



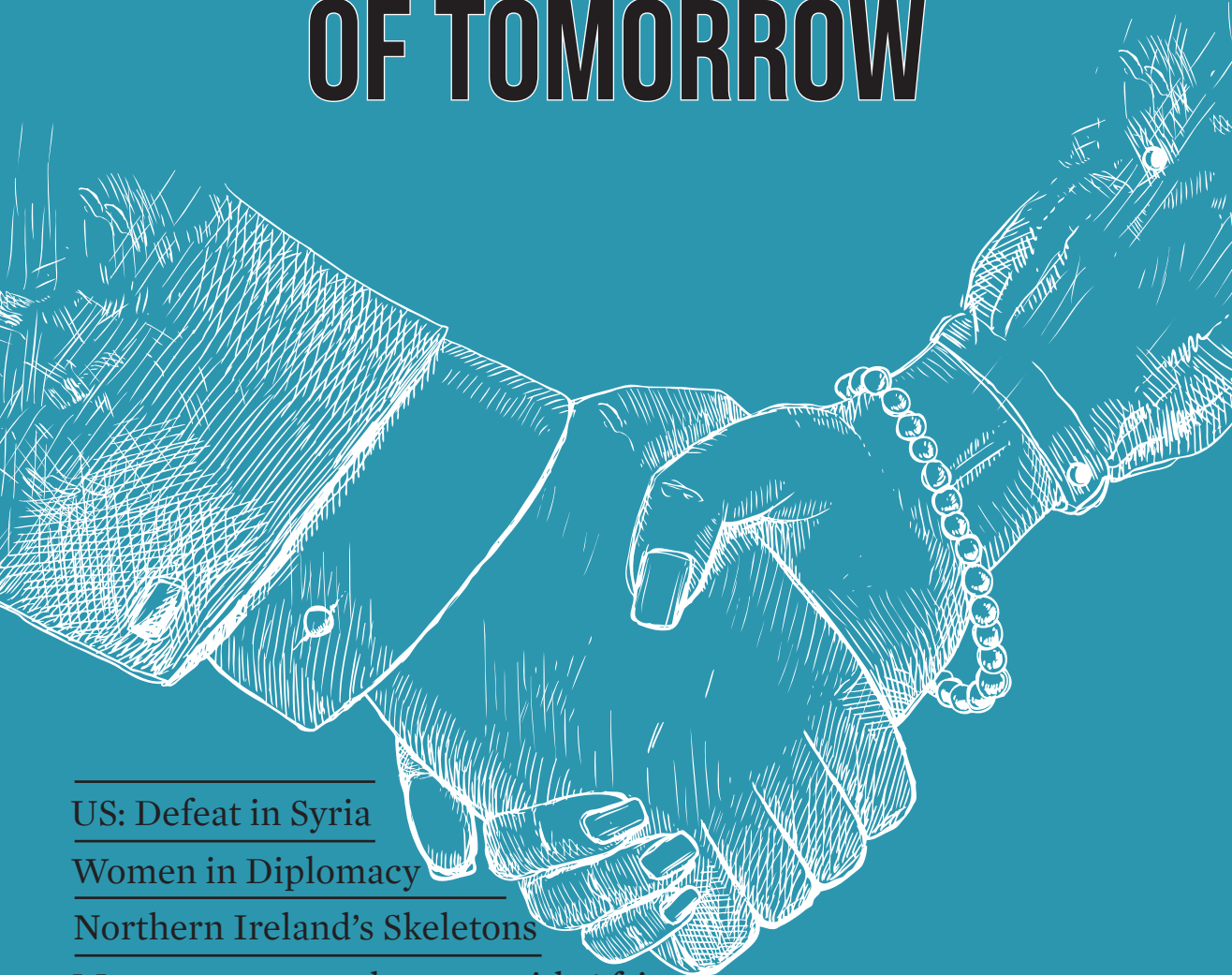
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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THE PERSPECTIVE MAGAZINE

No 3/2019

THE DIPLOMACY OF TOMORROW



US: Defeat in Syria

Women in Diplomacy

Northern Ireland's Skeletons

Moroccan rapprochement with Africa

PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

This is the time to be new. As we write this, so many of those new faces from Get Active have found their footing in the committees' work, adding new ideas and creativity to the way UPF contributes to debates on international topics. It is our ambition to combine this with the proud traditions we have built on since our founding some eighty-five years ago. The same can be said for our vision as Presidents - the desire to find new ways to further our great, traditional organisation.

WE OFTEN REMARK on the vibrant student life, where people volunteer so much of their time and effort. Within UPF, there is, of course, personal gain to be had, both in terms of great friendships and experiences that can help us in the future. Ultimately, the level of selflessness is humbling. This is why it is so important for us to find ways to show appreciation to the active members that are the backbone of UPF.

FOR THE UPCOMING year, we have made efforts to do this by devoting money to the committees to arrange inclusive hangouts. Furthermore, we are trying to help active members realise their visions by adopting the Foreign Correspondents' Fund - where active members can receive funding from UPF to go abroad and produce media content.

ON THE ONE hand, it is wonderful that our association is full of ambitious people with great aspirations. However, let us not forget that we all have to last for a full year, and a lifetime beyond that, not just the beginning of the semester. Whilst most of us probably would like to save the world yesterday, we all need to take care of ourselves and find ways to avoid hurtful levels of stress and burnouts.

THIS YEAR WE are trying to take measures, such as introducing the first-ever UPF-Free Week - a week completely free from association-related activities each semester, to ensure time for rest and recreation. Furthermore, we are aiming to create an atmosphere where these issues are taken seriously, and the importance of our members' mental health is on par with their physical wellbeing.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT, in UPF you will meet some of the most wonderful and interesting people you will ever get to know - cherish the opportunity. Welcome to the UPF community - eight-hundred of the best friends that you never knew you had.



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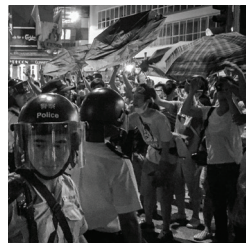
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UPCOMING UPF EVENTS

ACTIVITY

Study Trip to Copenhagen

On Thursday 14th November*, UPF Activity Committee will organise the study visit of the semester. This time we invite you to come with us to Copenhagen to visit a Think Tank, a NGO and an embassy located in the city. We might also receive a guided tour of Folketinget (the Danish Parliament building) sometime during the day. The study visit will be a full day activity, so make sure you have the whole day free to spend with us. The destinations are preliminary and may be changed. Finally, further information will be announced in the following weeks.

**The date is preliminary. To keep up to date with all UPF events follow us on facebook.com/upflund*



LECTURE

Marissa Jackson Sow - Deputy Commissioner of the NYC Human Rights Commission

We are honoured to host this lecture with Marissa Jackson Sow of the New York City Human Rights Commission. Ms. Jackson Sow is an attorney specializing in human rights, foreign and comparative law, constitutional law, and the law of diplomacy. Formerly a Lawyering Professor at the NYU School of Law, she served as the General Counsel at the NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs and as Deputy Commissioner for Community Relations at the NYC Commission on Human Rights. Ms. Jackson Sow is currently a finalist for the Open Society Foundation's Leadership in Government Fellowship and the founder and curator of The Black Gaze, an interactive online collection of global Black decolonial thought, culture, art, advocacy, and performance.

Wednesday, 20th of November
Palaestra 19:00



APPROACH US: PRESIDIUM AND COMMITTEES

As this is the first *The Perspective* magazine since our election, we would like to introduce the Presidium and the eight Committees that together with the presidents and all members make up UPF Lund. There are many ways to get active within UPF, please contact us at <http://upflund.se/committees/>



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1.

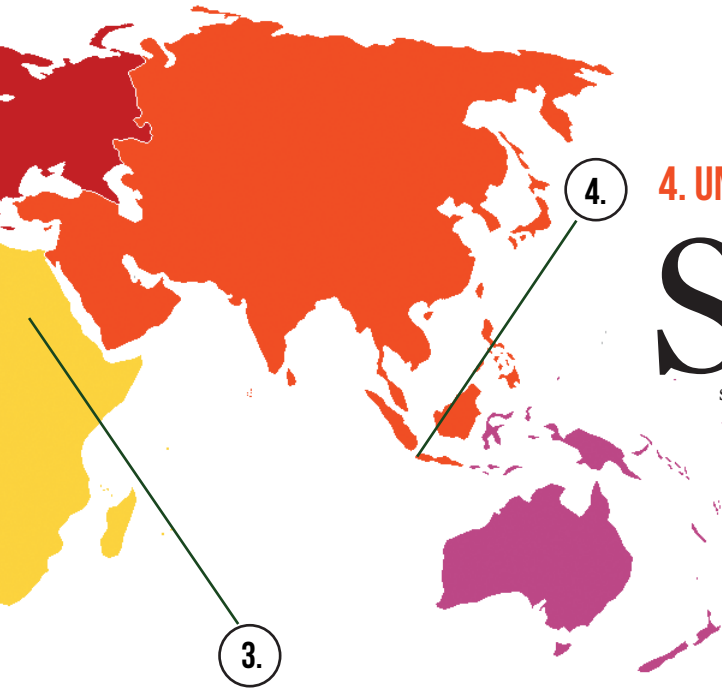
1. EL CHAPO'S SON FREE AGAIN

It is said that the sins of the father are passed on to their children; this rings true especially for the children of drug lords. In Mexico, government forces were once again subjected to the ritual of public humiliation by the Sinaloa cartel, previously headed by Joaquín Guzmán Loera, known to the world as El Chapo. Escape from the authorities appears to be a skill possessed not only by El Chapo - but by his sons as well. On October 17th, government troops captured Ovidio Guzmán López, one of El Chapo's sons in the Sinoloan capital of Culiacán. Unfortunately for the government forces responsible for the raid, their bold and poorly-planned strategy ran into trouble almost immediately, as Culiacán is a stronghold for the Sinaloa cartel and thus cartel gunmen quickly surrounded them. Besieged by large numbers of cartel members, the military forces were forced to release their Guzmán López the following day, sparing the civilians of the city from further bloodshed. With 14 dead and their quarry gone, the Mexican government was made to look impotent against organized crime. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador defended the decision to release Guzmán López, stating that "You cannot value the life of a delinquent more than the lives of the people." Many citizens agree with the president's sentiment, given how the previous administration under former president Enrique Peña Nieto distanced itself from the violence caused by the drug cartels, which culminated in the massacre of 43 students by cartel members in the state of Guerrero more than five years ago. One economics student in Mexico that was interviewed by the Perspective Magazine mentioned that "I don't think that [López Obrador's] statement in response to the incident was the right one, but the decision to prioritize the lives of civilians was. This is why a change in strategy to avoid repeating the same mistakes would be needed, although I can imagine it will be far more difficult to capture [Guzmán López] again." This will pose an incredible challenge for López Obrador's security strategy, and his government's ability to safeguard the lives of Mexico's population against the cartels.

2.

2. HOPE FOR CHANGE IN HUNGARY

Municipal elections in Hungary took place on 13th October 2019, bringing with them new winds of change after Viktor Orbán, the country's Prime Minister since 2010, declared victory at the 2018 general election following his anti-immigration and Eurosceptic campaign. Compared to gaining a two-thirds constitutional majority in 2018, the result of the European Parliament elections in May 2019 showed only little improvement as the ruling Fidesz party got 51.14% of the votes. Following the local elections, although a majority of voters were still favouring the ruling party's candidates, 14 out of 23 districts in Budapest, and 10 out of 23 cities with county rights, will be led by opposition parties for the next five years. It has symbolic importance that the opposition's candidate became the mayor of Budapest, showing cracks in Orbán's system of 'illiberal democracy'. Despite the result, the stakes for the future of Hungary are still high.



3. ENDURANCE FOR SUDAN

After the Transitional Military Council (TMC) brutally broke up the sit-in protest in front of military head-quarter in Khartoum, many people thought that the revolution in Sudan was suppressed and died down. However, the rebellious youth went against all odds and proved their commitment and dedication for their cause. They organized a million-man march on the 30th of June, what pressured TMC and the international community to address their demands and pushed political train back to track. International community forced TMC to negotiate civilian politicians (forces of freedom and change (FFC). It was a long, tiresome and sometimes frustrating negotiations that ended with a power-sharing deal between the army and FFC, declaring the commencement of a transitional political period of 39 months. Civilian political power proceeded to form the government. Despite the setbacks and shortcomings, but the government cabinet was formed under the leadership of prime minister Abdallah Hamdok. Comprehensive work and extensive effort are awaiting the newly formed government which is working in abnormal

4. UNREST IN INDONESIA

Since late September when laws were introduced that limited the authority of an anti-corruption agency, demonstrations have been ongoing across Indonesia. It is mainly led by students, who also object to conservative laws that would criminalize premarital sex and limit the sale of contraception, as well as making it illegal to insult the president. In many cities the protests have turned violent with protesters clashing with the police, hundreds of people arrested and reportedly at least three protesters killed.

Despite the unrest, President Joko Widodo was inaugurated for his second term in office in Jakarta on October 13th. "You don't see a lot of real reform-minded figures in the cabinet, the type of figures that would give a sign to any liberals in Indonesia that the government is paying attention to issues of democracy and human rights," an International Studies researcher in Singapore told BBC World News.

conditions with high expectations, and challenges as well. On top lays the achievement and establishment of sustainable peace in addition to developing a speedy emergency recovery plan for the devastated economy, which was a near-total collapse, due to the long political stagnation period.

Empowerment of Sudanese masses with the feeling -for the first time- of the ability to influence and change their political reality, in addition to the return of Sudan's relationships with the international community were the main fruits that this revolution has beard.



Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan meeting in Sochi on October 23rd, negotiating the future of Syria. Photo: Kremlin.

ANALYSIS: THE US HAS ALL BUT ADMITTED DEFEAT IN SYRIA. TURKEY, RUSSIA AND ISIS WILL REAP THE REWARDS

After a green light by US President Donald Trump, Turkish troops conducted an operation into northern Syria on October 9th. In terms of power politics, the US and the Syrian Kurds are on the losing end - while Ankara, Moscow and ISIS have everything to gain.

“TODAY, PRESIDENT DONALD J. Trump spoke with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey by telephone. Turkey will soon be moving forward with its long-planned operation into northern Syria. The United States Armed Forces will not support or be involved in the operation, and United States forces, having defeated the ISIS territorial “Caliphate,” will no longer be in the immediate area.”

THIS OPENING PARAGRAPH of a White House press release paved the way for a Turkish incursion into Syria. Ankara has long sought to expel the Kurdish militia YPG from its border region, citing

the militia’s ties to PKK - a separatist group that has been waging a war for independence and autonomy in eastern Turkey. PKK is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the EU and the US. On the other hand YPG, along with their affiliated political party PYD, has been strategic partners to the US in its fight to contain and defeat ISIS.

THE OPENING ADVANCEMENT of the new conflict was swift and brutal, with Turkish forces utilizing tanks, artillery units and fighter jets, as well as their heavily-armed Syrian rebel proxies. The YPG could only put up small arms, lightly armored vehicles and a dozen of heavy weapons to their defense.

DESPITE ALLOWING THE operation to take place, President Trump criticized the Turkish advancement and sanctioned three Turkish ministers. On October 17th, the US-brokered

a semi-functional, five-day ceasefire between Turkish forces and the YPG that allowed the Kurdish militia to retreat out of active combat zones.

BUT A MUCH more critical agreement was made a week later when Russian President Vladimir Putin invited his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Sochi. A ten-point memorandum was subsequently released. The most vital parts of it were that Turkish proxies could keep the territory that had been captured and that YPG should evacuate the whole border area and instead let Syrian government troops move in. This severely limits the possibility of Syrian Kurdish autonomy and cripples US influence in Syria.

WHAT IS IN IT FOR RUSSIA?

MOSCOW HAS LONG been a key player in the Syrian War. While the Assad regime has been their main allies, they have maintained good relations with all the major actors in the conflict - be it Israel, the Kurds, or Turkey.

“THIS IS DEFINITELY a great deal for Russia. Being able to set the terms of negotiations strengthens their influence in the Middle East” Mark Katz, Professor of Government and Politics at George Mason University, tells the Perspective.

ACCORDING TO KATZ, Putin does not have a clear foreign policy vision for Syria and instead seizes opportunities as they present themselves. And with the recent Turkish aggression, Russia could pressure the Kurds to strike a deal with Assad - since the US had proved themselves unreliable partners, the choice for YPG was between the federal government or possible annihilation.

AT THE SAME time, Putin is courting Erdogan by expelling the YPG and allowing the Syrian rebels to keep their conquered territory. While the Trump administration criticised Turkey - a NATO ally, Russia contradictorily suggested that they understood Turkey’s security concerns and their demand for a safe zone. “This is another perfect opportunity for Putin to drive a wedge between Turkey and the US, and improve his relations with Erdogan even further instead,” Katz says.

