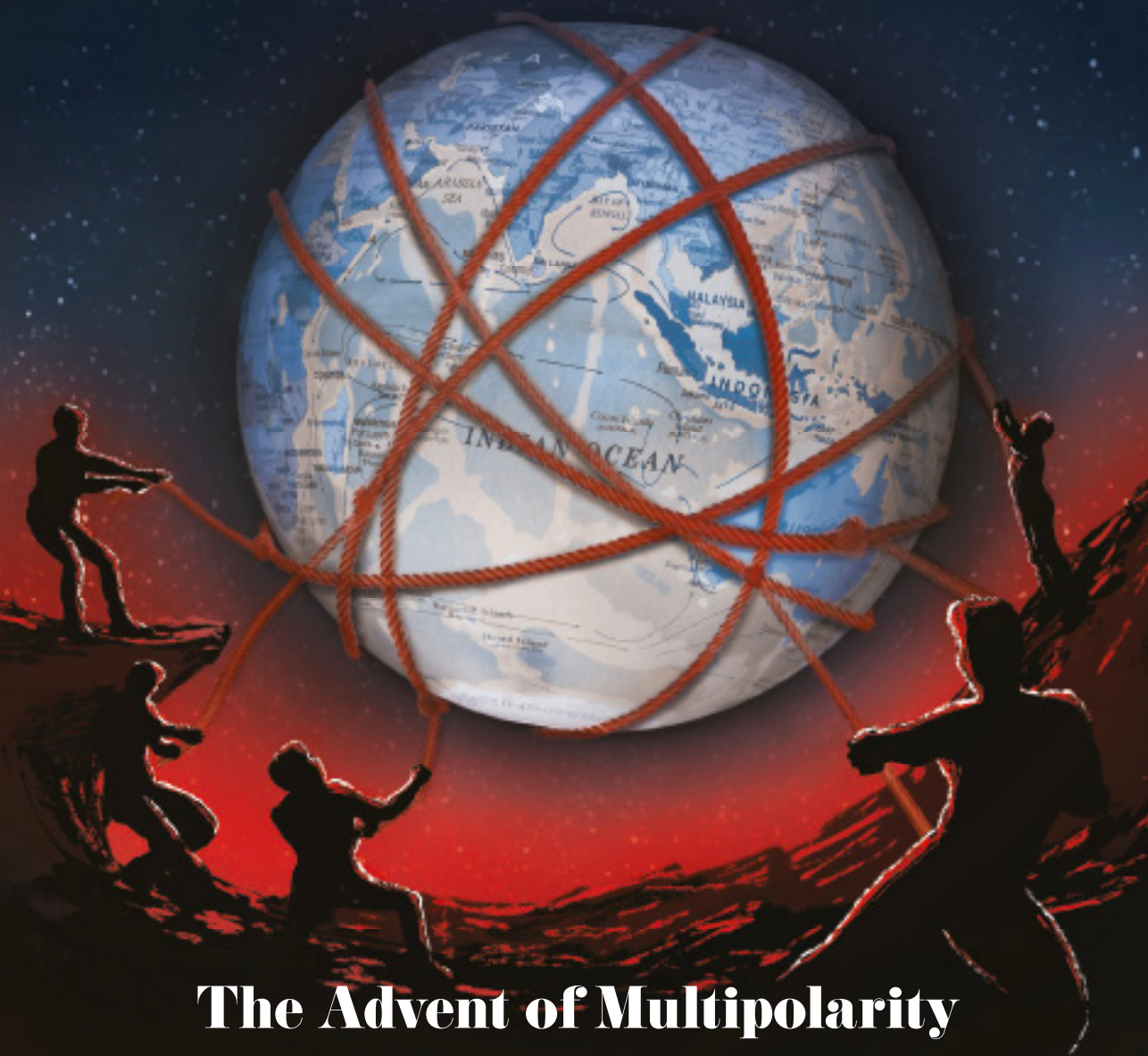


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The Advent of Multipolarity

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EDITORIAL

Dear reader,

It seems more likely than ever that our current system of international affairs has reached its end, and a new world is taking shape. As Asia's economic might grows, the Western political and economic dominance of the post-cold war world no longer seems unchallenged.

Not since the cold war have authoritarian models of government been able to compete for appeal on the world stage, but today democracy and human rights are being disputed with renewed vigor. The institutions of the “rules-based order” have withered and lost their luster.

History proves that such times of turbulent transition are fraught with great peril. Indeed, great-power competitions over hierarchy and ideology frequently result in major wars. The return of conflict in Europe is likewise a bad omen. We are witnessing the transition into a multipolar order where emerging powers are seeking to claim their place in the international arena.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 came an extraordinary period of unipolar power. The collapse of the premier communist state invalidated alternatives to liberal capitalism and eliminated the last global counterweight to Western power. The post-cold war period was defined by issues of “global governance” and the idea that the great political questions had all been settled. Francis Fukuyama predicted a future filled with nothing more than the maintenance of liberal democracy and the solving of technical problems.

The end of history ushered in a period of forgetfulness, where previous ages of multipolarity drifted into obscurity. The mid 19th century was characterized by a system of international relations known as the Great Game, as European empires sparred over territory and influence all while balancing against the risk of a devastating large-scale war.

Gradually, the contours of a new Great Game are taking shape, as the world splits into regional power blocs. A rising China throws down the gauntlet, seeking to challenge the West's authority and its approach to domestic and international governance. Russia remains revanchist and is willing to act aggressively despite its own fragile domestic situation. In recent years it has exploited the internal divisions of the Atlantic alliance to gain leverage over Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. Despite its internal divides, India has begun to realize its potential internationally. Throughout the policy u-turns of the Obama, Trump and Biden administrations

Iran has steadily increased its influence throughout the Levant, and the region remains shadowed by Iranian nuclear ambitions.

Other countries, such as South Africa, Brazil, and Turkey, have emerged as regional powerhouses in their own right, clamoring for increased global influence .

The current international architecture's shortcomings highlight the necessity of rethinking old orthodoxies. Clinging to the status quo and relying on existing international rules and institutions would be dangerously naive in the face of global challenges new and old. The need for new thinking and solutions is urgent, if the age of relative peace is to continue as countries big and small look to secure their interests in the face of a rapidly changing world.

Here is the advent of Multipolarity.

In this issue we seek to explore various aspects of this emerging multipolar world. There are texts about regional cooperation, asymmetrical warfare, climate diplomacy and conflict over norms and ideology. Modern international institutions enable new constellations to form, as last year's climate negotiations in Glasgow can attest, while at the same time old forums in Northern Europe find new purpose. Many countries are finding it necessary to revisit old habits and practices, while emerging powers find new ways to exert influence. Multipolarity implies diversity, as societies interact, argue and cooperate in new ways enabled by unprecedented communication. This diversity of events requires innovative thinking and widespread attention. We hope that these articles will shine a light on some of the lesser known happenings in world affairs as well as highlighting the emerging diversity of opinion and practice in international relations.

In an age increasingly characterized by competition, the role of civil society grows in scope and importance. The work of institutions such as our own university in generating new thinking and new solutions is essential to the continued prosperity of the societies on which they depend. Change brings risk and uncertainty, but most of all it brings opportunity. As past truths come into question, the chance for positive change is increased as doors that were once sealed start to open. Dear reader, arm yourself with curiosity and agency as we venture into an uncertain future!

Bahadir Sirin & Nicolas Jendi
Editors-in-Chief

STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD

Dear members,

On 24 February 2022, the Board of the Association of Foreign Affairs in Lund (UPF Lund) was summoned for an extra board meeting to unite behind a statement with respect to the ongoing developments in Ukraine. The Board convened on 1 March 2022.

We are issuing this statement with the wellbeing of our members in mind, especially those directly or indirectly affected.

We, the Board of UPF Lund, therefore:

Condemn in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked, unjustified and senseless use of violence against a sovereign nation undertaken by the Russian government this past week.

Express our deepest concern for the suffering of innocent people that invariably arises from acts of violence.

There can be neither equivocation nor hesitancy about this grave violation of sovereignty, human rights and decency. We should always oppose those who would rule by coercion and fear rather than through consent and dignity. We emphasise that our opposition is to the recent actions of the Russian State and would like to highlight the brave actions of Russian citizens who stand up to their government's actions.

