idea of increasingly regulated processes of international relations, as Germany has been promoting for years, is now being replaced by self-serving power politics. The rule of law is being replaced by the rule of the powerful.
3. *The economic and financial order is changing*. For the moment, international trade in goods and services is still growing, despite occasional crises and setbacks.¹⁸ However, there are numerous indicators that suggest a re-emergence of protectionism. To date, the strongest impetus in this direction comes from the United States. The presidential elections in November of 2016 have shown that the social consequences of decade-long de-industrialization have had such severe social effects that a policy of free trade is no longer a viable option. But also mass movements against CETA and TTIP in Europe highlight the great uncertainty regarding the social consequences of free trade policy and its dynamics. In the U.S. these movements give rise to nationalist and isolationist instincts, whereas in Europe nationalist sentiment is joined by anti-capitalist and anti-American attitudes. In addition, it is likely that the relevance of established institutions such as the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Bank for Payment Settlement (IBZ) will de-

crease or, put differently, the respective role of Western industrialized states in these organizations will decline. Regional and supra-regional agreements with a low level of institutionalization, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Community (APEC), will become more important as they are more flexible and allow faster, more economic and more sustainable results. Especially agendas which have been addressed largely due to the pressure of the general Western public (environmental protection, social standards, security and health standards, good governance, and equality, etc.) will become increasingly difficult to implement.¹⁹ The attempt to lay down these issues within the framework of free trade and investment partnerships is hardly promising. The mechanisms for crises stabilizing in the area of international monetary, financial, and economic policy (especially the IMF, BIS, G7, G20) will also be weakened for the foreseeable future.

4. Other forms of multilateralism, above all, the many negotiations and institutions of global governance, are in the process of changing. Provided that they can be expected to yield any substantial results, they will less likely reflect the Western, liberal agenda. Rather they will be decided by non-Western governments, or at least, non-European governments. This trend is already obvious in the area of multilateral climate policy. Previously, multilateral climate policy was structured by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, signed in 1997. The global climate regime was, thus far, essentially based on Western (mostly Western European) liberal concepts of global governance. This approach rests on three pillars: (a) the agreement on global targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases with legally binding limits for industrialized states, (b) the creation of economic and financial incentives to „promote“ technological innovation (also in non-industrial nations) and penalizing the emission of greenhouse gases; and (c) the establishment of mechanisms to assess the implementation of the agreement and pursue further negotiations. The continuation of this approach has become inadequate because today the greenhouse gas emissions of China and India surpass those of all Western industrialized countries combined and because, like other emerging countries, they simply do not accept any negotiated reduction targets. The compromise found in Paris in December 2015, therefore reflects the increased importance of the emerging markets, as each country can now determine its own

¹⁸ According to the WTO, the global export volume has shrunk from USD 19 trillion to USD 16 trillion in 2015, and taking the decline in energy prices into account this leads to a rather modest growth in trade (WTO 2016).

¹⁹ See Krause 2016 a.

national emission reduction targets. It is a clear step away from the European approach of negotiated reduction targets and their internationally monitored implementation.

What is taking shape is a tectonic shift in international relations, which marks a fundamental step backwards, when juxtaposed to what has been achieved in the past twenty-five years in terms of regulating international relations. Today we are witnessing a historical turning point towards anarchy. The liberal order is melting away and we are farther away from a global trend towards democratization and freedom than ever before. The White Paper on Security, published by the German Government in 2016, and the *Global Review* of the German Foreign Office from 2014, also reflect clear pessimism regarding the development of international relations.²⁰ Yet, both documents remain cautious in their choice of language and leave the impression that the necessary „sense of urgency“ is missing. In comparison, the European Security Strategy of 2016 is much more pessimistic in its wording. It states: „*We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned. To the east, the European security order has been violated, while terrorism and violence plague North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Europe itself.*“²¹

2. The Root-Causes for the Structural Change within International Relations.

How has it been possible for such tectonic shifts in international relations to take place within less than twenty-five years? The German white paper from 2016 refers to globalization – which is defined as „interconnectedness“ – as the driving factor behind recent developments.²² While this statement might be valid in a general sense, it is not particularly helpful without providing further context. It makes little sense to explain globalization solely by interconnectedness and connectivity (especially, in the area of information technology). Rather, today's globalization is in principle based on the global spread of the liberal mar-

ket economy (some call it „capitalism“), which was possible due to quantum leaps in the areas of information technology and transportation. Yet, the global spread of the liberal market economy poses substantial challenges to industrial powers, emerging states, and developing countries alike. Globalization, as we see it today, is the direct result of a political course the Western world has sought and promoted from the late 1940s until the end of the 20th century (and especially in the 1990s). However, the nature and the consequences of the dynamics unleashed by globalization were difficult to foresee.

In this regard there are structural similarities to the prevalent international developments towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the last century. Similarly, at that time, a period of economic globalization came to an end. In fact, globalization was the result of political decisions initiated by Great Britain in the middle of the 19th century which found support among other Western states.²³ In the second half of the 19th century, the expected increase in international cooperation and democratization took place for several decades. Moreover, the success of globalization set socio-economic dynamics in motion, which, in turn, generated uncontrollable domestic upheaval in most European states – thereby tearing down the international structural order. These were particularly pronounced in times of economic crises (as during the 1890s). In most cases, they were caused by social decline (or the perceived threat of decline), the impoverishment of large parts of the population, compounded by the simultaneous disintegration of traditional or revered social institutions and norms.²⁴ The disintegration of the international order came about because nihilism, nationalism, protectionism, and militarism took hold of most of the developed countries of Europe as well as the U.S. The classic promises of the Enlightenment and modernity had seemingly failed.²⁵ Britain's leading international role, favored by international free trade, was relativized by the rise of the German Reich, the United States, and Russia. London was unable to secure a permanent partner among the aforementioned and was incapable of maintaining the liberal international order. Therefore, it had to gradually adapt itself to an international system with no or only inadequate structural order. At least from the beginning of the 20th century onwards, British foreign policy was geared towards ensuring a certain degree of international stability

²⁰ Federal Government 2016; Federal Foreign Office 2014.