PUTIN MAY ALSO have other interests in permitting the establishment of a Turkish safe zone in northern Syria. Russia currently controls proxy

The memorandum between Russia and Turkey:

1. The two sides reiterate their commitment to the preservation of the political unity and territorial integrity of Syria and the protection of national security of Turkey.
2. They emphasize their determination to combat terrorism in all forms and manifestations and to disrupt separatist agendas in the Syrian territory.
3. In this framework, the established status quo in the current Operation Peace Spring area covering Tel Abyad and Ras Al Ayn with a depth of 32 km will be preserved.
4. Both sides reaffirm the importance of the Adana Agreement. The Russian Federation will facilitate the implementation of the Adana Agreement in the current circumstances.
5. Starting 12.00 noon of October 23, 2019, Russian military police and Syrian border guards will enter the Syrian side of the Turkish-Syrian border, outside the area of Operation Peace Spring, to facilitate the removal of YPG elements and their weapons to the depth of 30 km from the Turkish-Syrian border, which should be finalized in 150 hours. At that moment, joint Russian-Turkish patrols will start in the west and the east of the area of Operation Peace Spring with a depth of 10 km, except Qamishli city.
6. All YPG elements and their weapons will be removed from Manbij and Tal Rifat.
7. Both sides will take necessary measures to prevent infiltrations of terrorist elements.
8. Joint efforts will be launched to facilitate the return of refugees in a safe and voluntary manner.
9. A joint monitoring and verification mechanism will be established to oversee and coordinate the implementation of this memorandum.
10. The two sides will continue to work to find a lasting political solution to the Syrian conflict within Astana Mechanism and will support the activity of the Constitutional Committee.

Source: Kremlin press release.



forces in three countries - Transnistria in Moldova, South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, and Donbass in Ukraine. If a NATO country also installs a safe zone by its borders, it is essentially receiving a blessing from NATO, which could add legitimacy to Russia's territories.

"THIS HAS BEEN a long-term strategy of Moscow's. They thrive on frozen conflicts, and want to reproduce this in northern Syria," Katz says.

WHAT IS IN IT FOR TURKEY?

TO UNDERSTAND THIS, one has to distinguish between domestic rhetoric and the sphere of influence of foreign policy. According to Salim Çevik, a Postdoctoral Researcher at Lund University and Fellow of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, the Turkish incursion is predominantly dominated by domestic political considerations. Economic stagnation, local elections losses by the ruling party in several key cities and rising diplomatic tensions have increased the pressure on Erdogan. Therefore, it was an opportunistic time for Erdogan to shift the focus of the Turkish population to an external military operation.

ACCORDING TO ÇEVİK, it was Erdogan's self-confessed aim to initiate a change in the regime in Syria. However, this became essentially impossible after the Bashar Assad regime recaptured Aleppo in 2017. This occurred with Russian support and it was made clear that Assad will stay in power as long as Moscow sees fit.

WHAT ERDOGAN AND Putin agreed upon in Sochi was ultimately what Russia has been proposing for two years. "Erdogan had to accept these terms

and he could have accepted it without the military incursion as well," says Çevik. Even if Erdogan only got a fraction of his declared goals, it can still be considered a political win - the fundamental goal was to prevent a Kurdish state in northern Syria. By putting regime soldiers by the border, Turkish security concerns were met as well.

REALIZING THAT ASSAD would remain in power, Turkey now accepts the legitimacy of the Syrian regime. For Ankara, this posed another problem - they had long supported radical rebel factions in the war, and now needed a place to put them to prevent a backlash. An indefinite safe zone would fit some of them - but not all.

ÇEVİK MAY HAVE an idea of Erdogan's plan for them. "Turkey could put all of the rebels in Idlib, the last rebel stronghold in North-Western Syria, and let Russia and other allies annihilate them there. But the support for them in parts of Turkish society is still strong, and it could cause a domestic retaliation. Instead, Erdogan could provide safe passage to them in the hope that they will leave for a future Middle Eastern conflict with religious undertones," he says.

WILL THE PYD ALLOW IT?

THE KURDS WERE faced with an agonizing ultimatum - hand over the control of most of their major cities to Assad, who oppressed them for years prior to the conflict, or face a war against Turkey that they could not win.

FOR SHIYAR ALI, PYD's representative to Sweden, the party just had one goal: stop the war as soon as possible. "The results of the invasion were catastrophic. So many civilians killed, hundreds

of thousands fled, and their homes destroyed by bombs. In essence, stopping this carnage was our priority,” he tells The Perspective via phone.

ALI SEES THE recent deal with Assad as a necessity - but sets out some clear limits as to how many concessions his party will make. “We do not trust Turkey, but we started negotiations with Russia on October 23rd. Those talks are continuing. We want to keep our self-governance. The safe zone should also be patrolled by the international coalition, USA included” he says.

PYD STEPPED UP their diplomatic representation abroad in 2016 and opened offices in Moscow, Prague, Berlin, Paris and Stockholm. While wishing more could be done, Ali praises the cooperation with Sweden’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“I MET [previous Foreign Minister] Margot Wallström multiple times, and I met [new Foreign Minister] Ann Linde and [State Secretary] Annika Söder last week. Our partnership has been fruitful.”

AT THE SAME time, he is appealing to the international community that PYD is the entity in Syria that can provide the most stability. “We hope that the EU, NATO, and the Arab League will take on an active role in this. ISIS has not yet been defeated and the international coalition has a responsibility to remain here. Do not just stand on the sidelines and observe” he says.

FOR PYD, TWO of their most important cities lie within the proposed safe zone. Kobani, which was where they held their last stand against ISIS and became a symbol of resistance, and Qamishli, their most populous city and de facto capital.

ALI IS RELUCTANT to say whether his party is willing to cede their autonomy to federal Syria.

INSTEAD, HE STRESSES how PYD will attempt to democratically change Syria from within. “We do not want a central power in Damascus that can do as they please. We want our model of self-governance to work in Syria as a whole, where every ethnic group have the same rights and are free to practice their culture” he says.

“WE WANT OUR MODEL OF SELF-GOVERNANCE TO WORK IN SYRIA AS A WHOLE, WHERE EVERY ETHNIC GROUP HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AND ARE FREE TO PRACTICE THEIR CULTURE”

- Shiyar Ali, PYD representative in Sweden

WILL THIS HAVE OTHER CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REGION?

IN TERMS OF geopolitics, it is hard to not see the United States as a loser in this deal. Washington’s presence had two declared goals - to hinder a resurgence of ISIS and to counter Iranian expansion in Syria - both of which have now become much more difficult to achieve. PYD is now effectively an ally of Assad, which by extension means that they are cooperating with Iran.

INTERNATIONALLY, THE WITHDRAWAL is also seen as a betrayal to the Kurds - something that could make other groups reluctant to work with Washington in the future.

THERE SEEMED TO be a contradiction of where the US soldiers would go once they left Syria. While Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said in a statement that they would be deployed in Western Iraq to continue to combat ISIS in both Iraq and Syria, Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul Mahdi said his government would not grant permission for US forces to stay in his country.

PRESIDENT TRUMP HINTED at one familiar area where some soldiers could end up. “We’ve secured the oil, and, therefore, a small number of U.S. troops will remain in the area where they have the oil. And we’re going to be protecting it, and we’ll be deciding what we’re going to do with it in the future,” he said at a White House press conference

on October 23rd. At a later press briefing, he added that this was to ensure that ISIS would not regain control over the oil fields.

WHEN THE TURKISH operation commenced in northern Syria, PYD stated that they were moving some of their troops from ISIS prison camps to counter the Turkish forces. Subsequently, there have been several escape attempts - some of which were successful. In mid-October The Guardian reported that up to 900 ISIS affiliates, mainly women and children, may have escaped, citing local sources.

JAMES JEFFREY, THE US Special Representative for Syria engagement and global head of the coalition to defeat ISIS, confirmed that fighters had also escaped. "The number is now over a hundred. We do not know where they are" he said at a US Congress hearing also on October 23rd.

THREE DAYS LATER, news broke that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed in a US operation. While this gives more credibility to the US claim that the terror group has been defeated, there are several reports that ISIS is still conducting sporadic attacks throughout the North, East, and central parts of Syria.

In April, ISIS news outlet Amaq named Abdullah Qardash, a former officer in the Iraqi Army under Saddam Hussein, as the heir to Baghdadi. It remains to be seen in which direction he will take the group.

"LET SOMEONE ELSE fight over this long-bloodstained sand," Donald Trump said at the press briefing. That will inevitably happen - except it may not be in the president's favor.

Timeline of the Syrian War

March 2011: Violent protests erupt in Daraa as a group of teenagers are arrested for anti-government graffiti.

October 2011: With large demonstrations calling for the ousting of President Assad spreading throughout the country, Russia vetoes a UN Resolution that would stop the ongoing crackdown on protesters.

November 2011: Turkey announces a series of financial sanctions against Syria.

February 2012: Russia again blocks a proposed UN resolution to condemn the Syrian government.

March 2012: Turkey hosts a meeting between Kofi Annan and Syrian opposition groups.

October 2012: Five people are killed in the Turkish city of Akcakale after shelling that came from the Syrian side. Ankara authorizes Turkish troops to deploy in foreign countries and retaliates against Syrian targets.

April - September 2013: The US accuses Syria of using chemical weapons against civilians. Syria eventually agrees to hand over its chemical weapons stockpile to Russia.

September 2015: Russian President Vladimir Putin openly supports Assad in the war. Pentagon releases information that the Russian armed forces are establishing a base in the western city of Jableh.

July 2015: Turkey launches an offensive against ISIS in Syria, capturing Jarablus and al-Bab in the north.

December 2016: Russia and Turkey broker a ceasefire to evacuate civilians from the battle of Aleppo.

July 2017: Trump and Putin agree to a ceasefire in southwestern Syria.

January 2018: Turkey launches an incursion against Kurdish PYD in Afrin, capturing the whole enclave with the help of Syrian rebels.

September 2018: Russia and Turkey establish a demilitarized zone in Syria's Idlib province.

October 2019: Turkey launches their third military operation into Syria, targeting the PYD again with the help of Syrian rebels.

Source: CNN, Global Security



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Raoul Wallenberg at his graduation 1930

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Photo: Wikimedia Commons

THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS BETTER!

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a convincing dystopian nightmare that still haunts me. Her new sequel is good, but it's got nothing on *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In 1985, Margaret Atwood's infamous dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* was published. Labelled a cautionary tale, the novel is set in a totalitarian regime called Gilead (formerly the US). Due to radiation and a deteriorating environment, most people have become sterile or infertile, resulting in low birth rates. Fertile women, so-called Handmaids, are enslaved, raped, and forced to bear children for the regime's powerful men. In *The Handmaid's Tale* we follow the harrowing story of one such Handmaid, the protagonist Offred. It's been argued that the novel has contemporary relevance, due to its commentary on retrenchments of women's rights similar to ones we can see today.

THIS SEPTEMBER, ATWOOD published the long-awaited sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*, a story that takes place 17 years after the events of the first novel. Unlike its predecessor, the sequel, entitled *The Testaments*, focuses not on a singular main

character. Rather, it follows three women whose separate storylines eventually knit together.

GILEAD IS A society that treats women in the worst imaginable ways. As disclosed by Atwood, every atrocity faced by women in her Gileadean society has happened to women in reality. Somewhere, sometime, in history. In her own words: "no imaginary gizmos, no imaginary laws, no imaginary atrocities". However, some women in Gilead are a bit better off than others – the Aunts. This is the faction of women that *The Testaments* focuses on. The Aunts are charged with governing all other women in Gilead and in return enjoy special privileges. They alone among women are allowed to read and write. They also don't have to marry or serve as childbearing slaves.

I READ *The Handmaid's Tale* in school and it changed my life. Since then, I have been a fan of Atwood's authorship. Not only is her writing

incredibly beautiful, but her way of cautioning the reader about what might happen, if we continue to take women's rights for granted, is very effective. No, there's no contemporary society that enslaves, rapes, and forces women to bear children for the nation in the way that Gilead does. Yet, there are modern examples of women being encouraged to reproduce. A few years ago, Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan encouraged Turkish women to have at least three children, stating that women who reject motherhood and refrain from the house, regardless of how successful their careers are, are giving up on humanity. He even called such women "deficient" and "incomplete". In 2015, due to declining birth rates, Danish women were asked by a municipally funded campaign if they had "counted their eggs today". Also, women worldwide are subjected to exploitative surrogate motherhood. The responsibility to ensure the nation's survival is essentially put on women, their worth reduced to their reproductive capability.

ATWOOD'S WARNINGS ARE still relevant today. As argued by many historians, the development of women's freedoms and rights hasn't been linear. Rather, it can be considered a pendulum, swinging back and forth. Throughout history, women have often enjoyed freedoms just to later have them retrenched. Back and forth; freedom, retrenchment. In recent decades we've done pretty good, but there are indicators that the pendulum is, again, swinging backwards.

THE TESTAMENTS WAS written as a reaction to this backlash, in a time of political instability. Atwood has argued that, in unstable societies, women are among the first to suffer. Today, women's reproductive and other rights are threatened in many places. For example, in the US, abortion is now debated in the Supreme Court. Despite the first pro-choice lobby just being formed in Malta, there is still a very strong taboo on the subject in the country. The US reinstating the Mexico City policy – also known as the global gag rule – means that no American aid for global health is allowed to go to abortion-related activities. Because of this abortion is now more difficult to access in many places around the world.

WE ARE ALSO facing climate destruction. The UN has declared that we have barely a decade left to prevent irreversible damage from climate change. Speaking at a conference organised by Atwood –

"Under Her Eye: Women and Climate Change" – former UN climate chief Christiana Figueres said: "Climate change remains one of the greatest threats to achieving sustainable development and its effects fall hardest on women". For instance, women in developing countries are very reliant on agriculture, which is already affected by climate change. Mass-migration is another likely outcome of a deteriorating climate. The migration road has always been dangerous for women. Border rapes, literal "rites of passage" is just one example.

DUE TO THE bleak reality of our present, I expected *The Testaments* to give me the same fear of the future that *The Handmaid's Tale* did. That it'd be another wake-up call for people to realise that women's rights are always under threat, maybe especially right now. Unfortunately, it wasn't. Instead, *The Testaments* is a joy-ride. It's fun to read and it's exciting to find out how the three protagonists' lives eventually intertwine. In fact, I could not stop reading. The chapters about Aunt Lydia (a seemingly evil antagonist from *The Handmaid's Tale*) are particularly well-written and clever. However, the novel is hopeful. It is predictable and Hollywood-esque. It does not offer the same hopelessness present in *The Handmaid's Tale*, and the novel is poorer for it. That hopelessness is what made *The Handmaid's Tale* so effective.

PERHAPS THE BOOK is so hopeful because we live in a time where we desperately crave hope. Many things today feel hopeless and out of our control, so maybe reading about brave and heroic women fighting a theocratic, women-hating regime is what we want. It was nice, no doubt. However, the sheer bleakness of Offred's life in *The Handmaid's Tale*, and the uncertainty of her future, is what woke people up. There is a reason why "the Handmaid" has become a global symbol for resistance. Women have to fight to keep the rights we now enjoy. So, maybe what we need isn't hope. We need fear. Fear that makes us angry. That stops us from taking our rights for granted. Fear that makes us fight.

THE TESTAMENTS IS a joy to read, so read it. Enjoy it. It just isn't a convincing cautionary tale similar to the one given in *The Handmaid's Tale*. In fact, *The Testaments* mainly reminds its readers of the greatness of the prequel. Or maybe I just prefer the old testament.

Passion and Global Politics: A Conversation Series

How can we understand today's global collective body of anxiety? The fear of the other? War and hostility?

What is the emotive component of critique, protest and mobilization, challenging authoritarian regimes and power relations?

How do politics of passion contribute to strife and conflict? To ethnic and sectarian categorizations? To loyalties and alliances?

How is passion interrelated with politics of displacement? With senses of uncertainty, experiences of persecution, the loss of a national home?

And how may affect simultaneously work toward strengthening people's sense of belonging and public intimacy?

In order to reflect on such questions, and with the hope of generating new ones, The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University is bringing together five prominent international scholars for conversations with Associate Professor Maria Frederika Malmström.

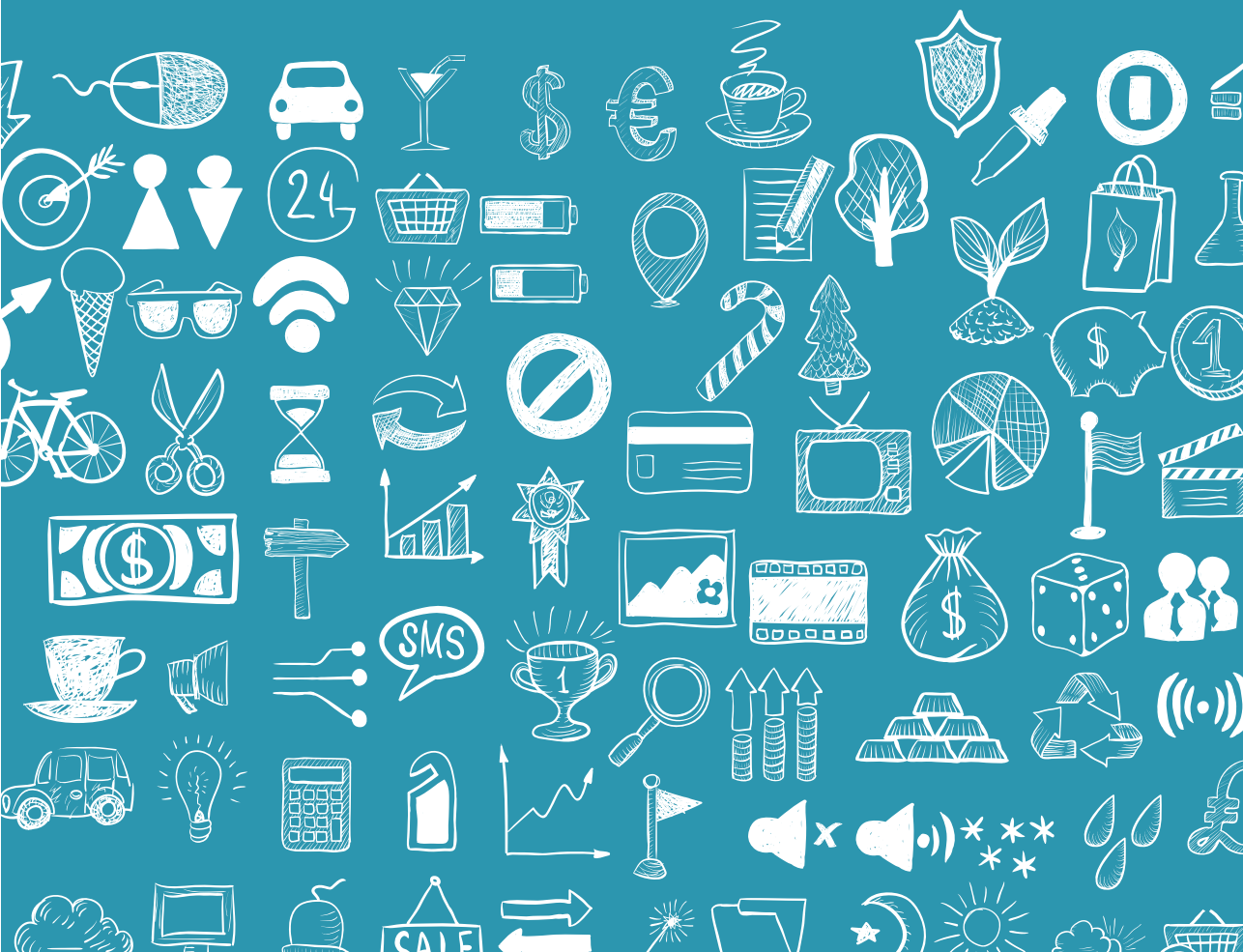
November, 7th, 2019: Stefania Pandolfo
December, 12th, 2019: Jessica Winegar

17:00-19:00, Eden Lecture Hall

Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University, Box 201, 221 00, Lund, Sweden



LUND
UNIVERSITY



IS THE FUTURE OF DIPLOMACY FEMALE?