We reiterate our deepest concern for the safety, health, and wellbeing of all civilians impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and call for all parties to come to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

UPF BOARD 21/22

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PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

Dear members,

Spring is almost here and so is a new issue of The Perspective Magazine!

First, we would like to express our thanks to all of you for your valuable contributions to UPF. Thank you for the amazing articles, thank you for the podcasts, thank you for the Career Fair, thank you for the lectures, thank you for the events, thank you for organizing the UPF travel trip to Berlin and thanks to our social media team for the graphics!

Many exciting things await us this spring semester! In January, we will welcome our sister association UF Uppsala to Lund for our annual knowledge exchange. Moreover, UPF's Project of the Year, the Spring Forward Conference, will take place later in the semester. Outside of UPF, we are very excited about the upcoming Lundakarneval in May. This event takes place every fourth year so it's definitely something you don't want to miss out on if you are in Lund!

Finally, we are excited to announce that Lund Debate Society (LDS) will be merging with UPF Lund in the near future! In the beginning of the summer, Lund Debate Society approached us inquiring about our interest in taking over their operations. Like many other student associations, Lund Debate Society has faced hardships during the pandemic which has forced the association to consider their future prospects. As a result of these considerations, Lund Debate Society decided that the best option was to close down their own administrative operations. However, preserving debate and debating culture in Lund even after closing down their operations was a goal of theirs. Therefore, finding another student association that could foster debate was the best way forward and after initial conversations it was decided that UPF Lund would continue their work on debate in Lund and take over their operations. It is certainly sad to see the loss of a fellow student organisation, but we are happy that debate and debating culture can continue in Lund despite these challenging times and we are excited about this new chapter in our association's history!

We wish you all a wonderful spring term of 2022!

Henrietta Kulleborn & Miljaemilia Wala
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A Model for Peaceful Cooperation

*How an Alpine region in Europe can help
the U.S. and Mexico to do better*



The border relations between Mexico and the U.S. have always been problematic. In recent years, an increasing influx of migrants and a resultantly intensified immigration debate in the U.S. has made the issue of cross-border cooperation all the more urgent. A small region in Northern Italy, once part of Austria, shows the way to peaceful coexistence and transnational cooperation.

“This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas... I am simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion”. This statement is part of a gunman’s pamphlet published on the extremist forum 8chan in 2019. After publishing his pamphlet, he shot and killed 23 people at a Walmart Store in El Paso, Texas. It was not the only mass shooting in the U.S. that year, but it stands out because it underlines the tensions regarding the co-existence of Americans and Mexicans that intensified under the Trump administration.

The resulting political climate is something the Biden administration now needs to face. However, an example from the other end of the world shows that peaceful coexistence between people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is possible in a border region. In South Tyrol, a region in Northern Italy, people of Austrian and Italian descent live side by side in harmony. Though, a quick tour through history shows that this was not always the case.

South Tyrol became part of Italy in 1920 with the end of the Austro-Hungarian empire. In the years that followed, the Italian fascist government under Mussolini began an aggressive assimilation policy, known as the

“Italianization” of newly gained territories. The goal was to cast out everything Austrian from South Tyrol and make it fully Italian.

The use of the German language was forbidden in schools and public institutions. The undermining of German culture led to a collective trauma that can still be felt today. The consequence of this was division and resentment, leading to acts of terrorism committed by a South Tyrolean separatist group in the mid-1950s.

Things started to change from 1972, when South Tyrol became an autonomous region of Italy. The right of self-government led to economic prosperity, as it facilitated the economic integration with the German-speaking area and Italy, and the introduction of bilingual public institutions and schools.

In 1991, some four years before Austria became a member of the EU, the first multi-parliament meeting with delegations from all three regions was held, and has been held every other year since then. South Tyrol entered a leading transnational cooperation project known as the “Euregio”, which has been immensely successful despite the region’s troubled past.

What is a Euregio?

In European politics, a Euregio (or Euroregion) is a transnational cooperation on a local level between two or more countries. The main idea is to strengthen the regions' economies and foster social and cultural relations. Since its inception in the late 50s, the concept has been successfully implemented across Europe, with 60 Euregios currently in operation.

When a model like the Euregio has strong support from a supranational institution like the EU and has already been successful in other countries, it is easy for local authorities to argue for its implementation. This helped South Tyrolean politicians tremendously in the early 90s when the Italian government granted them their current self-governing rights. It spurred the governments of South Tyrol, Trentino and Tyrol to act and form a Euregio. By now the Euregio is a role model for transnational cooperation on a worldwide level. Could the same cooperation and peaceful coexistence be fostered along the U.S.-Mexican border?

The U.S.-Mexico relations

The relationship between the U.S. and Mexico is characterized by strong economic ties and conflict-ridden border policy. This interdependence and common challenges require countries to share responsibility on social, cultural and economic arenas. The latter was underlined in 1994 when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico was signed. After the European Economic Area, NAFTA is the largest free trade zone in the world.

However, the Trump administration took a unilateral approach to the border and blamed Mexico for the problems of cooperation. Trump portrayed Mexico as a threat to the U.S. and planned to construct a wall between the two countries. This was criticized as a major obstacle for

cooperation. Dan Restrepo, a former special assistant for Western Hemisphere affairs in the Obama Administration, told *The New Yorker* in February 2021: "Trump was very reductionist in his approach to Mexico and the Mexican president was comfortable in that reduction. But that's not the relationship the United States and Mexico have - it's the relationship they had in the seventies".

In fact, the U.S. and Mexico have a deep and thorough relationship characterized by strong economic interdependence, which requires deep cooperation.

“Trump was very reductionist in his approach to Mexico”

For example, in the border regions, integrated labor markets with workers from both sides have emerged. 80% of Mexico's foreign trade is with the U.S., which further underlines this interdependence. The fact that 10.9 million Mexican immigrants lived in the U.S. in 2019 also adds an urgent imperative to cooperate.

It is important to note that the inflow of migrants is owed to disparities in standards of living, as they are higher in the U.S. than in Mexico. However, a considerable portion of the migration takes place illegally, something the Trump administration tried to rectify. Despite the efforts of several American administrations, many people have already crossed the border and settled in the U.S. which has created an uneasy fusion of the two populations. A demographic that neither government is keen on taking the ultimate responsibility for.

This coexistence needs to be addressed and effective ways of cooperating need to be found. This is one of the biggest challenges for Kamala

Harris, who was appointed by President Biden to work on the migration crisis and relations with Mexico. We believe that the example of South Tyrol can serve as a role model for peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

A Euregio at the U.S.- Mexican border?

There are many positive examples of fruitful cooperation within the South Tyrolean Euregio, which could be helpful in reflecting how a model like the Euregio can be beneficial in the U.S.-Mexican border region.

“We believe that the example of South Tyrol can serve as a role model for peaceful coexistence and cooperation”

South Tyrol's Euregio organizes projects to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers and draw strength from the region's diversity. For example, last August, the governors of the three Euregio regions, Trentino, South Tyrol and North Tyrol, announced a new Au Pair program for young people. The region supports them with a monthly grant of 250 euros to facilitate cultural exchange and language learning.

The political climate along the U.S.-Mexico border poses serious challenges to organize and sponsor cultural exchanges on the scale observed in South Tyrol. One problem is that participants often need to secure travel rights themselves. However, cross-border organization in the region can offer new financial possibilities and a fast track to short term visas. The ensuing programs can also bring economic advantages. For example,

German and Austrian investors use South Tyrol as a stepping stone for investments and expansion into the rest of Italy.

For South Tyrol, the Euregio makes the cross-border move especially easy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals in the region shared intensive care beds and medical equipment. “We have shown what we are capable of,” Günther Platter, the governor of Tyrol, states proudly in an article on the region's official website. The situation looks quite different in the U.S.-Mexican border regions, where what has been accomplished by the Euregio is still half-enthusiastically discussed. The underlying problem is that there is no institution in place to facilitate cross border cooperation.