²¹ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Vice-President of the European Commission 2016, p. 10.

²² Federal Government 2016, p. 28.

²³ See O'Rourke/Williamson 1999.

²⁴ See Keynes 1936; Schumpeter 1943; Polanyi 1944; Laski 1945; Holborn 1951.

²⁵ See basic discussion in Lübke 1975.

and peace by committing itself to alliance policies; albeit to little avail.

These problems were reflected in the scientific and political debate of the time. Yet their true consequences for international peace were not understood until the 1940s. Already as early as 1850, German economist and philosopher Lorenz Stein had referred to the social question and its perilous potential for the stability of modern societies. It would evolve into the most important political issue of the following decades.²⁶ The German national economist Werner Sombart had already recognized the decline in globalization and international trade in 1903. He pointed to a general trend of declining export rates both in Germany and in other economies, whereas in the preceding decades, most industrialized countries had shown a growing export quota.²⁷ The French sociologist Emile Durkheim also observed and analyzed the dissolution of traditional values within the rapidly modernizing European societies. He noted that the repression of religious and traditional values and norms in a modern society under conditions of great social inequality led to the deterioration of norms and pathological disorder. He called this loss of internal values and norms and the associated social anarchy „anomie“.²⁸ In a later study, Durkheim concluded that these anomies were responsible for the atrocities and brutalities of the First World War.²⁹ In this context John Hobson's work also needs to be mentioned. In a much-respected study from 1902, he opined that it was, above all else, the unresolved internal economic and social problems that led the largest states in Europe as well as the U.S. to choose the path of militarization, colonialism, and imperialism.³⁰

But we should not overemphasize the parallels between then and now, for every period of history has its peculiarities. Unlike 120 years ago (1), today there is no Franco-German rivalry, but a deep friendship between the two countries and an institutionalized framework of cooperation that includes the other European states; (2) most of the European states primarily considered themselves „civil powers“; (3) international trade is more institutionalized than during the 19th century, and (4) Europe is no longer the center of international politics. Yet, structural analogies to the above-mentioned period of European history can be made out and can help to better understand

current developments. For example, the global trade and investment flows are similar to those of the 19th century, with far-reaching domestic and political consequences. As in the past, globalization, spurred by free trade, not only creates winners but also many losers. And today, as then, these losers form the fertile ground for anti-Enlightenment and anti-modern theories (often merely fantasies) to grow on – ranging from nationalism, xenophobia, and racism to anti-Semitism, protectionism, world conspiracy theories and simple „do-gooders“ that undermine democratic systems of governance.

In contrast to the 19th century, today the level of international trade is much higher. Over the course of the past fifty years, dismantling of customs and trade barriers as well as the liberalization of markets have led to an international division of labor and to the establishment of value added chains in an increasing number of areas. Consequently, this process has created a state of deep international cooperation and interdependence. Industrial production and services of various kinds are taking place in more and more countries and contribute to an increase in the exchange of goods and services. This trend is most evident in the fact that, since the mid-1950s, the growth of international exchange of goods on the global market has always been higher than the production of global goods – a process which has accelerated dramatically after 1990.³¹ However, the difference between the two growth rates has been decreasing since 2012.

From these global economic trends and in the light of a technological revolution, especially in the field of digital information processing, tectonic transformations have emerged over the past few years, which can provide an explanation for the problems of modern times, outlined above.

1) There have been enduring changes in the economic structures of the traditional industrialized countries of Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific, which have widespread political implications. First and foremost, a de-industrialization has taken place, which however varies from country to country. While up to the turn of the century, de-industrialization was perceived as a positive development and as a necessary step towards a modern service-oriented economy by international organizations, such as the World Bank

26 See Stein 1850, also in Ritter 1991, Flora/Heidenheimer 1981.

27 Sombart 1954, p. 368–389; also see Deutsch/Eckstein 1961. Export rate is the share in exports of the total economic output of a country.

28 See Durkheim 1951, Durkheim 1997.

29 Durkheim 1915; the statements made in regard to the brutalization of the society and politics in Germany can also be applied to France and other belligerents.

30 Hobson 1902.

31 By 1980, the volume of world trade had grown nearly twelvefold compared to 1950, while the volume of the global production of goods had grown by a factor of 5–7. Between 1990 and 2000, international trade grew by 85.9 % and by 2001, a further 46 %. In the same periods of time, production of goods only rose by 28.5 % and 21.0 %, respectively.

