

A b s t r a c t s

Confrontation Peace and Security in Europe

Markus Wehner
Hackers, Propaganda, Electoral Manipulation
Moscow's Information War in the West

For a long time, there has been a failure in the political and the public spheres in Germany and the EU to recognise both the degree of influence of Moscow through propaganda and disinformation and the risk of cyber attacks originating from Russia. It was not until the cyber attack on the German Bundestag, the "Lisa case", and the hacking scandal during the American election, that the full realisation dawned that Moscow is interfering in the domestic politics of western countries on a massive scale. There is no reason to dramatise the situation. However, at a time of profound alienation between Russia and the West following the annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine, the Russian leadership is set on a path of confrontation. In order to divide the West, it has adopted a targeted, and at the same time flexible, approach. There is no cause for complacency.

Barbara von Ow-Freytag
Turning "Black Sheep" into Avantgarde
New Ideas Russia's Civil Society

In Russia, the Putin system systematically destroys civic engagement. The authorities try separate the NGO sector from society. However, the suppression of civil society is a reflection of the treatment of society as a whole. Anti-corruption protests in March 2017 showed that despite all the repressive measures, civil society is still alive in Russia. Germany, the EU and donor organisations should take into account the fact that stronger commitment, a new approach and a higher degree of flexibility are required when working with civil society.

Nikolay Mitrokhin
Transfer of Dictatorship
"State Building" in Russia's "People's Republics"

The Donbas region has disappeared from public view. However, not only are skirmishes are a daily occurrence in the transition zone between the Ukrainian and separatist-controlled areas. Also in the interior of the two "People's Republics" a dynamic process is unfolding. While at the end of 2014, they were still anarchic, gang-ruled territories, today, they have become dictatorships with a high concentration of political and economic power. The decisive factor in this state building, which is being driven forward with an extreme

degree of savagery, is Russia. Only those who are in favour with Moscow and who receive Russian resources are in a position to eliminate their opponents and set themselves at the top of the state structure.

Jerzy Maćków

Extortion and Bribery

The Russian Empire and Belarus

The Kremlin regards Belarus as being a colony. Vladimir Putin believes, it is of key importance to the survival of his empire. However, Moscow is unable to provide any convincing legitimisation for its imperial ambitions. In order to secure the loyalty of the Belarusian élites, Russia oscillates to and fro between extortion and bribery. Therefore the relationship between the centre and the periphery is marked by deep mistrust.

Rafał Riedel

In a Middle-Income-Trap?

Poland's Search for a new Growth Model

In the view of Poland's minister for economic affairs, the country is in a trap. He claims that the growth model of the past 20 years is preventing Poland from becoming one of the leading economies in Western Europe. While the diagnosis may be correct, the remedy offered by the government is not. High-performing institutions and direct foreign investment are one of the key factors for high growth. By contrast, the PiS is creating poor governance and wishes to see less foreign capital in the country.

Russia, Peace and Security in Europe

Matthias Dembinski, Hans-Joachim Spanger

Plural Peace

Guiding Principles for a New Russia Policy

Since the annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine, relations between Russia and the West have been deeply confrontational. New approaches must be taken in order to avoid a military escalation and guarantee security in Europe. The West should abandon its strategy of "liberal peace", which since 1990 has focused on an adaptation by Russia to the liberal norms of the West and its integration into Western institutions. Instead, we promote the guiding principle of "plural peace". We see the way forward as being peace through dissociation. The normative differences with Russia should be acknowledged. A clear delineation is a precondition for creating a new basis for stable cooperation. This entails providing Russia with plausible assurance that Ukraine and other states in the region will not be allowed to join the EU or NATO.

Karsten D. Voigt
Change behaviour, forge trust
Moscow, Peace and Security in Europe

Russia has destroyed trust. The annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine has exacerbated the sense of threat among its neighbour states. Some German peace research circles recommend, that in order to forge trust in Europe, the EU should declare that it will forego inviting Ukraine to become a member. This is the wrong approach. Such a stance would create a negative precedent. Other states in Eastern Europe would interpret it as offering a right of veto to Russia, and as evidence that a “Concert of Europe” is again taking place beyond their sphere of influence. This cannot be in the interest of Germany or the EU. A cooperative security policy with Russia may never be pursued at a cost to other states. A precondition for the revival of trust is a change in policy by Russia.

Andreas Heinemann-Grüder
No to a Separate Peace
A Reply to the Concept of “Plural Peace”

It is pertinent to ask how the current confrontation between Russia and the West can be overcome. However, the recommendation by peace researchers Spanger and Dembinski for a new policy towards Russia fails to convince. The notion of a “plural peace” is no more than a re-labelling of the “multipolar peace” à la russe. Their arguments amount to a guarantee of the continued existence of an autocratic regime in the name of pluralism. They offer a formula from the Cold War, namely peaceful coexistence along Soviet lines: the acceptance of zones of influence and a Russian cordon sanitaire at the expense of the states in “Zwischeneuropa”.

Oleksandr Sushko, Andreas Umland
Unrealistic Scenario
Comments on the Concept of a “Plural Peace”

The West should reduce the risk of escalation of the conflict with Russia through dissociation. Unbridgeable differences such as the annexation of Crimea should be ignored. This recommendation by peace researchers M. Dembinski and H.-J. Spanger is only pragmatic on the surface. In reality, the concept of a “plural peace” is unrealistic. It fails to acknowledge the fundamental Ukrainian interest in integration with the West, the earlier experiences in Moldova, Georgia and Armenia of Moscow’s hegemonic policy and the connection between Ukrainian sovereignty and the regimes affected by the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. No treaty clause preventing Ukraine from becoming a member of the EU or NATO would guarantee peace.