On the contrary, the institutional system in South Tyrol provides a strong base for further cooperation. Both North and South Tyrol profit from infrastructure projects that connect Austria and Italy. The longest railway tunnel in the world is planned to halve the travel time from Innsbruck (Austria) to Bozen (Italy) by 2032. The most notable infrastructure project in the recent history of the US-Mexican border, however, is a wall.

As we have seen, institutions are the basis for a successful cross-border cooperation. We believe that, additionally to fostering common projects on a regional level, they can help in securing tranquility. As in the case of South Tyrol, they encourage laws to protect minorities and make sure that the general climate within the population remains stable. They also generate conversations among people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which can be a basis for peaceful coexistence. For these reasons, we believe that the solution to the tensions at the U.S.-Mexican border is not building a 700km wall, but to start working together on an institutional and regional level.



To Intervene or Not to Intervene

*What Should be
the Future of American
Interventionism?*

“This decision about Afghanistan is not just about Afghanistan. It’s about ending an era of major military operations to remake other countries,” said U.S. President Joe Biden when announcing the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Although the exit was widely accepted as the right choice—yet heavily criticized for being poorly executed—the future of American interventionism is still a looming issue. In a Western world where support for human rights is a central feature, it might be too early to wave the era of nation-building farewell. What should America do if faced with an urgent humanitarian crisis? To intervene or not to intervene—that is the question.

With its starting point in the tragic events of September 11th, the 20 year war in Afghanistan is the longest war in American history. Still, all that time was not enough to turn Afghanistan into a democracy. The American retreat and the remarkable collapse of the corrupt Afghan government raise questions about the effectiveness of aggressive American interventionism. As stated by President Biden, it also marks a new era of U.S. foreign policy and a rethinking of America’s posture in the world. After decades of embracing an extremely active role in foreign affairs, is the U.S. returning to isolationism?

Often, the thought of unilateral American interference generates strong antipathy. The feeling makes sense. It is presumably connected to the many failures of active American foreign policy and the rich history of the U.S. violating the traditional notion of state sovereignty. The Iraq War, pursued on false accusations that the regime held weapons of mass destruction, and the Chilean military coup in the 1970s—an attempt to quell

the spread of socialism—are examples of this.

Recent history reveals that US interventions abroad have been ineffective at achieving the goals for which they were launched. In the case of Afghanistan, data from The Economist shows that the Taliban controls a bigger part of the country today than when the war started in 2001.

The case for U.S. interventionism gets even more delicate when considering the current challenges the country faces with its own democracy. After four years of Donald Trump in the White House, with recurring attacks on the media and attempts to undermine voting rights, culminating in the Capitol insurrection on January 6, American democracy is unwell. With the majority of the Republican Party still questioning the validity of the presidential election, a cure appears hard to find. These are bizarre conditions for the U.S. to confidently intervene in other countries’ domestic affairs.

This need to get the house in order could be a motivation leading President Biden to stick

with Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. Other arguments from the current U.S. President against "forever wars" are their enormous monetary and humanitarian costs. Biden does not want to risk more American lives and spend more American dollars on seemingly unsolvable interventions.

Despite all this, the case for intervention can turn out to be remarkably strong. When practiced in a war-torn country with a suffering population, ending heavy pain and misery must be seen as intrinsically valuable. To further improve human rights through political reform and by instituting a judicial and economic framework—so called nation-building—might be necessary to establish peace.

In many cases, an intervention could also provide geopolitical stability in a chaotic region. Being the world's political and military superpower, no country would be able to provide these features better than the U.S. President Biden has himself expressed a vision of America "defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding universal rights, respecting the rule of law, and treating every person with dignity." One could argue that such an endeavor is not always possible without military intervention. There is also a risk of a power vacuum. If the U.S. does not take action, another power will. If the authoritarian regimes of China or Russia intervene instead of America, the humanitarian situation could get even worse and the geopolitical arena might be destabilized.

The issue of intervention, it appears, is not so simple. So what would the U.S. do if faced with a major humanitarian catastrophe in a geopolitically neutral country? What if something like the Rwandan genocide

were happening today? Would the Biden administration send troops? It seems the only plausible answer is no. The President is clear about prioritizing the domestic agenda over foreign nation-building. Perhaps the more interesting question is if America should pursue a military intervention in such circumstances?

This question gets right at the balancing act of America intending to be "the leader of the free world" while at the same time taking an isolationist position. It is aimed at the discrepancy of attempting to promote liberty abroad while breaching other nations' sovereignty. Can the U.S. claim to be "defending freedom" and "upholding universal rights" without intervening? Or does cherishing that freedom imply staying out of foreign intervention?

Still, this binary only complicates the question of nation building. In the turmoil following intervention, establishing judicial and economic infrastructure as well as committing to political reforms is likely necessary to ensure the continued protection of human rights. Keeping intervention separate from nation-building looks tricky. One solution could be unilateral peacekeeping through the UN. However, that idea runs into problems as unilateral actions have to be authorized by the UN Security Council where China or Russia can use its veto power.

Clearly, the sticky world of global politics does not make the project easily pursued. That is the inescapable reality, and perhaps a necessity, of foreign affairs. This piece does not intend to come up with any groundbreaking suggestions or magic solutions. Rather, it highlights the complexity of foreign relations and the difficulties of doing good. To intervene or not to intervene? It's complicated.

Europe's Frozen Conflict

An Analysis of the War in Donbass



Editor's note: This article was written and finalized in December of 2021, and therefore does not reflect the events of February 2022.

The Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine, known as the Donbass, are governed by two self-proclaimed "People's Republics," both of which are financially dependent on Russia. The Donbass region covers 5% of Ukraine's territory, is home to 10% of the country's people, and generates 20% of GDP and a quarter of the country's export volume. Both the DPR and the LPR are increasingly being perceived as conduits for Russia's quest for dominance in a post-Soviet world. Meanwhile, conflicts between Ukraine and the Russian-backed DPR and LPR have continued to grow.

These entities were formed in 2014, following the Ukrainian Euromaidan Revolution. The timing of the unrest was quite strategic, as separatist groups took advantage of the weakened Ukrainian government. Today the region is the center of the civil war. According to the Carnegie Moscow Centre, the separatists are backed by Moscow

The unrest later escalated into an armed conflict between pro-Russian separatists affiliated with the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk "People's Republics", and the post-revolutionary Ukrainian government.

On September 5, 2014, Ukraine, Russia, the DPR, and the LPR signed the Minsk Protocol, which established an agreement between the two countries to stop the armed conflict. The agreements called for a ceasefire in

the region as well as prisoner exchange while allowing the Ukrainian government to make a constitutional amendment that would provide for special status to Donbass. However, ceasefire violations on both sides became regular, and the Minsk Protocol was abandoned in January 2015.

Russia's official statement on the presence of its forces in Donbass has always been vague. While officials have denied the presence of "regular armed forces" in Ukraine, however, on numerous occasions, the presence of so-called military specialists have been confirmed.

There are many in Donbass and eastern Ukraine who identify ethnically and politically with Russia as opposed to Ukraine. The Soviet mentality still runs deep, especially among older generations as many long for the stability of the Soviet Union. For this reason, Russia argues that it has been "forced to act in defence of the Russian speaking population"

This goes hand in hand with the increasing numbers of migrants. Millions of Ukrainians work in Russia, and according to the EU-funded Migration Policy Centre, the Russian-Ukrainian border is the second-largest migration corridor in the world. The Russian Federation plans to channel more than 900 billion rubles (12.4 billion USD) to meet the socio-economic needs of the occupied part of Donbass over the next three years.



mustafack/Shutterstock.com

The “so-called” Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic in the Donbass region (red stripes)


This is stated in the “Program of accelerated socio-economic development of territories” approved by the Russian government for 2022-2024. The planned spending described in the documents appears to represent a significant increase in the average salary as well, which is considered a move towards consolidating the relationship in the region.

The Russian stakes in Donbass rests on strong economic interests. The region is dominated by heavy industries such as coal mining and metallurgy, and contains one of Ukraine’s greatest coal deposits, estimated at 60 billion tonnes. Because of this, Donetsk and the Luhansk area together contributed nearly 30% of Ukraine’s exports prior to the Russian invasion in April 2014.