and the IMF, and economic scholars alike, a more differentiated assessment has emerged over the past decade.³² Empirical studies have shown that in industrialized countries globalization leads to the growth of the service sector but also results in the growing inequality of incomes.³³ Only a minority of employees and workers can reach high incomes in the service sector while the majority fall back to low wage levels and the middle-income sector shrinks accordingly.³⁴ It is also considered certain that de-industrialization tends to contribute to structural unemployment since not all workers can be transferred to other sectors.³⁵ It has also been noted that states that have maintained export-oriented industries have less problems adjusting to problems in the face of global financial and economic crises than those that have been subject to sustainable de-industrialization.³⁶ These developments also mean that social security systems, based on taxation of work, will accumulate deficits in the face of rising demands and relatively diminishing revenue, which will be all the greater the lower the political scope for reforms of the social welfare state are. These deficits can lead to the accumulation of exorbitant state deficits and can, thus, minimize the political scope for necessary adjustments.³⁷ There are apparently various strategies in dealing with globalization, each with varying degree of success.³⁸ Deficits can elicit more or less severe internal political fragmentation. Parts of the population that permanently work in the low-wage sectors or which are exposed to a real social descent are the breeding ground for left and right wing populism. The extent to which populism manifests itself and what form it takes on in each country depends on the particular political situation; sometimes also on singular events or the actions of charismatic persons. Populism cannot be explained in socio-economic terms alone, other variables must also be taken into consideration.³⁹ The results of

empirical research indicate that today's right-wing populism must also be understood as a reaction to liberal, post-materialist *mainstream* media, politics, and educational institutions that are perceived as hegemonic and intolerant.⁴⁰ Also, wide spread identity crises that the recent mass migration have caused form the backdrop for the success of populists.

- 2) Under these conditions, structural problems of Western governmental systems become relevant. The inability to showcase the necessary strategic leadership is one of these problems. The success of Western government systems in the past was based on the fact that they reflected important social conflicts and developed institutions and procedures to channel and counterbalance these *cleavages*.⁴¹ In Germany's case, particularly the two people's parties (SPD, CSU/CDU) and their connection to large social organizations played an important role. The traditional social conflicts (for example between capital and organized workers, between religiously-minded and secular people, between urban and rural areas) have become less apparent. In all representative democracy, it is becoming more difficult to adjust the established mechanisms and institutions of policy-making to the new cleavages, which are often moving along the materialism/post-materialism spectrum, or along varying degrees of concern towards the consequences of globalization. A clear indicator for this disintegration in parliamentary democracies is the fragmentation of the party landscape and the growing importance of populist parties which question essential elements of parliamentary government (open debate, respect for other opinions, and majority decisions) and thereby contribute to polarization.⁴²
- 3) The liberalization of international trade in goods and services, as well as the quantitative and qualitative growth of the international financial markets have, especially in the last thirty years, offered emerging economies and developing countries unimaginable opportunities to catch up in terms of industrialization and growth.⁴³ Many of them have made good use of these the possibilities. A high-level expert commission, established by the World Bank in 2008, came to the conclusion that the prospects for a global transformation were favorable. The number of people living

³² Rowthorn/Ramaswamy 1997; on criticism see Schumer/Robertsjan 2004.

³³ This is especially true for the digital economy where enormous business volumes and huge sales and revenues can be generated – from which only a relatively small number of people benefit.

³⁴ Iversen, Torben/Cusack, Thomas R. 2000, Scheuer/Zimmermann 2006; Pelzer 2008, Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft 2013, Wren 2013; Autor 2015; Acemoglu/Autor/Dorn/Hanson/Price 2016.

³⁵ Kollmeyer/Pichler 2013.

³⁶ Zambarloukou 2007; Wren 2013.

³⁷ Plumpe 2014.

³⁸ The EU Commission distinguishes four different types of strategies, see EU-Commission 2014.

³⁹ Autor/Dorn/Hanson/Majlesi 2016; Autor/Dorn/Hanson 2013.

⁴⁰ Inglehart/Norris 2016.

⁴¹ See Lipset/Rokkan 1967, Dalton 1996.

⁴² See Kitschelt 1995; Bornschier 2015.

⁴³ See Kaya 2010.

in open economies, with high rates of growth or a per capita income at OECD level had increased from one billion to four billion in the last thirty years.⁴⁴ In a study by the United States *National Intelligence Council*, published at the same time, foresaw a similar picture evolving; and it was particularly stressed that in many countries a middle class was emerging.⁴⁵ Many of these optimistic assumptions had to be corrected after the international financial crisis of 2008/2009, but, on the whole, this trend still continues. However, very different reactions and developments have been observed. The „Tiger States“ of Asia (especially the PRC) have exploited these opportunities not only to catch up but, in many cases, to actually become some of the leading industrialized countries in the world – dominating many international market sectors. While China is in the process of becoming the world's largest industrial nation and already has the second largest economy, other states have been less open to liberalization. Above all, underdeveloped countries, but also formerly socialist states, find it difficult to take advantage of the opportunities offered by international free trade and globalization. On the other hand, the countries that are successful in achieving significant growth rates and which can also create a technological upturn are able to gain considerable economic and military power. In the case of major emerging economies such as India and China, this can lead to a serious change in the level of regional power relations and allows these countries to become important players in world affairs. A case for itself are states that export energy or raw materials and, under conditions of free trade and international division of labor, can accumulate enormous wealth (sometime referred to as „rentier states“). In the majority of cases these countries do not – or only inadequately – use their wealth to stabilize their economic structure and tend to perpetuate the political rule of an elite (which controls the export revenue) often by exercising repressive measures.⁴⁶