The *Perspective* put this very question to four women working associated with diplomatic cores. After centuries of male domination, women are breaking through the glass ceiling. But there is still much to do.

In 1990 the feminist scholar Cynthia Enloe raised a question: “where are the women in foreign affairs?”. Almost thirty years later, as we witness an increasing number of women being appointed to powerful positions, her question may sound almost anachronistic.

IN THE LAST four years, the Italian politician Federica Mogherini has been the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union. Sweden, under the lead of Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, was the first country to adopt a feminist foreign policy. More recently, Ursula Von Der Leyen has been appointed as the President-elect of the European Commission.

So, is the future looking brighter for women in diplomacy?

TO ANSWER THIS question *The Perspective* has interviewed four women of power each in their own field: Annika Söder, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Sweden since 2014; Veronika Bard, currently the Swedish Ambassador to the UN in Geneva and the first woman to have been the Swedish Ambassador in Moscow, from 2012 to 2015; Karin Aggestam, author of *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, a path-breaking book in the field of gender, diplomacy and mediation. And finally, to get a southern European perspective on the topic, Laura Carpinì, former Italian Ambassador and President of the Association of Italian Female Diplomats.



A GROUNDBREAKING MOVE: SWEDEN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

2014 WAS AN important year in Sweden for gender equality and representation. The red-green government led by Social Democrat Stefan Löfven, in which half of the ministers were women, openly declared itself feminist. The most feminist of all ministries came to be the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), with an all-female team led by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström. Together, they declared that “a feminist foreign policy will permeate all work at the Swedish MFA, the aim being to strengthen women’s rights, increase women’s access to resources, and improve women’s representation”, thus making Sweden the first country in the world with a feminist foreign policy.

STATE SECRETARY ANNIKA Söder recalls the motivations behind this statement, and how it was received. “We knew how important it was to push for the issue of gender equality in foreign policy. In many parts of the world, women still lack what we call “the three Rs”: Rights, Representation and Resources.”, she says.

ACCORDING TO SÖDER, describing Sweden’s foreign policy as feminist resulted in great deal of media attention. “Using the term *gender equality* is one thing, saying *feminist* is a whole other thing. But we also had an outspokenly feminist government, so it felt as a natural step to take. As women, I think we were more eager to push on the word feminist, and we had more credibility in doing so. The principles of Swedish foreign policy would have been the same had the Minister for Foreign Affairs been a man, but I don’t know if it would have been called a *feminist* foreign policy”.

SWEDISH AMBASSADOR VERONIKA Bard also commented on the implementation process, which hasn't always been easy: "When the MFA introduced the feminist foreign policy to us ambassadors, they admitted there was a giggle element to it."

BARD APPRECIATED THAT the Swedish government understood that it could be difficult to introduce the feminist foreign policy in certain countries. She recalls that, in the beginning, she could see some of her male colleagues rolling their eyes when she would present it abroad. "Today, however, more than twenty countries are with us in the fight for gender equality," she adds.



Annika Söder. Photo: Marianne Weiss

NUMEROUS COUNTRIES HAVE indeed followed Sweden in their foreign policy approach, but few of them call it feminist. "Surprisingly, Canada opted for a feminist framing - says Prof. Aggestam - whereas Norway, for instance, despite its important work on gender equality, felt that a feminist framework would be too provocative". That is why Swedish diplomats and politicians emphasize the economic advantages that come with including and empowering women. The weight is put on the economic side rather than on the ideological one. As Prof. Aggestam explains, in order to get as many countries as possible on

board the Swedish government has tried to sell its policy as a method, a matter of procedures, instead of an ideology.

"WE CAN'T HAVE any real influence if we work alone. We can initiate policies, but we need allies to have a real impact" Bard adds. According to her, the feminist foreign policy is closely connected to development issues, which are linked to economic growth. Proving that including women in all aspects of society is an economic asset is therefore complementary to the ideological side of inclusion. Söder agrees: "The ideological and the economic side of the policy are not antagonists. Feminist foreign policy is above all about equal rights for women".

DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES, Söder has a positive outlook on how the MFA worked to introduce the policy: "We handled it very well. We had big meetings at the MFA to explain what the policy entailed and how we would implement it. We met with both younger women, who knew exactly what we were talking about, and with men who were less familiar with the topic." She also explains how adopting a bottom-up approach made the implementation very effective: "The embassies and delegations had the opportunity to shape their own role in the policy, by deciding what they could do in their field. We gave them freedom under our goals".

OVERALL, BOTH STATE Secretary Annika Söder and Swedish Ambassador Veronika Bard maintain that the Swedish feminist foreign policy has had a positive impact internationally.

STILL A HURDLE RACE

LOOKING AT SWEDEN'S groundbreaking work, it is easy to think that the future looks bright for women in diplomacy. However, when broadening the picture, statistics still paint a bleak situation. The presence of women in MFAs is increasing, with Sweden presenting a whopping 56% of women employees. However, the higher the ranks, the lower the share of women gets: women in diplomacy are still confronted with a glass ceiling that makes their career progression slow.

AS PROF. AGGESTAM points out, it is important not to get stuck in meaningless number-crunching: “In some peace processes, women are welcome to be participants, but very silent ones. If we look at the European External Action Service, half of the employees are women, but the Special Representatives are always men.” Instead, it is important to analyze how frequently women reach positions that actually allow them to have an influence. The focus should shift from “counting women” to “making women count”.

THAT IS WHY statistics about the share of women ambassadors are important: ambassadorship is the pinnacle of the diplomatic career. 40% of Swedish ambassadors are women, but 85% of the world’s ambassadors are still male. If we exclude the Nordic countries, only 14% of European ambassadors are female. In Italy, a far more patriarchal society than Sweden, women make up for 22,5% of diplomats. In 2018 only 4 out of 23 Italian ambassadors were female.

THE LACK OF women in top positions could, to a certain extent, be explained by their late entrance in diplomatic careers. In Sweden, women couldn’t become envoys until the 1930s, and female diplomats weren’t allowed to marry until the 1960s. In Italy, women could only access the career in 1967.

HOWEVER, AS PROF. Aggestam explains, there are reasons to think that the increasing number of women might not be sufficient to break down the existing gender hierarchies. Laura Carpini, former Italian ambassador and currently President of the Association of Female Diplomats, agrees: “Women’s diplomatic career progression has been extremely slow. Today the situation in Italy is almost static”.

THE BIGGEST DIFFICULTY for women in diplomacy is penetrating a homosocial environment, with its own rules, rituals and functions, calibrated around the male. Here men are, even if just subconsciously, biased against women, says Carpini. In her experience, this is reflected even in language: “Our association has fought hard for gender-appropriate terminology, and we encountered resistance from our male colleagues.”



Veronika Bard. Photo: Sören Andersson/The Swedish Government Offices.

“IN DIPLOMACY”, BARD adds, “we talk a lot about how it is hard for women to penetrate male constituencies. Men recruit men, and usually don’t contact female coworkers in the first hand. However, I can perceive a clear difference between younger and older men. The latter are more reluctant to work with women. It all has to do with culture, which affects foreign policies as well.”

THE PROBLEM OF male networks is particularly preeminent in diplomacy because of its informal nature. When political processes are institutionalized, explains Prof. Aggestam, women are more likely to have influence in the matter. Something Bard felt on her own skin: “When I worked in the EU as the Swedish ambassador for the OSCE, male ambassadors of certain EU countries like England, France and Germany would often confere privately. They would then come to our general meetings with their minds already set. What you have to do in these situations is to create bilateral relationships and try to break negative structures for the sake of the whole group”.

THIS STRATEGY COULD be applied to negative patriarchal structures as well. Annika Söder had a similar experience: “as Assistant Director General at FAO in Rome in 2007, I felt a difference from Sweden. It was a male dominated working environment which isn’t unusual in the field of agriculture. Things felt to be moving very slowly.”

MALE NETWORKS ALSO deter women from entering diplomatic careers. We see this in Italy today. Women make up for half of the applicants of the foreign service training programs, but the percentage of women pulling back increases at every step of the selection. This, according to Carpini, reflects a lack of self-esteem. That is why her Association also promotes coaching sessions for women.

UNFORTUNATELY, SHE ALSO observes a “high infant mortality rate”, a term she ironically uses to describe the negative trend of women leaving the diplomatic career early on. This is partly due to the difficulty in balancing a highly demanding career with a functional family life. There are policies addressing the situation, but in Italy they are often not implemented. Younger male diplomats could be seen as allies in this issue. They are also looking for a working environment that allows

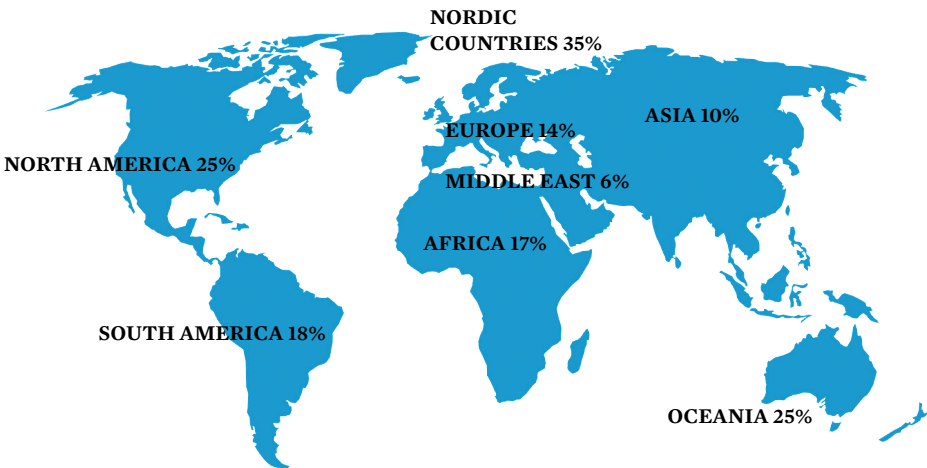
them to have a family and play an active role in it. But today it is women’s careers that suffer as a result of maternity. That is why Carpini’s association focuses on constantly reminding the Italian government to do better in these issues. Only a strong political will can break the existing hierarchical structures.

ON THE OTHER side of Europe, Veronika Bard says that she didn’t really perceive any tangible difficulties until she was in her thirties, when she realized that she was earning a lot less than her male colleagues. “That made me sad and unmotivated. But if you make a name for yourself in an organization, you also have the chance to negotiate your salary. You have to create a platform for yourself”.

DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

FEMALE NETWORKS SHOW to be a good answer to difficulties. “Here in Geneva we have a great network of women ambassadors previously called ‘the lipstick club’, a name that was dropped for obvious reasons,” Bard says. “We share personal experiences and work together with different topics. It is time for women to create our own recruitment networks with both women and

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE AMBASSADORS:



young men. I, for instance, I, for instance, find it more rewarding to work with young male colleagues. They are more used to collaborating with women and are also disadvantaged by traditional patriarchal structures”.



IT IS TIME FOR WOMEN TO CREATE OUR OWN RECRUITMENT NETWORKS.

– *Veronika Bard*

CARPINI HAS THE same experience: she is glad that associations for female diplomats are being created all over Europe, and she hopes to have more frequent and regular exchanges with them in the future. At the time of the interview, Annika Söder was just about to meet the Swedish Women's Mediation Network, established in 2015. “Female networks have been very important to me here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Women need to support each other because they still tend to underestimate themselves, while men do the contrary”, she says.

OVERALL, VERONIKA BARD hasn't felt that being a woman has held her back in her diplomatic career. “Sometimes being part of a minority can work as an advantage. I felt that in Russia for instance. I sparked a lot of attention and curiosity as a female Ambassador and it opened doors for me that would otherwise have been shut.”

SHE RECALLS THAT when she worked in the Swedish Embassy in Moscow in the 1980s, as head of the trade department, Scandinavian and Russian diplomats used to go together to the sauna - a place that automatically excluded female diplomats.

HOWEVER, WHEN SHE went back to Russia in 2012, those traditions were gone. The social climate had changed and the processes were more institutionalized. There were also more women, both on the Swedish and on the Russian side. She adds: “Gender representation is important to

neutralize polarisation between men and women. It reduces the feeling that you are not welcome in a room because of your gender.”

SO, IS THE FUTURE OF DIPLOMACY FEMALE?

THERE IS A positive trend. Gender issues and female representation in foreign policy are taken seriously today, not only in Sweden but in the international arena as well. “Governments are now to a greater extent ensuring that the number of women and men is balanced in delegations and in management positions in international organizations in foreign policy” says Bard. “Although, what we should aim for is not a female future but a gender equal one. Often, when a field becomes dominated by women, the salaries drop”. Veronika Bard's last sentence highlights a negative structural pattern in society.

“JUST LIKE IN academia, change take time. This issue is also about gender norms and hierarchies. It is not only about having more women but about changing organizational cultures, so that they can become more inclusive for women and for other groups that have traditionally been marginalized” adds Professor Aggestam.

THE LAST TWO decades have been a window of opportunity for gender equality in politics. But Aggestam, as well as Bard and Söder, is concerned with the gender backlash that we see in the world today. According to Aggestam, there has always been opposition to gender equality, but today it is much more articulate. Söder agrees: “We had perfect timing with introducing our feminist foreign policy in 2014. I see a more hostile environment in the world today”.

ON THE OTHER hand, there have never been as many women in power as there are today, and men, especially young men, are seen as allies in the fight for gender inclusion. “In the end diplomacy is about negotiating solutions and solving problems with other tools than war. I identify this as a female characteristic. Diplomacy is also about ensuring that all parts included in the process get an equal share. Therefore we have to believe that yes, the future of diplomacy is female” Annika Söder concludes.



LIECHTENSTEIN'S SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY

*Georg Sparber, Liechtenstein's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN.
Photo: United Nations*

Despite being a microstate, Liechtenstein is a successful actor in the diplomatic world scene. However, one cannot deny that the size of a large state matters when it comes to geography, population and economic and military powers. Liechtenstein is a striking exception that proves that size doesn't always matter.

Last summer, my friend Peter from Liechtenstein told me some amusing stories about border crossings he had experienced. For example, one time when he went to the Turkish border and got laughed at by the border officials. They claimed that he had forged his passport. The official told him “If you’re going to fake a passport, next time you should choose a country that actually exists”. When Peter insisted that his country, in fact, did exist the border official sent for his boss to examine the authenticity of his passport. The boss googled Liechtenstein and found that the ‘faked state’, in fact, exists. The border official realized that he had made a mistake and he let Peter pass through without any further questions. Another time Peter crossed the

Serbian border. All officials at the Serbian border crossing gathered around him. Everyone wanted a glance of his passport since they’d never seen a passport from Liechtenstein before.

LIECHTENSTEIN IS THE sixth smallest country in the world. Located and landlocked between Austria and Switzerland this small country inhabits around 38.000 people. To walk from the southern to the northern border takes about five hours.

GEORG SPARBER, COUNSELOR and Deputy Permanent Representative for the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations talks to me about Liechtenstein’s successful diplomacy as well as their position in the world society.

What role do you think that microstates should play in the international society?

— States will always try to preserve their national interests and for smaller states this involves building strong international relations and playing an active role in the international community. Smaller states have certain advantages in shaping policy discussions on the international stage. They can often act quicker, are sometimes more creative in finding solutions and are used to reaching out to other states across regions. Smaller states often have a strong interest in promoting international law which guarantees that all states play by the same rules. It is these states that are often vocal if the law is violated, which is something Liechtenstein has been doing consistently.