According to The Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), numerous Russian space and defense oriented monopolies rely on the supply of raw materials from companies in southeastern Ukraine.

The region produces a special type of steel for the tanks of the Russian Armed Forces. Ukraine has been trying to become a part of NATO since 2008 and this ambition by a former member of the Soviet Union to join the ranks of the Western alliance is anathema to Moscow. As the DPR and LPR present Russia with a foothold in Ukraine, as well as being a buffer against potential NATO positions, in case of a Ukrainian ascension to the alliance, the region is of great geopolitical importance.

As the conflict drags on, its ethnic and geopolitical origins ensure that Russia and the West are likely to remain engaged for further years to come. Ukraine, caught in the middle, finds itself alone. Dependent on NATO for a chance at final victory, the asking for this aid itself could bring the country into an escalated conflict with Russia that it cannot win. This fragile balance ensures that Europe remains marred by a frozen conflict in the East.



Preparing
For
Climate Wars

The image shows a man with white face paint and a brown paper bag around his neck, holding a sign that reads "Preparing For Climate Wars". He is standing in front of a large, ornate building with a dome, likely a government or institutional building. The background is a clear blue sky. To the left, another person wearing a yellow turban and a brown shawl is partially visible. In the bottom right corner, a person wearing a yellow high-visibility vest is also partially visible.

Great power competition took center stage at the COP26 climate summit as the U.S. and its Western allies advocated for ambitious climate goals, while China and Russia defended their interest in extending the use of fossil fuels in order to maintain their economic growth models. As U.S. President Joe Biden declared on the first day, the focus was on the US being “back at the table” and “leading by the power of our example.” as the president is still working hard to restore the international image of the US left by president Trump.

Neither Chinese leader Xi Jinping nor Russian President Vladimir Putin were at the summit in Glasgow with both countries only sending delegations to the talks. However, this did not stop Biden from criticizing China and Russia, calling the absence of the leaders “a gigantic mistake.” China didn’t wait long to respond, as foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin replied that “tackling climate change requires concrete actions, not empty goals,” adding its hope that the “US would shoulder its due responsibilities” when it comes to the climate.

In the background of these major power tensions, the developing world tried to strike a balance between developing their economies and reducing the risk of climate devastation.

Realpolitik

COP26, like many other high-level international summits, sees a constant competition for countries advancing their own agendas, with different blocks exerting their influence. Historically, the U.S. and its Western allies have steered global decision making virtually unchallenged by voices from developing countries. There has been a general North-South divide where Western countries try to bring forward policies that suit their interests while emerging powers have had little say.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

China, India, and Brazil, have raised their voices in opposition to this imbalance in the global system. China has historically been on the sidelines of global decision-making but today its role has almost reached parity with

the West. This while India and Brazil have been increasingly acting in tandem, pushing their own agenda.

Decisions in global arenas, as at COP26, can no longer happen without the support of these 3 countries. India managed to influence a last minute shift at COP26 by asking for a more gradual transition from fossil fuels; overcoming objections from rich countries. EU lead negotiator Frans Timmermans at COP26 described this maneuver as a “disappointment” in the negotiations.

Costly Negotiations

Transition to climate-friendly policies is a costly matter especially for developing countries, something that is difficult to account for when negotiating with wealthy economies such as the EU. This is why the COP26 summit is based on consensus among the 197 countries that are part of it. Each country involved at COP is an equal partner on the same level playing field precisely because every nation has different needs. Decisions for a final COP document, which states the goals that countries need to reach and the actions they need to take need to be approved by all members to ensure legitimacy, accountability, and representation.

Behind this one country, one vote rhetoric, there is a material imbalance in decisions that goes beyond formal voting procedures. Countries form coalitions and pressure each other in order to achieve their aims. In an interview with POLITICO on November 13, 2021 policy expert Mohamad Adow said: “The outcome [of the conference] reflects a COP held in the rich world and the outcome contains the priorities of the rich world”.

The capacity of countries to pursue their aims at a global level does not only rest on classic hard-power methods but also on more subtle

actions that easily go unnoticed during global summits. One of these is the number of delegates sent by each country to negotiate the COP26 agenda. Delegates from each state need to draft policy documents and then vote on them in a way that appeals to all 197 members.

Not all parties have the same amount of delegates to steer discussion. Meetings sometimes overlap with other events during COP26, or different drafting groups meet at the same time. This means that if a country does not have enough people to send to each meeting, it has a limited power to influence outcomes.

The average number of delegates sent to COP summits is around 40. Brazil, always at the forefront of COPs, sent 479 delegates this year. India had 134 while China and the US respectively 60 and 165. All well above the average, showing the influence these states have on the negotiations’ results.

Arguably, it was only a few countries that managed to influence the final deal at COP26, while the rest of the parties did not have the material capacity to refuse it. Countries can oppose changes through their votes, but this could lead to a breakdown of negotiations. Having a partial deal is better than no deal at all.

A Future for Climate Cooperation?

Not all summits have been only about clashes between the East and West while the Third World suffers. As India and Brazil have joined forces, even smaller countries are forming coalitions to advance their own interests at COP.

There is a group of 38 states that have united and influenced several COP outcomes through the years as a result of their collective bargaining power. It is the Small Island Developing



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COP 26 witnessed a fierce competition among world leaders

States (SIDS) that together had influenced the outcome at the previous COP21 in Paris, ensuring the aim to limit climate warming to 1.5°C.

These islands are some of the most exposed countries in the world, facing the risk of submersion. However, their populations and GDP combined amount to less than that of a mid-size country. Even their number of delegates is below average. For example, Palau sent only 27 delegates to COP26. Their power to influence outcomes and secure their survival rests in their collective strength. Unfortunately, COVID has further reduced their presence at COP26, although historically they have been influential.

The SIDS cooperation proves that nations can work together on contentious topics. SIDS were able to gather influence in order to steer decisions in their favor and in favor of other

small developing countries. Coalitions like the SIDS or India and Brazil's ability to gather developing-country support is the future of negotiations.

“You might as well bomb us”

“You might as well bomb us”, Palau’s head of state exclaimed in sorrow at the COP26 in Glasgow while trying to explain to the world the climate change-related threats his country is facing. This works as a reminder that in the midst of squabbles between countries, those sidelined in climate talks are taking the hardest blow from climate change.

Two-Tiered Diplomacy

Germany Divided Before Russia



Editor's note: This article was written and finalized before the formation of the current German government in Nov. 2021

The current migrant crisis at Europe's eastern border highlights a widening rift between two important countries standing on opposite sides of the conflict: Germany and Russia.

After 16 years at the helm as chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel and her center-right party, the CDU, now find themselves in opposition. With the upcoming appointment of a new Chancellor, the stance that the new coalition government has towards Russia will be instrumental in determining the stability and security of the European Union.

Recently Belarusian soldiers were found ripping down fence posts, tearing down barbed wire and blinding Polish border guards with lasers and strobes. In a later retweet of the incident, Carl Bildt, Sweden's former prime minister and foreign minister, stated: "We are not very far from this turning into active hostilities." This sentiment has been seconded by Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of Nato, stating that relations between Nato and Russia are at their lowest level since the Cold War.

Poland, with Germany and the EU's backing, has condemned Belarus for luring people with false promises of onward passage to the EU, effectively using would-be migrants as a coercion measure against the union.

Russia, on the other hand, stands by its ally and maintains that it is the EU, and not Belarus, that is to blame. Russia further cemented its support for Belarus by flying strategic bombers over Belarusian territory, although it was insisted that this was only done in order to test Belarus's air defence and detection systems.

Russian-German relations have arguably deteriorated for years. Russian actions such as the annexation of Crimea, the poisoning of opposition politician Alexei Navalny, various human rights abuses and attempts to undermine democracy in the West do not rhyme well with the international values of their German counterpart.

Frenemies

However, Merkel has managed to maintain contact with Putin throughout many of these crises, as opposed to many other Western leaders. At the heart of their relationship there seems to be a mutual understanding. Merkel grew up under communist rule in East Germany and therefore speaks fluent Russian. Putin meanwhile, was stationed in West Germany while working as a KGB agent. In Merkel's case, her upbringing in a Soviet satellite state has likely given her a perspective on Putin's rule that many other world leaders do not have.

