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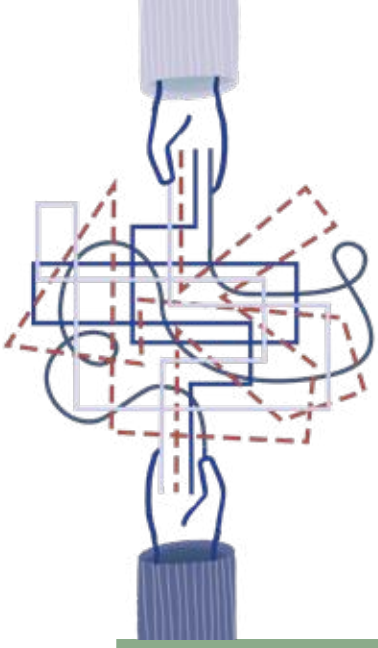
MOVING TARGETS

GEOPOLITICS IN A WARMING WORLD



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POWERS AT PLAY

JAMIE KENDRICK FOR THE EDITORIAL BOARD

This edition of the *Green European Journal* heads to the press in the days following COP26 in Glasgow. COPs expose both the divides and the diversity of global politics [Eckersley]. Small-island states most vulnerable to climate impacts vie against rich nations whose power could not have been built without fossil fuels. Far from just a matter for nation-states, scientific assessments frame the conference, protestors set the mood music, and corporate lobbyists influence where they can. Even the structure of the conferences reflects the contrast between the reality of geopolitics and the promise of global governance, with an inner sanctum of actors allowed to speak and a much larger group left excluded.

Disappointment at Glasgow was prefigured by the ongoing experience of Covid-19. Like the climate crisis, the pandemic calls for international solidarity and cooperation. However, since its outbreak, it has been experienced as a geopolitical affair [Bialasiewicz]. Countries asserted control over territory and population in an attempt to contain and quash the virus. Soon afterwards, as disputes erupted over medical supplies, a geopolitical understanding of the virus began to emerge: the pandemic not as the result of an interdependent globalised society resting on a dangerously depleted natural world but as yet another front for competition between powers.

How is it that two global problems have been subsumed into an all-encompassing geopolitical game? They are not alone. As state-sponsored misinformation campaigns and the fate of refugees weaponised between borders depressingly show, issues from technology and media freedom [Geese and Schaake] to the right to asylum end up understood on the same

terms. Clashing with once-dominant liberal understandings of the economy, concepts such as "geoeconomics" are reshaping debates on international trade and economic policy.

Underlying this shift is the decline of US hegemony, the rise of China [Kefferpütz], and the arrival of a multipolar world. Between the two superpowers lie economic competition, military rivalry, and ideology. While the confrontation in the Indo-Pacific region may resemble 19th-century gunboat diplomacy [Lieven], the tensions are intertwined with the realities of security today: digital technology, biosecurity, and the green transition.

Geopolitical uncertainty circles back to, and, in turn, interacts with the climate problem. Whether in the gas fields of central Asia [Armando] or the pipelines of eastern Europe [Laffitte], energy is a source of power in all senses of the word. To the extent that a "liberal international order" ever existed – for the benign notion obscures the brutal global history of the late 20th century [Bennett] – it depended on access to cheap and abundant energy. As the energy system changes, the international system changes with it.

This new picture is forcing a worldwide debate about independence and self-reliance in the context of globalisation. Much more than a narrow foreign policy matter, the consequences of the pandemic, the energy transition, and the climate crisis show how geopolitics determine the security, safety, and quality of lives everywhere. In Europe, the European institutions have seized upon proposals, spearheaded by France but that resonate much more broadly, for a more "autonomous" or even "sovereign" European Union. A progressive version of such a shift could bring a necessary correction to a form of globalisation that has stretched too far for people and planet. However, isolationism also risks undermining global solidarity and discussions of European sovereignty often overlook questions of democratic and social legitimacy [Akgüc].

This geopolitical moment has thrust many green proposals into the mainstream. From state support for expanding renewable energy production

to reshoring certain critical industries, green economic policies would make Europe more secure and less dependent on other parts of the world, including on rival powers. For a Europe divided on defence policy, a more holistic understanding of security that spans environmental security, human rights and democracy, and digital rights and cybersecurity provides a better starting point for a response to the complexities of 21st-century geopolitics [Haavisto]. Opposition to authoritarian regimes also reflects how repression, censorship, and unfreedom anywhere ultimately undermine the integrity of freedom and democracy in Europe too [Ashdown].

The lack of international progress on climate action points to the need for a geopolitical approach that puts climate and ecology at the centre of European foreign policy. The European Green Deal, if truly realised as a project for social and industrial transformation, can be a tool to carry and drag other regions along in the green transition [Schmid]. Cajoling states around the world to bring forward climate action will require both leadership by example as well as trickier, more transactional endeavours [Newell]. In a world where, from the Amazon rainforest to the deserts of Western Sahara, green issues can be mapped onto the fault lines of domestic and international politics, such an approach is long overdue [Awuapila, Dias Da Mota Junior, Marcellesi, Momčilović, and Turan].

Adopting a geopolitical lens is not without its dangers. A world perceived to be full of threats and tensions tends towards walls and conflicts [Dalby] and different agendas compete and overlap in the debate over Europe's geopolitical future. Autonomy and security are also used to argue for hard borders and an energy transition that does little more than redraw the frontiers of extraction [Diaz and Cabaña]. Faced with global issues of a scale that means "no one can lose, or everyone loses", Europe cannot fence itself off from the world's problems [Robinson].

As Europe slowly defines its geopolitical stance, green politics can make an essential progressive contribution to the debate. The Greens' economic vision promises a more autonomous, sustainable, and just

Europe and their broader worldview both integrates a global justice perspective while recognising that Europe should be prepared to wield its power and influence. As geopolitics is about who can do what where, about power and its limits, this lens might not always come naturally for green politics. But questions of energy, socio-economic model, and democracy and human rights are inseparable from geopolitics today. Far from clichés about peace, love, and harmony, the Greens have built, through values and experience, a coherent and credible geopolitical vision based on the world as it is [Neumann]. Rooted in principles of justice, it runs through overcoming division to deepen European cooperation, reconnecting societies with the materiality of the planet, and tempering the worst aspects of globalisation. The task at hand is to make it a reality.

> No man is an island entire of itself; every man
> is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
> if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
> is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as
> well as any manner of thy friends or of thine
> own were; any man's death diminishes me,
> because I am involved in mankind.
> And therefore never send to know for whom
> the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.
>
> Meditation XVII
> *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*
> John Donne

The editorial board and the team pay tribute to the contribution of Annabelle Dawson, who brought editorial excellence to the journal for three years, and Suzanne van den Eynden, who was an invaluable partner and board member. We thank them for their support and wish them all the best for the future.

WE NEED TO TALK

WHY CHANGE ONLY COMES THROUGH COMMUNICATION

AN INTERVIEW WITH
PEKKA HAAVISTO

International crises from the pandemic to the recent desperate withdrawal from Afghanistan are forcing a debate on whether Europe has the means to take care of its own security and defence in an unpredictable world. While some argue for Europe to be shut off and others for a defence focused entirely on the armed forces, international cooperation remains crucial for a safer, more peaceful world, and security today means far more than the military. We spoke to Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto about some of the big questions Europe faces today.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: What are the greatest geopolitical challenges facing Europe?

PEKKA HAAVISTO: In Finland, and also within the Finnish Greens, we take a wider perspective on security challenges. Security is not only about military tensions, competition between the great powers, and hybrid threats, but also environmental disruption, human rights violations, and migration. The greatest geopolitical challenge is clearly the climate. And it should also be underlined how mitigating climate change is a source of security more generally.

In Finland, the word "geopolitics" traditionally implies Russia and relations between Russia and the West. But looking at global actors today, the geopolitics of the US-China relationship is now having a greater influence on Europe. China is no longer just a third player; it has become the main player alongside the United States. For Europe, tensions between the US, China, or Russia for that matter, are not only about competition between the great powers but are also about

values, because Europe's strength lies in the values that it represents. If you take a narrow geopolitical view, you start to look at the map to see who neighbours whom and so forth. But when you look at values, there are many kinds of combinations.

How do you see the geopolitical role of the European Union?

I personally favour – and this is also the position of the Finnish government – the European Union developing its own security capacity. Of course, discussions on a European strategic compass are still in the early stages.[1] We are also fully aware in Finland that many EU countries base their security on military cooperation through NATO membership. However, the new security threats of the 21st century do not replace the old ones but add new layers: a hybrid layer, a cyber layer, and so forth.

The European Union as an institution is more suited to effectively responding to these new layers of security than a traditional military alliance such as NATO. All European countries have faced cyber-attacks in recent years. For real cybersecurity, you need more than just military capabilities. It requires civilian capabilities and the deeper involvement of civilian authorities. Whatever the EU can do to work on these wider security challenges is welcome. The basis of the EU's security policy should be a real response to health, hybrid, and climate risks.

The European Union also needs to develop stronger rapid response capabilities. After what happened at Kabul airport, many in the Finnish parliament asked, "Where was the EU? Which EU institutions were involved in the evacuation?" It was a clear example of where the EU should have cooperated more, and where it would have played to its strengths by doing so. A rapid reaction response is not only necessary for situations like Kabul; the ability to respond to environmental catastrophes and challenges is also critical. When I worked at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), we used to discuss the "green berets". Flooding and forest fires are the new security threats, and the EU should be able to react together as one when they hit, in Europe as around the world.

The evacuation from Kabul airport was a tragic and chaotic end to Western involvement in Afghanistan. What lessons should Europe draw from the withdrawal?

There will be different analyses made in the aftermath of Afghanistan and different European states will take different views.

1 The European "strategic compass" is a process led by European Union member states to develop a shared understanding of the defence and security challenges faced by the EU. It aims to provide a basis for further defence and crisis management cooperation.

Currently, there are at least three competing narratives. The American narrative is quite narrow – their line is that they were in Afghanistan for their national security. Once their security was guaranteed, it was time to leave. The European narrative is wider, saying that, yes, we were there for our own security and the security of other democratic countries, but our presence in the country was also about Afghanistan's development, democracy, and the rights of women and girls. The third narrative is the Taliban narrative that says that Afghanistan is now free: the occupation is over, foreign troops are out, and peace is restored. History will be composed of these three competing narratives.

Looking at the situation in Afghanistan, the next catastrophe is already around the corner. The loss of democracy, the rights of women and girls, and education was already a catastrophe. But now Afghanistan faces famine. International development programmes in the country are faced with a very difficult situation. And Europe is faced with a daunting question: should we, without recognising the Taliban, support the country so that people can live day to day? So that nurses and schoolteachers receive their salaries? That is why, under these circumstances, the EU wants to discuss a "humanitarian plus" initiative. Europe also recognises that the stability of Afghanistan is important for the region and the world.

Europe is suddenly facing a very different reality, and these are the elements that are left in its hands. It is a major disappointment that the peace talks in Doha did not bring about a government of national unity in Afghanistan so more of the values that Europe represents would be respected. Europe put down conditions for future cooperation: free movement of people, respect for human rights, respect for the rights of women and girls. For the moment, the Taliban has met none of these preconditions.

Will the experience of Afghanistan change how Finland and the EU approach the promotion of human rights around the world?

The question about massive peacekeeping and crisis management operations is always whether they are actually effective. Of course, there are frustrations, and we have to analyse what went wrong. The lessons from Afghanistan need to be taken into account when planning any future action in the Sahel region, in Niger or Mali, for example. However, I do not think that the experience in Afghanistan has changed the concept of intervening to prevent fundamental human rights violations. The responsibility to protect, and to uphold United Nations decisions, is still in our playbook. Afghanistan will not be the last conflict in which help will be needed.

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT, AND TO UPHOLD UNITED NATIONS DECISIONS, IS STILL IN OUR PLAYBOOK

However, there are lessons to be learned. From 2002, I worked in Afghanistan for the UNEP. We used to visit Taliban villages, where we would meet Taliban supporters. They would ask: "What good can the international community do for us? Can you build wells? Can you establish schools?" When we went back to Kabul, we would explain to the Afghan government that we had met with opposition supporters and that they would like to see some development in their region. It was always disturbing to be met with the accusation that we had been talking to the wrong people, that we should only talk to people who support the government. Only the "right" people deserved our help. A black-and-white reading of a post-conflict situation is a recipe for disaster. After a conflict, you need inclusiveness from the very beginning to start to rebuild.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan followed another major geopolitical shock, the experience of the pandemic. Richer countries have hoarded vaccines and many poorer countries have been left without. Vaccines and medical supplies have become tools for geopolitical leverage. How should Europe respond?

Going back to the first days of the Covid-19 episode, the lack of solidarity shown between European countries as they first handled the crisis was terrible. Countries put themselves first and closed borders to stop medical supplies and protective equipment from reaching their neighbours. Again everybody asked, "Where is Europe?" The vaccination rollout eventually helped European countries get back on the same page. However, overall the experience of the pandemic has been quite painful. In northern Europe, Finland and Sweden have deployed quite different approaches to the pandemic and this has created tensions at times. It is still under construction, but greater European coordination on aspects of health policy is needed.

COMMUNICATION DOES NOT MEAN SELLING OUT ON OUR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES; IT MEANS UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

The fight against the pandemic will only be over when it is won everywhere, so vaccination solidarity is crucial. We're running against time to prevent the emergence of new variants. Europe needs to support those countries that are still at the beginning or in the middle of their vaccine programmes. That can happen initially through COVAX, but the long-term solution has to be supporting vaccine production around the world. For example, I have spoken to the foreign ministers of India, Rwanda, and Senegal and they all have plans to produce vaccines. Europe needs to do what it can to allow for the establishment of national and regional vaccine producers.

Let's move on to the place of climate and ecological issues in foreign policy. Avoiding the worst impacts of the ecological crisis depends on the decarbonisation of the entire world, not just Europe. What levers does Europe have to accelerate climate action globally?

Europe has a particular responsibility here. Finland is aiming for carbon neutrality by 2035 and at the current speed we could potentially reach that goal a couple of years earlier. At the European level, the goal of a climate-neutral Europe is also a very positive step. In terms of levers, there are the discussions with big players such as Russia and China to convince them to bring their goals forwards. With developing countries, the most important lever is providing support for climate adaptation and access to new technologies. One new approach that Finland has taken is building a coalition of finance ministers for climate change. Sixty-five countries are now taking part in the coalition, currently co-chaired by Finland and Indonesia. It is a reminder that climate change is not just a matter for environment ministers. It is the finance ministers who are the essential decision-makers who can plan economic and social development in such a way that climate goals can be met.

It is perhaps in its own neighbourhood that Europe has the most influence. Energy geopolitics is particularly tense in eastern Europe. The construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a major fossil fuel project that risks isolating Poland and Ukraine. How do you read the situation, and what role can the European Green Deal play?

The rising price of natural gas will make for a difficult situation, especially in the winter months. There is a risk that people will associate the cost of energy with green policies and the energy transition. However, it is clear that the Russian government is influencing supplies for political leverage. Moldova's contract with Russia's state-controlled Gazprom, the largest supplier of natural gas to Europe, expired this autumn. Gazprom has extended the contract but is raising the price dramatically.