- 4) Given the growing role of many newly industrialized countries within the global economy, shortcomings in the governmental system of these states have become an origin of serious strategic problem over the past decades. The greatest shortcomings in states with an emerging economy, former communist states, and

developing countries hinge upon the fact that most of them are so-called *predatory states*, i. e. states with self-serving political leadership whose objective it is to aggrandize wealth of the elites at the expense of the broader public.⁴⁷ The strategic consequences of predatory and rentier-states can be illustrated by a few examples: Saudi Arabia would basically be a backward kingdom without its massive oil exports. Its fundamentalist state religion – which underpins the family system of the House of Saud – would be of little appeal. As a major oil-exporter and rentier-state, Saudi Arabia has, for decades, been exporting the Salafi interpretation of Islam: Through the construction of Wahabi mosques, the training of imams that spread their faith, and the founding of Madrassas throughout the entire Muslim world, Saudi Arabia is responsible for the revolutionary Salafist ideas that pose strategic challenges to our security. Another example is Russia. Without the enormous revenues from the oil and natural gas business, the local elites would neither be so blatantly indifferent towards the dire needs of its population nor would it have resources to position itself as a strategic opponent of the West.⁴⁸ Syria would likely not be engulfed in a civil war had it not become the predatory state of the Assad clan and other influential families and had a moderate middle class – a result of globalization – not demanded a say in political affairs in 2011. But also in emerging democratic states that show high rates of economic growth, substantial difficulties have arisen. Some states suffer from rampant corruption (Brazil) while in others ambitious politicians are seeking to exploit the growing resources of the state to further their personal agenda (Turkey). An exception is the PRC, where the Communist Party still claims and vigorously defends its power monopoly. This model of government has some inherent weaknesses and deficits (especially corruption) that could become a real burden in view of the enormous challenges China will be facing in terms of domestic policy. As is the case with some of the above-mentioned states, the instrumentalization of external enemies is a welcome tactic to secure the CCP's rule.

- 5) Another cause for the strategic problems already outlined is that in many emerging and developing

⁴⁴ Commission on Growth and Development 2008.

⁴⁵ U. S. Nation Intelligence Council 2008, p. 8.

⁴⁶ See Mahdavy 1970; Karl 1979; Beblawi 1987; Sachs/Warner 1995; Smith 2004; Gawrich/Franke/Windwehr 2011.

⁴⁷ On the definition see North 1981, p. 22 and Lundahl 1997, p. 31; also see Olson 1993; for a comprehensive overview of the current problem see Bavister-Gould 2011. On characterizing them in other authoritarian systems see Eshrow/Frantz 2011.

⁴⁸ Regarding Russia's oil industry and its political implications see Gustafson 2012.

countries traditional social systems, usually based on religious norms, find it extremely difficult to accommodate capitalist market logic, the emphasis on the individual freedom, and the rationalism of modernity; all of which permeate the existing systems through globalization. The conditions of continued social inequality as well as corrupt and predatory statehood can lead to dangerous crises within the existing regulatory social systems and the disintegration of social cohesion. That anti-Western Islamism has grown to a political movement and has gained wide-spread attraction finds its origins in the deep rifts within the Arab States and other Muslim communities across Africa, and Asia. Its appearance is the result of anomie, particularly visible in the Muslim world.

- 6) The problems described above are further exacerbated by the asymmetric development of demographics. The population of Africa, the Arab world, South Asia, East Asia, and Latin America is growing rapidly, whereas that of the established industrialized countries is stagnating or shrinking. A hundred years ago, there were 1.5 billion people, fifty years later 3 billion, and today 7.5 billion. Sixty years ago, more than 30 per cent of the world's population lived in the industrialized countries of Europe, North America, and Australia – today it is only 15 percent and in twenty years it will have shrunk to merely 12 percent. The population in Europe, North America, Japan, and Australia is getting older and smaller while the population in other regions is both younger and growing in size. Despite economic growth, these demographic developments will be a problem for emerging and developing states if they fail to integrate their young population into their respective economies. In countries that are experiencing either no economic growth, despite a high birth rate, or those for which the blessings of participation in world trade are unequally distributed, this can lead to revolution or to greater repressive actions by the state. The consequences are often civil war, anarchy, violence, criminalization of society and politics, hunger, impoverishment, environmental destruction, and migration.

3. Consequences of Structural Changes

The currently foreseeable consequences of the structural change have been described at the outset of this article.

The key question is: what will happen? The answer to this question raises considerable methodological problems because the analysis of the future is inherently difficult. When making predictions, it often is important to address the increasingly frequent occurrence of serious or catastrophic crises that were not foreseeable (*black swans*).⁴⁹ No state or actor is immune to unpredictable crises and events; one can only try to possess enough resilience against their effects. However, in many instances unforeseen events could have been anticipated but were not or not properly understood ahead of time due to ideological dispositions in the minds of politicians. In politics, it is often the case that events are either anticipated too late or not at all because they did not fit the expectations of the political decision makers. One of the best-known examples is the Bush administration's initial denial concerning the armed resistance in Iraq that had formed by the in the spring of 2003. Such opposition against the U.S.-led invasion did not fit the image of a nation that had to be grateful towards its liberators. Similarly, while precursors of the financial crisis in the U.S. were discernible before events unfolded in 2007/2008, they were not taken seriously by the extremely liberal market-ideology of the government. German policy has also seen its fair share of such failures. Up until February 2014, the Federal Government considered it impossible for Russian President Putin to use force against Ukraine, although this could have been considered a rather logical move in view of Russia's previous actions in Georgia and the modernization of the Russian armed forces. The same myopia in strategic foresight was evident regarding the radicalization of the Syrian armed resistance (including the advance of the Islamic State in early 2014), after all hopes of Western intervention had been laid to rest. The refugee crisis in autumn of 2015 is also worth mentioning in this context. Apparently, the German Government was caught by utter surprise that Chancellor Merkel's humanitarian gesture on behalf of Syrian refugees stranded in Hungary would elicit an uncontrollable movement of millions of people trying to reach Central Europe; and directly enable the populist right-wing party (Alternative für Deutschland) to become the third-strongest political party in Germany.