During the cold war, West Germany under Chancellor Willy Brandt initiated a foreign policy dubbed “Ostpolitik”, or Eastern Policy, based on recognizing the East German government and expanding commercial relations with the Soviet-bloc in order to limit potential use of force. Reminiscent of this foregone doctrine, Merkel too has preferred an approach based on engagement rather than confrontation. The reasoning being that by actively engaging in trade, Germany can levy certain demands.

“Even though China has become Russia’s largest trading partner, and despite several rounds of EU sanctions, Germany remains the largest foreign investor”

The nearly completed Nord Stream 2 project illustrates Germany’s approach. The €9.5 billion project will double the natural gas carrying capacity flowing from Russia to Germany. Many countries, not in the least the U.S, have condemned the project since its conception. Opponents of the gas pipeline assert that it will give too large of a share of the market to Russia, effectively handing over more geopolitical power to Putin. The fear is that this will allow Putin and the Kremlin to exert influence over the region as the EU becomes increasingly dependent on Russia for energy. Merkel however has been an

unflinching supporter and instead sees Nord Stream 2 as an important part of satisfying her country’s rising energy demand.

Market Allure

The reasoning behind German foreign policy in regards to Russia is likely that confronting Putin has most often been futile. When Russia invaded and subsequently annexed the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine, the EU and the United States imposed sanctions. Seven years later however, Crimea is still under Russian control.

The practical stance Germany has on Russia is affected by German industrialists who have long considered Russia to be an important and lucrative market. Even though China has become Russia’s largest trading partner, and despite several rounds of EU sanctions, Germany remains the largest foreign investor, and trade between the two countries has actually increased since the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

As a result, many German companies maintain a substantial presence in Russia, and for Volkswagen and other brands that have since long operated there, the Russian market accounts for a large part of their total sales. Sanctions and other measures imposed on Russia have often been viewed as a nuisance and disturbance to their operations. For such companies, it is often easier and wiser to criticize the elected politician and cozy up to the autocrat than the other way around.

In Angela Merkel, Germany had a leader that could approach a large and often difficult neighbor with a personal touch. How the new government in Berlin deals with Putin’s Russia remains to be seen, but mediating future clashes is not likely to be a one-man job.



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Is the EU-China investment
agreement a double-edged sword?



The sword of Damocles is hanging over Europe – at least that’s the feeling conveyed by European media. As the story goes, the EU must be prepared for a “Chinese century”. In the face of this development, in late 2020, the EU reached an investment agreement with China. The Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) aims to ensure European investors better access to the Chinese market, an integral condition for the maintenance of European economic might and relevance. However, in the long term, this strategic alignment might not only fail to benefit, but even harm the EU while simultaneously providing concessions to a country that stands accused of many human rights violations.

Several articles in the agreement decisively limit the scope of European NGOs’ actions in China; the CAI grants China the right to inhibit European investments in NGOs and can force them to employ a Chinese management board. These concerns raise a question: is an investment agreement really worth giving up the freedom of action for European NGOs in China?

In essence, the CAI seeks to balance out market conditions in Sino-EU business relations and to establish legal mechanisms to settle disputes. It mainly offers concessions to EU investors, including better market

access and non-discrimination conditions. A main feature is the elimination of production restrictions, equity caps, and joint venture requirements. At a glance, the EU appears to be the winner of this agreement. In reality, European potential to expand is confined. Crucial sectors like public procurement are not part of the agreement, a provision that favors Chinese firms.

The agreement also fails to oppose the communist party’s effort to relocate R&D and high value manufacturing processes to China, which can affect European companies’ business prospects. Technological autonomy, science, and supply chain resilience remain China’s strategic priorities –and it wouldn’t have concluded the agreement if it didn’t maintain its power to channel these key objectives. China wouldn’t allow the practical implementation of the CAI to interfere with its strategy of ‘dual circulation development’; the Asian powerhouse strives to become internally self-sufficient in terms of consumption and production while simultaneously retaining the dependence of foreign countries when it comes to trade and geopolitical issues.

Therefore, the agreement certainly doesn’t limit the Chinese influence in EU territories. Even though the CAI’s provisions are unlikely to induce a wave of Chinese investments in

the EU due to the generous EU market access previously granted, the agreement will not put an end to business practices that have expanded China's scope of interference in the recent past. Investments in specialized medium-sized companies with a high level of human knowhow and intensifying business relations related to the Belt and Road Initiative establish a direct link between China and the EU on European ground. This carries the danger of China influencing European governance and fueling conflicts of interest between EU member states: some of the Southern and Eastern European countries that are rather economically and socially poorly integrated in the EU happen to be main target regions of Chinese investments. The more economically beneficial Chinese involvement seems, the more prone these countries might become to giving up on proclaimed "common European values" and to turning towards Chinese autocratic practices. This could make the decision making process in the European Parliament increasingly fractious.

Therefore, the growing economic interdependence between the power blocs EU and China bring about uncertainties, especially against the background of the inseparability of the Chinese political and economic spheres. This threatens European liberal and democratic norms, which ought to be defended. However, at the moment, the EU is willingly giving up on its ideals and restricting its own freedom of speech by approving an investment agreement that leaves China with leeway to impose restrictions on European businesses' and NGO activities. Assuming that the EU acts in favor of its economy, the ratification of the CAI would hamper the ability of the EU to criticize China's actions in its capacity as a political institution. Hence, ratifying the current

version of the CAI which inhibits European NGOs interventions on Chinese ground and which doesn't regulate crucial labor and environmental standards would demonstrate the EU's indifference towards its own values. Doesn't integrating into the Chinese economy mean that the EU accepts the human rights violations of the Uighur Muslim minority? And what about China's aggressive handling of Taiwan and Hong Kong?

No, the moral costs of the CAI are too high! Economic interests should not be allowed to outweigh European values. When negotiating investment agreements, the European delegates should correct for what profit incentives cannot account for: moral steadfastness. The EU needs to invoke its core

"EU delegates must defy short-term profit incentives and never compromise on morality".

values of democracy, freedom, equality, rule of law, and human rights. Being formed not only as a political and economic union, but also as an entity of values, potential member countries that aspire to join the EU must affirm these values. If the EU doesn't raise the same claims against a prospectively omnipresent and influential partner like China, it would apply an indefensible double standard.

The EU, fortunately, has a second chance to prove that it still holds its core values dear. The ratification of the CAI has been put on ice due to sanctions triggered by European criticism on China's maltreatment of its Uighur population. If the agreement is renegotiated, EU delegates must defy short-term profit incentives and never compromise on morality. It is high time for the EU to do its proclaimed values justice and refuse to roll over in the face of autocracy.

Playing a Poor Hand Well?

*Analysis of the Polish-Belarusian
Border Conflict*



“We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand”

Randy Pausch

As of November 2021, thousands of migrants were stranded on the Polish-Belarusian border. Within the EU, there is a broad consensus that Belarusian authorities are deliberately luring migrants towards the Polish border. Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko denies these allegations and emphasizes that migrants are arriving in Belarus legally. He points to the challenge of managing the growing inflow of migrants amid a precarious economic situation.

Poland has declared a state of emergency and deployed a significant number of troops to push back migrants trying to enter Polish territory. On the other side, Belarusian troops are preventing migrants from returning to Minsk. Tensions continue to intensify, as migrants have no means of satisfying their basic needs and nowhere to go.

Furthermore, Poland has blocked entry into the area surrounding the border on the Polish side. The press is not allowed to pass, and the government is rejecting interventions from Frontex, the EU's Border, and Coast Guard Agency. Poland is simultaneously refusing to provide migrants with humanitarian and legal assistance while preventing nongovernmental organizations such as the

Polish Red Cross from helping with essentials.

In response to Lukashenko's controversial election in August 2020 and to the violent way in which the Belarusian government extinguished the resulting pro-democratic protests throughout the country, the EU did not hesitate to impose a new round of economic sanctions. Thus, the border tensions have been increasingly perceived by officials in Poland and the EU as revenge for the delegitimization of Lukashenko's government and the ensuing sanctions. The Belarusian government has stated that the economic sanctions are preventing it from creating the necessary infrastructure for dealing with an influx of migrants. These complaints come with additional demands for financial assistance, a measure also recommended by Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Additionally, the Belarusian government is suggesting that the EU – Poland, more specifically – is not fulfilling its obligation to ensure the basic needs of those stuck at the border, for which it is responsible according to international law. On a similar note, officials in Belarus have stated that Poland has deployed an unjustified number of troops.