MICROSTATES SUCH AS Liechtenstein are sometimes defined as actors with limited capability and influence. This definition could be explained due to the resource limits in the overall exercise of national power that smaller states have. Even though the states are sovereign the absence of a national army has the consequence that the states are sometimes considered weaker as they are unable to use military powers and positioning psychologically in their international relations. This means that they instead have to turn to other measures such as diplomacy or other state capabilities.

What is the main difference when you represent your country as a microstate in comparison to countries that are non-microstates?

— We don't like the term "microstate" very much. The UN Charter makes it clear that cooperation within the UN is based on the principle of sovereign equality, no matter the size or economic and military might of a country. This being said, it is evident that there are differences between states when they make their voices heard. An economic or military power can often just state its position and it will thereby influence the course of action at the UN, while smaller states often need to build alliances and generate political momentum to push an agenda ahead. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, because the legitimacy of UN decisions strongly relies on the support they enjoy in the UN membership. Smaller states sometimes just need to put in an extra diplomatic effort to make a difference.

Georg Sparber continues to explain challenges that Liechtenstein faces within foreign affairs:

— A challenge we face on an ongoing basis is limited resources. The UN covers so many different aspects of international relations that it is impossible for Liechtenstein to follow all of them. We have to choose our priorities very carefully and preserve the necessary resources to make a difference in these areas.

WITH THE BINOCULARS focused on Liechtenstein it becomes clear that the small state influences the world society more than one might think. Liechtenstein has been a very influential actor regarding human rights issues in the UN. In 2006, Liechtenstein was a key actor in the founding of the UN Human Rights Council. Liechtenstein also takes an active part in the reform of the treaty bodies of the UN Human Rights instruments. Furthermore, Liechtenstein participates actively in the intergovernmental work of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. Matters that are allocated to the Third Committee relate to a range of social affairs, humanitarian affairs and other human rights issues. Liechtenstein prioritizes inter alia the protection of the human rights of women and children due to their greater vulnerability as well as the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons. The Third Committee is responsible for all those questions.

On the question of how Liechtenstein has been able to be a key actor in the founding of the UN Human Rights Council Georg Sparber answers:

— Human rights have always been a priority for Liechtenstein as we consider them fundamental for peace and security and sustainable development. We have therefore consistently contributed to strengthening human rights institutions at the UN. At some stage it was clear to us and many others that the Human Rights Commission became an unviable body because of ongoing political attacks and could not properly fulfil its mandate anymore. Therefore, we have contributed to create a better institution which has become the Human Rights Council. Unfortunately, not all the flaws of the Council's predecessor could be addressed, but I believe that the Human

Rights Council today is a well-functioning and authoritative institution that has made a difference in many situations and on many topics.

WE SHOULDN'T JUDGE microstates as actors with limited capability and influence too quickly. The number of citizens or the geographical size of the state does not determine the state's influence in the world society. Their actions do. States that contribute to progression in humanitarian issues should be taken seriously no matter how small or big they may be. So, even though the Liechtensteinian passport might not be recognized at all border controls, we must not neglect to recognize their actions.

“WE DON'T LIKE THE TERM “MICROSTATE” VERY MUCH. THE UN CHARTER MAKES IT CLEAR THAT COOPERATION WITHIN THE UN IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY, NO MATTER THE SIZE OR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY MIGHT OF A COUNTRY.





Photo: Flickr

FROM BARCELONA TO EUROPE: A NEW CATALAN DIPLOMACY

Yellow and red adorn the streets, Catalans rush to the polling stations: Two years ago, an illegal independence referendum took place. The dissolution of the parliament and the escape of President Puigdemont followed. Until today, the Catalan ex-president remains in exile – and leads the independence movement onto a new path

Referendum and release: At this year's Diada Nacional, around 600,000 independence activists gathered at the Plaça d'Espanya in Barcelona. The secedes in the streets were unanimously demanding a new plebiscite and freedom for twelve separatist leaders.

IN THE CATALAN Parliament, however, the two largest independentist parties are moving away from each other. The left-wing ERC party is following a less radical course, whereas Puigdemont's Junts Per Catalunya is holding onto its target: a referendum that Madrid must accept. Beyond that, the impartial Catalan regional president Quim Torra declared that, in the event of a long-term prison sentence for political prisoners, a new stage to finally bring Catalonia to independence will be initiated.

THERE ARE DISPUTES and divisions, but the movement for independence looks down to the same bogeyman: Madrid. Klaus-Jürgen Nagel, Professor of Political Science at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, explains: "The opposition to what is conceived as repression and its methods is higher than the support for independence and includes many non-independentists". According to Nagel, this common discontent about Madrid's policies creates unity to this fragmented movement – just like the protests during the national day have shown.

WHEN LOOKING at the past two years, it is safe to say that the times of the Catalan question staying within its political borders have passed. The Catalan president and main initiator of the referendum, Carles Puigdemont, fled the Spanish judiciary.

Together with four ministers he secluded himself in Belgium. When returning from appointments in Helsinki, Puigdemont was arrested based on a European Arrest Warrant at the Danish-German border. Germany, however, eventually refused to extradite him. The conflict has irrevocably been Europeanized – and led to diplomatic tensions.

“THE EU INSTITUTIONS have reacted as expected, with common sense, respect for the community rules themselves and loyalty to a Member State that scrupulously complies with the political principles and ethical values that underpin the European building”, comments the Spanish ambassador to Belgium, Beatriz Larrotcha Palma.

“THE CATALAN CRISIS REPRESENTS THE FAILURE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN EUROPE.

THE GERMAN-CATALAN POLITICAL scientist Peter A. Kraus, on the other hand, criticizes: “There is a double standard in Europe: while Brussels tends to denounce Eastern European countries in national conflicts, the EU remains accommodating regarding the Spanish government”. Furthermore, he stresses that there are indeed tendencies in Spain that attack the rule of law. Brussels should stand up to those disquieting democratic performances.

“THE CATALAN CRISIS represents the failure of diplomatic relations in Europe“, disapproves Kraus. “Contrary to all hope, the conflict is simply too complex to just ignore it.” The former president of the Generalitat reacted to this passiveness and rejection: By remaining in the heart of Europe and avoiding a long-term prison sentence, he established diplomatic ties and

networks in the name of an autonomous Catalan Republic. Moreover, he is pursuing his target without having to face the quarrels in the local parliament. “His move to go to exile - and be present in every campaign by Skype - proved to be cleverer than to go to prison and to be left without many of the means of communication politicians need to have today”, explains Nagel. Like that, Puigdemont became increasingly diplomatic in his work and has taken the issue to the international arena.

HE IS CONSTANTLY expanding his network and representation: In September, for instance, he spoke at an event by the Young European Federalists in Germany and visited the Endorfine Cultural Festival in Lugano. He seized the opportunity to promote Catalan self-determination and sharply criticize the Spanish national government.

THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS in May were another steppingstone: The Catalan question could be discussed at the level of European institutions and Puigdemont could enjoy parliamentary immunity. However, in order to be appointed MEPs, he and his colleague Comín would first have had to swear on the Spanish constitution. Because they did not show up in Madrid, they could not take their mandate. The two candidates requested precautionary measures before the General Court of the European Union – unsuccessfully. Puigdemont, thereupon, sued the Spanish election committee.

THE “CONSELL PER la República”, founded in October 2018, is one of his projects in his Belgium home. Separates can show their support by joining via the council’s website. Its five areas of activity include the international scope. This field of interest contains the “dialogue with political and international actors for the future recognition of the Catalan Republic” and “coordination of efforts by Entities and Institutions”. A second pillar embodies the diplomatic action, such as “strengthen relations with democratic and non-violent movements that support the right to self-determination” and the Council’s presence in “international forums and international debates related to the right of self-determination”.

ONE OF THE councils most recent activities was the publication of communiqué in which it condemns the arrest of nine separatists that have been accused of terrorism, rebellion and sedition by the prosecutors of the Audiencia Nacional. Concretely, the Council accuses the Spanish government of “fabricating a narrative based on a violence that didn’t exist and proposes a firm democratic response to this repressive State”. The website is accessible both in Catalan and English.

THIS INEXHAUSTIBLE FIGHT for independence in exile results, however, in a significant problem: a distorted perception. “Many who go into exile have a rather one-sided image and are no longer up-to-date”, emphasizes political scientist Kraus. Especially when considering the current tensions within separatist parties, Puigdemont might have lost his connection to the present situation at home.

UNDENIABLY, CARLES PUIGDEMONT has transformed the long-running internal conflict into a diplomatically difficult affair in Europe. It remains uncertain if this kind of “embassy for Catalan sovereignty” will succeed with building up pressure from the outside. Kraus and Nagel agree: Puigdemont embodies a symbolic figure for an independent Catalan Republic. Whether home in Catalonia or on a foreign path.



NORTHERN IRELAND'S SKELETONS



Northern Ireland is at a crossroads. Its non-sectarian peace treaty is being strained to breaking point. No other workable peace process is possible - but all is not yet lost.

*The memorial to the twenty-nine people killed in the car bombing in the town of Omagh on 15th August 1998, the single worst attack of the Troubles.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons*

The EU fully stands behind Ireland, previous-EU President Donald Tusk recently said of the tumultuous Brexit process. This was not a mere platitude. Throughout Brexit, the EU has stood in firm solidarity with Ireland as both seek to protect the Good Friday Agreement – the agreement that ended decades of violence and political instability in Northern Ireland.

BEGINNING IN THE 1960s, there were violent clashes between Protestant Unionists – who want Northern Ireland to stay as a part of the United Kingdom – in Northern Ireland’s coastal areas, and Catholic Republicans – who want to see Ireland reunified – in the border areas. Soon, these clashes escalated into the Troubles (known as the Northern Ireland Conflict outside of the UK) and the pro-UK Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the pro-Ireland Irish Republican Army (IRA) were born.

IN 1998, AFTER years of stop-start negotiations and failed ceasefires and talks, the bloodshed finally came to an end with the Good Friday Agreement, which saw all sides agree to keep Northern Ireland within the UK, but with the provision that it could reunify with the Republic of Ireland through a referendum. The Agreement also oversaw the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly – a body devolved from the UK’s central government in Westminster, and one which would represent both Protestants and Catholics. Of Northern Ireland’s two main parties, Sinn Féin, an Irish republican party, supported the agreement. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), a pro-Union party, did not. It even refused to recognise the legitimacy of the agreement for some time after its ratification, as it viewed the agreement as an existential threat to the union.

EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER, the UK, as a whole, voted to leave the EU; Northern Ireland voted to remain. One year after that, the governing Conservative Party, led by then-Prime Minister Theresa May, unexpectedly lost their majority in a general election, which led to a support agreement being struck between the Conservatives and the DUP.

AS THE TROUBLES rumbled on, Protestants began to increasingly rally around the DUP, and Catholics around Sinn Féin. At the 2017 general

election, the DUP won ten of Northern Ireland’s eighteen parliamentary seats. Sinn Féin won seven, including all six seats which sit along the border with Ireland. However, Sinn Féin MPs do not take their seats. This is because, generally, Sinn Féin voters overwhelmingly self-identify as Irish. Therefore, Sinn Féin argues, their MPs would be sitting and voting in the parliament of a neighbouring country.

“WHEN WE SAY WE’RE NOT BRITISH, WE’RE NOT PRETENDING; WE’RE ACTUALLY NOT.”

MARY LOU McDONALD, the party’s leader, reiterated this stance in an interview with British journalist Owen Jones: ‘When we say we’re not British, we’re not pretending; we’re actually not.’ Michelle O’Neill, the party’s deputy leader and leader of the Northern Irish branch, called suggestions that her MPs might take up their seats in order to stop Brexit ‘a wee bit of nonsense’.



Mary Lou McDonald (right) and Michelle O’Neill (left) - the current leader and deputy-leader of Sinn Féin. Photo: Sinn Féin/Flickr

BUT, TO COMPLICATE the situation further, the Northern Ireland Assembly has not been sitting since January 2017, when power-sharing collapsed between the DUP and Sinn Féin over a renewable energy policy. Two subsequent snap elections to the assembly have not provided a clear result.

SINCE A SUPPORT agreement between the Conservatives and the DUP was struck in June 2017, a party opposed to the Good Friday Agreement has become the kingmaker of the UK parliament. The DUP currently has a decisive vote on any Brexit legislation, which will inevitably affect the Good Friday Agreement.



This polaroid was taken minutes before the Omagh bomb detonated. The bomb was hidden in the red car to the right. Photo: Flickr

WITH THE NORTHERN Ireland Assembly still dissolved and the DUP the only Northern Irish party in the House of Commons, Northern Irish Catholics are currently without representation. As a result, tensions are rapidly rising.

IN RECENT MONTHS, journalist Lyra McKee was gunned down whilst reporting on sectarian unrest in Derry, crude, but effective, bombs, left with the intension of killing police officers, have exploded across Northern Ireland, pipe bombs have exploded in Belfast, Derry and Strabane and,

in Belfast, a Unionist bonfire descended into civil disorder. Brexit, and the threat of a demarcated border between the UK and Ireland, is straining the Good Friday Agreement to its limits.

SINCE BORIS JOHNSON became the UK's Prime Minister in July 2019, he has repeatedly asserted that he will take the UK out of the EU without any formal agreement in place, if needs be. But a no-deal Brexit will inevitably result in border infrastructure; thus, violating a key principle of the Good Friday Agreement: the right to self-determination.



THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION IS A CORNERSTONE OF THE AGREEMENT.

EVERYONE BORN ON the island of Ireland has the right to hold either a British passport, an Irish passport, or both. The purpose of this is that it allows Irish-identifying Catholics to live in Northern Ireland without necessarily having to hold British citizenship. The right to self-determination is a cornerstone of the agreement. Even only the potential weakening of this cornerstone has led to unrest.

TO ASSUAGE THIS, Theresa May's government proposed customs checks between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland. The DUP rejected this as, in the view of many Northern Irish Protestants, it could weaken the union of the UK.

WHILST IT MAY seem as though Northern Ireland is inexorably moving back towards its past, it might just be possible to turn things around. During the Assembly crisis of the mid-2000s (during which Sinn Féin was accused of spying for the IRA), the St Andrews Agreement restored power-sharing and pulled the Good Friday Agreement back from the brink. Whilst Brexit is infinitely larger, more

complicated and unprecedented compared to this crisis, international pressure could be the way forward.

THROUGHOUT THE BREXIT process, Michelle O'Neill and Mary Lou McDonald have successfully lobbied Irish leader Leo Varadkar to keep to his stance on protecting peace in Northern Ireland. This is compounded by the fact that the US House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi has pledged, as has her party, the Democrats, to veto any post-Brexit US-UK trade deal that could undermine the Good Friday Agreement. This sort of international pressure can, and does, work. After all, it was international pressure that forced Theresa May to climb down after she initially refused to guarantee the basic human rights of EU nationals living in the UK post-Brexit.

BUT BORIS JOHNSON does not conform to norms in the way that Theresa May did. It is possible – indeed, highly likely – that Boris Johnson will simply try to ignore pressure from Ireland and the EU. But the veto pledge from Nancy Pelosi and the US Democrats took many pro-Brexit parliamentarians by surprise.

PERHAPS, DUE TO the complexity of Brexit, many people, on both sides of the argument, have come to exist in a bubble. In this bubble, a key point seems to have been forgotten: the Good Friday Agreement shows that people with different identities and statehood aims can live together in peace. They can not only live, but also prosper and thrive together.

IF BREXIT COLLAPSES the agreement, then a clear, replicable pathway to diplomatic, global conflict resolution will have been lost. Any real peace in Northern Ireland would be lost with it, as would the potential for peace in other parts of the world. Despite many EU governments hing wildly differing political ideologies, the EU 27, from Malta, to Sweden, to Hungary, agree that the Good Friday Agreement must be preserved.

'THE EU FULLY stands behind Ireland.' These are words that many would do well to remember.

For further articles on Northern Ireland, Brexit and all things international affairs, please scan the QR code or visit theperspective.se





The river beneath Iceland's longest bridge has changed direction as a result of the glacier melting. Today, the one kilometer long bridge crosses bare ground. Photo: Olivia Runsala

WHAT IS ICELAND WITHOUT ICE?

For a thousand years Icelanders have lived side by side with the glaciers. Within two centuries, they will have melted, never to come back again.

“IMAGINE THAT YOU have a landmark near your home, which you see every day and that you experience as permanent, in the same way as a mountain. Then imagine seeing the mountain disappear, knowing that it is because of the impact of humanity” Sigurdur Loftur Thorlacius, president of the organization for young environmental activists on Iceland, tells *The Perspective* in Reykjavík.

THE GLACIERS OF Iceland are melting, and at an increasingly alarming pace. The first glacier to be declared dead was Ókjökull in 2014. It was also the first to be given a funeral. Oddur Sigurdsson attended the ceremony held in August this year. He is a glaciologist at the meteorological office in Reykjavík. It was his job to issue a death certificate for Ókjökull.

“WE WILL LOSE a thousand years of Icelandic history frozen in the ice,” he says, referring to the practice of analyzing the layers of ash that have fallen on the glacier.

THIS TECHNOLOGY HAS, among other things, been able to determine with certainty when the first settlement took place on the island. Now valuable historical information is melting away.

AS THE LARGE masses of ice melt, Iceland's land mass will increase when the weight of the glaciers no longer press against the crust of the earth. This will offset the elevated sea level. Iceland's largest port also risks becoming too shallow for the cargo vessels as the crust rises. A problem which is solved by digging out the sea bottom.

BUT IN ORDER to save the glacier, no solutions have been found. It is already too late. “There is a saying among us Icelanders,” Oddur Sigurdsson says. “Everything the glacier takes, it gives back.”