My diplomatic answer to questions about Nord Stream 2 is that the pipeline runs through the Gulf of Finland, but that Finland is not part of it. It is up to the recipients of this energy to see how it fits into their plans, and to calculate how it will affect their environmental objectives. On the European Green Deal, one complex question is whether it will fund nuclear energy. There are several dividing lines. However, the very nature of nuclear power creates a dependency on providers and the safe treatment of nuclear waste remains a challenge. My choice, out of all these options, would be to invest in renewables.

How does green politics inform your approach to foreign policy?

The Finnish Greens have always taken a wider approach to green politics. In our very early years, there was a fight between the ecologists, who supported a narrower, more environmental politics, and the broader green agenda covering themes such as human rights, feminism, and the rights of people with disabilities. The wider agenda won and turned out to be key to our political success. The Finnish Greens have been in government five times because of this agenda, even if environmental and ecological issues are at the forefront of our policies.

Currently, the Greens hold the ministry for foreign affairs, the ministry of the interior, and the environment ministry, which also coordinates climate issues. Green ministers, therefore, have many opportunities to influence national politics, as well as politics at the European level. When there are discussions about the overall situation and crises around the world, we always raise environmental security, the link between conflict and climate and environmental issues, and bridges between peace and environmental issues. This perspective is something that green politics can take the lead on.

The Nordic countries have a reputation for an active foreign policy based on values such as peace. Could the European Union learn from the Nordic approach?

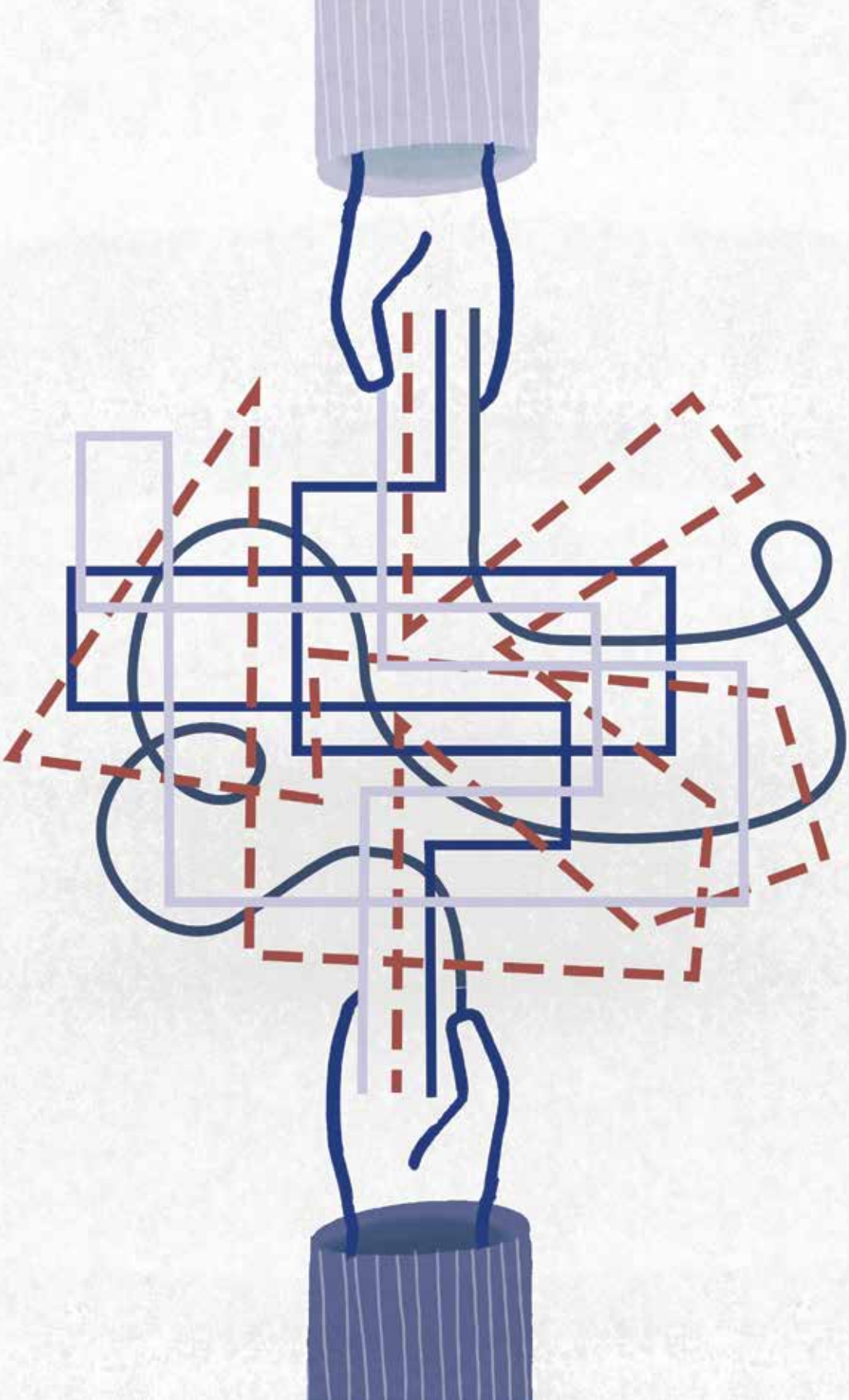
Three elements of the Nordic model are interesting for the European Union. First, the Nordic countries manage to cooperate closely amongst themselves despite quite fundamental foreign policy differences. While Denmark, Iceland, and Norway are NATO members, Finland and Sweden are not, and Iceland and Norway are not part of the European Union. Through the Nordic Five, we nevertheless come together like a family because we share values that cut across these different alliances.

Second, an active approach to development policy is a clear source of strength. Here Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are often even better than Finland; they consistently increase their overseas aid and development

spending. Every country has populists who argue against solidarity with the rest of the world. They do not want migrants to enter Europe, or European countries to spend money on overseas development. We need to make our own proposals against this lack of solidarity. In the world we currently live in, you never know when you might need it yourself.

Finally, the Nordic countries are willing to speak to almost everyone. While condemning the illegal occupation of Crimea and human rights violations such as the case of Alexei Navalny, Nordic countries maintained a dialogue with Russia. We are all extremely concerned about what is happening in Belarus. Nevertheless, I am trying to maintain contact with my counterpart in Belarus, because we need to find a way out of this crisis. Likewise, dialogue between the opposition and the government is needed. You have to speak to the people that you disagree with. Communication does not mean selling out on our values and principles; it means understanding the world we live in and what the real risks are. We cannot build peace without communication.

PEKKA HAAVISTO
is the minister for foreign affairs of Finland. From 1995 to 1999, he served as minister of development and the environment, and from 2013 to 2014 as minister for international development. From 1993 to 1995 and from 2018 to 2019, he was leader of the Greens in Finland. He stood as a candidate in the Finnish presidential election in 2012 and in 2018.



WILL ECOLOGY EXPAND THE EU'S HORIZONS?

ARTICLE BY
LUCILE SCHMID

Faced with the colossal challenge of the climate emergency, the leading figures of the European Union are saying all the right things. But the voices across the world calling with increasing volume for change will only be satisfied by real action. With the United States flip-flopping on its commitments and China showing disregard for democratic principles, the EU has an opportunity to show real leadership on climate and environmental issues. Such a stance could imbue the EU and its institutions with renewed momentum and legitimacy, both at home and abroad.

FR

This article is available in French on the *Green European Journal* website.

LA DIPLOMATIE CLIMATIQUE PERMETTRA-T-ELLE À L'UNION EUROPÉENNE DE PRENDRE SON ENVOL ?
Le pacte vert peut-il dynamiser l'action climatique internationale et donner un nouveau souffle au projet européen ?

When Ursula von der Leyen staked her claim to becoming the next head of the European Commission, addressing the European Parliament in July 2019, she put the Green Deal at the heart of her vision. It was an *idée-force*, a central pivot. The concept broke with the spectre of austerity policies and acknowledged the strong Green results at the May 2019 European elections. It also opened up the political game. In the European Parliament, the Green Deal had long been supported by Green MEPs, particularly the German Greens. It was even more popular on the Left in Europe (through DiEM25's Green New Deal for Europe manifesto, for example) and in the United States, championed among the Democrats by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. The European Green Deal combined international ambition, the transformation of European societies and economies, and a unifying project. Indeed, von der Leyen herself emphasised that the coming period would be marked by profound geopolitical changes linked to ecology and digital technology.

Two years on, the Green Deal is the keystone of the Commission's programme. It commits to a carbon tax at Europe's borders; a veto on trade agreements with countries that do not respect the Paris Agreement; transition funds worth 100 billion euros for coal-dependent regions; a rail plan to provide alternatives to flying; strengthened environmental standards; the transformation of the agricultural model; and an end to fossil fuel investment by the European Investment Bank, which promises to devote 50 per cent of its financing to climate projects by 2025. The Commission has stayed the course despite the pandemic, publishing ambitious proposals for a new Farm to Fork food strategy and plans for a circular economy in 2020. In July 2021, it released its Fit for 55 climate package including 12 legislative proposals and policy initiatives. It aims to adapt EU policies to reduce net emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030 and make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

The intention is clear: for the EU to assume a form of climate leadership by example, to challenge itself internally in order to build influence internationally.

A GREEN POWER?

At present, no one holds the key to effective and convincing climate diplomacy, either at the multilateral level, or in bilateral or regional relations. The meetings of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP) are essential occasions for negotiation, but they have not produced any binding multilateralism up to the task of tackling the climate emergency. While the Paris Agreement sets the objective of limiting climate change to between 1.5 and 2 degrees of warming, the current policies of nation-states tend towards 3 degrees. The drumbeat of warnings from scientists has sharpened the disappointment of citizens, who denounce governments' cynicism and lack of courage. The Green Climate Fund, formally established at COP16 in Cancún in 2010 to help the most vulnerable countries, is still struggling to reach the agreed amount of 100 billion dollars.

Today, the climate emergency is unfolding in a more unstable world. China and the United States in particular are in a state of "cold peace" and illiberal democracies are flourishing. China is proclaiming its ambition to be a green power while simultaneously stepping up its territorial and economic offensives. The US is seeking to fight the Chinese incursion in the Indo-Pacific region (via the Aukus naval pact with Australia and the UK, for example), while its relations with its European allies are in crisis. Ecological awareness is growing, but the threat of conflict remains, hegemonic ambitions are on full display, and uncertainty prevails. The EU is in a different situation to the US or China, but must still take the international context into account.

TO BE CREDIBLE, THE EU MUST RESOLVE THE CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS BETWEEN MEMBER STATES THAT THE GREEN DEAL HAS REVEALED

The debate on European power has returned to the fore with recent shifts in the transatlantic relationship linked to NATO and the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The subject is not new. As early as the 1970s, Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung spoke of a superpower in the making.[1] Numerous concepts arose to represent a quest for influence that stays true to founding principles such as peace and the promotion of democracy through *doux commerce*: normative power, civil power, peaceful power, soft power. None were entirely convincing, no doubt due to the absence of a fully developed plan and a lack of political will on the part of the member states. Can the climate emergency create that necessity?

Climate issues escape the classic geopolitical vision as they are inherently borderless, even if people – and, more broadly, living things – are affected differently depending on the societies, location, and ecosystems in which they live. Hence the notion of the "shared but differentiated responsibility" in global climate negotiations. This idea recognises the universal nature of climate disruption as well as the specificities of each country's history, financial means and power, and geographical and economic situation. From this perspective, the fact that the EU is not a state but rather a community of states – its hybrid nature is somewhere between federal and intergovernmental – can be an asset. For example, the EU is able to mediate between the most vulnerable states and others. After all, it is already engaged in a constant mediation exercise between its members.

But to be credible, the EU must resolve the contradictions and tensions between member states that the Green Deal has revealed. For although the Green Deal raises familiar questions in terms of legal and procedural provisions and the reality of national practices, their scope here is unprecedented. First of all, there is the challenge of converting economies that are heavily dependent on coal such as Czechia, Germany, and Poland. It will also be necessary to break with a certain quid pro quo culture (echoing Margaret Thatcher's "I want my money back") in which the interests of the most powerful states and economic actors prevail over a common project. This requires strong and active alliances between the Commission and the European Parliament, but also between the member states that wish to move forward. Such an outcome cannot be taken for granted. Although France has supported the Green Deal from the outset, it has maintained a contradictory position on the Common Agricultural Policy that essentially undermines it.

1 Johan Galtung (1973). *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Beyond the tensions between national interests and the ecological imperative, there is still much work to be done to link the Green Deal to social justice. For example, building a true European rail network means reconciling public investment, competition rules, and national contexts (to prevent the kind of backlash seen in France in spring 2018, when massive strikes broke out in response to a European competition action against regional train lines). Similarly, there is no magic formula for the creation of green jobs, despite considerable optimism. Today's urgent needs include providing appropriate training for millions of people, setting up a proper industrial ecosystem, relocating certain kinds of production, and rethinking globalisation. From the very start, the green transition must be linked to social priorities to avoid France's *gilets jaunes* spreading across Europe.

Is the complexity of relations between states, the diversity of interests among Europe's cast of actors, an opportunity to assert a form of know-how? Could the European Green Deal be a laboratory for wider climate negotiations? These are central questions. As the difficulties in implementing the Paris Agreement have shown, the main challenge is bringing climate diplomacy down to earth. If we can first believe in it and then actually do it, the EU could provide a promising landing site.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

The European Union's credibility as an example and mediator on climate issues must also be considered in comparison with the ambitions of other nations. Since the Paris Agreement, China has gradually asserted its climate ambitions with the overt goal of taking advantage of the American withdrawal under Donald Trump. The term "ecological civilisation" even made its way into the Chinese Constitution in 2018. In September 2020, before the United Nations General Assembly, Xi Jinping announced that his country had set two goals: to reach peak CO_2 emissions "before 2030" and to achieve carbon neutrality "before 2060". In 2021, at the same forum, the Chinese president confirmed these choices, this time committing to end financing for new coal-fired power plants abroad. Xi Jinping has presented the transformations linked to the ecological transition as opportunities and not just a crisis or threat. According to Chinese environmental policy expert Coraline Goron, the Chinese government has made the transition "a positive narrative, a key element of the 'Chinese dream' and of the 'new era' of renewal for the nation".[2]

It is true that China is still the world's leading polluter, and that the Chinese state often has difficulty imposing its decisions on the

2 Coraline Goron (2018). "Civilisation écologique et limites politiques du concept chinois de développement durable". *Perspectives chinoises*, 2018(4), pp. 41-55.

provinces.[3] But China's determination to develop renewable energies remains impressive, and it has reaped significant benefits from its exports. The Chinese example is even fuelling questions in Europe about the supposed links between ecological urgency, authoritarianism, and efficiency.[4] Given its desire to interweave a strategy of influence, an economic offensive, and political authoritarianism, China's commitments cannot escape contradictions of an economic nature (the trade-offs between growth, consumption, and the sober use of energy and resources). But the main question posed by the Chinese model remains that of the disconnection between society and political strategy: how viable is a top-down green transition, deployed at a breakneck pace and in the absence of democratic dialogue?