The EU is standing in solidarity with Poland and strongly affirming that the Union as a whole should not give in to the pressures of the Belarusian government. NATO held a briefing on the issue, after which the allies declared their support. Along with its neighbors, Lithuania and Latvia, Poland launched discussions on whether Article 4 of the alliance's treaty should be invoked. Critically, it provides for military consultations when "the territorial integrity, political independence or security" of any member is threatened.

This support has given Poland the needed impetus to take bolder steps. Among them is a ruling of its national parliament that allows the building of a wall along the country's border with Belarus, not a one-of-a-kind initiative in Eastern Europe. As opposed to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's 2015 commitment to erect such a barrier, Poland's pledge is not viewed by many as an extreme measure. In fact, it is one of the first times when talks of having major separators at the EU's external borders have been taking place in the European Council.

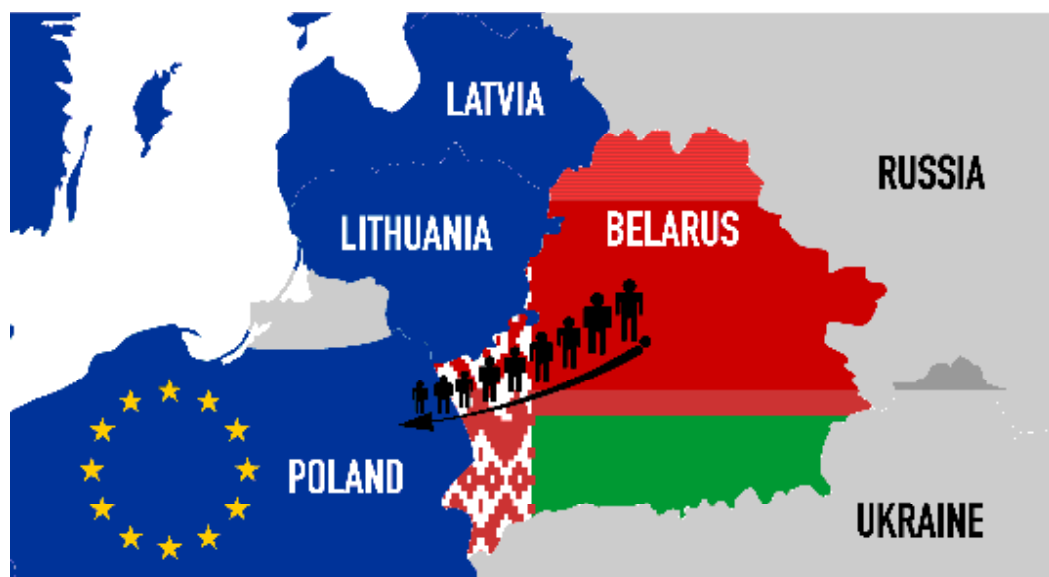
Russia's role in the conflict cannot be overlooked since it actively supports Lukashenko's government, both financially and politically. A stone's throw from the Polish-Belarusian border, a Russian training mission has actively been taking place since late August 2021 and was later augmented by repeated flights of Russian strategic bombers over Belarusian territory. This activity has led to accusations that Russia had a more direct role in the border tensions than they claim. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov deemed these allegations to be senseless, claiming that the arrival of migrants is a direct consequence of the long wars led by the U.S. in

the Middle East, together with the Arab Spring.

What does this say about the nature of conflict in the 21st century? In a recent interview with Al Jazeera, scholar Sascha Dov Bachmann connected this case to the concept of the "grey zone," which entails actions on the verge of warfare but not quite reaching the threshold. In the midst of profound political instability and an economic recession worsened by COVID-19, perhaps the only way Belarus could have played its poor hand well was to exploit loopholes and position its actions within this grey zone.

Lukashenko's government identified weak points in Poland's domestic situation and in European integration in order to instrumentalize them to its own advantage. The tactics that it employed laid the groundwork for carrying out "hybrid warfare." More specifically, in its attempt to respond to the delegitimization of its government and to press for the potential easing of economic sanctions, Belarus has engaged in what Bachmann terms "lawfare," discourse on trade warfare, as well as information and migration warfare. Lawfare, or "trying to abuse the rule of law in a malicious way," as Bachmann puts it, was used in the right place and at the right time, amid Poland's ongoing rule of law crisis.

Belarus drove Poland to a point in which it broke away from international law and fundamental EU values, by pushing back migrants – aggressively, as some migrants who have managed to reach the EU claim – and overlooking their need for safety. The inability of the press to cover much of what happens on the Polish side of the border is also controversial. The state of emergency, which enables Poland to take measures that would otherwise be unacceptable, further adds to this complicated conflict.



Majority of migrants flows into Poland

Discourse on trade warfare also heightened the tensions. In retaliation to Poland's staunch response, Belarus threatened that it would block the main gas supply routes that pass through its territory and deliver Russian gas to Poland and Germany, among other countries. Yet, experts hold that this measure has a minimal chance of surpassing the discourse level.

Information warfare lies at the roots of the migrant influx, according to members of the Belarusian opposition and to the personal accounts of some migrants. People coming from several countries in the Middle East were allegedly informed of the possibility to travel to Belarus and make a livelihood in the EU, where free movement would be possible. These allegations hold that, in exchange for large sums of money and false promises, migrants were smuggled into Belarus and then guided towards the border with Poland.

Deliberate misinformation paved the way for migration based warfare. Migrants were used to put pressure on a Union lacking a common

migration policy, this being far from the first time such a strategy was adopted. The EU's Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, was created in 2004 and given its headquarters in Warsaw partly due to similar pressures from Belarus. During the more recent refugee and migrant crisis, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened that he would allow for uncontrolled passage into Greece. Today, the 2016 EU-Turkey Deal is known for the important concessions that the latter obtained.

The Polish-Belarusian border conflict certainly has its peculiarities. From minor pressures on the border, it has evolved into a tinder box of events that have the potential of triggering physical conflict and a humanitarian crisis. Such a close-up case study tells us a lot about the nature of contemporary conflict, the myriad of actors involved, and the complex ways in which they interact. Law, trade, information, and migration, seemingly separate from international conflict, have now become integral to understanding the tactics of its players.

The Only Way is North?

*Analysis of Northern European Cooperation
in Times of Crisis*



For a long time, the states of Northern Europe were the figureheads of successful state cooperation, but today they too are marred by persistent crises.

In a time when the European Union appears more divided than ever, a strong Nordic Council appears to be a suitable crisis manager. But the relationships between its members are no longer as harmonious as they were. The Covid-19 pandemic and the handling of the refugee crisis in 2015 have left their mark. Both events led to temporary border closings and the partial reintroduction of identity checks at the crossings between the countries. Furthermore, the tone between the Northern European states and Russia has become harsher, causing unrest in security policy matters. The events seem so severe that the annual summit of the Nordic Council in 2021 in Copenhagen was even described as a crisis meeting by several media outlets.

The council was founded in 1952, illustrating the length of the tradition of cooperation between its members Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. While the countries continue to stress the relevance of Nordic relations, their alliance appears to be overshadowed by other political actors and institutions. This is particularly the case as some of the members are part of the EU, as well as NATO. Throughout the last years, the Nordic

states preferred to transfer their competencies to both institutions and act more cautiously. As Europe appears rife with instability, the Nordic Council has the opportunity to reform and renew its capacity for political action and impact.

Subject to change

Nordic cooperation is based on the common history of the countries, as well as shared values such as democracy, justice, and equality. It was in order to defend these that the council was founded several years after the end of the Second World War. With Russia as a major security threat in the immediate vicinity, the Nordic states wanted to set up a local defense alliance. The security aspect has been complemented by other policy areas over the years. Thus, it faded into the background and was no longer an issue at the meetings of the Nordic Council for a long time.