Jakub Eberle, Vladimír Handl
International Law instead of Zones of Influence!
The Concept of “Plural Peace” Reverts to Old Patterns of Thought

In Germany, policy towards Russia is again under dispute. A broad swathe of society demands rapprochement. Two Frankfurt peace researchers have taken up these ideas and developed them further. Their aim is to prevent a return to the Cold War. However, this is just what their approach represents. Underlying the concept of “plural peace” is a plea for the acknowledgement of major power politics and spheres of influence. The authors refer to international law while jeopardising achievements in international law that had already been formulated in the Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE in 1975.

Stefan Meister
Grist to Putin’s Mills
“Plural Peace” as a Russia First “Ostpolitik”

Matthias Dembinski and Hans-Joachim Spanger fail to understand the nature of the Putin system. In their call for dissociation between the West and Russia, the peace researchers, referring to John Rawls, promote the acknowledgement of the principles of justice and order. However, Russia’s leadership refuses to recognise the sovereignty of Ukraine or Georgia, intervenes militarily in those countries, violates international treaties and agreements such as the Charter of Paris or the Budapest Memorandum, rejects fundamental human rights and restricts basic civic rights. It is naïve to expect that Russia’s leadership will act according to international law when it is given the right of veto in European affairs and the zone of influence it claims is recognised.

Jan Claas Behrends
“Ostpolitik” is Security Policy for the Whole of Europe
A Response to Dembinski & Spanger

The concept of “plural peace” is misleading. It will bring neither security nor peace, but will instead again divide Europe and create greater instability. We do not need a Russia policy that rewards Russia’s flouting of the law, but a European and Atlantic-based “Ostpolitik”, a policy towards the east, which promotes security in the region and contains Russia without isolating it. The “constraintment” approach will defend international law and the sovereignty of states, including those in Eastern Europe.

Art Theft: A Critique of a Critical Review

Esther Abel

Examining and Discussing, and not Scandalising, the Past

The Scheibert case. A reply to the Review by Egbert Jahn and Inge Auerbach

Egbert Jahn and Inge Auerbach have written a lengthy review of my book *Kunstraub – Ostforschung – Hochschulkarriere* about Peter Scheibert, a specialist in Eastern European history. The book discusses Scheibert's involvement in the theft of art by the Nazis and his attitude towards his own past in the Waffen-SS. It would appear that the main purpose of the reviewers is to rehabilitate Scheibert. In their view, he has been wrongly condemned in my book. They have inaccurately quoted countless results from my research. Their degree of objectivity is questionable.

Stefan Plaggenborg

A Marburg Historians' Dispute

The Scheibert Question: the Formation of Revisionism

Egbert Jahn's and Inge Auerbach's slating of Esther Abel's book about Peter Scheibert is unacceptable. In substance, the criticism is unfounded, both in terms of content and methodology. It serves to dissolve the question of Scheibert's guilt and responsibility for his actions during the Second World War and his involvement in stealing art. In so doing, Jahn and Auerbach fall behind the latest developments in the historiographical discussion and legal assessment of guilt. Their comments express clear elements of a revisionist discourse which is of socio-political significance, since their article represents a call to bring to a halt all critical evaluation of the activities of historians during the Nazi period.

Corinna Kuhr-Korolev, Ulrike Schmiegelt-Rietig

It is Always the Others who are the Thieves!

Suppression and justification strategies in connection with art theft in Eastern Europe under the National Socialists

The extent of the destruction of culture and looting of art in Eastern Europe under the National Socialists continues to be downplayed even today. Strategies for exoneration and justification that emerged during the Second World War continue to be pursued without critical reflection. Several rival German institutions were involved in art theft in the Soviet Union. This provided the perpetrators and their accomplices with the opportunity to transfer culpability to others, and to present their own actions as "securing" or "saving" cultural assets. In many cases, the theft was semantically discarded and presented as being a normal aspect of war. For decades, the looting of cultural assets and the destruction of culture by the Germans in the Soviet Union was blanked out from awareness. In the German political and public spheres, the issue of art theft under the National Socialists in the Soviet Union is not given the weight that it is due.

Wolfgang Eichwede
The Art of Seizing the Moment

Restitution between Expertise and Diplomacy: from the Engine Room of
German-Russian Cultural Relations

In art restitution, traumatic history and dramatic present are densely intertwined. This applies in particular to the relationship between Germany and Russia. A look back over 30 years of cooperation and conflicting actions in relation to looted and stolen art reveals a history of opening and gift-giving, struggle and failure. Academia and society have shown ways and forged connections where bureaucracy and diplomacy have lost an awareness of common ground in the interplay of German claims based on international law and Russian defensive legislation inspired by national patriotic principles. So it was that during the 1990s, the right moment for reaching a major settlement was missed. However, time and again, in individual cases, it has been possible, through skill and commitment, to circumnavigate the legal barriers. Thus, in culture, social relations remain that have not been destroyed by the current political upheaval. These relations cannot overcome the conflict between Russia and Germany, but are at least able to resist the process of drifting apart.