As for the United States, following Joe Biden's election, the US immediately sought to rejoin the Paris Agreement and promised to double aid to developing countries to deal with climate change. On the domestic front, the focus is on decarbonising the US economy by linking it to the post-Covid-19 recovery. US commitments will undoubtedly have ripple effects on the commitments of other countries. But the US government's position seems to be guided mainly by economic considerations: creating jobs in sustainable and renewable energies, reducing the bill for extreme weather events, and competing with China by becoming a leader in new sectors such as electric cars, batteries, and charging stations.[5] Ultimately, given the strength of climate scepticism as represented by Trump, the American position is fragile. What might happen in the event of a future Republican win remains uncertain.

GLOBAL CALLS FOR CHANGE

Internationally, the climate issue is no longer limited to the position of states. More than defence or even foreign policy, climate issues have given rise to the emergence of new forms of democratic remonstrance that resonate on a global scale. A new alterglobalisation is afoot, the intensity of which is fed by a sense of urgency and frequent scientific warnings. Youth mobilisations have become a common sight across the world. "System change, not climate change," chant the demonstrators. Beyond just young people, a real cultural battle is playing out around the climate issue, calling into question growth, productivism, and our understanding of globalisation.

These calls upon states have become impossible to ignore. Increasingly, they include ideas on what public policies or institutions would look like if adapted to the ecological emergency.

3 Géraldine Kühn (2019). "La Chine peut-elle devenir verte? Les obstacles nationaux à la concrétisation de la « civilisation écologique » chinoise". *Décryptage* (no. 23). Paris: La Fabrique Ecologique.
4 Emeline Baudet et al (2020). "Gouverner la transition écologique: démocratie ou autoritarisme". *Note* (no. 38). Paris: La Fabrique Ecologique.
5 Jean-Marc Four & Franck Ballanger (2021). "Les États-Unis et le climat: l'économie d'abord". *France Culture*. 2 May 2021.

THE EU COULD BE A MEDIATING INSTITUTION AND SET AN EXAMPLE THROUGH THE GREEN DEAL

In November 2020, a group of young people from the Fridays for Future movement held a mock COP26. "We're going to show the world what would happen if we were the decision-makers, and what a COP should look like," explained an organiser.[6] The meeting resulted in the drafting of a treaty to change public policy.[7] Ramping up pressure on institutions, climate grievances are increasingly heard in courts in both the US and Europe. Such legal action is often welcomed by judges.[8]

The climate emergency is thus creating an unprecedented mix of diplomatic negotiations and democratic mobilisation. Within the institutions themselves, supporters of more radical measures are making their voices heard.[9] Large corporations and governments are challenged, accused of neglecting intergenerational solidarity and the choices that need to be made. In the face of these movements, the EU could once again be a mediating institution and set an example through the Green Deal. Provided, of course, that it remains unified and honours its own climate commitments. The prominent place of law in the challenge to states is reminiscent of the EU's institutional culture, which closely associates law and politics. For a Europe that is not well liked by its citizens, this situation is an opportunity to renew its legitimacy.

UNLOCKING THE EU'S POTENTIAL?

It is striking that, in the matter of a few months, ecology has provided the European Union with the vision and impetus that it had been lacking for some time, both internally and in relation to the rest of the world. At a time when climate protests are taking place from Australia to Sweden to the Americas and are mobilising millions of young people, the Green Deal links institutional ambition with powerful social momentum. The project is not only an economic and social programme; it is a potential locus for democratic aspirations that exist well beyond Europe.

But a project to build European credibility cannot be based solely on the Green Deal. More broadly, Europe must allow itself to have a historical vision and imagine its own future around climate issues. This is a difficult exercise for an EU that was created precisely to turn its back on world wars. The objective

6 Audrey Garric (2020). "350 étudiants organisent une fausse COP26 pour montrer « ce qui se passerait s'ils étaient les décideurs »". *Le Monde*. 19 November 2020.
7 Jessica Murray (2020). "'Mock Cop26' activists vote on treaty ahead of 2021 climate summit". *The Guardian*. 1 December 2020.
8 In a ruling handed down on 14 October 2021, the Paris Administrative Court ordered the state to repair the damage caused by its failure to combat climate change. This implies not only the adoption of measures to put an end to it, but also that these measures be implemented within a sufficiently short period of time to prevent the aggravation of the damage observed. The excess on the emissions cap set by the first carbon budget (2015-2018) will have to be compensated by 31 December 2022 at the latest.
9 The High Council on Climate (Haut Conseil pour le Climat), an independent body created in 2018 in response to the *gilets jaunes* movement, has criticised the French government's Climate and Resilience Bill as insufficiently ambitious.

of building peace has led it to develop an apolitical narrative to escape the bellicose values that dominate relations of power. But the project of climate leadership calls for Europe to take the risk of entering fully into the world as it is today. The Green Deal can be a means of exerting that leadership, but not an end in itself.

Where consensus is required but difficult to achieve, the European Union has often been fond of fudges that hide disagreements. Legal pathways become the only means to face up to internal conflicts. Averse to division and disagreement, the EU takes refuge behind the unanimity rule, preferring to practise morality and law rather than politics. How then can the concert of European nations play its part in the face of the conflicts inherent to climate issues? Can Europe take all facets of the issue into account – society, migration, economic confrontations, support for the most vulnerable? Undeniably, this presupposes a re-politicisation of Europe and the creation of a dynamic combining efficiency, democracy, and openness towards the world.

Rather than imagining a state that goes beyond states, we should see the European Union as an association of multiple histories, the interweaving of different peoples who agree on a shared idea of the future. This is what the Green Deal can encourage, if it is based on genuine social considerations, and on an engagement with the world that leaves the idea of fortress Europe behind. Paradoxically, because of its reliance on intergovernmental concertation, the EU is an institution that can claim to play a decisive role in the new climate order that is yet to be built. But it still needs to find the meaning within its story, and to set out on a new path to building a common future. This is what more and more of its citizens are asking of it today.

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HOW WE PUT OUT THE FIRE

AN INTERVIEW WITH
KIM STANLEY ROBINSON

Like Dante in the inferno, for humanity in the first decades of the 21st century, the only way is through. In *The Ministry for the Future*,[1] writer Kim Stanley Robinson imagines that path, telling the story of a world that somehow manages to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. A future history that does not shy away from tragedy or violence, the novel does not offer a linear progression. Instead, it points to the institutions, levers, and struggles to be seized upon on the messy road to a world that is not just liveable, but better.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: Your latest novel unfolds over the critical decades leading up to 2050, the year that humanity has set to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. The setting is much more immediate than some of your other novels such as *2312* and *New York 2140*; is the age of science fiction upon us?

KIM STANLEY ROBINSON: I think so, but I've thought this for a long time now, certainly since 2000. The future dates that appear in my fiction don't really indicate a changing view. But part of my project has been driving me to set the dates of my future fictions closer and closer to our present. I've done that in part because the pace of change has accelerated and we've come to some crucial tipping points, ecologically and socially. It seems very clear that what humanity does in the 2020s will have an outsized influence on what comes after. If we don't make huge changes, we will initiate a mass extinction event that future generations won't be able to recover from. If we change quickly enough, we may set a course for a just and sustainable human future in a healthy biosphere. These futures are radically different and there is no easily habitable middle ground.

1 Kim Stanley Robinson (2020). *The Ministry for the Future*. New York, NY: Orbit Books.

If you are interested in writing about the present, it obtrudes as the story of our time even for science fiction writers. If you like to set stories in various futures, as I do, then they all lead back to the coming decade as the crucial time.

The Paris Agreement is central to *The Ministry for the Future*. Throughout the novel, the agreement is messily implemented: countries negotiate over their climate commitments, under-report emissions, and cut corners where they can. Nevertheless, the agreement gradually guides the world towards a more liveable future. Does this point to the necessity of global governance, however flawed, to making headway on climate change?

The climate crisis is global and concerns Earth's biosphere as a totality. But we live in a nation-state system in which each nation sets its own rules and exists within a paradigm of comparative advantage and zero-sum politics. Even when not at war, nations see themselves as competitors, causing national interests to take priority over global concerns.

A global problem is awkward for the nation-state system. We find ourselves in various versions of the prisoner's dilemma, in which you might do better if you trust your fellow prisoner and know that they trust you, but this is hard. It's easier to pursue one's own interests and hope it won't ultimately wreck the both of you. That being the case, international treaties such as the Paris Agreement are the best we can hope for. Solutions to climate change need to be pursued jointly by all nations to work effectively. It was the awareness of our shared fate that brought the agreement into being in the first place. Now we need to live up to it. That won't be easy.

Your novel treats the climate question as a fundamentally geopolitical issue. From tensions between the US and China to the gulf in access to vaccines between the Global North and South, how do you read world politics today?

Many of the tensions go back to the idea that my nation does better if yours does worse. If you are doing better, that threatens me. None of this holds for climate change. But, in a capitalist world, the basic question is: how can we make a profit from this? That question boils down to competition. There is money to be made in reacting to climate change faster than the industries of other nations. It is a kind of double set of imperatives that we have to avoid turning into a double bind.

If the race for profit and comparative advantage were aligned with the race to decarbonise our civilisation, this could even be seen as a good thing. However, the situation commands that no nation be left behind, as that would harm everyone. "No one can lose, or everyone loses" is a hard concept to bring into international relations, but the climate crisis is

IT WAS THE AWARENESS OF OUR SHARED FATE THAT BROUGHT THE AGREEMENT INTO BEING. NOW WE NEED TO LIVE UP TO IT

forcing us into that new kind of cooperation. The competitive aspect then begins to recede and look pathological or self-destructive.

You're based in California. From your point of view, what positive role can Europe play in the world when it comes to the climate? Where does Europe have leverage?

Europe is interesting precisely because it is a group of nation-states that don't always share the same interests, so accommodations have to be made. The EU is a model for how broader international cooperation can work successfully. In the aggregate, it is also one of the three or four biggest economies on Earth, and a social-political unit on a par with the United States, China, and India. In many senses, Europe is more advanced than the others, although partly because of a troubling history that leaves it with the obligation to take bold steps to help the whole world as a matter of (mostly psychic) reparations. Europe has been central in world history for 400 or 500 years, and that isn't completely over. Europe can be a model of effective multinational cooperation.

The novel opens with a horrific heatwave in India that kills 20 million people. In its aftermath, the Indian political class is swept away by a people's movement that mobilises India's vast population to dismantle fossil fuel infrastructure and turn towards regenerative agriculture. This turn of events hinges on tragedy but its consequences are dynamic and hopeful. Is this a conscious effort to stress the importance of politics to our fate?

I wanted to suggest that the nations that are the first to suffer the worst climate change catastrophes might lead the way in trying to deal with the problem. That could be India. It is the world's biggest democracy and a very complex political entity, and is particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events including heatwaves. Certainly, politics is crucial to all of us, everywhere. Science as a political force has done much to improve people's situations, but even our successes have secondary effects that can increase the burden on the biosphere. It becomes a matter of directing science and society to cope with both old and new challenges.

While technical solutions to climate change have already been invented, we don't have a way to pay ourselves to enact these at scale because they don't offer the highest rate of return in the current capitalist economic system. What we need are viable reforms that create a working post-capitalism. This could initially take the form of Keynesian control of the economy for the human good. For economic reforms that require political systems to exert their power to a maximal

extent, working political majorities will have to legislate these solutions. So yes, politics is key. As always.

Throughout the plot, it seems that some, even most, of the progress achieved by humanity is somehow connected to the violent acts of the Children of Kali, an ecoterrorist group formed after the heatwave in India. Should we read this as a pessimistic statement as to humanity's ability to change without being violently forced to?

No, that isn't a correct reading. Most of the progress in the book is achieved by science and politics working at emergency speed. The strand of the book concerned with the Children of Kali exists because it seems to me that there will be people in the future struck so hard by climate disasters that they will be radicalised and angry. It brings up the question of violence for sure – because it seems like violence will happen, and I wanted my novel to portray a realistic future. Will the violence in the future be as targeted and effective as the work of the Children of Kali? Not very likely. It's possible, but violence so quickly gets out of control, and the backlash against it is often even worse, such that the subsequent repression is more damaging than any good that the violence might have done.

That said, Andreas Malm makes an interesting distinction between violence against people and violence against property – sabotage and the like. When should ordinary citizens resist the slow violence of the fossil fuel industries and their supporters with physical resistance, including "blowing up pipelines", as he puts it?[2] It is an important question. My novel doesn't help think that question through; it is as messy as history itself on this question.

The carbon coin – an idea whereby central banks create new money to fund carbon-negative activities – is a central lever in the book. Is greening the global financial system the key to solving the climate crisis?

It is one of the keys. The real centre of my novel as a political intervention is advocating not the use of violence but rather a Keynesian, even post-Keynesian and post-capitalist political economy in which we pay ourselves more for decarbonising work than for any other work. Carbon-burning activities would be penalised with regulations and taxes strong enough to remove any possibility of making a profit from them. Decarbonising actions of any sort should be rewarded, not just with praise but also with money. You should be able to make your living by doing decarbonising activities of any kind. This shift requires the world's economic system

2 Andreas Malm (2020). *How to Blow Up a Pipeline; Learning to Fight in a World on Fire*. London: Verso.

IDEOLOGICAL PURITY IS NOT THE POINT. IN FACT, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE IN OUR TIME

to be seized for the good of humanity, just as 20th-century governments seized economies during wartime, the Second World War in particular. That kind of major intervention is appropriate, even required, for the good of humanity.

We're witnessing a worldwide attempt to make capitalism greener by replacing fossil inputs with renewables and new technologies. But this does not address how fundamentally unsustainable our societies and indeed our daily lives are. As famously put in *The Leopard*: "If we want everything to stay as it is, everything has to change."[3] How should progressives respond? Cautious optimism? Reject greenwashing? Exploit it for further gains?

All of these reactions would be appropriate. What would be inappropriate would be to reject possible solutions because they are not pure enough, or are seen as complicit or suspect in various ways. Ideological purity is not the point. In fact, it is impossible in our time. We have a biospheric emergency, real and huge and immediate, and we have an existing global political economy, just as real and huge, but inadequate to the problem and in need of rapid reform. In this situation, there won't be an instant revolution to a better system, no matter what some might hope.

What there will be is a grinding, irregular, stepwise shift to a better system; that's the only good option. There will be partial solutions, backsliding, recalcitrance, and outright opposition, so every step forward is worth pursuing in the hope of staggering toward the best result. Purity? Forget about it. Question all your old opinions on this. Geoengineering as a moral hazard, a plot to keep doing capitalism and get away with it? Sure, but such talk belongs back in 1995. Now, geoengineering may represent a necessary clawing-back from utter catastrophe. In the future, we may have to do odd things to escape mass death that would wreck civilisation. Same with nuclear power. Oh my God – so dangerous – yes. But France runs on it, and new kinds of nuclear power are being invented that lessen the dangers. Anything that doesn't burn carbon has to be considered as we try to survive.

As a leftist and an environmentalist, I appeal to all fellow leftists and environmentalists to rethink all the old truisms in the light of the present emergency. History going forward will be a stepwise process that, if it succeeds, will inevitably require leftist solutions. The power of democratic government to take over the economy is the modern version of seizing the means of production for the good of the people. The values of justice and democracy can remain at the forefront, while

3 Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (1960). *The Leopard*. Translated by Archibald Colquhoun. New York, NY: Pantheon.

the technological details will always change, as technology itself changes. Judgment of any particular tactic or technology has to be weighed against the current crisis and the technological and political means at hand. That means a continuous reconsideration of all these questions for maximum effectiveness.