This, as well as the establishing of common security and defense policies within the framework of NATO, resulted in the Nordic Council experiencing a change in meaning and political influence. At the same time, Nordic cooperation has been normalized to such an extent, that the close relationships

between the states are taken for granted. However throughout the last couple of years, cracks have begun to form.

Nordic cooperation is based on the common history of the countries, as well as shared values such as democracy, justice, and equality.

Security sorrows

The changes occur due to the fact that domestic problems of the states are supplemented by foreign policy tensions. The Russian saber rattling and the weakening alliances in NATO means that a fundamental issue for the Nordic Council was back on the agenda at the meeting: security policy. This had previously been avoided because Finland and Sweden are not part of the defense alliance. But now, security cooperation with NATO does not seem to be an issue anymore. The opposite is the case, because the newly revived security cooperation would lead to a strengthening of NATO's northern flank. This seems to explain why NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg was invited to the previous annual meeting of the Nordic Council in Copenhagen.

Also present at the talks was a delegation from the Russian parliament, the Duma. With regard to relations with their powerful neighbors, the Nordic countries are relying on an ongoing dialogue, which, however, is increasingly characterized by disagreements.

Since 2015, Russian representatives have referred to the Nordic offices in their own country as "foreign agencies". As a reaction, the representation of the Northern European States in St. Petersburg reduced its activities, as well as its staff. The Nordic Council's

external relations have been coordinated from Copenhagen since. This severely restricts the dialogue with Russia and makes the security situation in the Northern region more difficult to assess from a European point of view.

Back to the roots

Since the EU and NATO are both equally plagued by their own problems, they are no longer absolutely reliable partners for the Nordic countries. Would the alliances of states react effectively if tensions with Russia result in a tangible conflict? The Nordic Council does not even want to ask this question, but instead chooses to act. As a result, there is a return to an active, self-designed Nordic security policy, which was made official at the meeting in Copenhagen. This seems to be the new aim of the Council: step up where other actors fail to do so.

What do these developments mean for the future? They enable the states of Northern Europe to work together in times of crisis independently of the major EU and NATO alliances. In view of their weakened positions in world politics today, the Nordic states are taking on more responsibility for shaping their relationships with one another, as well as with other nations. How this will develop in the context of Russia remains to be seen. However, Moscow is unlikely to not have noticed the change in the political focus of the Nordic Council. Both sides eye each other with suspicion, although the Northern European countries are endeavoring to rehabilitate the dialogue with their larger neighbors. If they succeed, the Nordic Council can again become a model for intergovernmental cooperation.



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THAWING ICE, FROSTY POLITICS

**How a Warming World
is Transforming the Arctic**

The world's northernmost statue of Vladimir Lenin sits atop a coal mine about a thousand kilometers from Russia. The revolutionary overlooks the Arctic Ocean in the settlement of Barentsburg- a Russian village on the Svalbard archipelago, whose capital, Longyearbyen, is the northernmost town on Earth. The mine hasn't turned a profit in decades, and its own workers are well aware - as one Barentsburg resident told Vox in 2016, "[it] doesn't bring much revenue. It's obvious." Russia subsidizes the mine for a simple reason: there is far more at stake in Svalbard than a single coal seam.

Climate change is quite literally redrawing the map of the Arctic. The region is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet, with the polar ice cap rapidly retreating in the face of rising temperatures. New shipping lanes through the North are becoming passable for the first time, soon including the fabled Northwest Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Beneath the melting ice lie rich deposits of natural resources: fisheries, minerals, and fossil fuels. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, as much as 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and 30% of undiscovered fossil gas lie beneath the melting Arctic. The countries abutting the polar region are jostling to lay their claim to this Arctic bounty; Russia,

Denmark, and Canada have petitioned the UN to expand their rights to resource extraction in the Arctic, often with overlapping claims. Even as world leaders boast of the need to act on the climate crisis, new oil rigs, pipelines, borders, and fishing trawlers are cutting through the seascape.

“A Russian military exercise demonstrated the Fleet’s capacity to ‘liberate’ an Arctic port from enemy occupation.”

Back on Svalbard, we see this trend playing out on land and sea alike. Until recently Svalbard, like the Arctic Ocean itself, was a practically stateless realm. According to the 1920 Svalbard Treaty, Norway is sovereign over the islands, but other countries are permitted to extract natural resources from the area. Citizens of any country willing to brave the freezing winds and three-month polar night can visit and even settle permanently on Svalbard without a visa. The archipelago may be nominally Norwegian, but its remoteness has offered it safe political distance from the government. However, that may be starting to change.

The Svalbard Treaty does not clearly define how fisheries off the coast of the archipelago should be treated, an issue that has continually caused discord between Norwegian and Russian fishing fleets. The Treaty also bans the militarization of the islands, but that has not stopped either country from making naval provocations.

In August, Russia's Northern Fleet made a surprise detour just to the edge of Svalbard's territorial waters. In September, a Russian military exercise demonstrated the Fleet's capacity to "liberate" an Arctic port from enemy occupation. In October, the Norwegian Navy responded by sending its frigate KNM Thor Heyerdahl to encircle Svalbard and dock at Longyearbyen. Russia condemned this move, with Norway responding, "We don't only have a right, but also a duty to safeguard sovereignty in [our] territorial waters." Svalbard, once a remote outpost defined by economic extraction, has become the locus of increasing military tensions between Russia and Norway.

The saber-rattling around Svalbard matters because conflict with Norway could drag Russia into direct confrontation with NATO. However, most of the bloc is keeping its distance from this disagreement. While Canada and Denmark have their own disputes with Russia over Arctic sea resources, the U.S. has yet to provoke Russia by submitting expanded Arctic seabed claims.

The European Commission, meanwhile, is even calling for a climate-motivated ban on Arctic oil extraction. If approved, this policy would put the EU in stark contrast with Norway's fossil-fueled economy. This begs the question: will Norway involve NATO in this maritime dispute? Or will the Kingdom's attempts to extract ever more oil from the melting Arctic isolate it from the rest of the bloc?



Group of Islands in the North

The squabbling between Arctic Circle states over natural resources appears petty in the face of this reality. Even so, the melting Arctic is a preview of conflicts to come across the world. As climate change alters geography over land and sea, new avenues for competition between states open up, and lines of political conflict will shift alongside the landscape itself. Some amount of contention between nation-states will be inevitable in this new world, just as it was in the old one.

In this environment, Russia knows that its Svalbard coal mine is a dead man walking. Authorities are pivoting to eco-tourism, hoping that crowds will jump at the chance to experience a Soviet ghost town nestled beneath polar mountains. True to form, Norwegian authorities are limiting Russia's ability to operate tours, a move motivated by both environmental regulations and an imperative to protect Norway's own booming polar tourism business in Longyearbyen. One local tour guide told the Barents Observer "we will make Barentsburg a centre for the Russian Arctic." The fact that Barentsburg is in Norway, not Russia, is just another instance in the litany of ironies facing the Arctic today.



ACROSS THE LINE

**The Kashmir
Conflict &
Cricket**

Chants of “Pakistan Zindabad”, meaning “long live Pakistan” in Urdu, were heard throughout the country in late October. Pakistan had just won its first Cricket World Cup match against India, which has been dominant in the sport for over three decades. The win was historical and 167 million people saw the match be played in Dubai. For those unfamiliar with the sport, cricket is to South Asia what football is to Europe – so winning a world cup match is no trifling matter! However, this win was not in itself as important as winning over India, as it ended the decades-long Indian cricket domination over Pakistan.

The India-Pakistan rivalry is not only over cricket, however, as relations have been tense since British colonial authorities left in 1947. Britain separated the largest religious groups, Muslims and Hindus, by drawing borders without much consideration of geography and religion. The Partition of India left the two holiest sites in Sikhism on Pakistan’s side of the border. Only in 2019, a peace corridor was created for Sikhs to visit the other holy site without a visa, which took 72 years. The Indian Independence Act was also created by the British, which stated that the region Kashmir was free to accede to either country. This division of the two countries created arbitrary borders and fostered a culture of “us against them”. Kashmir is a mountainous region sandwiched between the Himalayas and the mountainous Karakoram region, home to some of the world’s highest mountains and the

world’s deadliest, K2. It is also the place that has divided Pakistan and India for decades.