It is therefore necessary to analyze and assess risk for which there are sufficient indications. Thereby, it is useful to distinguish between such developments and events which are potentially existential in nature and those that must be taken seriously, but do not represent an existential threat.

⁴⁹ For problems regarding „black swans“ see Taleb 2007.

A prominent feature of today's tectonic changes in world politics is that events of extreme nature, i. e. that threaten our existence, must again be accounted for. This does not mean that one can make general suppositions regarding the likelihood of these extreme events and developments, but the certainty with which they could be excluded up until recently is no longer given. Possible events and developments that threaten our existence must include:

1. The dissolution of the European Union and the regression of Europe towards nationalism, revisionism, and anarchy under conditions of Russian military preeminence. This might sound like political fiction today, but latest since the Brexit Referendum such a scenario can no longer be ruled out. If other European politicians were to commit similar brinkmanship (calling for referendums on whether to be part of the E.U. or not) and should the Front National become the strongest party in the elections in France this coming May 2017, it would be the end of the European Union. What would be left would be a zone of states economically aligning themselves with Germany and likely either looking to the U.S. or rather even to Russia for protection. Then the E.U. would not be much more than a modern version of the Holy Roman Empire – with France and Great Britain going about their own business. Nationalism and revisionism would once again make a comeback and accentuate the traditional dilemma of Germany's position as a middle power. This development would put Germany in a situation where it would not have any good options, but only bad and less bad ones to choose from. This scenario no longer is unthinkable and could in fact occur – but it can also be prevented.
2. A war with Russia over the Baltics or Ukraine. Again, this scenario sounds unlikely and is avoided in the German political debate as much as possible. Currently, Russia poses only a limited military threat. Yet, it does threaten the Baltic States and Ukraine. Here the outbreak of limited wars is a possibility. In the case of Ukraine, Russian troops were about to undertake a major offensive operation in Eastern Ukraine in the summer of 2016.⁵⁰ If Russia were to initiate hostilities in the Baltic States, the conflict would inevitably have

a nuclear dimension.⁵¹ The apparent deployment of nuclear weapons to the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, which can directly threaten the German capital, must be understood under this prerequisite. It shows that Russia's military threat is real and is aimed precisely at an area where NATO has practically nothing to offset or counterbalance Russia's capabilities, namely in non-strategic nuclear weapons.

3. The failure of the U.S. as a steward of international order. The circumstances and, above all, the outcome of the U.S. presidential election of 2016, have shown that the American society is less willing to play the role of the guarantor of a liberal international trade and security order. The internal division of America's democracy even has the potential to degenerate into civil war-like violence. Whatever is going to happen in the coming years, American policy will largely be dictated by the necessity to resolve internal problems and will therefore focus less on international leadership. If President Donald Trump were to implement only half of what he has promised on the election trail, it would mean that the U.S. would forfeit most of its international commitments and security guarantees. This is an existential challenge for both Germany and Europe (and for many countries of the world), because without the security policy, the economic and financial policy, leadership, and hegemony of the U.S., the erosion of the international economic order and the security structures is likely to take on dramatic forms.

Apart from these existential threats, a series of major problems and dilemmas that still pose considerable problems to German and European foreign policy can be made out. Apart from the Euro Crisis and the strife among and within the southern European states, the developments in Turkey merit close attention. Under Prime Minister Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi in Turkish), the country is evolving into a national-Islamic presidential dictatorship, with its leader likely to continue his erratic course of foreign policy in the future – having negative consequences for German domestic policy and national security. The German foreign policy will also be challenged by the fragile situation in the Near and Middle East as well as in North Africa, by the

⁵⁰ This was attributed to a large mobilization of Russian land and aerial forces. Quite surprisingly, the Russian Ministry of Defense accused Ukraine of conducting commando raids on Crimea and stated that it would therefore reserve the right to take any countermeasures deemed necessary. However, the marching order was not given, after which the armed forces practiced extensively in the North Caucasus, firing unusually high amounts of ammunition.

⁵¹ Russia could figure that it can conquer the three states relatively quickly and then could prevent a NATO counteroffensive by threatening the use of tactical nuclear weapons. This sounds unlikely but cannot be disregarded outright given Russia's growing readiness to assume risk and the current weakness of the West. Moreover, such a move would be consistent with the framework of Russian military doctrine. See Krause 2015.

conflicts and social disintegration in these regions, and indirectly by the strategic developments in the Pacific region. To present these problems in a differentiated manner would be beyond the scope of this article.