***The Ministry for the Future* was published in 2020, the year the pandemic hit. Ever since, the pandemic has continued to rage, and the effects of climate change have become increasingly palpable. What needs to happen to make this a turning point for the world?**

More awareness, more analysis, more flexibility. The creation of working political majorities in all the major economies, towards taking immediate, strong action in coordination with all other nations through the Paris Agreement. Central banks helping to concoct a new political economy in which money is moved away from carbon-burning activities into decarbonisation. All this will need to be led by the people telling their political representatives to do it. Resistance to all nativist authoritarian leaders encouraging tribalism and ignoring the climate problem; these forces are strong, and they need to be defeated.

What might be stronger, in the end, is a sense of One Planet; that we are all stuck in one biosphere and have to create a good relationship with it or nothing else will work at all. It goes back to awareness and education. If every natural and human event is seen as an aspect of the larger story of coping with climate change and finding a balance between people and biosphere, then the entire structure of feeling in human civilisation will change in accordance with that reality. All the things that happen will be seen in that new light. They will be dealt with in ways that look unlikely now, but will increasingly come to be seen as normal, even the "only way". Of course you take care of your home, your extended body, your one and only life support system. Who wouldn't? It would be stupid not to. And so you find yourself living according to a new worldview, with a new structure of feeling, and in a new political economy. It will happen, and the sooner the better.

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THE UNHEALTHY GEOPOLITICS OF A SOVEREIGN EUROPE

ARTICLE BY
LUIZA BIALASIEWICZ

The Covid-19 pandemic has given rise to a new doctrine of "health security". In geopolitical terms, this conception has created new divisions, while at the same time feeding older, often racialised stereotypes. It has traced new global cartographies of danger, demarcating healthy and unhealthy, "risky" and "less risky" spaces and peoples. Mobility is restricted or imposed in new ways – whether in the case of migrants locked out at the EU's borders, or vulnerable European citizens for whom isolation is not an option. Underpinning this approach is an outdated notion of sovereignty, that needs to be overcome.

Commentators have described the Covid-19 pandemic as heralding a return of geopolitics, unleashing new forms of power-political and biopolitical competition. Pandemic geopolitics has been waged across a range of sites, from global contests over vaccine procurement, and national border closures, to the militarised control of urban space and the bordering of individual bodies, now differentially marked as safe or unsafe. Overall, it has been a thoroughly "unhealthy geopolitics", to use the term coined by political geographers Jennifer Cole and Klaus Dodds.[1]

As Achille Mbembe notes, the pandemic laid tragically bare the unequal global geographies of exposure, risk, and vulnerability, marking out "who has the right to breathe and who does not".[2] Access to vaccines but also oxygen and other vital medical supplies continues

1 Jennifer Cole & Klaus Dodds (2021). "Unhealthy geopolitics? Bordering disease in the time of coronavirus". *Geographical Research*, 59 (1), pp. 169 -181.
2 Achille Mbembe (2021). "The universal right to breathe". *Critical Inquiry*, 47 (S2), pp. S58 -S62.

to be the object of international power politics, multiplying other forms of injustice through the deadly effects of the pandemic. The unhealthy geopolitics of Covid-19 is built upon existing relations of inequality and global hierarchies in production and supply networks, determining who can access health services or, to put it even more bluntly: who lives and who dies. While international programmes such as COVAX and ACT have been lauded for promoting "global health solidarity", they remain a drop in the ocean.[3]

So where does the European Union sit in the geopolitics of the pandemic? The von der Leyen Commission has made much of its aim to promote "health solidarity" within and beyond the borders of the Union. Under the slogan of "No one is safe until everyone is safe", the EU has taken an active role in both the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) – Accelerator and the Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX). International support has been deployed through the creation of "Team Europe", launched by the European External Action Service (EEAS) in April 2020 as a way of pooling resources from member states, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the European Investment Bank. The Team has not only provided vaccines but also other medical supplies, delivered through a series of humanitarian air bridges. In the Commission's words, "Team Europe is a good example of how multilateralism should deliver to the benefit of all, leaving no one behind in the joint endeavour to overcome the pandemic."

Lofty proclamations aside, the limited scope of European assistance, as well as its geographical selectivity, throw into question the "benefit of all". As of the end of September 2021, EU countries had shipped less than 10 per cent of the 500 million vaccines pledged, with significant differences in member states' fulfilment of promised donations. EU countries have targeted their donations, either via COVAX or bilaterally, to "priority countries", most frequently proximate neighbours or former colonies with which they hold close historical or present-day ties. The Commission's continued opposition to the TRIPS waiver agreement – a proposed exception to international intellectual property rules for technologies linked to containing Covid-19 – over a year since South Africa and India called for the initiative fundamentally calls into question the EU's global public health engagement.[4] What is left is a performance of multilateralism, primarily geared towards sustaining Europe's image of itself as a global actor driven by the principle of solidarity.

3 The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator was launched by the World Health Organization and partners in April 2020 to speed up the development and production of, and equitable access to, COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments.
4 "COVID-19: Time for countries blocking TRIPS waiver to support lifting of restrictions". *Amnesty International*. 1 October 2021.

HEALTH SOLIDARITY OR HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY?

The image of the EU as an altruistic global actor cultivated by the European institutions for over a decade clashes directly with the recent push to develop an EU "strategic sovereignty" in a number of areas, including health. This tension between competing geopolitical imaginaries and actual policy choices is crucial to understanding what role the EU will take in the world in the years to come.

Since the notion of sovereignty has come to dominate discussions regarding the EU's capacity to act, within as well as beyond its borders, it is good to reflect briefly on the term, for it is far from innocent. While it has come to be used interchangeably with autonomy (for instance, the term "EU strategic sovereignty" is often used as a synonym for "EU strategic autonomy"), sovereignty does not simply denote autonomy of action. Sovereignty, in its classical geographical definition, is a highly normative concept that links authority, territory, and population. It presumes a sovereign that is rightfully entitled to exercise authority within a given territorial space. While claims to sovereignty do not solely entail claims to territory, we could say that all claims to sovereignty are, to one degree or another, territorial. They are claims to be authorised to govern and determine the applicable rules (and enforce them) within a certain territory and on a certain population (even though such claims are increasingly partial in a globalising world).

Several implications follow from this understanding. First, the founding division between an "inside" and an "outside" that delimits the spaces where sovereignty is exercised is based on exclusion; that is, on a territorial and ideal division between an "us" and a "them". At the same time, the sovereign capacity to act on behalf (and presumably for the benefit) of a certain population in no way presumes a commitment to distributional equality at home, and even less abroad. Sovereignty is thus not necessarily commensurate with solidarity. Finally, since sovereignty is an ideal, it does not necessarily need to be connected to factual conditions or legal status. It is a performative fiction or more precisely, in the words of political philosopher Michael Naas, a "phantasm", whose allure lies "precisely in this elision of a fictional origin and its real effects".[5]

As a political creature, the European Union is often presented as an example of shared or "pooled" sovereignty. Indeed, for the EU, claims to sovereignty are always functional in the sense that they relate to the exercise of a particular power, in a particular field or competence. Vis-à-vis its member states, the EU never makes a comprehensive claim to sovereignty

5 Michael Naas (2008). *Derrida From Now On*. New York: Fordham University Press.

in the traditional sense. But the enactment of "European sovereignty" in the Union's external action is envisioned as something else entirely, mirroring in problematic ways the sort of exclusive and potentially exclusionary understanding of traditional, territorial notions of sovereignty. The attempts by the EU and by member states to "border" pandemic risks are a stark illustration of this conception, as boundary-making and the enforcement of territorial distinction is the most notable aspect of traditional sovereignty.

THE ATTEMPT TO DELIMIT VIROLOGICALLY "SAFE" AND "UNSAFE" SPACES AND POPULATIONS BECAME A GUIDING STRATEGY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

BORDERING THE PANDEMIC

Historically, pandemics have provided key moments in which new borders have been enforced. The Covid-19 pandemic has been no exception. The first "gut" reaction of states to the spread of the disease in the pandemic's early weeks and months were border closures and mobility restrictions. In the EU context, these were seen as an attempt by member states to regain sovereignty in the governance of the pandemic, presuming that territorial controls would somehow stop the progress of an airborne and mobile virus. This was based on misguided assumptions that the virus arrived from abroad, when in fact it was already circulating among national populations (which was already the case when most restrictions came into force). The attempt to delimit virologically "safe" and "unsafe" spaces and populations became a guiding strategy in the fight against Covid-19. There was a hardening not only of EU and national borders but often internal ones as well, with regional and even local administrations pushing to affirm their "territorial sovereignty" in controlling movement.

But this hardening of borders was highly differentiated, and not just in space, with certain kinds of mobility and certain populations more likely to be subject to borders than others. While goods and "essential workers" were permitted to circulate even during the strictest national lockdowns, those "out of place" in national territories (such as precarious or partially documented migrants and intra-EU migrants) became the object of border enforcement. Borders have long been selectively permeable membranes that sort and delimit mobility, of people as well as of other flows. The sorting of desirable and undesirable mobilities is indeed a fundamental aspect of borders under contemporary neoliberal capitalism, hyper-charged during the pandemic by the invocation of the new rubric of "health security" or "biosecurity". As Kezia Barker has argued, states' biosecurity politics always need to negotiate a balance "between too much and too little regulation"; rather than conflicting with global trade, travel, and contemporary neoliberal life more broadly, biosecurity

THE GEOPOLITICAL VISIONS THAT WE INVOKE TO IMAGINE OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD MATTER

emerged as a practice that facilitates these flows by attempting to remove their risky or negative elements. Thus, rather than simply halting circulation, biosecurity relies on policy interventions that facilitate and "optimise" the right sort of circulation.[6]

When examining the border restrictions enacted during the pandemic, it is important to ask who benefited from these restrictions. Whose protection, whose security was guaranteed? The unequal impact of Covid-19 on the most vulnerable in European societies was strongly compounded by unequal forms of immobilisation, through border controls, and forced mobility. Certain populations were much more exposed to viral circulation, such as "essential workers" or those who simply could not afford to isolate. This is an important point to keep in mind when considering the claims to national as well as European sovereignty invoked to enforce new border controls, as though these were magical incantations that would protect all within the territory of the imagined sovereign "safe space" equally.

While pandemic safety was already unequally distributed within the EU, the Union's external borders became an even more dangerous space for migrants. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the "Covid excuse" has been instrumentalised to further restrict those on the move. New forms of pushback, containment, and confinement of migrants at the EU's borders are now justified in the name of both their own – as well as Europeans' – "protection". Noting the multiple instances of pushbacks and port closures in the Mediterranean (such as the declaration of the Italian and Maltese authorities in the spring of 2020 that their ports were "unsafe" for migrants to disembark at), Tazzioli and Stierl describe how border closures were enforced in the name of hygienic-sanitary protective measures, turning the EU "not merely into a hostile, but also an unsafe and risky environment, supposedly unable to take care of asylum seekers and to prevent them from being infected, as well as infecting European citizens".[7] What we have observed in recent years has been not only an unequal bordering of Europe's territories and populations, but also of its "sovereign responsibility" to ensure safety.

BEYOND MEDICAL NATIONALISM

The profoundly unequal impacts of border closures and mobility restrictions during the pandemic urge caution in any further and future European appeals to sovereign governance of health (or other) risks. It is alluring to imagine the creation of a European safe space where health sovereignty can be

6 Kezia Barker (2015). "Biosecurity: securing circulations from the microbe to the macrocosm". *The Geographical Journal*, 181 (4), pp. 357 -65.
7 Martina Tazzioli & Maurice Stierl (2021). "'We Closed the Ports to Protect Refugees.' Hygienic Borders and Deterrence Humanitarianism during Covid-19". *International Political Sociology,* Volume 15, Issue 4. pp 539–558.

ensured by reshoring and enhancing medical and pharmaceutical production capacity and securing critical supplies, so that EU citizens are fully covered in the event of a future health emergency. But how can we ensure that such health sovereignty at home would not adversely impact the health and wellbeing of others beyond the EU's borders? Securing supply chains can easily become hoarding, and the EU's common procurement strategy, lauded as a form of European solidarity, can easily translate into exclusionary market dominance.

How can the EU respond to future health crises in non-exclusionary, non-isolationist ways? If one thing has become clear from the current pandemic, isolated and isolating responses are ineffective against a global virus: they may serve to create the illusion of safety for a short time, but to take the Commission's slogan at face value, in epidemiological terms truly "no one is safe until everyone is safe". Medical nationalism, whether in the realm of vaccines or supplies is, as the former French minister of education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem recently argued, an "imposture", a fiction, in its promise to guarantee health security. [8]

How, then, to begin? The geopolitical visions that we invoke to imagine our place and role in the world matter. They matter a great deal. They are performative fictions that serve to, literally, "make worlds", providing both a description of the sort of world that we want – and a prescription for action. Marrying Europe's global role to an outdated notion of sovereignty is not only misplaced in today's interconnected world; it also risks feeding an illusion of the possibility of sovereign control, privileging closure rather than collaboration, and ignoring the intertwined geographies of vulnerability that connect us all.

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8 Najat Vallaud-Belkacem (2021). "L'impasse du modèle national pour faire face aux crises sanitaires". *Le Grand Continent*. 29 October 2021.

FORGET GEOPOLITICS, SAVE THE CLIMATE

AN INTERVIEW WITH
ANATOL LIEVEN
BY **RODERICK KEFFERPÜTZ**

Anatol Lieven's *Climate Change and the Nation State* criticises national security elites for neglecting the ultimate threat of climate disaster.[1] He tells Roderick Kefferpütz why human rights abuses in China and Russia, the retreat of liberal democracy in the world, and rising geopolitical tensions are nothing compared to what would await us with runaway climate change. Security today starts with flood defences and wind turbines, not aircraft carriers and submarines.

RODERICK KEFFERPÜTZ: You started out as a journalist in Afghanistan before going on to build a long-standing career in global affairs, developing a reputation as a geopolitical super-realist. Now you have written a book on climate change. What happened?

ANATOL LIEVEN: I've simply been convinced by the evidence that climate change is the greatest threat facing both humanity in general, and our Western states and societies in particular. Realists are supposed to pride themselves on recognising the facts, and the fact is that the threat of climate change vastly exceeds the danger of great power competition from China and Russia.

It isn't Russia that is going to destroy western Europe and civilisation over the next century, nor China. It's climate change. I have become increasingly convinced that the concerns of our security establishments are completely misplaced. We talk about terrorism, new weapons systems, killer robots, and the rise of China, but not about the ultimate threat: climate change.

1 Anatol Lieven (2021). *Climate Change and the Nation State: The Realist Case.* London: Penguin.

Why do you think that is?

Because of enormous, institutionalised interests: the military-industrial complex, the huge bureaucracy within the military and associated think tanks, and, most of all, our old-fashioned, traditional mindsets. We need to get away from our classic security beliefs and consider the real threats to our societies in the 21st century, not the 20th-century ones that we are so accustomed to. The residual military and security elites are still living in a mixture of the run-up to the First World War and the Cold War. We need to change their minds.

How is climate change a security issue?