Today, Pakistan and India each administer a portion of Kashmir. Three wars have broken out in the region, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people. A cease-fire was declared in 2003 over the temporary “Line of Control” that was already established in 1947 but shootings have occurred. However, as India and Pakistan do not agree on whether international law applies in Kashmir or not, efforts at reconciliation are difficult. Pakistan calls the conflict an “international dispute” and India considers it an “internal matter”, making it hard for foreign actors to intervene in the conflict. India also abolished the law that gave Kashmir autonomous rights in 2019, something that Pakistan has called illegal. The UN has tried to mediate the conflict and urges the two countries to demilitarize in Kashmir, as it is one of the most militarized places on earth with a 1 soldier to 10 civilian ratio. In 2018 alone, 500 people were killed in the region. Killings have continued and escalated once again in 2019 when a Pakistan-based terrorist group attacked 40 Indian soldiers. After this targeted attack, India ensured it would take diplomatic measures to isolate Pakistan from the international community.

The Pakistani military poses another obstacle in resolving the Kashmir conflict. The two governments agreed in 1953 to resolve the conflict through U.N. mediation of the



Ranier Lesniewski/Shutterstock.com

The Kashmir Region surrounded by three states

International Court of Justice's proceedings. This was never realized however, as the Pakistani military overthrew the government two years after, shattering any hopes for conflict resolution.

In following years, the Pakistani government has continued to be interrupted by military intervention, causing a loss of credibility. At least five terrorist groups that are based in Pakistan are targeting India. The US State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism has in 2019 called Pakistan to "continued to serve as a safe haven for certain regionally-focused terrorist groups". The report also expresses concern that Pakistan's government is not doing enough on counter-terrorism and terrorism financing. Only as recent as 2021, the Pakistan government established an anti-terror financing cell. The Kashmir conflict is no doubt an area where international law has failed. The rise of extremist terrorist groups only poses a further challenge for a peaceful Kashmir. Moreover, it threatens the lives of thousands of Kashmiris and the security of the whole region.

The relations between Pakistan and India affect not only the future of Kashmiris, Indians, and Pakistanis but the whole of Asia and the world. The two countries hold nuclear weapons, which adds additional tension to any escalation of the conflict. Pakistan and

India find themselves on opposite sides of what might be the great geopolitical divide of the 21st century. That between the U.S. and China. India is a member of The Quad, a diplomatic grouping aimed at countering Chinese dominance in the Pacific. The Quad consists of the U.S., Australia, India and Japan. In parallel, China has supported Pakistani efforts in Afghanistan, sharing animosity for India through their contested Himalayan border.

Pakistan and India have long had a stake in Afghanistan, which has been mired in political turmoil as a result of US troop withdrawals. Both countries are now attempting to establish a leadership role in Afghanistan to guarantee future trade agreements and to strengthen their position in Western Asia. The relations between these nuclear armed states affect not only the future of Kashmiris, Indians, and Pakistanis but the whole of Asia and the world.

Looking back at other sporting breakthroughs in diplomacy, the U.S.-China table-tennis rivalry in the 1970's comes to mind. Perhaps cricket could one day serve as a conduit of peace on the Indian subcontinent as table-tennis before it. Hopefully the day will come when chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" or the Hindu version "Jai Hind" can be heard alongside each other, especially after a game of cricket.



DAVID & GOLIATH

**China Reawakens Resistance in
a Small Baltic Democracy**

The recent dust up between Lithuania and China is a sign of the times as small and increasingly independent countries take action in service of their interests and values. However this quickly comes into conflict with realist considerations of trade, might, and sovereignty.

Since October 2020, Lithuania has had a new center-right coalition with many young politicians in their 30s and 40s. Contrary to the previous government, which tried to liaise and link with global superpowers, the new government got attention through “values-based foreign policy” to support people and democratic movements. While admirable, this approach has not been without its problems.

From the beginning, the newly elected government coalition stated: “We will actively oppose all violations of human rights and democratic freedom. We will defend people who fight for freedom around the world, from Belarus to Taiwan.” How this approach fared can be observed through the opening of a Taiwanese representative office in Lithuania on July 20th, 2021.

There was already growing division with Beijing over Lithuania’s support of the Hong Kong protests and Lithuania’s separation from the China-led 17+1 initiative that was established to enhance cooperation between China and the Central and Eastern European countries. The opening of the Taiwanese representative office in Lithuania was the

straw that broke the camel’s back for China.

The Chinese government claimed Lithuania was crossing a “red line” by using Taiwan’s name for its representative office and directed the country to “immediately rectify its wrong decision”. Also, the Global Times, a Chinese government affiliated newspaper, affirmed that it is “a high voltage line, even a watershed between peace and war”.

Lithuania did not appreciate the aggressive rhetoric. “We are not used to being told how to behave, even by a superpower,” said Gintaras Steponavicius, a former legislator who helped set up the Lithuania-Taiwan Forum, a lobbying group.

In a statement, the Lithuanian government reaffirmed that it respects “the ‘One China’ policy, but at the same time has the right to expand cooperation with Taiwan”. Many governments have official diplomatic relations with Beijing while still cultivating extensive commercial ties with Taiwan, specialising in so much needed electronics and semiconductor chip production.

Consequently, on August 10th, 2021 Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi recalled diplomats from Vilnius and asked Lithuania to do the same in Beijing. Chinese government media has disparaged “small” Lithuania following these developments. “Lithuania is not qualified to attack China, and this is not the way a small country should act,” writes the Global Times.

The attacks from China are not only verbal, but they also bring economic implications. Lithuanian businesses are facing punishment. The Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists stated that they were “targeted very precisely”, through delayed contract extensions and refused new deals.

“China has officially downgraded its diplomatic relationships with Lithuania”

“It’s like the classic Chinese saying: ‘Killing a chicken to scare the monkey’” says an anonymous senior diplomat to Politico. In this case, the monkey would be the European Union. “Beijing is sending a message that whoever follows Lithuania’s example, of daring to stand up to it, will face severe consequences. And such a message is best tested in a smaller country”.

In a commentary to LRT, Lithuanian National Radio and Television, Matas Maldeikis, member of the Lithuanian parliament, pointed out that China is only their 22nd largest trade partner. There are other countries with whom Lithuania has stronger economic ties that do not dictate its internal or external politics.

Lithuania has more than ten times more investments in China, 40 million Euros, than China has in Lithuania, only 3 million Euros. The Lithuanian Minister of Economics and Innovation, Ausrine Armonaitė, downplayed this imbalance in October, saying that “it is not too harmful”. For comparison, Washington has offered sizable support. On the 19th of November, just a day after opening the Taiwan representation in Vilnius, the Minister announced that Lithuania will sign a \$600

million export credit agreement with the U.S. Export-Import Bank in the coming days.

Since the beginning of the conflict, American support led China to suspect that Lithuania was a puppet in the hands of their adversary. The Global Times pointed to international politics saying, “Lithuania is just a clown that plays bravado and loyalty”. Zhao Lijian of the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs explicitly stated that Lithuania “has been instigated by some major country, and Lithuania has sacrificed its interests”. He also encouraged “other countries to prioritize their interests and not be manipulated by a certain major country.”

Some political commentators see Lithuania’s action as a “wake up call” for other countries. Many agree that the 17+1 network, firmly grounded in China’s interest in critical infrastructure investments in Eastern Europe, should be replaced by the 27+1, a joint European approach. The EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell defended Lithuania, even though he specified that EU relations with a “like-minded and important partner” like Taiwan doesn’t mean recognizing its statehood.

Following the official inauguration of the Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania on the 18th November 2021, China has officially downgraded its diplomatic relationships with Lithuania to “chargé d’affaires”. It again publicly condemned the move as interference into its sovereignty, stating that this action “created a bad precedent in the international arena”. China’s only remaining request is to change Taiwan’s name. After all, in a busy global world of international politics, one must choose one’s battles.

However the impact of small actions by a small country have not gone unnoticed. As the New York Times wrote, “...surprisingly, Lithuania has proved that even tiny countries can create headaches for a superpower.”

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