This is a preview of a UPF long-read. The full article is available via this QR-code or theperspective.se/magazine



Many tourists visit Lake Jökulsárlón daily. Today it has grown so much that a bridge has been built over the delta that leads into the Atlantic ocean. Photo: Olivia Runsala



AT THE MELTING POINT

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES ARE PUSHING POLITICS IN THE ARCTIC



The Arctic, previously a frozen and inaccessible region, reserved for polar bears and brave explorers, is now becoming increasingly accessible. With increased temperatures the sea ice is giving way to a new diplomacy in the Arctic in the coming years, suddenly a gold mine for natural resources, shipping routes, and potential environmental catastrophes.



The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet. Disappearing glaciers, missing sea ice where once it was plenty, city-sized ice cubes breaking off the ice in Greenland and Antarctica. In all of the world's polar regions the ice is melting at a never-before-seen pace. One such region is the Arctic, covering the ocean and land surrounding the North Pole. Before a symbol of no-man's-land, explored only by the brave and the foolish, and a region of little economic interest, the retreating Arctic sea ice means the polar region has plunged into an identity crisis of international magnitude.

THE ARCTIC SEA ice varies greatly in its seasonal cycle – from 15 million square kilometres in the winter to a mere 4 million square kilometres in late summer. However, in the past decades, the sea ice has been retreating, with lower and lower extents of ice observed. The decrease in sea ice means access to the region's wealth of natural resources, including untapped gas and oil reserves, mining fields and fish. It also means there's access to an ice-free shipping route in the North Sea with the potential to have a large impact on the shipping industry.

DIPLOMACY IS NOT new in the Arctic, but as of late, it's of a changing nature. The Arctic Council was established in 1996 to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction between the Arctic States, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Russian Federation and the US. Additionally, six groups representing indigenous people in the area are permanent participants of the council, and any non-Arctic State is welcome to become an observer. The council has long dealt with issues of cooperation and research, as well as addressing the changing climate. However, with increased access to the natural resources the polar region has to offer, the stakes are changing, and new players are showing up to the table.

BACK IN 2007, Russia did a bold move and planted a titanium flag at the bottom of the ocean under

the North Pole. With that, they symbolically staked their claim to billions of dollars' worth of oil and gas reserves in the Arctic Ocean today. With two mini-submarines, Russian scientists collected samples from the seabed, hoping to be able to prove that the underwater Lomonosov Ridge running under the pole is part of the Russian mainland. However, many of the other Arctic countries also claim the same, and the Canadian Foreign Minister at the time, Peter MacKay, even said that:

“

THIS ISN'T THE 15TH
CENTURY. YOU CAN'T GO
AROUND THE WORLD AND
JUST PLANT FLAGS AND
SAY: 'WE'RE CLAIMING THIS
TERRITORY'.

WHILE NOT GIVING Russia control over the ridge, the move shows the great value and importance of the Arctic in the coming years. Because, really, who owns the Arctic?

THIS IS A question that has been left unanswered for years, maybe because there was no pressing need to find an answer – until now. Today, much of the Arctic region sits on international waters. However, both Russia, Denmark and Canada has expressed interest in the area, Canada filing a claim with the UN body determining validity of boundary claims as late as May 2019. This contests the current order – that each nation with a border to the region has economic control 200 nautical miles from their coast.



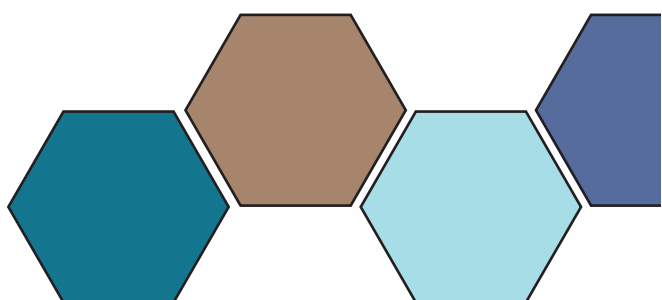
RUSSIA IS LEADING the way in the scramble for the Arctic with 20 percent of the country's GDP already stemming from the North and an impressive expansion of their icebreaker fleet, now more than five times the size of the second largest fleet. The country has long been looking for ice-free harbours and ways to expand their shipping without crossing NATO-controlled waters, and the disappearing ice in the Arctic might provide just that.

CHINA IS ANOTHER unexpected player in the Arctic scramble, slowly buying their way in from a lack of Arctic coastline. China has undertaken a soft-power campaign, first focusing on scientific collaboration, with financial interests not too far behind. The nation struck a free-trade pact with Iceland in 2013, and it has held free-trade discussions with Norway since 2008. The country has also upped shipment in the region and is a large financier of Arctic projects. This long-winded strategy might provide China with much to say in future developments of the polar region.

THE FATE OF the Arctic has the potential to have far-reaching geopolitical and international consequences. The Arctic makes up only six percent of the Earth's surface, and yet its neighbours feel like they live on the other side of the world from each other. This is due to change, and as we can see, many nations are already employing long-term strategies with an ice-free future in mind. The region has the attention of two huge global players, China and Russia, and with their interest, US responses are usually not far behind.

WITH THE ARCTIC transforming from a region of research and cooperation to one of great economic interest and contested resources, continued efforts towards cooperation, sustainability and diplomacy is more important than ever. Installing oil rigs and mining might prove even more damaging for the warming climate, destroying the Arctic ecosystem and the lives of 500 000 indigenous people residing in the region. It might be a gold mine for new economic opportunities, but in the wake of changing Arctic politics, greater Arctic diplomacy will have to follow.

Photos:
NASA
The Arctic Council
Andrey Korchagin





NIGERIA - A STEPPING STONE FOR MOROCCAN AMBITIONS?

Within the span of two years, the two heads of state welcomed each other in their respective countries, heralding a potential fresh face of African geopolitics and a renewed role for the emerging North African power.

IN JUNE 2018, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's visit to Morocco did not go unnoticed. International and local media alike widely covered the first ever travel of a Nigerian head of state on Moroccan soil, outlining the ongoing bridging of the two countries initiated two years ago, on their first encounter. The primary focus being the 5,000 kilometers long gas pipeline project that would run through the major part of West Africa, providing additional resources to the area as well as ushering cheering economic prospects for the Nigerian gas industry. An ambitious enterprise estimated at 20 million dollars that will "change the face of this part of the continent" according to the agreement.

HOWEVER, THE CONUNDRUM lies elsewhere. Morocco is currently in the midst of a major shift in its foreign policy. After returning to the African Union (AU) in 2016, the Kingdom appears to be heading south, turning away from its European focus. With the European Union representing over half of their commercial activity, the country embodies the words of its former king, Hassan II: "Morocco is a tree whose roots lie in Africa but that breathes by its European leaves". A situation that his successor, Mohammed VI, yearns to change. In his homecoming speech at the AU, he declared: "It feels good to come home after such lengthy absence".

WHAT COULD BE seen as mere political rhetoric was in fact followed by substantial action. In February 2017, Morocco applied to join the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, the regional political and economic union. A positive signal confirming the Kingdom's willingness to return to "its roots" through institutional integration into Africa. In fact, after being one of the driving forces of pan-Africanism, the Kingdom of the West turned its back on the continent for ages. Former King Mohammed V hosted and created the Casablanca Group, which paved the way for early forms of African integration.

HOWEVER, THE HONEYMOON did not last long. As Senior Lecturer of Human Geography at Lund University Yahia Mahmoud puts it: "in the 80's and 90's, Morocco gave up the cause of Africa, using the status-quo of the Cold War".

WHILE A MAJORITY of African newly decolonized nations chose Third-Worldism or Communism, Morocco picked the Western-Capitalist side, drifting away from its neighbors. In addition to that, turmoil regarding the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic's admission in the Organization of African Unity in 1982 resulted in Morocco slamming the door of the organization, only to return 30 years later.

TO BACK SUCH an undertaking, who better than the biggest economic and demographic power of the continent. Founding member of both the AU and ECOWAS, Nigeria's voice in Morocco's emergence could prove to be crucial. Yet, their relationship is ambiguous. If the current rapprochement is promising, various disagreements remain. Nigeria is in fact amongst the countries that are blocking Morocco's ECOWAS candidacy, fearing the kingdom's competition in numerous markets and questioning its ability to accept freedom of conscience, a foundational principle of the organization.

IN ADDITION TO that, Nigeria still recognizes the legitimacy of the Western Saharan Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and its armed militia, the Polisario Front, which have been at war against the Kingdom since the 1975 Moroccan Green March, which resulted in the country's de facto annexation.

THE SAHARAN DESERT, rich in phosphate and other fossil resources, is without a doubt the biggest focus of Moroccan diplomacy. Beyond a return to "its roots", Morocco's new approach in Africa is undoubtedly linked to its geopolitical agenda. As Yahia Mahmoud says: "the strategy of Morocco is to try to create a noise in the AU, so they would withdraw their recognition of Western Sahara as a country".

MOROCCO'S AIM SEEMS to be crystal clear: gaining Nigeria's support. President Buhari's voice is of paramount importance in both AU and ECOWAS and could very well prove to be a kingmaker for the North-African power. However, beyond the obvious economic motivations, the main Moroccan goal was and always will be geopolitical. With half of the Sahrawi Republic's supporters being African countries, the Kingdom of the West sees in Nigeria the first step of a potential domino effect that would consolidate its Saharan position.

BOTH THE GAS pipeline project and Morocco's willingness to play along with Nigerian relative dominance in West Africa could be part of a trade-off, resulting in Nigerian support to Moroccan views on Western Sahara. A strategy already used by Chinese diplomats in the continent, as Yahia Mahmoud explains: "in the 70's and 80's, China would always have a requirement: 'if you want to have a diplomatic relationship with us, you will have to not recognize Taiwan as an independent country'. We saw China gaining terrain in that sense, as very few countries would opt to keep their relation to Taiwan and not to China." However, Chinese officials stopped practices of this kind, thus expanding their African scope.

HISTORY WILL SHOW if Morocco chooses such pragmatic approach to address the barriers that it imposes on itself. In fact, as Yahia Mahmoud points out: "that [Moroccan-Nigerian] pipeline has to go through a whole deal of countries, and one of them unavoidably would be Western Sahara. And as long as this conflict is not settled, Morocco will not receive the green light from countries to do that." By pushing too far its geopolitical agenda, the Kingdom of the West could see its economic interests widely jeopardized, and its homecoming to the African community go down the drain.



Photo: Wikimedia

UNHCR REGIONALISING

MOVING HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY OUT OF THE GLOBAL NORTH

The field of humanitarian work is changing, and so are the relations enabling it. UNHCR, the leading global authority on refugees, has in this spirit taken the decision to regionalise their bureaus in Geneva and moving the space of negotiation closer to the field.

The conventional perception many might hold of humanitarian work could be that of a truck, belonging to some US or European INGO rolling into a camp filled with people in need to hand out boxes of food and water. This image is rapidly becoming outdated however. Emergency relief items are still very much a crucial part of humanitarian work; however, it is only a small part of it.

BEHIND THE SCENES of the fieldwork, a large structure of people, networks, agreements and funding both enables and restricts the work conducted on the ground. Everything happens within these framings. States have never unconditionally committed to allowing humanitarian workers to carry out their activities within their borders so if you wish to carry out humanitarian work, you will have to start in the area of diplomacy.

HISTORICALLY, THERE HAS been a geographical divide between continents sending aid, and the ones receiving it. Diplomacy concerning matters of Africa for example, has to a large extent been discussed in Geneva or New York. This is however changing with global poverty on the decline and former third world states on the rise in the global political arena.

GLOBALIZATION HAS ALSO given rise to new relations and actors. Along with local governments and NGOs, states and international organisations from outside of Europe and the US, as well as the private sector are getting increasingly involved in the humanitarian-development scene.

IN RESPONDING TO this change, the UN has since the beginning of 2019 begun implementing a wide set of systemic changes aimed at comprehensively reforming the organisation. According to the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, this change represents “the most significant structural change process in the history of the United Nations”, placing a larger emphasis on people and delivery and less on processes and bureaucracy.

PARALLELLY, UNHCR, THE UN Refugee Agency, has also embarked on implementing change in cohesion with these principles. In December 2018, the Global Compact on Refugees was adopted by the General Assembly. Key to this framework is to create a more predictable and equitably responsibility sharing for refugee-reception with emphasis on shared responsibility and international cooperation.

THIS MEANS THAT UNHCR will now put a stronger focus on partnership and collaboration, something which the organisation historically has not been very keen on doing. The compact has four key objectives; easing the pressure on host countries; enhancing refugee self-reliance; expanding access to third-country solutions; and to support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

TO FURTHER THIS goal, UNHCR has decided to regionalise their bureaus formerly situated in Geneva, moving them to Bangkok, Amman, Nairobi, Pretoria, Dakar and Panama City. Geneva will maintain its status as HQ, but in a more supportive role.

In making this change, more authority will be given to the staff working closer to the fields of action.

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND how this reform can come to affect the diplomatic capacities of the UNHCR, it is useful to first reflect on how humanitarian diplomacy differs from conventional state-centred diplomacy.

CONVENTIONAL DIPLOMACY CAN be viewed as the practice of conducting negotiations with the aim of furthering the foreign policy of a given nation. UNHCR is however not a sovereign state. Although they mainly engage with state-actors, the “content” of their policy differs although the practice of diplomacy is still comparatively similar.

The heart of UNHCR is the 1951 Refugee Convention stem from article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to the article, “everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” and “this right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.”

FURTHER ELABORATING ON this, the 1951 Refugee Convention defines the term ‘refugee’ as a juridical status (unlike the term ‘migrant’ which is a description, not a legal status). A core principle here is non-refoulment, which asserts that a refugee should not be sent back to a country where he or she might face serious threats to life or freedom. As of today, 145 states have ratified the convention and are thus expected to cooperate and ensure that the rights of refugees are respected and protected.

AN ALTERNATIVE COULD be “Axel Bisschop, formerly Deputy Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa and highly involved in the process to change bureaus, can provide a deeper understanding of this issue. “It goes without saying that the work surrounding refugees is a highly diplomatic one. UNHCR has both a supervisory and advocating role when it comes to promoting the principles of the 1951 Refugee Convention, as well as other conventions related to it” Bisschop says.



THERE ARE HOWEVER many factors one must be aware of when conducting diplomacy. Depending on factors such as if the country has signed the 1951 convention, or just the general political landscape of the country, the work can look very different. Ruling parties of a specific country for example must be aware of their own credibility as to not lose votes or seats in the next election.

“IN PROCESSES OF peace-negotiations involving big refugee-populations (such as Syria or Sudan), UNHCR also maintains a central role at the table” Bisschop tells us. Questions of durable solutions (such as repatriation) for the people uprooted by the conflict is a key component in creating a sustainable peace. In this area, UNHCR has a lot of information and expertise vital to this goal.

IN MOVING THE bureaux closer to where events and developments take place, Bisschop believes UNHCR will gain a stronger influence on the processes of negotiations as well as a better overview of situations. “This will provide UNHCR with a stronger narrative based on facts which will give UNHCR more leverage and more credibility in proposing solutions for refugee-situations.”

IN CONTEXTS OF active conflict generating refugees, the diplomatic process can instead be about gaining access to land for camps and operations, protection and the legal framework, prevention and finding durable solutions with refugee-camps not being considered one of them. This work is complex and not as straight-forward as one might believe. However, in regionalising the bureaux, Bisschop believes UNHCR will be in a better position to “sell” their solutions.

NATURALLY, THE MOST interested in finding durable and sustainable solutions are neighbouring countries. One criterion for becoming a refugee is that you leave your country of origin, most people uprooted by conflict stays in their country of origin while 80% flee to the neighbouring countries.

THE QUESTION ON challenges to this move is very much linked to the question of if this is believed to be part of a wider trend to move spaces of negotiations outside of Europe. Bisschop believes that it is now vital for other INGO's, advocacy organisations and other UN bodies to follow suit. Coordination is key to work in accordance to the Global Compact and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and much of this has to come together at a central level.

IT IS EASY to become detached from the people the organisation aims to serve, one aim of this transformation is to strengthen this awareness to make the staff more aware of the needs of refugees and other persons uprooted by conflict or disaster. On a final note, Bisschop says that “by being closer to the centre of events, UNHCR will gain a much greater influence on situations involving new flows of refugees, as well as prolonged conflicts. We will be able to work more closely with states and actors involved in these situations to find durable solutions for displaced persons in accordance to our convention. All of this will give our staff more ownership of the responsibility this entails and make them more aware of potential solutions.”



Photo: MONUSCO/ Abel Kavanagh



Bugra Dogruyol at the campus of Özyegin University. In 2014, he was charged with insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Photo: Fredrik Fahlgren

IN AN INCREASINGLY AUTHORITARIAN TURKEY, VOICES ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE BEING SILENCED

Legal proceedings for opinions expressed on social media have become commonplace in Turkey. In Istanbul, locals affected by these developments share their experiences with The Perspective.

IN EASTERN ISTANBUL, on a wooden bench at the campus of Özyegin University, a 26 year old student is lighting a cigarette. His grandmother passed away this morning. In half an hour he has to rush to the mosque in Kadıköy to prepare for her funeral, but he insists on first telling his story. “It is important that people know what is happening in Turkey,” he says.

THE NUMBER OF prosecution charges for insulting the President of Turkey has increased sixty-fold since Recep Tayyip Erdogan became president of the country. Some have been silenced, others continue their struggle for freedom of expression.