In the grand scheme of things, if we fail to limit climate change quickly and adequately, we will face an apocalyptic threat to human civilisation. If we fail to limit our carbon emissions, we risk hitting tipping points that will get us into feedback loops, such as a massive methane release caused by the Arctic permafrost melting. We could be talking about 3- to 4-degree warming that could turn into 5 degrees. If that happens, agriculture will collapse all over the world. We will be back to temperatures from long before human beings even existed. Some humans will survive, but society will not.

In the short term, countries in south Asia, west Africa, and central America are facing massive climate impacts. The intolerable stress could generate vast flows of forced migration. And we know how migration has been critical to the radicalisation on the right in Europe and North America. So our democratic political systems will come under disastrous strain before any direct catastrophic physical effect of climate change impacts the West. Our democracies will not collapse because of Chinese and Russian authoritarianism. The Russians won't invade Paris. No – the threat is that the French people will elect Marine Le Pen or Eric Zemmour entirely of their own volition.

You argue that "nationalism is perhaps the only force that can overcome climate change". This is in stark contrast to the "think global, act local" cooperative approach that many Greens believe in. Why is nationalism the answer?

Of course we need international cooperation. But international organisations, such as the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, cannot do anything by themselves. States are the only entities that have executive power, as the pandemic has demonstrated. As well as being disastrous in terms of ending the pandemic, the lack of cooperation on Covid-19 is morally wrong. Richer countries are sitting on stocks of vaccines that they will not share with poorer countries. Nevertheless, there are things that only states can do – closing borders, imposing lockdowns, and vaccinating people. The UN cannot do that.

LEFT TO ITSELF, CAPITALISM WILL NOT REFORM. IT NEVER HAS

If states must act on climate change, then the question becomes: how do we motivate elites to do so? We must mobilise electorates to support radical action, and that will require a willingness to make sacrifices. Climate action isn't just about targeting a few international corporations. People will have to fly less and drive less; the prices of food and electricity will rise. Understandably, it is extremely difficult to get people to accept such sacrifices. So then the question becomes: how do you motivate people? Nationalism, as in protecting your country, could be the answer.

It sounds like you are looking at a kind of wartime mobilisation, where everyone works together for a common goal. Our societies are so diverse, in terms of demography as well as interests. Is it even possible for nationalism to unite people around the climate issue?

It may not be. But we have to try. Gramsci called it the pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will. It is our duty to come up with solutions. The Green New Deal is a very strong magnet that can pull people together. In the 1920s and '30s, the United States was admittedly a more industrial and traditional society than today, but it was already extremely diverse. Roosevelt's New Deal still managed to pull together a huge majority of Americans behind an economic and social programme. It meant, among other things, that American democracy survived. America did not follow other European states down the road to authoritarianism. It's why the Green New Deal is an immensely powerful and positive image.

Can Europe be the scale for a collective project around climate change? Security is traditionally the preserve of the nation. However, EU countries increasingly turn to Brussels for support and protection, whether it's for vaccines, climate action, or border control.

The EU can certainly play a very important role in coordinating policies and setting standards. But when it comes to asking people

for sacrifices, there are limits to what the EU can do. The years after the financial crash of 2008 demonstrated the severe limits to how far populations in much of northern Europe were prepared to go in helping Greece and other southern neighbours. The tensions between different EU members over their readiness to receive migrants can also be deep. Unfortunately, the EU has not achieved the deep popular legitimacy that makes common solidarity and sacrifices possible.

The Greens have supported the Green New Deal for years, but your book criticises them as "counter-elites" – a kind of old-fashioned Green establishment that stands in the way of climate action. What do you mean by that?

I would certainly not say that Green movements as a whole have hindered climate action. On the contrary, they have played an absolutely vital role in spreading public awareness about climate change and the need to act. However, there are problems with certain aspects of certain Green movements.

Some traditional Greens – though not Annalena Baerbock and the German Greens today – combine the struggle to act on climate change with the desire to abolish capitalism. It's basically the old Marxist hard left that has taken on the climate cause. Now it may well be that capitalism cannot reform itself fast enough to meet the challenge of climate change. But if that's the case, then the war is lost. Because stopping climate change just won't happen if you abolish capitalism. There is no evidence that a radical, socialist revolutionary agenda would succeed in sufficient time. The idea that if we bring our existing system down in ruins, it will lead to some wonderful, new, progressive utopia is a fantasy. It is far more likely that climate change will have become so bad that states will simply collectivise everything. However, it is just as likely to be fascist collectivisation as socialist; an agenda of human rights and pluralism won't be part of it.

My book is dedicated to the Green New Deal idea. It is about saving capitalism from itself, because capitalism won't do it automatically. Left to itself, it will not reform. It never has. It needs leadership from political forces.

You mention the difficulties of getting Western elites on board with fighting climate change. But what about elites in fossil fuel producing countries such as Russia and Saudi Arabia?

Frankly, Saudi Arabia is hopeless. There's no point in even trying. For Russia, migration is a key argument. Several years ago, I was speaking to the deputy governor of a Siberian province. He claimed that climate change would be good for Siberia; they would grow wonderful oranges and grain. I said to him, "Sir, you do realise that you will be sharing these wonderful crops with tens of millions

of climate refugees from countries south of you as desertification takes over central Asia and the Middle East goes to hell?" His jaw dropped. He looked at me and finally said, "I never thought of that."

Russia is a great Eurasian state with land borders; it will not be able to isolate itself from the collapse of countries to its south. There will also be other effects, such as colossal forest fires in Siberia, and heatwaves. The transition of agriculture from south to north will also not be a smooth process. There is the obvious risk that agriculture in the south will collapse long before the north can replace it. And of course, if you cut down the Siberian forests to make way for grain and orange plantations, you will produce another feedback loop and risk the 5- or 6-degree warming we spoke of earlier.

You have argued throughout that climate change is the primary security issue that we face, and that other geopolitical differences should be put aside. But what does this really mean? Doesn't climate change cut across and complicate geopolitics rather than superseding it?

It complicates it. But the fact remains that international tensions can be reduced without destroying the existing world order. If nothing is done quickly enough to limit climate change, then the world as we know it will end. One has to prioritise. If climate change escapes our control, you will not have liberal democracy in Europe or anywhere else 100 years from now. All our lecturing of the rest of the world on human rights and democracy will be out of the window.

If you follow that logic, you quickly get to a dangerous point where the ends justify the means, and you sacrifice liberal democracy and human rights for the greater climate good.

No, not at all. On the contrary, my argument is in part about what we need to do to preserve liberal democracy in the West, just as Roosevelt's original New Deal preserved it in the United States in the 1930s. We in the West have multiple responsibilities, but first and foremost come those to our own societies and governments. As a German citizen, you have a responsibility to reduce Germany's carbon emissions. By the same token, you have a responsibility to preserve liberal democracy in Germany. But we do not have the same responsibility for what happens in China or Russia or anywhere else. Nobody has given us that responsibility. When we have tried, for example through direct intervention, we have failed miserably. Look at Libya: an intervention in the name of human rights led to unending civil war, the spread of Islamist extremism, and state collapse in large parts of western Africa, with dangerous implications for European stability.

IF CLIMATE CHANGE ESCAPES OUR CONTROL, YOU WILL NOT HAVE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE OR ANYWHERE ELSE

My argument for a Green New Deal is about the defence of democracy in the West. For other societies, we have to adjust our priorities. What's happening in Xinjiang is bad. But if China collapsed as a state due to climate change down the line, then you would see something much more like the era of the warlords from 1911 to the 1930s.[2] Then you are talking about appalling suffering and dreadful human rights abuses, not by the Chinese state but by endless local tyrannies and bandit kingdoms. I do not support the existing Chinese or Russian governments, but change is something that has to come from within.

But you can act on climate change and put pressure on China about Xinjiang without immediately putting China on a course of climate failure leading to state breakdown and tremendous suffering. It doesn't have to be one or the other.

I'm afraid that to an extent it does. Putting pressure on China over Xinjiang fits into the wider US strategy of maintaining unilateral US global hegemony by creating alliances against China. US support for "democracy" in China is seen by many Chinese – in part correctly – as part of a strategy to remove China as a rival, irrespective of the cost to ordinary Chinese citizens.

Stoking hostility between the West and China naturally makes cooperation on climate change far more difficult. It encourages both the Chinese and the Americans and their allies to pour money into armaments that they should instead be spending on developing alternative energy sources and energy conservation measures. Look at Australia's nuclear submarine deal. One hundred years from now, if Australian agriculture and the Australian economy have collapsed due to climate change driven partly by Australian coal, will future Australians think that was money well spent?

Much of the military posturing that's happening is a non-issue. A hundred years from now, these Chinese-occupied reefs and sandbanks in the South China Sea will be underwater. It is insane. The Chinese military is building bases in places that have no long-term physical future.

Would you argue for a recalibration of military spending?

Absolutely. This is about money and how we are spending it. The American annual military budget is about 10 times larger than the amount of money that the Biden administration will likely be given by Congress to spend on combating climate change.

2 After the 1911 revolution ended the rule of China's last imperial dynasty, the country collapsed, and the imperial army broke up into factions. Civil war between warlords and their regional powerbases continued for decades.

It is a misapplication of resources. The average American pays 2000 dollars a year in taxes for military spending. Much of it is irrelevant to the safety of American citizens and a colossal amount is simply wasted or stolen.

Should civil protection and even infrastructure for climate mitigation and adaptation become much more central to defence priorities?

As this 2021's history of heatwaves, forest fires, and floods shows, it is now too late to prevent some very bad consequences of climate change. Our task is to prevent the bad from becoming the catastrophic. First, this means rapidly reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. But undoubtedly, many countries will have to strengthen their flood defences and precautions against wildfires. The military is already heavily involved in disaster relief operations; greater involvement in disaster prevention would also be a very good idea. The creation of flood defences has always been a key role of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Whether in future this will also have to involve limited geoengineering efforts is impossible to say at present. I very much hope not, given the obvious risks involved. However, if our efforts to eliminate carbon emissions in time fail – and tragically, there are all too many indications that they will – we must remain open to the idea of geoengineering in the Arctic as a last resort. This is another reason why international cooperation between the great powers is so important. Geoengineering will always be risky, but competitive and rival geoengineering would risk disaster.

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To Repair its Geopolitics, the West Needs a New Model of Statehood

There are many things to fear about the unstable international landscape, with America in retreat and China and Russia increasingly assertive. But losing a stable, rules-based, democratic world is not among them. A sober examination of the post-war period reveals a striking truth: there was never a serious effort to create one. Over decades, the green shoots of democracy were repeatedly destroyed. What has been constructively created – not by states but civil society – is an international framework that needs to be taken up by steward states, of which EU members and the UK could and should be significant examples. The Nordic countries are leading the way.

Many see the geopolitical future as uniformly bleak. An economically and militarily resurgent China has taken a disturbingly Han nationalist path, repressing its Uyghur population with genocidal force and destroying Hong Kong's "one country, two systems" model, breaking past promises. Vladimir Putin's Russia still holds a massive nuclear arsenal, while presiding over a hollowed-out economy largely dependent on fossil fuels. Meanwhile, American hegemony is crumbling: economically, militarily, and in terms of will. Washington once strode the world proclaiming itself a force for democracy and peace. Particularly after the Taliban's return in Afghanistan, it is plain that this will no longer be the case.

But this shift need not be regarded as an inevitable descent into international anarchy. There is a story that the United States – a nation founded on settler colonialism and slavery that remains the only power to have used nuclear weapons – still tells itself and the world. That since the end of the Second World War, the US has kept trying to do good in the world, defending democracy and rights even in the midst of the Cold War.

To some degree, this may hold true in Europe where states were immediately aligned on "our side" in the struggle against Soviet domination. Elsewhere, however, it is diametrically opposed to the truth. The idea that the West has historically acted as a champion of democracy in the Global South is a lazy assumption that is repeated unchallenged far too often.

HOT FRONTS OF THE COLD WAR

Today's world is scarred by the long-term backing of repressive and corrupt regimes by the United States,

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the United Kingdom, France, and other European states. Carried out in the interests of giant multinationals, moral and practical support was provided for indefensible wars and human rights abuses. From Thailand, where the monarchy was built up on decades of Western support linked to the Vietnam War, to the desperate chaos of Libya and Iraq, where Colonel Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein were "our men" until they were not, the damaging repercussions of Western involvement are many.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a democratic regime at the dawn of independence in 1961 was pulled down. A Belgian parliamentary inquiry concluded in 2001 that Belgian forces were behind the killing of President Patrice Lumumba, with US support. In a reminder of the many horrors perpetrated on this potentially wealthy nation, Lumumba's body was dissolved in acid. A Flemish police inspector kept his tooth as a grisly memento; it was only returned to his family, and nation, in 2021.[1] The assassination sits like a dark shadow behind all of the subsequent trauma of a nation benighted by continuing violence, often linked to multinational mining concerns.

A visceral distrust of the US and the UK is evident today in the politics of Iran, and not just among the ageing male theocracy that runs the country. No wonder, given that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) finally admitted in 2013 to playing a key role in the coup that overthrew Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1951.[2] He had nationalised the oil industry, asserting that the asset should serve the good of his people rather than the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Britain appealed to the US for help. The first US-backed coup failed but the second restored the Shah as absolute monarch, paving the way for the popular and religious resistance that led to the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

Historiography is heated around the 1973 coup in Chile that brought dictator Augusto Pinochet to power, thrusting aside the democratically elected Salvador Allende. But there is no question that in 1970, President Richard Nixon directed the CIA to overthrow the lawful president.[3] There is no denial – even from Washington's stoutest defenders – that the US had prior knowledge of the coup and provided financial support.

In this tale of abusive foreign policy, Vincent Bevins's *The Jakarta Method* is even higher on the scale of horror, going beyond the destruction of democracy to the mass murder of civilians at America's direction.[4] From 1965 to 1966, the unarmed, non-violent Communist Party of Indonesia, a force with only loose links to the Soviet Union, was the target of mass extra-judicial killing and an epidemic of torture and abuse. An estimated 1 million Indonesians were murdered. The US-backed regime of President Suharto was not only vicious but immensely corrupt; his family had amassed an estimated 30 billion dollars in assets by 1998.

Bevins describes how "a loose network of US-backed anti-communist extermination programs emerged around the world" from 1945 to 1990. The states involved were Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, East Timor, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Mexico,

1 "Lumumba: How a single tooth's return to DR Congo brings historical relief". *Africanews*. 23 May 2021.

2 Malcolm Byrne (2013). "CIA Admits It Was Behind Iran's Coup". *Foreign Policy*. 19 August 2013.

3 Peter Kornbluh. "Chile and the United States: Declassified Documents Relating to the Military Coup, September 11, 1973". *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 8*. Washington D.C.: United States National Security Archive.

4 Vincent Bevins (2020). *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Nicaragua, Paraguay, the Philippines, South Korea, Sudan, Taiwan, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

The Soviet Union was also responsible for dreadful atrocities throughout the Cold War. The Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1950 was pure imperialism. Initially treading relatively softly, as resistance grew in the late 1950s the occupation became heavy-handed and set the model for what is happening today in the rest of non-Han China, and Hong Kong.