For that reason, analyzes of the current structural change and its probable consequences are long overdue. They are all the more necessary as it is becoming apparent that the Federal Government is merely beginning to understand the true scope of today's development. The Federal Foreign Office's Global Review 2014, for instance, did not reflect in depth on the global changes. It merely produced a report on various ongoing discussions, those regarding German foreign policy, as well as a list of experts, institutions, and important actors involved.⁵² While an analysis on the current state of international affair is absent in the paper, the gathered operating results allows conclusions to be drawn as to what seems important to the Foreign Office and where it sees room for improvement: (1) By forming a department for crisis prevention and crisis management Germany is to become better prepared to deal with crises; (2) more effort has to be made to support the international order; therefore a corresponding department was set up to strengthen the activities of Germany in multilateral forums; (3) Europe's ability to act on the global stage must be improved. The Federal Government's White Paper, published in 2016, deals with the challenges Germany's foreign and security policy is facing in a much more detailed manner than before. However, the corresponding situation-analysis reveals considerable deficits, some of which shall briefly be listed here:

1. At no point is Russia described as a strategic opponent or competitor. In the entire document, it is only mentioned once that Russia is „turning away“ from the partnership with the West and that Russia is emphasizing rivalry.⁵³ However, no further conclusions are drawn from this insight. Russia has emerged as a strategic adversary of the West and is primarily pursuing a militarily supported policy of enmity, which the West is currently more or less at a loss of how to deal with. Instead, the White Paper stresses that Europe has a „broad spectrum of common interests and relations“ with Russia and that Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, has a „particular responsibility to deal with common challenges and international crises“. In principle it is true that Russia carries special responsibility, but in reality, Russia sees many things differently and is generally not willing to take on such responsibility in support of col-

lective goods such as peace or economic prosperity. On the contrary, it has been Russia's policy to pursue international diplomacy almost exclusively to satisfy its own, largely revisionist interests, or those of its allies. As long as Russia was weak (as in the 1990s), this was readily overlooked, while it was possible for Western policy to solve some international conflicts despite Russian resistance (invasion of Kuwait, wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, pending threat of war in Macedonia). Today the situation is strikingly different: the consequences of which can be seen in the Ukraine, and especially in Syria, where Moscow's military intervention on part of the Assad regime has caused the conflict to become one of the most bloody and, more importantly, unresolvable conflicts of today.

2. Already during the Global Review of the Foreign Office, it had become clear that the international order was at risk and that German and European policy had to take measures to defend it. The White Paper reads: „The international order created after the end of the Second World War and which still sets the framework for international politics, with its organizations and institutions, is in a state of upheaval.“⁵⁴ This sentence is in so far incorrect as that the order itself is not „in a state of change“ but is, in fact, being called into question (especially but not exclusively by Russia) and because there is the danger of extensive international anarchy. Further statements in the White Book on the international order reveal the lack of the necessary sense of urgency. For example, the document mentions „multipolarity“ and „power diffusion“ as essential factors contributing to the „change“ of international order.⁵⁵ This supposition is not per se incorrect; however, the further deductions that are drawn from this statement are largely flawed. According to the White Paper, there are shifts in power due to the growing influence of emerging economies. These states want to have more say in how the international order is shaped and therefore establish new forums such as BRICS. As a result of the shifting of power, it would appear that different regional systems of order would develop, which would possibly lead to a „fragmentation of competing systems of order“. This fragmentation can only be countered if the multipolarity is represented appropriately in the United Nations.⁵⁶ From an analytical point of view this statement is

⁵² Federal Foreign Office 2014.

⁵³ Federal Government 2016, p. 32.

⁵⁴ Federal Government 2016, p. 28.

⁵⁵ Federal Government 2016, p. 30.

⁵⁶ Federal Government 2016, p. 31.

highly debatable. The essential problem lies somewhere else: both Russia, the strongest new regional power China, and the traditional regional power of Iran have completely different ideas of an international order than the Western states have. For them, the international order applies only as long as their ability to safeguard regional demands for preeminence is not infringed upon and under the premise that the universal international order does not apply in their sphere of influence. This is particularly the case in regard to the prohibition of the use of force, respect for the sovereignty of smaller countries, and the territorial inviolability of borders. Any hope that the United Nations or the G20 might be a place to find common ground on international order seems to be futile.

3. The collapse of the European international order is described in a way that is quite astonishing. „This order“, the White Paper reads, „is based on a vision of indivisible security for Europe.“⁵⁷ This notion is demonstrably wrong. The corresponding visions are described in the OSCE Paris Charter of 1990, which is primarily concerned with the (a) non-violence and the territorial integrity of all countries; (b) their support through the system of conventional disarmament (CFE: i. e., no invasion capabilities, CSBM: i. e., no threatening military maneuvers), and (c) the vision of a democratic Europe, where human rights are universally protected. The concept of „indivisible security“ is mentioned only once in the document, and was not considered to be of particular relevance at the time of writing. However, for some years, Russia has used this term as a pretext to justify its veto right in all matters concerning Europe's security policy. The fact that the Federal Government mentioned the concept of „indivisible security“ so prominently in its White Paper comes at much surprise.

The statements of the White Paper on hybrid warfare, terrorism, and other security risks are much closer to the truth. Interestingly, many threats to our security are referred to as generic problems, while there are few explanations as to who or what is responsible for these problems. This goes to show that the Federal Government is finding it difficult to accept that we are in a period in which strategic lines of conflict are, again, emerging and in which the system of German foreign and security policy is fundamentally changing. Over the past twenty-five years, German foreign and security policy has been designed to play a constructive role in the framework of multilateral

institutions and, above all, to emphasize cooperative and civil ways of dealing with problems. This policy, no matter how appealing and forward-looking it may be, cannot be continued to the same extent in the light of the fundamental changes in world politics. The era of a cooperative and multilateral international order, which is primarily developed by Western states, is over. What then can be expected in the future? How should the strategic framework of European and German policy in the E.U. be adapted if a cooperative and principle-oriented policy is to be pursued?