THE RISE IN charges has especially targetted academics and politicians. “Almost every media outlet in Turkey is biased in Erdogan’s favor. Very little information about what is happening in eastern Turkey reaches the public - there were

just a few brave activists that went there and exposed about how civilians were not allowed to leave their homes and were killed if they did. We knew reprisals would come for what we did”, says Alper Açık, a Psychology professor, regarding his prosecution.

WHILE THE STUDENT and the professor continues to voice their opinions, others have been scared into submission.

“These allegations put a whole new perspective to my life. Is this really worth it? What would happen to my child if I end up in prison?” says a former opposition politician, who left her party after being charged with insulting the President.

IT IS A CRIME that could which upon conviction could result in more than twelve years in prison.

*This is a preview of a UPF long-read.
The full article is available via this QR-
code or theperspective.se/magazine*





Çaglayan Justice Palace, in Istanbul where most cases related to Presidential Insult takes place. It is the largest courthouse in Europe. Photo: Fredrik Fahlman

ANALYSIS: HOW CHEAP DRONES MAY PRECIPITATE WAR WITH IRAN

During the past months, the intractable civil war in Yemen has reignited tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and has drawn the United States deeper into the fray. The cause for this recent flare-up in tensions is one that has not been seen since the First Gulf War of 1991: military attacks on oil fields in the Arabian Peninsula. As a result, Washington is pondering military intervention in support of the Saudis, though there may be a distinct divide between the perpetrators of this attack and whom the Americans and Saudis might assign the blame to.

On September 14th, two oil installations northeast of the Saudi Arabian capital were attacked and set ablaze via a combination of drone and cruise missile strikes. The Houthis, a Shia Islamic political movement in Yemen, have claimed responsibility for the attacks, with the intent of warding off further Saudi military operations in the Yemeni civil war.

THIS WAS NO small task for the Houthi rebels. One of the targets, located in Abqaiq, is the world's largest oil processing facility and a vital asset of the Saudi oil industry. The vulnerability of oil facilities in Saudi Arabia has been a concern for the kingdom for years, although the extent of the potential damage that could be inflicted was always uncertain. The damage to global oil markets resulting from this attack has mostly been restricted to sharp fluctuations in crude oil prices, according to Saudi officials.

HOWEVER, IT IS believed that the damage done to the facilities not only affected the prices of oil; estimates from experts indicate that the attacks reduced Saudi Arabia's total output by half, approximately 5% of global oil supply, over the past few weeks following the attack.

THIS MAY HAVE even resulted in the current delay to Saudi Arabia's national oil company Saudi Aramco's attempts to sell 1-2% of the company stock in its initial public offering, IPO, from the end of September until the end of October. Aramco's IPO is expected to be the largest in history, with speculations at an estimated 2 trillion USD - nearly twice the size of Microsoft Corporation.

MANY OF THE drones that are utilized by rebel factions like the Houthis are predominantly simpler, civilian models than those used by conventional militaries like those of the United States. Military analysts familiar with the war in Yemen question whether the Houthis were actually responsible for the attack though; the reason being that Saudi oil fields are simply too far away for non-military grade drones to reach without a complex support and transportation system.

NEVERTHELESS, IT IS difficult to verify the extent of the capabilities that the Houthis possess in their drone arsenal. One report from the UN postulates that the evolution of drone technology in recent years has grown considerably, with more advanced models being able to reach deep into Saudi airspace.



*The oil installations that were attacked on 14. September, located just northeast of the Saudi capital.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons*

FOLLOWING A RETALIATORY airstrike against the Houthi-held city of Hodeidah, the Houthis agreed to cease their drone attacks on Saudi Arabia, to the satisfaction of the international community. This is the first step towards a new ceasefire agreement in Yemen, though the prospects of it succeeding are far from certain.

WASHINGTON, HOWEVER, HAS chosen to identify a different culprit behind the attacks: Iran. The Trump administration has demonstrated evidence in the form of satellite photographs that it claims proves Iranian culpability for the drone strikes. Part of the reasoning is that the strikes required drone technology and weapons that are beyond the means of the Houthis; this type of material and training may have originated from Iran.

THE US SECRETARY of State Mike Pompeo has considered the incident as “an unprecedented attack on the world’s energy supply.” Meanwhile, President Donald Trump has gone as far as stating that the US is “locked and loaded” to respond to the attack, hinting at the possibility of a military response from the United States shortly after the attacks.

IRAN HAS, UNSURPRISINGLY, denied any involvement with the attacks in mid-September to the surprise of none in the international community. Regardless, Iran has not shied away from endorsing the attacks against their old nemesis Saudi Arabia. Iranian Prime Minister Hassan Rouhani noted that “Yemeni people are exercising their legitimate right of defence...the attacks were a reciprocal response to aggression against Yemen for years.” As one of the primary sponsors of the Houthi rebels, it is no surprise that Iran sees this exploitation of Saudi weakness favorably.

WHILE MANY ARE quick to note that this would invariably lead to harsher repercussions towards Iran at the hands of the United States, Iran does not appear to feel vulnerable at the moment; in fact, members of both the political and military institutions within Iran see this renewed aggression a new strategy against the Americans.

THIS THEORY MAY hold some merit, as this is not the first time Iran has begun to adopt more overt actions of defiance against the US. Since the disastrous efforts by the Trump administration to withdraw from the nuclear treaty signed between the two countries over a year ago, Iran has displayed a willingness to test American policy.

DESPITE THE FIERY rhetoric of the days following the attacks, it seems that the US president has taken a more restrained approach than expected. Instead of a large retaliatory strike against Iran as was believed, the U.S. has thus far deployed a small contingent consisting of one additional Patriot missile battery and approximately 200 troops to the kingdom. This might not have been sufficient, given that the Patriot missile defense system employed by the Saudis to defend against incursions from the southern part of the country failed to deter the drones and missiles from reaching their targets.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH this defensive gesture, the U.S. also carried out a secret cyber attack, as some officials noted, against Tehran's ability to distribute "propaganda". How this will impact Iran is unknown, but these officials believe it will take time before the effects manifest into a favorable outcome for both the U.S. and their Saudi allies.

WHILE THE PRESIDENT has decided to focus on a collaborative defense strategy with Saudi Arabia, he has simultaneously boasted that the restraint demonstrated could just as easily be replaced with airstrikes in yet another display of inconsistency in policy.

THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF Donald Trump's actions and rhetoric makes it difficult to ascertain which course Washington will take in dealing with Tehran over the next few months. This is in large part due to the fact that Trump has settled on a do-it-yourself approach to foreign policy like everything else. Days before the attacks, he dismissed his national security advisor, John Bolton, a hawkish conservative that favored more punitive measures against states like Iran, including military strikes.

THIS COULD SERVE to not only make the United States appear a more unreliable ally than ever, but it may also lead to an escalation of conflict between the Iranians and the Saudis, culminating in a potentially "hot" war between the two.

PRESIDENT TRUMP HAS a variety of possible approaches to resolve this latest issue but the biggest question is which aspect of his character will prevail in his decision-making down the road. Will it be the trade-obsessed businessman, the improvising opportunist, or the unforgiving revanchist?



One of the many Patriot missile batteries meant to protect Saudi Arabia from drone and missile attacks. Photo: Wikimedia Commons



AFGHANISTAN 2019

OLD PROBLEMS AND NEW CONFIDENCE

In the context of fragile statehood, Non-state actors play a significant role in social development and peace processes. *The Perspective* spoke with Dr Magdalena Kirchner, director of a political foundation's Afghanistan Office, about the presidential election and the current situation in Afghanistan.

The preliminary results of the Afghan presidential elections of 28th September 2019 have not been announced at the time that this article went to press. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced a postponement of at least one week, until the end of October. IEC chief Hawa Alam Nuristani said the delay would “further ensure the transparency of the electoral process” and “restore the people’s confidence in it”.

THE DELAY IS PARTLY caused by the use of biometric voter verification machines, which took fingerprints and photos of each voter. This was done to combat the increasing fraud in recent elections in Afghanistan.

NEVERTHELESS, IT IS the right time to place the electoral process in the larger domestic Afghan context. Dr. Magdalena Kirchner directs the Afghanistan office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), a political think tank affiliated with the Social Democratic Party.

Why does Germany have such a strong interest in Afghanistan?

THERE ARE SEVERAL reasons for the great attention paid to the processes in Afghanistan. Since 2001, German armed forces have been deployed to Afghanistan. This results in political and social interest in this country, with political foundations serving as a communication channel. However, it is important to Germany that it is also

involved in Afghanistan by non-military means. For example, it is the largest single project of the German development agency.

THE HIGH NUMBERS of refugees in 2015 are another reason for this growing interest. After four decades of civil war in various forms, more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees have been displaced – thousands of them have also come to Germany. As the number of asylum seekers in Europe rose, questions surrounding repatriation and living conditions in Afghanistan becomes of political interest.

What is the foundation and core of your work in Afghanistan?

AS A THINK and do tank, we follow a specific set of values which is also the basis of our work in Afghanistan. Since 2002, we have been active there, with a focus on enhancing dialogue and political action regarding social justice. Although there is no traditional counterpart in the form of a social democratic party in Afghanistan, there are civil society actors like labour unions and institutions like the Ministry of Labour. These actors are committed to improving the working conditions of Afghans, for example by ensuring that wages are properly paid - we try to provide support and address issues like child labour, exploitation and the difficulty of women entering the labour market.

We also engage in peace and security issues by organising roundtables and trying to support mediation initiatives to address political conflicts. Dialogues which include diverse views help to strengthen the Afghan civil society and give it a voice.

Looking back on almost 20 years of military, political and civic engagement, the electorate seems disillusioned and the Taliban to be strengthening again. How do you perceive the security situation recently?

THE SECURITY SITUATION was one factor for the poor voter turnout of around 20 per cent, especially the Taliban's continuing threats. Early on, they stated that voters - identifiable by their coloured thumbs after registration - would be punished. Many Afghans took these threats very seriously.

THE SECURITY SITUATION during the elections

was much better than expected - especially when compared to the parliamentary elections at the end of 2018. Uncertainty was very high in the months leading up to the elections. On election day, more than 2000 polling stations were closed due to threats, which led to many people being prevented from voting. Due to US-Taliban negotiations, the election campaign was open to possible cancellation for a long time. By the time the negotiations failed, it was already too late to mobilise voters widely.

What other factors may have played a role in voter turnout?

THERE IS A high degree of dissatisfaction with the candidates, who have few programmatic differences. The two main candidates are the current President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah – neither of whom stand for any change in politics.

DESPITE THE FRUSTRATION, positive signals can also be seen. There is a critical mass of Afghans who actively support, or at least passively tolerate the democratic system. We must therefore now wait to see if the defeated candidate calls for violent resistance to secure political power by force, as happened in 2014.

What role do local political groups and new actors play in different provinces?

WHAT WE HAVE seen over the last year is that there have been quite successful “grassroots” movements the peace process. For instance, there was a peace march of young activists, during which they expressed their frustration over the lack of progress both towards the government and the Taliban.

THE CENTRALISED POLITICS of Afghanistan brings its own challenges, whoever is in power in Kabul has had historically difficulties to control the entire country. Regional and local forces have always played an important role and continue to shape processes at the local level. The fact that the local elections, which were to be held at the same time as the presidential elections, were cancelled unfortunately reinforces the notion that many Afghans do not feel represented.

ONE APPROACH TO change this, for instance, is led by the EU through the Community Development



Photo: FES Afghanistan

Councils, which decide at the local level what should be prioritised. Still, personal connections to decision-makers in Kabul are too often the most effective way to draw resources.

IN FACT, THE population of the Southern provinces is under-represented in the central government and many see that Kabul as preferring “politics for the North”. This creates a dilemma: If the government does not succeed in winning the hearts and minds of all population groups, alternative actors such as the Taliban may have many opportunities to undermine Kabul’s political legitimacy.

What are measures that can be used in civil society where the official politics is too slow or incapable?

ONE MAJOR POINT of criticism about the negotiations had been the lack of inclusion. Hence, our project “The public’s voice in the peace process” allowed us to talk to many different members of Afghan society and make their voice heard by decision-makers. It was very well received by the German government as it contained many constructive recommendations for a mutual understanding among a wide range of Afghan interest groups.

AND YET, THE mood among the population has deteriorated since we started the project in March and the results would have been much different now. At that time, many were positive about the US-Taliban negotiations, but terror attacks soon followed. This has left a feeling that even negotiations cannot stop the violence.

DESPITE THIS, OUR roundtable discussions have shown that, as different as their origin, age, ideology and aspirations may be, the majority of Afghans does agree on some issues. This gives hope as compromise seems possible - even though serious differences between urban and rural populations and between different age groups remain in place. While, for instance in

the field of economic development, there is a lot of consensus on the goals, bridges towards a joint process still have to be built. This is exactly where also our engagement must start: enabling the population and encouraging active participation.

Speaking of the US-Taliban negotiations: is international mediation the solution to stop violence and support democratic change?

THUS FAR, THE international partners who are in talks with the Taliban have, for the most part, focused on security issues. But the Afghan people have more complex challenges than just improving the security situation. Even though we know not all the details about what happened during the US-Taliban talks and trust-building and confidentiality is often needed under such circumstances, future negotiations need to address a more comprehensive set of issues.

What should European engagement focus on so that more Afghans can see a future in their home country?

ONE THING THAT we take very seriously is to strengthen the self-confidence of the Afghans and their own ideas. We are already supporting local Afghans start-ups that create jobs and opportunities. Many young Afghans are well-educated and online and develop ideas and concepts that can also be interesting for clients, customers and trade partners beyond Afghanistan.

IN ADDITION, MORE focus must be placed on socially responsible economic development. Although the security situation must be improved immediately, a better understanding of Afghanistan’s economy by the European partners is necessary, for example, where the integration and connectivity of the Afghan economy with neighbouring countries is concerned. The best – and only – strategy to decrease Afghanistan’s dramatic dependence on foreign aid and infrastructure, could be building and the country’s private sector.

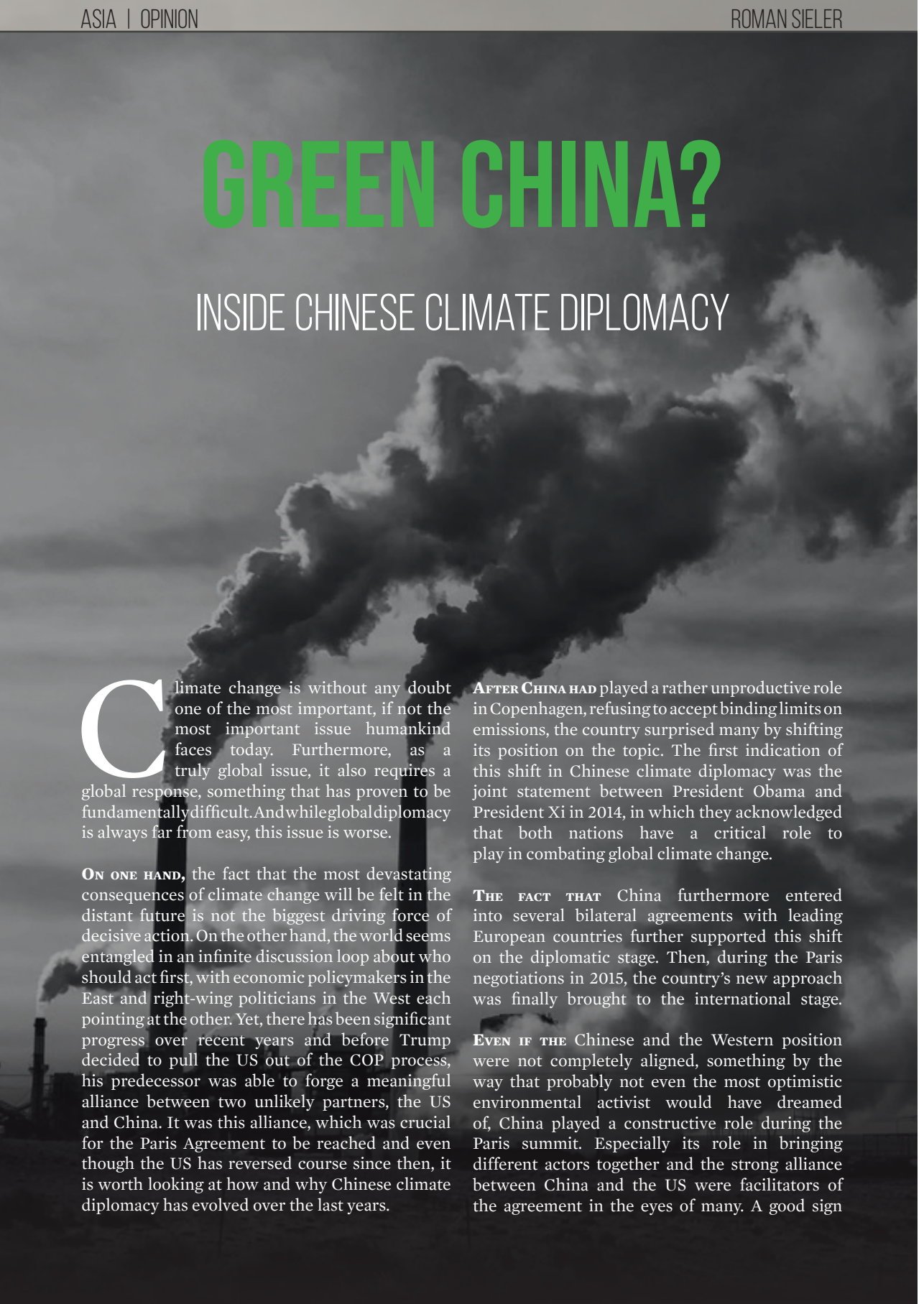
INSTEAD OF WRITING off the country’s future, we should trust the Afghan people, especially the youth, to be able to overcome these challenges with solutions that are developed and owned by themselves.