The difference is that the United States claims that it stood for democracy and the rule of law. In fact, what happened was that perfectly reasonable ambitions of newly independent nations were identified as "communism", to be repressed in the interests of US-linked corporations.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WORLD IS NOW A MATTER OF CONSENSUS ACROSS BOTH SIDES OF US POLITICS

US and UK policy has not changed in recent years. The dreadful human rights record of "friend and ally" Saudi Arabia has not prevented massive arms sales, though democratic pressure has seen some of the flow cut off.[5] The US backs the regime of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Egypt despite the repression of independent media and civil society as well as Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte's "war on drugs" that has involved thousands of extra-judicial killings.[6] In North America, US gun manufacturers pump vast quantities of high-powered weapons into Mexican drug wars.[7]

The fact that much of the world has not succeeded in establishing stable democratic governance and the rule of law is hardly surprising. The hegemonic world power acted against such an outcome, as did the second military power, the Soviet Union. Today China is increasingly playing the same role.

5 Joseph Stepansky (2021). "Advocates see 'opportunity' in US review of Saudi arms sales". *Al Jazeera*. 3 April 2021.

6 Ed Markey (2021). "In Letter to Secretary of State Blinken, Senator Markey, Colleagues Urge the United States to Press the Philippines Government on Human Rights Violations". Press release. Website of Senator Ed Markey. 26 July 2021.

7 Sonia Corona (2021). "Why Mexico is taking on the US arms industry for illegal trafficking of weapons". *El País English Edition*. 5 August 2021.

CHANGE COMES FROM WITHIN

Withdrawal from the world is now a matter of consensus across both sides of US politics. President Biden, as demonstrated in Afghanistan, is implementing Donald Trump's "America First" policy. The situation in Afghanistan remains enormously dangerous: the country risks both internal conflict and becoming the site of a proxy war. The Russian state is back as a player in Kabul to an extent not seen since the collapse of the Soviet invasion in 1988 to 1989. Chinese interests are closely involved; it shares a sensitive border with Afghanistan and sees the country (and its valuable mineral resources) as part of its Belt and Road Initiative.

For China and Russia, another proxy war so close to their doorsteps holds serious dangers, while the West is rightly concerned about Afghanistan serving as a base for terrorism. The case needs to be made that international support for the rule of law and basic human rights – however antithetical to the Taliban's ideology and record – is in everyone's interests. Stability and security could produce benefits for all, and eventually allow the nation to develop functional institutions and governance.

For institutions to truly develop, for a functional polity, and hopefully democracy to arise, internal political forces have to be allowed to counter-balance and develop mechanisms to deal with each other, and to achieve some form of harmony without an overweening outside force. The world should, with initially modest goals, work towards such a direction in Afghanistan – building on the education of girls and supporting environmental goals that will help protect agriculture.

This slow, internally worked-through development is what happened in most currently successful states in the world. Finland is now seen as one of the world's most stable and best-governed states, but the nation's early 20th-century history was tragic. A visit to the Finnish Labour Museum in its second city, Tampere, tells of civil war between Whites and Reds that saw massacres of political, economic, and social leaders, of unarmed civilians, and of surrendered fighters. Yet this relatively small country went on to become a much-admired model nation.

While the Finnish people did that internally and largely on their own, even in the face of invasion, the development of international law – norms of behaviour for states that want to be respected and admired – over the past century makes it easier for other states to follow their path. Respect for the international system has demonstrable benefits for all nations that practice it and brings the broader, crucial advantage of a more stable world for all.

A WORLD BUILT FROM THE BOTTOM UP

An agreement unlikely to be familiar to any but the most dedicated international relations aficionados, the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 outlawed war. The agreement obviously did not have the desired effect, and it is most often referred to by those wishing to mock peace-making efforts. However, law professors Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro put forward a different reading, arguing that the accord set out the foundations of an international legal order that prevented states from – at least explicitly – going to war because they wanted a neighbour's island, or some of its resources.[8]

8 Oona A. Hathaway & Scott J. Shapiro (2017). *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

BEING A STEWARD STATE MEANS LOOKING AT WHAT WORKS IN ENCOURAGING HUMAN RIGHTS, THE RULE OF LAW, AND DEMOCRACY

Cross-border conflicts between internationally recognised states have declined precipitously since then. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a rare exception. Even then, President Putin felt the need to prepare a smokescreen of pro-Russian demonstrations and a puppet regime, rather than just march in. Instead of conflicts, the pact paved the way for disagreements resulting more often in economic sanctions than the drawing of sabres. Economic sanctions are of course extraordinarily blunt instruments, directed at entire peoples when it is usually unelected regimes that are the offenders. Foreign policy resulting in starving children and collapsed economies is a powerful counter-argument.

Yet civil society has developed, campaigned for, and won growing implementation of an alternative approach. Known as Magnitsky-style sanctions, these measures target the individuals responsible for decisions rather than whole societies. Indeed, it is within civil society that the bulk of an increasingly complete framework of international law .has been developed and put in place, if not always as fully as might be hoped.

Magnitsky-style sanctions are the latest in a long line of advances in declarations of international rights and responsibilities. That honourable line starts with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It runs through seven major treaties against racial discrimination and torture, and for civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, women's and children's rights, refugee rights, and the rights of migrant workers. Conventions against chemical weapons, cluster bombs, and landmines have limited their use, and civil society-led work on the international offence of ecocide is well advanced.[9] The majority of the world's states have backed a global ban on nuclear weapons.

How then can we implement this framework in the 21st century? For civil society lacks the instruments to act. Meanwhile, nation-states and international bodies either stand aside or stand in the way. Any seriously well-intentioned international geopolitical effort would start with the example of the Nordic countries.

POWER AND INFLUENCE FOR GOOD

Military force or economic power is not what makes a country truly respected in the world. A nation can be feared as a military force or counted as an economic heavyweight but still not rank as a "good global citizen". The Good Country Index takes a data-based approach to examine the external impact of countries on the rest of the world – starting from the assumption that all of them have a wider responsibility to all of Earth's people as well as the planet itself that we depend on.

While the details of the calculations are debatable, broadly the Nordic countries come out on top. The Netherlands and Germany also rank highly. All of these countries enjoy demonstrable economic and other benefits from their status. Recently described as "the most fearless country in Europe", Lithuania may soon be joining its Nordic neighbours.[10] Having both defied Russia and supported democratic forces in Belarus,

9 Stop Ecocide is the global campaign to establish the large-scale and systematic destruction of nature as an international crime alongside war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

10 Peter Dörrie, Edward Lucas & Elliot Waldman (2021). "The Most Fearless Country in Europe". *Trend Lines* [Podcast]. 29 September 2021.

Lithuania has also stepped up to offer strong support to democratic Taiwan against China.

The Nordic countries are in effect "steward states", a concept developed by Emilie Hafner-Burton. In *Making Human Rights A Reality*, the law professor sets out how the past few decades of international civil society and government effort has developed a comprehensive normative set of human rights rules, but fails to deliver them.[11]

Hafner-Burton's vision of how progress might be made, based on careful examination of what works, does not mean great sweeping actions but rather quiet patient work, diplomatic endeavours, the funding of civil society actors, and the use of international disapproval. It means taking human rights seriously, to be protected in the case of "friends and allies" as well as rivals, without fear or favour.

Being a steward state means looking at what works in encouraging human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. It also implies acknowledging that "first, do no harm" is a principle that should extend far beyond medicine and deep into international affairs. It means acting hard against corrupt actors in the Global North – progress, if inadequate, has been made in American, British, and European law in this area – and reining in neocolonialist multinationals: the work towards a global minimum tax rate shows the way here.

In an unstable status quo, working towards a world that looks radically different to today's is not only in the interests of the small players who already stand out as good global citizens but also of the big powers. The EU, UK, and US have nothing to gain from further arms races and proxy wars. Feeding the military-industrial complex – powerful as it is – only means inadequate resources to meet the real challenges of today. Dealing arms to states such as Saudi Arabia means eventually handing them to the hostile forces that will take over when such regimes fall, as Afghanistan illustrates.

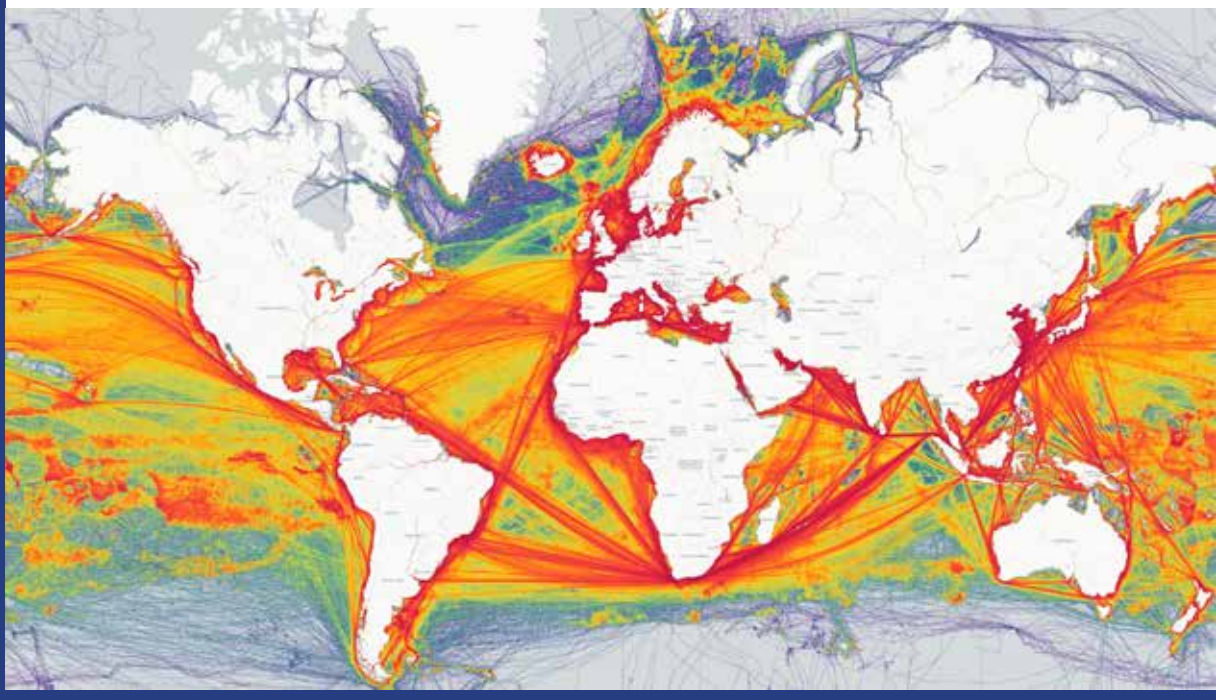
To quote former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan: "We will not enjoy security without development, we will not enjoy development without security, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights."[12] Security is the desire of the Chinese people, the Russian people, the American people, as much as any other. A green diplomatic future seeks to build on that, to take the international legal framework already in place and deliver the rights it promises for all.

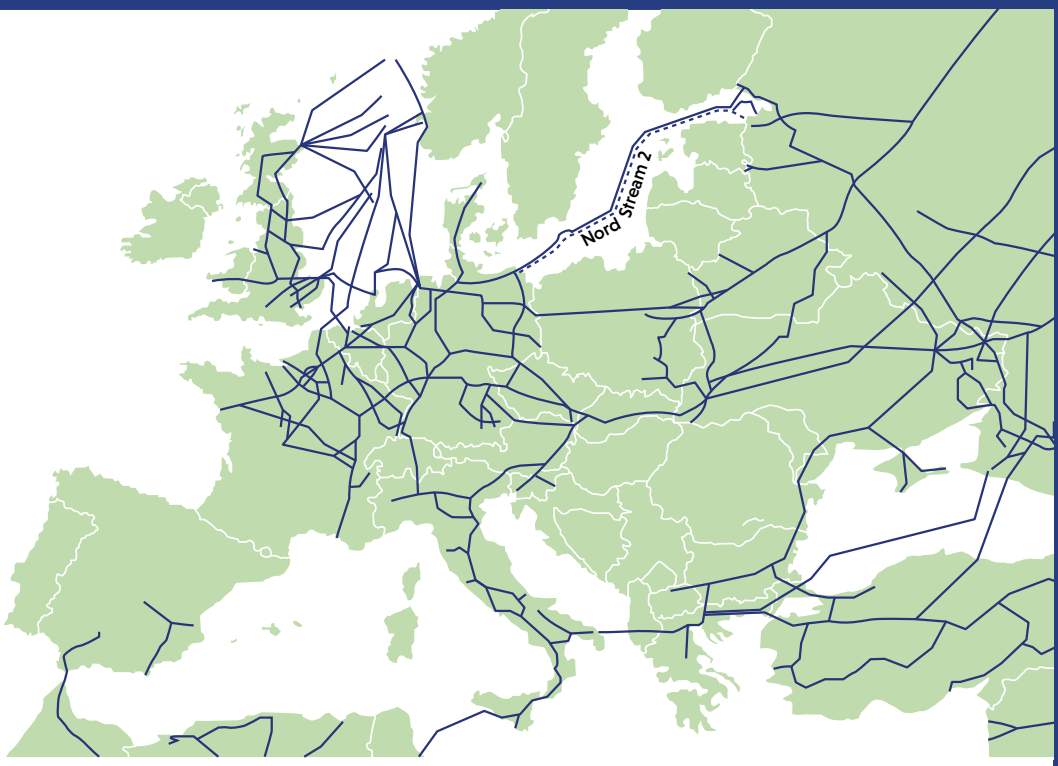
The world cannot afford militarism and exploitation if it is to both put the resources, energy, and attention needed into the climate and ecological crises, and see off threats of economic and social collapse. Previous failures were the functions of bad choices. We can – and must – make better ones. ■

11 Emilie M. Hafner-Burton (2013). *Making Human Rights a Reality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
12 United Nations General Assembly (2005). *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all: Report of the Secretary-General*. (A/59/2005). 21 March 2005.

CHANGING LANDSCAPES

Renewable energy, sustainable food production, and 3D printing promise a more autonomous future on a human scale, yet the realisation of such a vision remains a long way off. Despite worldwide shocks, the geography of money and trade is global. So far at least, technological change and the energy transition are not freeing us from geopolitics but just reshaping the stakes.