4. Elements of a New Strategic Framework

German as well as European policy requires a fundamental revision – one in which the changes in international relations are not only reflected in rhetoric but also where they are analyzed with all necessary prudence and then used to make meaningful policy changes. This requires a critical examination of political concepts that might have worked in the past but have now lost their significance. Above all, there is a dire need for a *strategic framework* within which both German and European policies should operate. For democracies which wish to remain international actors, especially those that have joined forces within the framework of the E.U. and NATO, it is essential to have common understanding of the historical developments that have led to the current situation. They need to be clear on which economic, political, demographic, technological, and environmental factors have a bearing on the future, and where the great challenges as well as the great opportunities of an active policy lie. The alternative to a strategic framework is the relapse into a policy of pursuing narrow-minded national-interests, which can only lead to disasters on a continent like Europe. Over the course of the past two decades, Germany, the E.U., as well as the Western world in general, have succeeded in developing the essential features of a strategic framework within which national, European, and Western policies could be put into action. This framework for action is currently disintegrating in the face of dramatic international and domestic policy changes. Without a new strategic framework, politics within and among democracies will be severely hamstrung.

It would be both too early and too ambitious to propose such a framework in this article. At this point, only a few central questions – central to such a framework – can be raised. In essence, it remains pivotal to draw the necessary conclusion from the ongoing structural changes in

⁵⁷ Federal Government 2016, p. 31.

international relations. The main aim of this effort has to be to preclude the emergence of existential threats, to identify realistic strategic objectives in the process of addressing challenges, and to (re)-establish strategic capacity for action. The questions arising from this context can be divided into eight different areas:

1. *One area covers issues related to European politics.* First and foremost, it is essential to prevent the Union from further deterioration. This is not so much a question of reviving European resolve, but primarily the critical appraisal of previous decisions and agreements (e.g. what mistakes were made in the introduction of the Euro and how can these shortcomings be rectified), and the critical examination of traditional political ideas regarding European integration. In particular, it is important to ask how the differences between Northern and Southern Europe as well as between Eastern and Western Europe can be redefined in a common E.U. *political acquis*. Areas of mutual agreement and consent will need to be defined, on the basis of which a solid cooperation can be re-established. Primarily, one will first have to look to the area of security. This concerns both the deterrence and defense against Russia as well as securing Europe's external borders against uncontrolled migration, terrorists, and organized crime. Europe needs to re-establish itself in terms of security and defense policy; not only because the United States' role as a guarantor for peace is in doubt but also because existing measures to protect Europe's external borders have not proved to be successful. But how can the E.U. become a strategically relevant actor that is taken seriously in the area of security policy? Moreover, it will also be necessary to think of how a strategic-political center of the E.U. – an institution or mechanism – can be forged that enables common European strategic action on truly relevant international issues?
2. *Another area of concern is the relationship with the U.S. and the role of NATO.* For the foreseeable future, there is no substitute for the U.S. as a security guarantor for Europe, nor will the provisions of material resources and political determination be made that would allow for such a development. This does not only apply to defense but also to economic relations and cooperation in multilateral institutions. In the coming years realistic possibilities of cooperation and the development of common concepts have to be explored. This will likely not be an easy undertaking with Donald Trump as President. Yet, it will be inevitable to renegotiate transatlantic relations in the areas of security, trade, and finances. NATO continues to be the insti-

tutional framework within which the security policy relations can be realigned. A comparable framework for negotiations on economic, monetary, and trade policies still has to be established given the fact that TTIP is likely to fail.

3. *The relationship with Russia is a further key area.* The relationship is particularly complicated because Russia combines (at least) three separate sets of problems, each of which would need to be addressed: Firstly, how to deal with a country that sees itself as a strategic opponent and deliberately destroys a common international order based on non-violence, the territorial integrity of states, and international law? So far, the E. U. has not responded adequately to the Russian policy of revisionism (and revanchism), mainly because there are governments that assume that sooner or later Russia will understand the benefits of cooperation with the West. What should be done if Russia does not seize the proffered hand of partnership? This is a fundamental challenge for German policy. If, as the Federal Government emphasizes, maintaining the international order is at the forefront of foreign policy, one cannot react to a one-sided and obvious breach of international law (as in the case of Russia against Ukraine) by merely „moderating“ between the aggressor and the victim of the attack. On the contrary; it is much more crucial to think about how to punish the attacker for the breach of the international norm and by what means he can be coerced to return to the status quo ante. This is only possible if one is prepared to maintain a broad range of economic and political sanctions over a long period of time. If the West does not intervene in an effective manner against such violations of a fundamental norm, then this norm will become worthless after a short time and other states will consider the precedent event an action worth emulating. Secondly, the question of how Europe and NATO should react towards Russia's resurgence begs answering. The policy of reassuring the Baltic States and Poland cannot be a permanent option. Either NATO builds a defense and deterrence structure against Russia (taking into account hybrid elements) corresponding to the true extent of the threat or it risks that Russia understands the West's reluctance as a kind of appeasement policy and, hence, shows increased military adventurism. The interjection that such a deterrence strategy of NATO could lead to a renewed arms race cannot be disregarded outright. However, in view of the current level of arms competition in Europe, the risks of an arms race are infinitely smaller than the danger of Russia's willingness to assume military

risks. If, on the other hand, there is an intention to respond to the military challenge posed by Russia primarily with non-military measures, far more emphasis must be placed on effective economic sanctions. The main objective should be to force the strategic opponent to give up his hostile attitude or to weaken him permanently as long as he vehemently pursues his antagonist behavior.⁵⁸ Such efforts require both perseverance and a high degree of self-discipline. The nuclear component of the equation is also of great importance. In many areas of strategic capabilities, Russia is inferior to the West. This is not the case in the area of nuclear weapons. Thirdly, it is important to determine how to deal with states whose leadership is part of a kleptocratic and partially criminal power vertical. While Russia is possible the most prominent example of such a state, it is not the only of its kind.⁵⁹ In general, such governments place great emphasis on securing their rule – either stressing their animosity towards the West, by seeking proximity to the West, or simply by behaving inconspicuously. In any case, certain dangers emanate from all forms: They can become a military threat (like Russia), they can contribute to the failure of an international reconstruction and stabilization operation (as was the case with the Karzai regime in Afghanistan), or they can lead to political corruption and thus destabilization in Germany and other democratic countries.