Read more about the Public Agenda for Peace and other projects in Afghanistan.



GREEN CHINA?

INSIDE CHINESE CLIMATE DIPLOMACY



Climate change is without any doubt one of the most important, if not the most important issue humankind faces today. Furthermore, as a truly global issue, it also requires a global response, something that has proven to be fundamentally difficult. And while global diplomacy is always far from easy, this issue is worse.

ON ONE HAND, the fact that the most devastating consequences of climate change will be felt in the distant future is not the biggest driving force of decisive action. On the other hand, the world seems entangled in an infinite discussion loop about who should act first, with economic policymakers in the East and right-wing politicians in the West each pointing at the other. Yet, there has been significant progress over recent years and before Trump decided to pull the US out of the COP process, his predecessor was able to forge a meaningful alliance between two unlikely partners, the US and China. It was this alliance, which was crucial for the Paris Agreement to be reached and even though the US has reversed course since then, it is worth looking at how and why Chinese climate diplomacy has evolved over the last years.

AFTER CHINA HAD played a rather unproductive role in Copenhagen, refusing to accept binding limits on emissions, the country surprised many by shifting its position on the topic. The first indication of this shift in Chinese climate diplomacy was the joint statement between President Obama and President Xi in 2014, in which they acknowledged that both nations have a critical role to play in combating global climate change.

THE FACT THAT China furthermore entered into several bilateral agreements with leading European countries further supported this shift on the diplomatic stage. Then, during the Paris negotiations in 2015, the country's new approach was finally brought to the international stage.

EVEN IF THE Chinese and the Western position were not completely aligned, something by the way that probably not even the most optimistic environmental activist would have dreamed of, China played a constructive role during the Paris summit. Especially its role in bringing different actors together and the strong alliance between China and the US were facilitators of the agreement in the eyes of many. A good sign

of how close this alliance was is that both climate envoys at the time, Xie Zhenhua and his US-American counterpart Todd Stern, claim that a deep friendship connects them until today.

DESPITE THE IMPORTANT implications, the question of why China shifted its diplomatic position on climate change so drastically after 2009 is still puzzling. The answer is to be found in a process which already started in the mid-2000s when Chinese policymakers started realizing that the economic model of China at the time and its almost entire disregard of environmental consequences might not be completely ideal and started to introduce first environmental regulations. This process of environmental awareness, however, unfolded relatively slowly. In the meantime, air pollution, the environmental problem that is probably the country's most visible and unpleasant one, as anyone who has ever lived in a Chinese metropolis can confirm, had worsened.

THIS PROCESS CULMINATED in something people started referring to as airpocalypse in early 2013 when a cloud of smog so dense that it practically forced everyone to smoke 1.5 cigarettes every hour surrounded many cities. This made the environmental issue the country was facing so obvious that it could no longer be hidden or ignored. And since air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are inherently linked by China's reliance on coal, the smog problem also helped to support more active climate policy. Another reason was China's raising awareness of potential risks from climate change, both in the political sphere and among the population.

BUT WHAT HAS happened since then? The Paris agreement was decided on almost four years ago and since then the world has seen some fundamental changes. When it comes to climate change and the beneficial alliance between the US and China mentioned before, the most problematic change was probably the election of Donald Trump as President of the US in 2016. While this effectively ended the alliance, President Xi underlined China's new position when he stated in front of the National People's Congress in 2017 that China was taking a driving seat in international cooperation to respond to climate change.

“**CHINA IS TAKING A DRIVING SEAT IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE.**

– President Xi Jinping

THE COUNTRY FURTHERMORE continued to increase climate policy ambitions, announcing to work on a timetable for the phasing out of combustion vehicles, investing in renewable energy and launching the pilot phase for its country-wide emissions trading scheme. While the latter project, on which China cooperates with the European Union and individual European countries such as Germany, is only in an early phase and still has a long way to go, it could become a relevant tool for the transformation of the Chinese economy.

RETURNING TO DIPLOMACY, Xi's plea was first put to the test during the climate negotiations in Katowice in 2018. And after Paris, China proved that its shift regarding climate diplomacy was long-lasting. It did not only constructively participate in the summit, but also agreed on detailed reporting requirements, considerably increasing transparency.

DESPITE THESE DEVELOPMENTS and the case that even a fierce critic of China's climate policy would probably admit that the country has made considerable progress since 2009, it still has a long way to go if it really wants to be in the driver's seat of climate diplomacy. Even if the country is on track to reach some of its Paris commitments ahead of time, they are far from sufficient.

ACCORDING TO CLIMATE Action Tracker, China's current commitments are only sufficient to limit climate change to 3-4 degrees. Apart from that, there are still new coal-fired power plants being built and after a stagnation, China's CO₂ emissions started rising again this year. Therefore, it remains to be seen how strong China's commitment to the fight against climate change is. China's next chance to prove it comes soon enough, at the COP25 in Chile.

A GOVERNMENT'S GUIDE TO REVOKING AUTONOMY

In early August, the inhabitants of Indian-administered Kashmir would experience a series of foreboding events. The telephone networks and internet access were cut off, public gatherings were banned, and tens of thousands of troops were sent in. On August 5th, Kashmir was stripped of its autonomy – a special status that the region had held for over seven decades.





PAKISTAN FIERCELY CONDEMNED the Indian government's move in Kashmir. Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, has vowed to fight India's decision to remove Indian-administered Kashmir's autonomy. Khan has been talking to the UN Security Council arguing that the Indian government's recent decisions are illegal. When Khan went before the UN General Assembly on September 27th he furthermore argued that India's move of sending military troops into Kashmir and implement a curfew would lead to a "bloodbath". Khan also argued fervently that the move was a breach of international law and that he feared it might lead to an ethnic cleansing in India.

Kashmir has a long history that stretches all the way from its creation in 1846, it is a tumultuous history telling the story of one of the most fought over territories in history - ever since 1949 between India and Pakistan. Wars and conflicts have followed since then, especially in 1965 and 1999. As of now both Delhi and Islamabad claim Kashmir as fully theirs, but continue to only control their respective parts, specifically "Indian-administered Kashmir" and "Pakistan-administered Kashmir".

NONETHELESS, INDIAN-ADMINISTERED KASHMIR continues to be an area of unrest. Article 370 of the Indian constitution grants Indian-administered Kashmir autonomy, meaning they have their own constitution, a separate flag and general independence over their matters, except on foreign affairs, defense and communications.

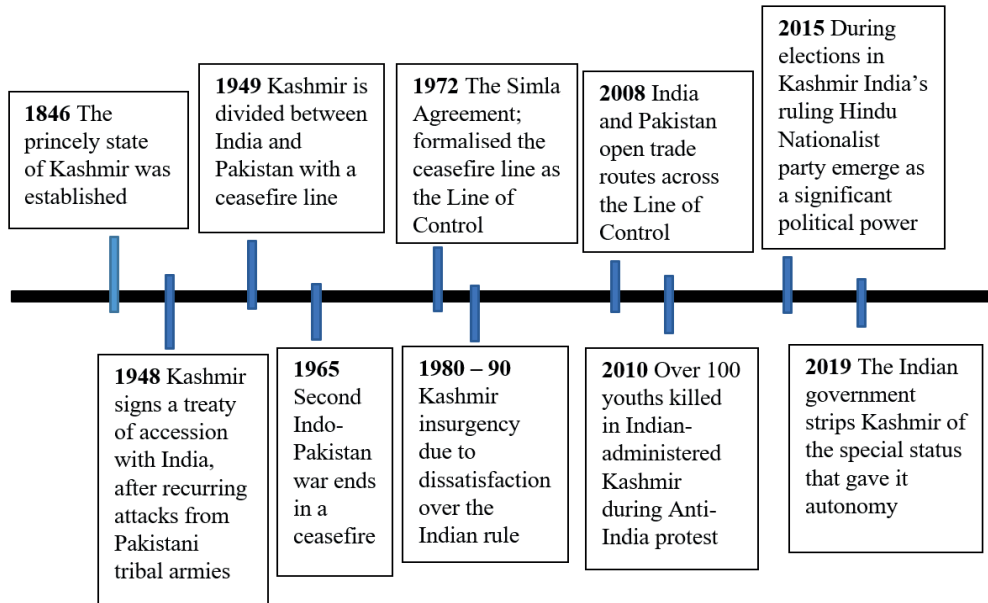
HOWEVER, NOW THERE has been a sudden change Kashmir's status in India that has created further unease and trepidation. On August 5th., 2019, India revoked the privileged status that had been granting the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir autonomy for seven decades.

THE HINDU NATIONALIST Bharatiya Janata Party had promised in its 2019 election manifesto to revoke Kashmir's special autonomous status, and promptly followed through, seizing control of the territory.

DUE TO THE fact that Kashmir is a Muslim-majority state, there is rising concern from both Pakistan and China that India will attempt to remove the local inhabitants and bring in others who will then constitute a majority, giving rise to possible discrimination of the local Kashmiris.

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi also addressed the UN General Assembly where he spoke of peace and India's development achievements. Modi spent a large part of his speech discussing India's environmental sustainability and explaining a campaign to stop using single-use plastic in the country. He did not mention Kashmir in his speech, deliberately creating a stark contrast to Khan's speech.

IN INDIAN-ADMINISTERED KASHMIR mobile services was restored after 72 days, but with internet access still closed off. There might be a very good reason internet access remains to be restored as it gives the Indian government a chance to control the media in Kashmir. In Indian Kashmir the media is split between pro- & anti-secessionists. Journalists in Kashmir normally work under curfews and threats from militant groups. This is in contrast to the Pakistan-administered Kashmir where the media is mainly used to solicit stories that highlight alleged human rights violations in India.




AFTER AUGUST 5TH only five newspapers in Indian-administered Kashmir were allowed to publish their stories due to restrictions imposed by the Indian government. With the phone lines and internet services suspended there was no way for the editors of the active newspaper to get any outside news in. Indian Kashmir has a grand total of 180 newspapers in both English and Urdu manned by Kashmiri journalists who are accustomed to writing and working under curfews – several Kashmiri journalists have later expressed frustration over the fact that they had been unable to report on the biggest event of their generation and on a subject they are so familiar with; unease within Kashmir.

THE UNEASE IS continuing. On October 16 Indian security forces killed three separatists in a gun battle. The Indian soldiers received a tip-off saying the three separatists were hiding in a Kashmiri village. The police said that “three terrorists were killed and the bodies retrieved from the site of the encounter” and that they found “incriminating material, including arms and ammunition”.

IN RECENT, BUT separate incidents, firstly a migrant worker was killed execution style while walking along a railway track in Kakapora, and secondly one fruit vendor was killed, another seriously injured when gunmen fired at them in the Shopian district of South Kashmir.

THE FUTURE OF Kashmir is uncertain. With Article 370 revoked the people of Kashmir no longer see a reason to put up with the treatment of the Indian government and more and more inhabitants are vocally calling for a secession. Pakistan is eager to condemn India's actions and PM Imran Khan is already vowing protection and justice for the people of Indian Kashmir – but is it out of the goodness of his heart, or is Khan seeing an opportunity to seize control of a region that has eluded Pakistan for decades? There are many questions that remain unanswered in this conflict, with so many possible outcomes, that we will have to wait and remain vigilant while the future of Kashmir is being negotiated.

PLANTING SEEDS FOR A REVOLUTION

A nighttime photograph of a protest in Hong Kong. In the foreground, several large, colorful umbrellas (rainbow, blue, green, and black) are open, held by protesters. Two individuals in the center are wearing yellow helmets and gas masks. The background shows a city street with buildings and a sign with Chinese characters. The scene is illuminated by streetlights and building lights.

The streets of Hong Kong are drowning in anti-government protesters who long for a Hong Kong ruled by Hongkongers. Joshua Wong is the teenager taking on communist China & he is willing to pay the price that may accompany the political struggle against the superpower.



Photo: Studio Incendo, Flickr

Hong Kong has been China's offshore public sphere for the past two decades and exists as an enclave between the cracks of empires. Under these circumstances it becomes clear as to why Hong Kong is one of Asia's hubs for diplomacy and foreign relations. The country has been ruled under unique conditions, known as the "one country, two systems". Above this, Hong Kong is often referred to as a complex political experiment due to its historical trajectory, having been a British colony for 150 years. Under the one country two systems principle, China and Hong Kong have separate administrative systems and independent economies. Governmental systems, legalisations, financial affairs and trade relations with foreign countries are also independent from one another. Although the one country two systems agreement is set to expire in 2047, China's progressive growing influence is already seen as a threat to free speech, the right to vote in elections and to democratic rights.

AS THE CLOCK ticks, new blood enters the political arena. The western bred population has been put under pressure of Chinese autonomy and on the sidelines stands Joshua Wong, a twenty-two year old man who has been at the forefront of encouraging Hong Kong to be ruled by Hongkongers. Thick glasses frame the eyes of the slim and harmless seemingly benign young man. At thirteen, Joshua was, as most young Hongkongers, very much under the influence of his parents. They simply wanted him to build a successful and

“ CHINA IS A RISING
DARKNESS THAT COULD
DESTROY HONG KONG.

- Lam, follower of Scholarism

stable career by being loyal to his studies.

AT THE AGE of fourteen, Wong founded Scholarism, a pro-democracy student activist group active in the fields of Hong Kong's education policy, political reform and youth policy. Scholarism had the aim of banishing the implementation of a Chinese national education system. At the age of fifteen, his pro-democracy student activist group grew from hundreds of followers to thousands. Strikes eventually became a common ground.

AT THE AGE of seventeen, Wong was arrested and detained by police officers after entering the Civic Square during the rise of the Umbrella Movement. The Umbrella Movement brought many young pro-democracy activists together under harsh circumstances, having to battle higher powers. Many activists used umbrellas to protect themselves from police bearing full ammunition and pepper spray. As protesters flood the Civic Square, Wong's voice pierces through the heated air as he chants, "People should not be afraid of the government, the government should be afraid of their people". Two months later, the



Photo: Studio Incendo, Flickr

largest political demonstration in China since the Tiananmen massacre occurred, more than 1.5 million people protested against Beijing's government.

AFTER WINNING A contest that enabled him to meet Leung Chun-ying, chief executive of Hong Kong at the time, he questioned the implementation of the Chinese national education system and urged against it. Today Joshua plays a prominent role in Hong Kong's future and has been deemed as one of the greatest leaders in the world by Fortune Magazine. Joshua speaks on behalf of many young Hongkongers and shows compassion for global engagement. By pursuing to attract global attention, his diplomatic intentions became a powerful tool, bringing attention to the struggle of humanity with freedom, human rights and independence. The young high-profile pro-democracy leader has swept the globe and touched base with world leaders, requesting their immediate attention to Hong Kong's urgent political chaos.

IN AN OPEN letter Joshua urged German Chancellor Angela Merkel to express concern over China's threat of civil human rights and democratic rights against Hong Kong, relating his intentions to her first hand experience growing up in communist East Germany. The Chinese government criticized Joshua's intentions and action of reaching out to the German Chancellor, urging that his interference is of great disrespect to China's sovereignty and internal affairs.

ON SEPTEMBER 17TH 2019, Joshua encouraged the United States to pass a bill supporting the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act. The Chinese government exclaims the testifying as evidence that foreign forces are bleeding into internal affairs. Joshua states that the Chinese government will use whatever means they can to interfere with Hong Kong's autonomy and with this continues his journey for freedom by battling against state repression. Joshua is established as a powerful and observant leader who has drawn connections between Hongkongers' communalities and the Chinese government's nudges. By continuing raising the voices of Hong Kong's intellectual popular culture, much of the youth begin to see China's influence as a threat. One Scholarism follower under the name of Lam states that "China is a rising darkness that could destroy Hong Kong."

WILL THE RISE of new activists and leaders such as Joshua Wong shape the political arena and future of Hong Kong or will the Chinese government allow for socialism to progressively eat its way into Hong Kong's political system? As the one country two systems system agreement gets closer to its expiration date, Hong Kong continues to fume with riots and uncertainty. Wong continues planting seeds for a revolution as young citizens of Hong Kong drown the city streets. Joshua stands head high and continues to rise to prominence as his words only echo deeper into society, "We may have lost this battle, but not the war."

CONVERSATIONS ACROSS DIVIDES

HOW JOURNALISM CAN BUILD BRIDGES

Are you red or blue? For or against? In an era of polarisation – where engagement with different worldviews is dismissed and willingness to listen to opposing opinions has declined – new ways to encourage civil discourse are needed. Spaceship Media, a journalism non-profit, showcases how to bridge the divides.

POLARISATION IS NOT a particularly new phenomenon. However, it has been sustained and reinforced by identity politics, social media and targeted news reporting, creating closed and exclusive sub-communities and echo chambers. This current lack of engagement with ‘the other’ has led to an increasing inability to communicate across difference and fostered a culture of dismissiveness and condemnation.

STILL, MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE based on respect and recognition of difference, and searching for common ground form the bedrock of democracy and political representation. Smaller, regular exchanges and debates at a local level can lay the groundwork for a form of grassroots diplomacy – for civic engagement both in politics at a national level and in international contexts, when meeting with others of different nationalities or cultures, to address problems and create shared understanding.