Major gas pipelines in Europe

In operation Planned

Source: Based on Kai-Olaf Lang and Kirsten Westphal and ENTSO-G

EUROPE'S MOST STUBBORN FOSSIL FUEL

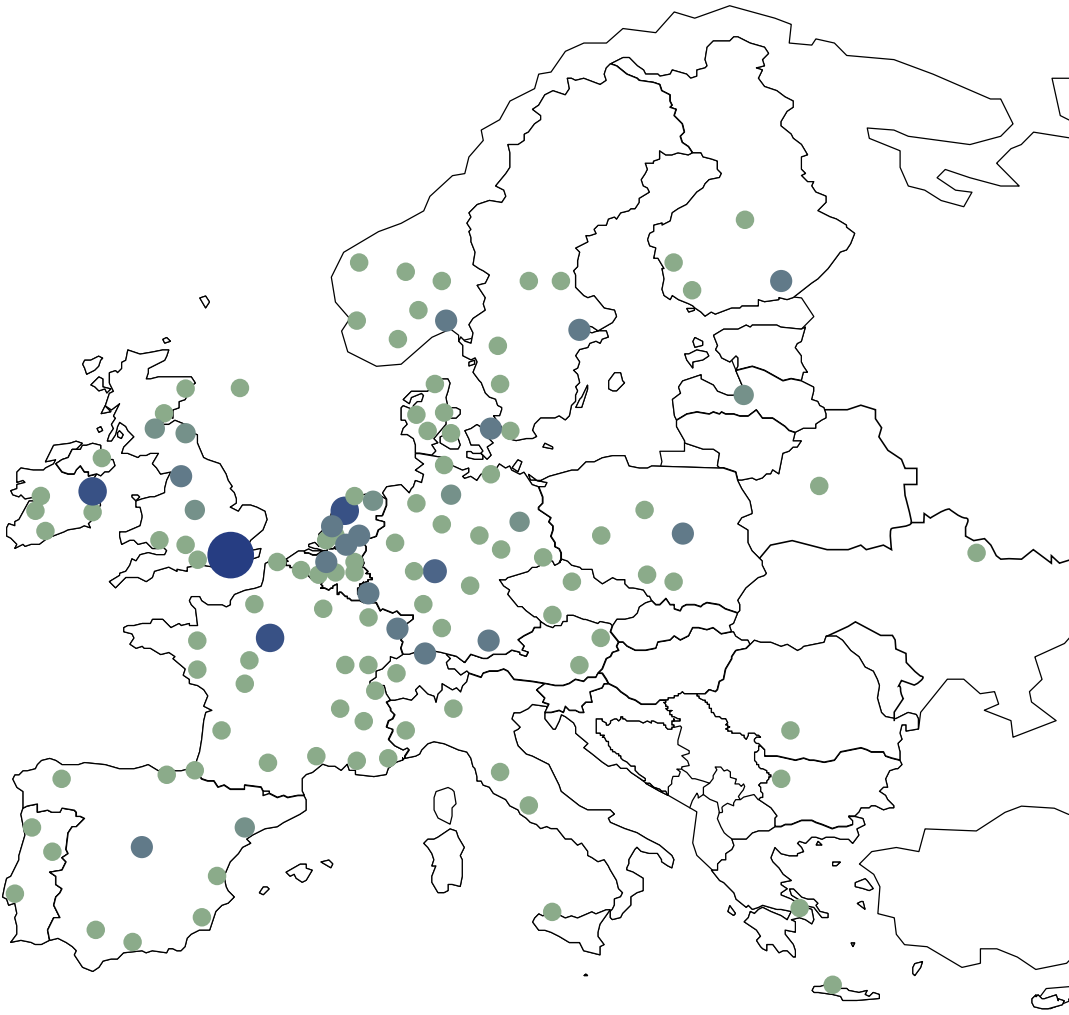
Despite the urgency of climate change, Europe's failure to invest sufficiently in renewables means that fossil gas is now touted as a "transition fuel". As Thomas Laffitte explores on p. 92, natural gas supplies are a major geopolitical issue and the impacts of Europe's choices about its energy transition extend well beyond its borders.

Density of global container shipping in 2020

Source: MarineTraffic

SHIPPING MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND

Even as much of society shut down in 2020, container ships criss-crossed the world to keep critical services running and supermarket shelves stocked. As part of Europe's pandemic recovery, reshoring industries is high up the agenda. On p. 86, Mehtap Akgüç argues that these efforts need to be led by European citizens and their needs.



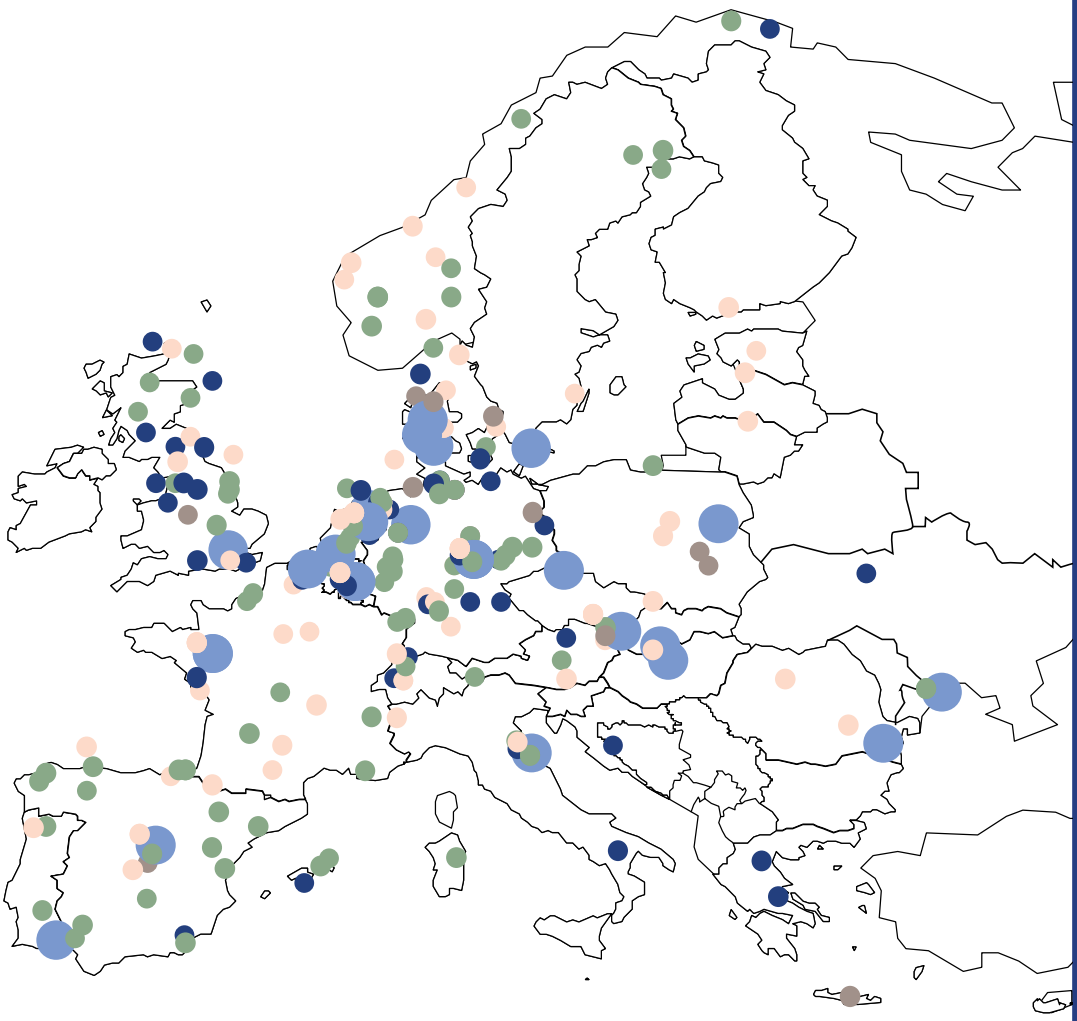
Data centres in Europe

1 to 5 · 6 to 10 · 11 to 20 · 21 to 30 · 50 to 60 · over 100

Source: Baxtel Data Center Map

THE INTERNET IS NOT IN THE CLOUD

If data is the new oil, then control over technology, data, and infrastructure is a form of power. On p. 56, Alexandra Geese and Marietje Schaake discuss how the digital economy is far from immaterial and why the European Union needs to get serious about regulating its digital space.



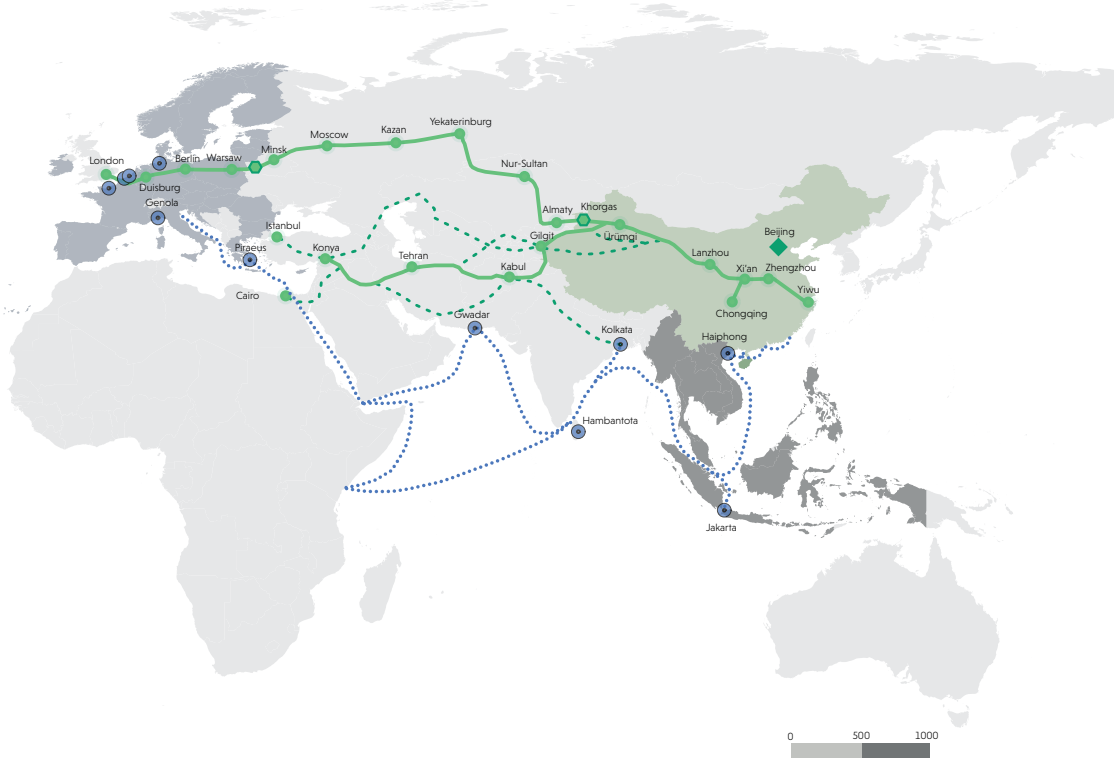
Hydrogen investment in Europe

Giga-scale production
Industrial use
Integrated hydrogen economy
Transport project
Distribution and storage

Source: Hydrogen Council

EUROPE AS THE WORLD'S HYDROGEN HUB

More than any other continent, Europe is betting on hydrogen as a fuel of the future. Infrastructure projects abound and the first trial delivery of hydrogen-produced "green steel" was made in August 2021 in Sweden. But as Gabriela Cabaña and Mario Díaz explain on p. 106, the new hydrogen economy will come at the cost of new conflicts over resources, land, and energy.



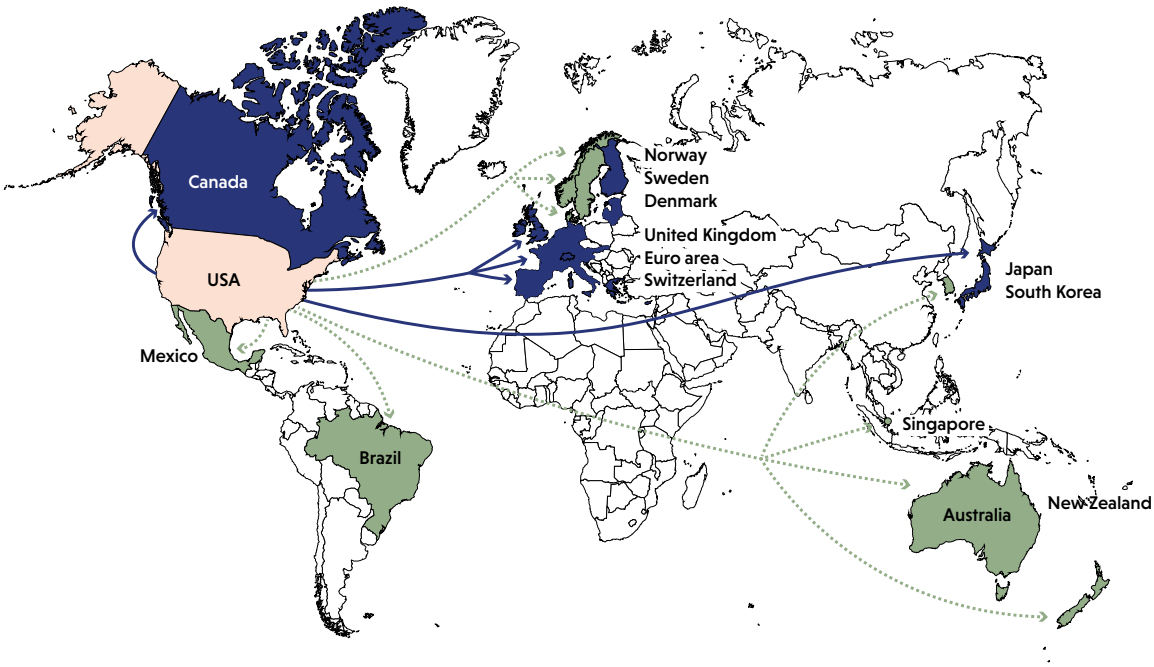
The Belt and Road Initiative

Sea routes
High-investment port
Main route
Secondary route
Node cities
Transborders
EU member state
ASEAN member state

Source: *GREEN (Géopolitique, réseau, énergie, environnement, nature)*

TRACING THE NEW SILK ROADS

China's Belt and Road Initiative – a colossal infrastructure investment programme centred on Eurasia – is among the most ambitious geopolitical projects of the 21st century so far. On p. 115, Eric Armando explores the importance of energy to the Chinese project, and analyses some of the contradictions that could be its undoing.



US Federal Reserve swap lines

Standing arrangements

Temporary arrangements up $60 billion

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York

FINANCIAL ALLIANCES

As the global reserve currency, the US dollar remains king. The Federal Reserve's swap lines – offers of emergency dollars to other central banks – helped keep the world economy from going over the brink in 2008 and 2020. As Roderick Kefferpütz argues on p. 79, geopolitics increasingly trumps economics in how the world is run. The financial system is no exception.

TECHNOLOGY IS NOT NEUTRAL

Online disinformation has caused havoc around elections and during the Covid-19 response, but it is far from the only technological threat that democracies face. Ransomware and distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks paralyse core infrastructure, while the revelations of Edward Snowden teach us that authoritarian and democratic governments alike are building up surveillance infrastructure.

Software that is allegedly developed to keep us safe is used to spy on us. In summer 2021, it was revealed that the government of Hungary, an EU member, was using Pegasus spyware to hack the phones of journalists and opposition politicians. Another major question around technology, especially around artificial intelligence, is the development of autonomous weapons. Armed drones with facial-recognition software are no longer limited to sci-fi and two of the biggest players, China and the United States are unwilling to support international efforts to regulate these technologies effectively. What happens in relation to algorithms, online platforms, and hacking is at least as important for Europe as nuclear proliferation and terrorism.

Big tech is part of the problem. Online platforms that were praised for being catalysts of pro-democracy revolutions a decade ago are now widely seen as tools for autocracy. Private companies with market valuations greater than the GDP of some nation-states not only wield immense lobbying power but are setting the pace. The direction of development will be driven by the profit motive, not the public good.

Technology and artificial intelligence can be a positive force, with the potential to revolutionise healthcare, transportation, and environmental protection. The EU could still make this a reality. Increased investment in research, technology, and education, as well as incentives for experts to stay in Europe, could allow the EU to decide how technology is used and maybe even lead the way globally. On the following pages, Green MEP Alexandra Geese and cyber expert Marietje Schaake emphasise the need for the EU to act as one on the geopolitics of technology. They talk about how technology can serve the people, how Europe can set global standards, and why the digital space is central to geopolitical debates. Success will depend on a real European approach committed to investment, digital rights, and coalition building.