4. *Germany's relationship with Turkey is another major concern.* President Erdogan and the ACP have chosen a questionable path, both in terms of domestic and foreign policy. While democratic and constitutional institutions are largely paralyzed, Turkey is distancing itself from the West (whereby the rhetoric often differs from real politics). Again, Germany and the E.U. must learn to deal with such an actor. Simply threatening to suspend the negotiations on Turkey's accession to the E.U. or repeatedly reminding them of their many human rights violations will do nothing but harden the respective positions. To reduce risks, a new, realist, and sober attitude towards Turkey and a range of differentiated and rather subtle instruments and measures are needed.
5. *Curtailling Salafism will also be of significant importance.* In Germany and other parts of Europe the problem of Salafism has so far been defined as a problem of terrorism and is thus considered a domestic security problem. In the minds of many, it depends on the effectiveness of intelligence services and law enforcement agencies to what degree it can be contained. In reality, terrorist attacks are only the tip of an iceberg. Political Salafism is a new totalitarian challenge (especially in its Jihadist form) and must be addressed with a corresponding broad range of policy measures that range from the participation in military operations against the IS and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa to taking measures that strengthen modern and peaceful Islam.
6. Alongside Europe's foreign and security policy, Germany will also have to deal with growing tensions and hostilities between Iran, on the one side, and Saudi Arabia and further Sunni states, on the other. This conflict compounds political and sectarian elements and is likely to be exercised with even greater violence than has hitherto been the case. It will indirectly influence European policy but it does not allow the Europeans to take a mediating role, much less take sides.
7. *A central area of concern is that of economic policy, technology policy, and social policy.* Europe's international weaknesses (like those of the U.S.) derive from the unresolved internal problems in all three areas of policy. As long as no solutions to these problems are found, the international capacity for action of the West will continue to decline. Europe is currently deeply divided between representatives of an economic policy that is primarily supply-oriented and those who pursue a demand-oriented policy. Within the Euro zone the impact of such differences has been catastrophic. A new strategic framework would also include reaching agreement on the direction of decisions and on how the dispute can be settled. The question of how a policy of re-industrialization can be pursued in Europe without regressing into protectionism is particularly important. De-industrialization has led to a long-term disruption of the social and political balance in both Europe and the U.S. Without international free trade and without the opportunity to build up value added chains internationally, however, re-industrialization will not be possible in Europe. The various ideas of protectionism in Europe (which argue along nationalist, socio-political, as well as ecological lines, or promote supposed claims of democratic sovereignty) offer no valid solutions to this problem. The

⁵⁸ On the role of economic sanctions as an instrument to control a strategic competitor in the case that military measures are not to be used, see Krause 2016 b.

⁵⁹ Regarding the role of power verticals in other states see Fahmy 2002; Heuser 2004; Cook 2007, Gilka-Bötzow/Kropp 2007; Chase 2007; Chase 2015, Chase 2016.

great challenge to European and national policy is how to expand the sector of well-paid services in the context of globalization while at the same time stopping or even reversing de-industrialization. Furthermore, a new form of social balance has to be found for those who belong to neither sector (industry or services). Solutions can only be found if new technological possibilities are utilized, when education policy clearly increases the economically viable potential for innovation (and not merely produces large numbers of university applicants), and when new approaches are taken in regard to social policies.

8. *The role of global governance and other forms of multilateralism is an equally critical area for debate.* In any case, one should refrain from using either/or answers. It makes little sense to forebode the end of *global governance* or to have a „now more than ever“ attitude.⁶⁰ The many transnational and global problems that can only be solved within the framework of *global governance* (including climate change) do not disappear simply because the world has changed in terms of power politics. On the other hand, it would be unwise to ignore the realities of power politics such as the deep structural changes within international politics or to believe that our power-political rivals will sooner or later realize that it is in their own interest to work with the West in order to successfully tackle these global challenges. German and European policy must simultaneously be invested in power politics and *global governance* and must understand how to successfully combine and apply the two. What is important is that there is a realistic understanding of what can and cannot be achieved.⁶¹ For Germany such a paradigm shift in the way it thinks will not be easy. German foreign policy has so firmly established itself in the role of a proponent and driver of a principle-oriented, cooperative, multilateral, civilian foreign and security policy that its leaders currently find it impossible to think in categories such as multi-polarity, great power rivalry, and geopolitics. But a paradigm shift is more than overdue.

These questions, which have only been discussed in general terms, will need to be addressed in the coming years in order to reach appropriate political decisions on all levels of government. The structural change in international politics is too extensive and the associated risks are too

great for German and European policy to continue business as usual. Unfortunately, the necessary sense of urgency apparently has not yet reached the political decision makers in Berlin. This essay is intended to heighten the sense of awareness towards the tectonic shifts in international relations that is currently taking place so that the present phase of global political upheaval does not end in a political earthquake.

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⁶⁰ These two highly contradictory positions are found in Terhalle 2016 and Rinck/Debiel 2016.

⁶¹ Masala 2016, p. 154.

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