JOURNALISM CAN STEP in and (re-)engender productive conversations. Such was the mission of Spaceship Media, the start-up the journalists Eve Pearlman and Jeremy Hay founded in the US in 2016. Their work – what they call dialogue journalism – is built upon practicing empathy and listening carefully by moderating dialogue right at the heart of conflict.

THE PROCESS IS backed by the core tools and values of journalism, that is gathering and contextualising information fairly and accurately, and therewith serving the public good.

THUS FAR, SPACESHIP Media has facilitated eight projects on topics such as agriculture, the enforcement of immigration laws or gun safety. One of the first initiatives, “Talking Politics”, hosted a conversation between Trump and Clinton voters shortly after the elections in 2016.

THE CONCEPT TRACES back to the roots of journalism. According to Pearlman, in the past, “the newspaper reflected the community to itself”; she compares newspapers to public squares where issues that mattered to the community were discussed, relevant information was shared, and everybody knew each other not just because they shared the same worldview.

ON THE CONTRARY, most reporting today only plays opposing views against each other, thus highlighting only certain voices and deepening divides. In this regard, Spaceship Media is both rethinking the role of journalism and journalists today and, at the same time, resuming the role it used to play in community building in the past.

IN COLLABORATION WITH news partners, Spaceship Media looks at where there is a need for dialogue. As Pearlman puts it in an interview with The Perspective, journalism is meant to respond to and report on what matters and what is discussed in the communities the journalists are serving.

THIS PART OF the process is referred to as “the Build”; a point of conflict is identified together with the news partners and the (local) community, and a conversation is designed. In the following, community members ‘of both sides’ are invited to participate. In the case of “Talking Politics” for example, women from Alabama who voted for Trump and women from California who voted for Clinton, were brought together.

PARTICIPANTS ARE THEN encouraged to reflect on what they think of themselves and the other group. Based on that, a journalism-supported, moderated conversation is facilitated, either in closed Facebook groups or in person. In the end, the outcomes of the conversations are shared.

INCREASINGLY A CLASHING of opposing views tends to lead to snappy retorting, mere insulting, or outright refusal. But what Spaceship Media has found is that by inviting people to have a different kind of conversation, one that is respectful, fact-based, and centred around listening, and by asking them four simple questions beforehand, the interactions play out quite differently.



Eve Pearlman, journalist and co-founder of Spaceship Media.

THE PARTICIPANTS ARE asked what they want to know about ‘the other group’, what they want the others to know about them, what people think of ‘the other group’ and what they think the others think of them.

THOSE FOUR QUESTIONS allow and invite people to think about themselves in relation to ‘the other’; the resulting self-reflection angles and frames the interaction differently. Pearlman explains that it allows to see people as whole human beings, with subtle and nuanced opinions, and with a story, a background and a context to their opinion.

IN HER WORDS, “we all know how to be respectful and decent, but we are allowing ourselves to behave differently in certain contexts. [Yet] when you re-orient towards civility, people can do that.” With some nudging, they start to listen to what the other person has to say from a different angle and thus to hear the needs and feelings behind. Meeting and connecting with the other by virtue of their humanity, they can have conversations built on mutual respect and empathy.

IN SUPPORTING CONVERSATIONS with facts and information, dialogue journalism relies on the “understanding that relationships come before trust” (Eve Pearlman). In particular in times of declining trust in journalism, forming actual relationships with the communities the reporter works with and reports on is essential.

AND SO IS understanding that it is not the scope of reporting to create a story or use information to impose opinions or change minds, but to respond to points of conflict, enable conversations and support them with facts and information where needed.

PEARLMAN FINDS THAT if this is made clear and the focus is shifted on relationship building, people will disagree on certain issues, but they also ask sincere questions and do not fundamentally challenge or suspect the validity of the information. Hence, a real, fact-based debate can emerge.

IT IS IMPORTANT to bear in mind that the people participating in Spaceship Media projects are

filtered. “We are not getting the people that are the most embedded in their own particular news and information ecosystems”, Pearlman pointed out. Rather, the people who take part are already to a certain degree open to other views and to challenge their own.

STILL, SPACESHIP MEDIA has found that there is a growing interest and a trend in coming together, open-heartedly and with respect, in building communities and creating shared understanding and that people are and can be empathetic toward and curious about others who hold different views and opinions from them.

“I SEE SPACESHIP Media as just part of this movement [concerning] how we can vest support for democracy at the biggest picture and, at a little lower level, dialogue and trust.“ Pearlman said. “It just starts with this more respect and empathy.”

*For more information about
Spaceship Media:*



FEAR AS A DETERRENT AT THE US-MEXICO BORDER

Trump's Public Diplomacy

President Trump is well known for his negative opinion of migrants and refugees from Central America who cross the southern border of the United States. He implemented some new policies and made changes to domestic policies shortly after taking office, however, he did not manage to pass major legislation through Congress. Instead, Trump's most visible means of deterring border crossers has been a form of public diplomacy.

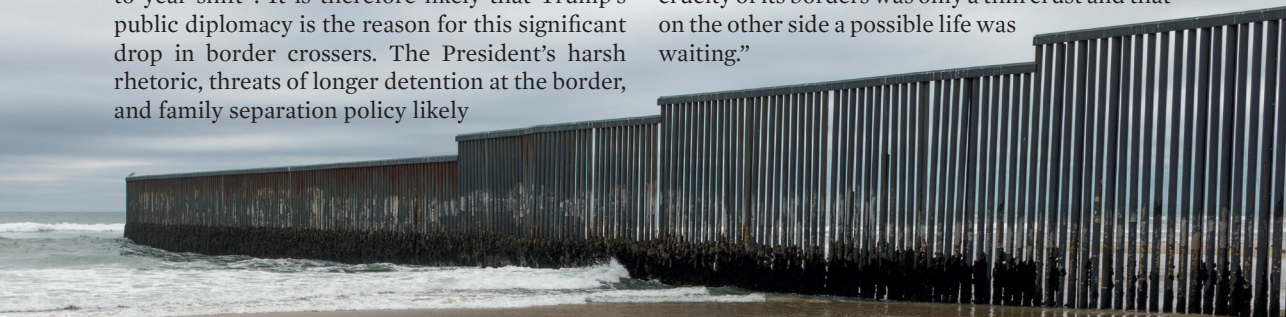
THE PRESIDENT USES scare tactics and harsh rhetoric about border crossers, and the cruel treatment of those captured at the border – such as family separation and locking up children in fenced cages – is covered in the media extensively. The question is, however, if this form of public diplomacy, aimed directly at prospective Latin American border crossers, is enough to stem the flow of migrants into the country? Has Trump's public diplomacy deterred people from trying to cross the US-Mexico border?

IN 2017, THE first year of Trump's presidency, the number of apprehensions at the southern border fell by 26 per cent. A policy brief by the Migration Policy Institute describes that there were “no real additional enforcement resources or initiatives at the border to explain such a significant year-to-year shift”. It is therefore likely that Trump's public diplomacy is the reason for this significant drop in border crossers. The President's harsh rhetoric, threats of longer detention at the border, and family separation policy likely

deterred many people from crossing the border. **THIS ‘TRUMP EFFECT’** did not last long however, the Foreign Affairs magazine reported this summer that “by the winter of 2018, border arrivals had begun to mount again, reaching a 13-year high of 133,000 in May” Among this group of border crossers, there are more children and families than ever before.

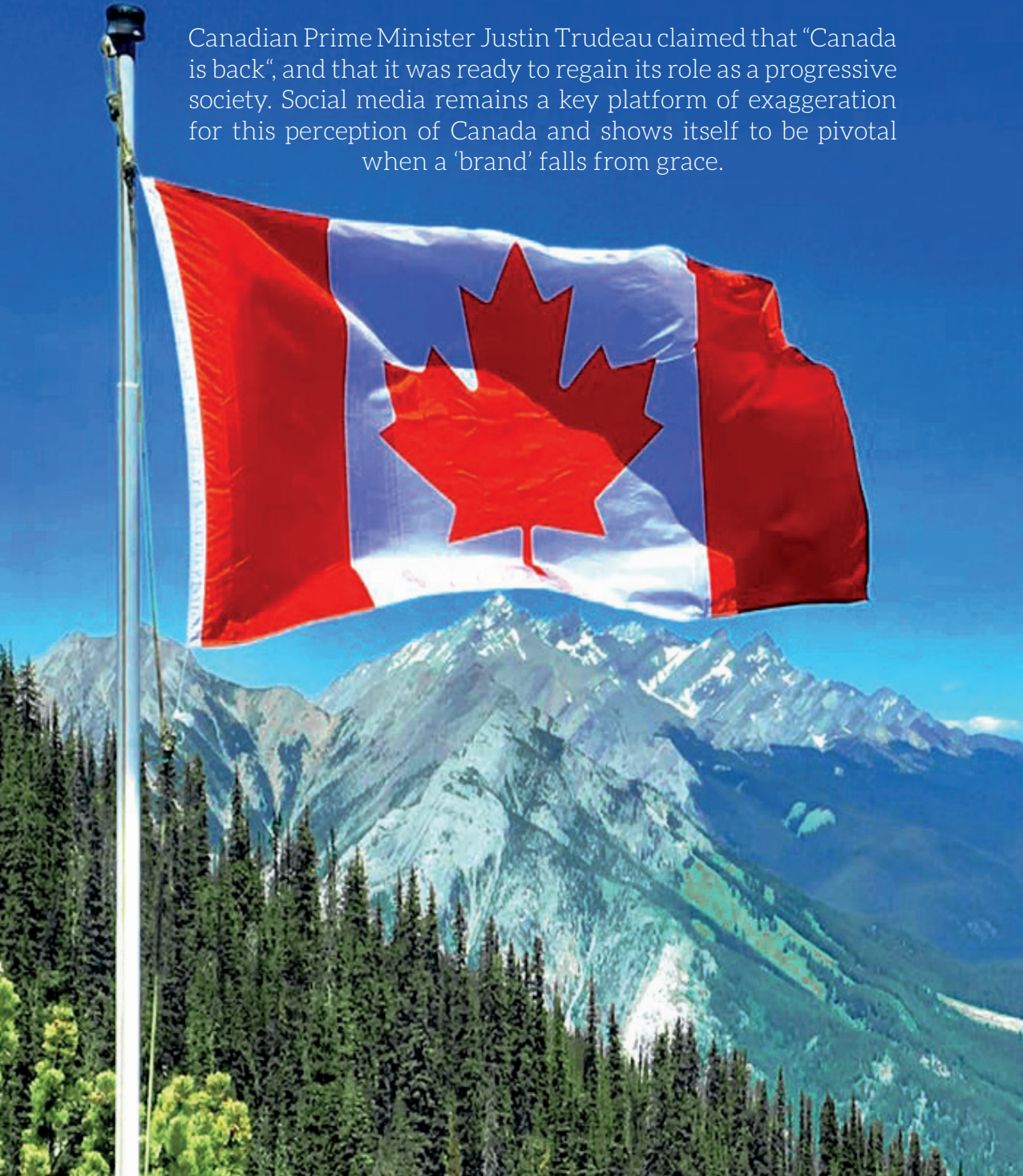
THESE PEOPLE ARE often forced to leave due to violence, threats from gangs, or extreme poverty, issues. Because these problems remain as severe as before Trump's election many people saw no other option than to attempt to cross the border. As an author for the Washington Office on Latin America put it, “the most that crackdowns and tough talk have done is put Central American children's and families' flight “on pause” for a few months before, out of necessity, it resumes again”.

IN CONCLUSION, TRUMP'S public diplomacy is not enough to deter border crossers on the southern border permanently, even though it did initially work. It seems that if the systemic issues – like extreme violence and poverty – that motivate border crossers to leave their country are not dealt with, public diplomacy and fear will not stop them from crossing the border. As Mexican writer Valeria Luiselli put it: “Before coming to the United States, I knew what others know: that the cruelty of its borders was only a thin crust and that on the other side a possible life was waiting.”



IS CANADA BACK?

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claimed that “Canada is back”, and that it was ready to regain its role as a progressive society. Social media remains a key platform of exaggeration for this perception of Canada and shows itself to be pivotal when a ‘brand’ falls from grace.



In his election victory speech, Justin Trudeau described his “sunny ways” of Canadian politics, which emerged as an alternative for Canadians after 10 years of Conservative rule. Trudeau’s ideas about value-based foreign policy and Canada’s international role were built up as an opposition to Stephen Harper’s transformed foreign policy that shifted from collective security by withdrawing from peacekeeping and NATO responsibilities, weakened international alliances and the favouring of economic diplomacy over climate change negotiations.

DURING HARPER’S GOVERNANCE, public diplomacy became less relevant in Canada’s foreign policy and resulted in the termination of the major public diplomacy program “Understanding Canada” in 2012. On the contrary, the Trudeau government’s approach towards public diplomacy and nation-branding includes positive political-image making that could lead to increased export, tourism and, eventually, stronger global partnerships.

BUILDING ON HIS father Pierre Trudeau’s legacy, Canada’s longest serving prime minister, during the electoral campaign in 2015, Justin Trudeau came to represent a Canada that is a “just society”, in which human rights and minority rights are respected, refugees are welcomed, climate action is supported.

TRUDEAU WAS APPEALING with this narrative, especially in an “international political scene that has been moving towards nationalistic populism in many countries”, according to James Pamment, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Strategic Communication at Lund University, Sweden.

AS A RESPONSE to the strengthening ideas of nationalism and xenophobia, Canadians wanted to be seen from outside as a nation of progressive political standpoints, which in this political scene, as Mr. Pamment revealed, “Trudeau and Macron in particular have had the opportunity to represent and assume the role of international leaders for this perspective”.

THIS PROGRESSIVE IMAGE was not only welcomed by Canadians who wanted to see their society represented in this way, but also as a potential idea of a constructive Canada as an influential global player and what it could mean to the world.

BEING THE FIRST Prime Minister of the Instagram age, as Trudeau is often labelled, quickly gained him international attention, partly because of his liberal internationalist approach, charismatic appearance and also because of his clever way of adapting political marketing to the new environment of communication.

“TRUDEAU IS A GREAT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADIAN VALUES BECAUSE HE EMBODIES THIS PROGRESSIVE SPIRIT. IT’S EXACTLY WHAT THE WORLD WANTS TO SEE.

– Dr. Dutceac Segesten, political communication researcher at Lund University.

He was presented on the cover of Rolling Stone as “the free world’s best hope” and was on the pages of the New York Times Magazine and Vogue, among others.

CELEBRITY POLITICS, as a new trend, quickly became identified with his name thanks to his youthfulness, approachability and the Liberal Party’s effective online image management.

DR. ANAMARIA DUTCEAC Segesten, Senior Lecturer in European Studies, researching political communication and the role of social media in politics, explains that the way Trudeau uses different platforms and cross-platform communication can easily reach different target groups. This includes Millennials on Instagram, who mostly rely on visuals and would otherwise probably know very little about politics. Trudeau is one of the fifty most-liked world leaders on Instagram with more than three million followers and among the most-followed ones on Twitter and Facebook as well, according to a study on the ‘Twiplomacy’ website that analyses social media presence in foreign politics worldwide.

EVEN THOUGH TRUDEAU’S social media platform clearly served the campaign for the federal elections from January 2019, his Instagram also serves as a basis of his personal and political brand that, especially in the first two years of his governance, became synonymous with the “Canada” brand. It also orives that “diplomacy is in many ways connected to governmental representation”, as Dr. Dutceac Segesten points out.

TRUDEAU’S INSTAGRAM PROFILE strongly relies on the connection of image and impression which is due to a well-planned communication strategy which is used in a very traditional way. Official press images of Trudeau and his favourable skills in situations that make him seem friendly, devoted and relatable are presented.

ON PICTURES MADE by his official photographer he is marching with climate activists, participating in the Toronto Pride parade, planting trees with his kids or talking with Greta Thunberg about Canada’s climate action. Dr. Dutceac Segesten noted: “If you look at Canadian values and image, of course Trudeau is a great representative

because he embodies this progressive spirit. It’s exactly what the world wants to see.”

JUSTIN TRUDEAU MIGHT have perfected his personal and political branding and image management through which he gained more international attention than Canadian leader did before, but as scandals continued to pop-up since the end of 2018, it is obvious that he did not manage to deliver the politics and the Canada he promised. The gap between promises and reality became more visible after spreading his #WelcomeToCanada message to refugees, then later introducing a bill that makes it more difficult for refugees to seek asylum in Canada. Also, despite depicting Canada as the world leader of climate action, he extended the Trans Mountain oil pipeline project which could have devastating effects on the environment and threatens Indigenous communities.

DESPITE THE FACT that Trudeau seeks to portray himself as a progressive and honest world leader, his political brand was not enough to improve Canada’s position when it comes to global negotiations and diplomacy. In fact, efforts to have a temporary seat on the United Nations Security Council and to get more involved in UN peacekeeping has failed and despite Canada being the defender of human rights and gender equality, it continues to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia. Relations of Canada with the U.S., India and China have also become rocky during Trudeau’s governance over these issues.

TRUDEAU’S AND, TOGETHER with it, Canada’s international reputation might have failed to live up to the expectations but Canadian voters were not ready to let the Trudeau brand go. Now the question is: What will Trudeau do to “bring Canada back?”

INFOBOX

The general election of Canada was held on the 21st October 2019 in which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberal Party lost 27 seats in the House of Commons compared to the general election in 2015, while its main opposition, the Conservative Party gained 22.

The Liberals retained enough seats to form a minority government; however, the Conservatives won the popular vote with a 34.4% share, in contrast to the Liberals’ 33.1%.



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