ALEXANDRA GEESE
Can Europe Shape its Digital Space?

Respect for human rights and democracy needs to be enshrined in Europe's digital space. If it manages, Europe could establish an alternative vision for technology and artificial intelligence for itself and the world.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: What are the main questions when it comes to defining a European approach to digital technology?

ALEXANDRA GEESE: The main issue is what kinds of technologies we are going to master – especially among the various technologies referred to as artificial intelligence (AI). The dominant narrative is that Europe is lagging behind, while the US and China are leading. The question we need to ask is: what strategy should the EU follow?

Currently, the US and China are going in two very different directions. The Chinese state exerts totalitarian control over its population, and right now it is even going against its own companies, who are trying to follow the US model of collecting private citizens' data. At the same time, private companies in the US have based their business models on building very large profiles of what they call "users" – but, from a democratic point of view, these users are citizens, and should be treated as such. These two different visions of digital technology both ultimately depend on surveillance.

After Donald Trump, Europe has seen that it cannot go on simply depending on the US. Europe must have its own geopolitical strategy and this requires that Europe control its own technologies and resources. If we have our own strategy, we can also decide whether we want to master artificial intelligence technologies through increased surveillance. Do we? I do not think so. That is why we are working on new legislation in the European Parliament and the European Council to make sure that, on the one hand, investment is stepped up, but on the other hand, that it is directed to the right kind of technologies. We need to focus on AI technologies that will make our industry more efficient and help combat climate change, whether that means coordinating smart grids or facing other challenges that come with the ecological transformation. What we do not want is a society based on AI-enabled surveillance and biases. We need to choose, and the time is now.

ALEXANDRA GEESE
has been a member of the European Parliament since 2019 and is responsible for the Digital Services Act for the Greens/EFA.

Why is technology a challenge to be confronted at the European level?

It is obvious that we cannot compete as single countries. Even Germany has no chance of competing either with the US or China in terms of artificial intelligence or digital technologies. So, there is necessarily a need for a European dimension. I think that the European Commission has already recognised this point, but EU member states still have to make some progress towards coordinating their strategies in the direction of increased cooperation. They need to focus, for example, on European research centres. In Europe, we have a tradition of middle-sized centres in different cities with different specialisations. We could make use of this decentralised tradition, while giving it a European objective.

Is it really possible to enshrine values such as democracy or human rights in the digital world?

Yes. But we need legislation that enshrines those values. That is the aim of the Artificial Intelligence Act, but it is not sufficient. We need to avoid everything that goes against our vision of individual free will. Bias in artificial intelligence must be eradicated, and we must say no to biometric recognition, deep fakes, and snake oil applications like emotional recognition. The same is true for the proposed Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act. Citizens' data cannot continue to be handed over, often with no effective consent, to two or three global companies that will use it to create and sell user profiles. The legislative framework needs to support these aims, so that privacy-friendly companies can compete, both in Europe and beyond. It is not impossible; many of these companies and initiatives already exist in Europe.

The current situation is not a law of nature. It is the outcome of a lack of legislation. Europe can set different standards. The legislation that needs to be in place will have to include a few prohibitions but, at the same time, it will open a market currently controlled by a handful of companies up to competition.

We will also require investment. Europe has a funding problem. China has large amounts of public funding, while the US has a huge venture capital market. In Europe, however, investors remain very conservative. You only get funded if you already have collateral, and it helps if you are male and correspond to the traditional ideas held by investors. A lack of diversity is limiting growth in the digital sector.

What is at stake in the current EU legislative effort?

What is at stake is whether Europe can establish or approve a regulation that really enshrines the democratic values and rights that we have in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, or whether we just pretend to have strong legislation, with so many loopholes that the current US or even Chinese models will prevail.

The Digital Services Act (DSA) is a good proposal by the Commission but it is currently not a game changer. It tackles some systemic issues like algorithmic amplification, transparency, and access to data, but it is definitely not enough.

Take the example of algorithmic transparency; very large online platforms will have to do a risk self-assessment that will undergo an independent audit. But Facebook or Google are never going to admit that their algorithmic amplification systems are a systematic threat to democracy. And nobody can seriously answer the question of who is going to do the audits. Auditors will explain to you that – unlike with financial operations where we have decades of experience – there is no precedent for auditing large online platforms, such as Facebook or Google. Without specialised companies, the most probable solution is that we will have Google and Facebook spin-offs auditing Google and Facebook. What we need is strong enforcement and independent audit organisations that can develop under the oversight of an independent, public agency.

In the case of AI, some dangerous practices such as social scoring and Chinese-style biometric identification in public spaces are banned by the DSA. But there are too many exceptions that risk undermining fundamental rights. To prevent algorithmic bias, for example, it calls for the required representativity of data but does not explain what that means. The rhetoric is very good, but the provisions in the legislation are just not sufficient.

Is there a tension between the ethical and democratic regulation of technology and the geopolitical implications of its development?

You do not win a race because you are ethical. That is true. Nevertheless, history shows that totalitarian societies always lose out in the end. I believe that free societies bring about the best solutions. And these free societies have to be defended. During the pandemic, we saw that China and Russia produced vaccines earlier than Western countries, but that Western vaccines were ultimately more effective. Having a free society, including a free press and open research, is the best precondition for developing the best solutions.

The European Commission recently announced plans to invest in the production of semi-conductors. What would be your suggestion for Europe when it comes to investment and productive capacity in relation to tech?

Investment is extremely important, and it is underestimated by national governments. The European Commission made proposals to increase its digital research budget, but this was not approved by the Council. So it is not the Commission's fault but rather the responsibility of the national governments. Europe needs to increase all these budgets, at least tenfold, to keep up with the US and China.

The European Union has some projects, but they are not sufficient. There is, for example, Gaia-X, a unified ecosystem of cloud services and data centres governed by EU data laws

and supported by the American hyperscalers.[1] What we would need would be a strong European initiative with decent funding to start something completely new. Right now, we still have to rely on Microsoft or Google, and this does not give us real strategic independence. We need more money and more courage.

Should the environmental regulation of AI and the digital economy receive more attention as Europe shapes its digital model?

Absolutely. We need to think about climate neutrality and sustainability strategies together with our digital strategies. The European Commission has two main goals: climate neutrality with the Green Deal, and digitalisation with the legislation on digital services, artificial intelligence, and data. But they are not interlinked.

The Greens would like the Digital Services Act to include a risk assessment in terms of climate neutrality and the environment. Regulation on AI should aim for the same, because large language models consume a huge amount of energy. We need a benchmark for the energy consumption of AI technologies and to think about electronic waste, as well as the extraction of rare earth elements and minerals. You often hear that AI could help save the climate. This is not a given. It could do the opposite, unless we manage to link the two.

Could European regulation of the digital world set standards internationally?

The world is looking to Europe. No country wants to go for the Chinese model, and there is also a lot of scepticism about the US model. I sit on panels with people from India, Pakistan, and many other countries, who are really interested in how we deal with freedom of expression online in Europe, how we deal with AI, and our approach to digital services. Even in the US, many people recognise that Europe has been a standard-setter with GDPR [General Data Protection Regulation] – even if we have failed to enforce it correctly so far. People around the world see that Europe has the capacity to set new. We shouldn't miss the opportunity.

1 Hyperscalers are digital services such as cloud computing that can rapidly scale to millions or even billions of processes and users. Large US corporations such as Amazon and Microsoft dominate this kind of capacity.

MARIETJE SCHAAKE
Europe's Tech Policy Misses a Common Understanding

Framing digital policy as a geopolitical race is risky. It can divert attention from the respect for human rights and proper regulation, and pave the way for a narrow focus on speed and quantity. Yet artificial intelligence remains a crucial geopolitical issue, even if leading European politicians have only paid lip service to it so far.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: What are the main ways in which technology manifests as a geopolitical issue?

MARIETJE SCHAAKE: We cannot think of technology as a sector anymore; it is a layer of almost everything. So when it comes to geopolitics, a country manifests its strength through its ability to create technologies – for example, its market power, its ability to defend itself against cyber-attacks or even to wage cyber-attacks; essentially its ability to promote its interests and values through everything digital. In that sense, Europe is much stronger when it comes to protecting its citizens than it is geopolitically.

Europe lacks a strong geopolitical agenda or the political will to operate geopolitically. National governments still want to hold on to as much agency and power as they can, and are not operating as one. This was clearly illustrated in the case of 5G network technology, where equipment from Huawei and ZTE from China came under scrutiny, partly due to US pressure. While the EU has a single market, it has no single vision on national security. For this reason, there is growing friction between national security and geopolitical concerns and the promise of a single market.

In an era of increased systemic competition between geopolitical blocs, it is a problem if the EU cannot connect strategic, security, and economic concerns, as well as values and rights. The EU is currently leading on the values and rights side – although it needs to become stronger – but when it comes to its tech industry, the situation is not as good. Geopolitically, there are weaknesses, mainly because of the way in which governments cling to their national positions in the world, instead of building a joint European position.

MARIETJE SCHAAKE
is the international policy director at Stanford University's Cyber Policy Center. Between 2009 and 2019, she served as a member of the European Parliament for the Dutch liberal democratic party D66, focusing on trade, foreign affairs, and technology policies.

Is a more general geopolitical awareness lacking across Europe?

I think there are large differences between member states in their analyses. Wherever we look, we see fragmentation, and a fragmentation of priorities. There is growing awareness of geopolitical shifts, but different priorities lead member states to different answers. Countries like the Netherlands, as well as some of the Nordic and eastern European countries such as Poland, have a very strong orientation towards the US. While these countries would ordinarily inclined to opt for a transatlantic alliance, they are increasingly disappointed with what is actually coming out of the transatlantic relationship.

France is promoting a much more sovereign and autonomous European Union. Others remain undecided in order to pragmatically navigate decisions. Italy is an important pragmatic country but to some extent so are Spain and Germany, as issues such as Nordstream 2 or making clear choices about risks related to the rise of China show. Economic investments can undermine the ability to share a geopolitical position and leave European countries open to external pressure. Ever since Chinese investors bought the port of Piraeus, for example, Greece has not been part of EU statements condemning human rights violations in China.

How would you rate the Commission's geopolitical awareness in relation to technology?

We hear a lot of statements and intentions. Ursula von der Leyen has declared this Commission as the "geopolitical Commission", and there is a lot of activity on the tech side. So, something is obviously happening. But the question is, can it all be brought together? Can there be an integrated policy that combines economics, geopolitics, and rights and principles in an efficient way? There is no clear answer from Brussels. That is obviously because there is no mandate from the member states.

Vladimir Putin famously said that the country with the best AI will be "the ruler of the world". Is the race for AI a zero-sum game?

I am not in favour of being deterministic in that sense. Many of our expectations about the transformative power of the internet in the last two decades did not hold true, so I would not dare to predict what will happen in the next 10 or 20 years. But clearly there are aspects of AI that authoritarian, top-down regimes can benefit from disproportionately. Their ability to assemble massive amounts of data with no respect for civil liberties or human rights, for example, makes it easier to deploy certain applications of AI, such as facial or emotion recognition systems. These systems can be used to keep people under control, as we see with the Uyghur minority in China.

The question is what the impact of essential democratic and rule of law principles will be on the scaling and training of AI systems. I already see a tendency on the part of US companies, for example, to ask for exceptions. They argue that regulation will not allow them to compete with China as successfully, and that the US will lose the race. In other words, their argument is that the best defence of democracy comes from unregulated US tech companies.

I fundamentally disagree. Giving companies so much leeway has not led to a stronger position for democracies. Not in societies, and not between coalitions of democracies. It is risky to frame the issue as a race; it might mean that principles or quality will be pushed aside for speed and quantity. Seeing China as an opponent, without looking at the need to safeguard our open societies, can justify policies or decisions that take us in the wrong direction.

Can the EU lead the way on the ethical regulation of AI?

It depends on our ability to convince other democratic nations to join us. It is disappointing that there is still no firm alignment between the EU and the US on this matter. The US is much stronger in the military and security field. The EU, on the other hand, is better placed when it comes to rights and protections, as well as being a provider of development assistance across the world. Combining the two could bring out the best of both worlds.

But even in that relationship, it is difficult to come to a common approach. I think it is a mistake for the EU to hope that just because it has a first-mover advantage, it will continue to set global standards. There is a lot of activity in the US – much more than we have seen for a long time – and there are also regulatory initiatives in Asia. Just expecting that others will follow the EU is not enough.

Is there scope for international partnerships between the EU and other players to cooperate more deeply on tech regulation and digital rights?

The EU should invest much more in an alliance between democratic states. It is ironic that it is US president Joe Biden who will host the next summit of the alliance of democracies and not the EU. The EU has been more proactive when it comes to regulating tech according to democratic standards, and it has been more credible over the past four years when it comes to democratic principles.

This failure of initiative shows a lack of geopolitical strength. The EU is an obvious leader when it comes to multilateralism; it has a number of key partners not only in America and Asia, but also on the African continent. It is important to make this multilateralism a global effort and not just a transatlantic or Western effort. After all, we are geographically connected to China's Belt and Road infrastructure and the Middle East. If we do not want conflicts to escalate and people to be displaced, which I think is the consensus right now, then we have to be more capable of shaping the outcomes, not just with development support but more proactively across the board.

How should the EU relate to China?

This is still in flux. If China acts too quickly and is not careful, things could go terribly wrong. Beijing is increasingly assertive and ambitious and is proactive not only at home but also internationally, seeking to claim a greater role within the United Nations and other multilateral fora, particularly around tech standards and development. It is an enormous country with a leadership that is determined to retain maximum state control. The Communist Party is willing to sacrifice economic interests for its power. In this context, the EU must see it for what it is, and also understands where the battlegrounds lie globally. Investment in digital infrastructure is pouring into developing countries, in central Asia for example. These are regions where the EU could make a decisive difference, and I hope it does.

The Long Arm of Transnational Repression in Europe

The ever-increasing size of diasporas in the European Union brings many benefits and opportunities to the countries in which they live, but also the responsibility to protect these communities. Authoritarian governments are active on the territory of European countries, targeting dissident citizens with surveillance, intimidation, and physical violence. Through transnational repression, domestic and international politics become intertwined. Its consequences threaten the integrity of democracy and freedom for all.

Events such as the March 2018 poisoning of former Russian military officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter by Russian intelligence in England, and the October 2018 murder of Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi officials in Istanbul, propelled transnational repression onto the news agenda. Though the term is recent, the practice of targeting "enemy" citizens abroad is not new. Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier was killed in a car bomb by Augusto Pinochet's secret police in Washington, D.C. in 1976. Bulgarian writer and BBC journalist Georgi Markov was killed by a poison-laced pellet in London in 1978, allegedly by a Bulgarian state agent.

More recently, digital technology has allowed exiled activists such as Belarusian opposition politician Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya to influence the political situation in their home countries from abroad. Authoritarian states such as Russia, Iran, and China have exploited the same technology to target dissidents with spying and online harassment, as well as harnessing more prosaic forms of repression, such as assassinations, kidnapping, threatening family members back home, or issuing international arrest warrants and Red Notices via Interpol. Transnational repression is on the rise,[1] and Turkey is one of the worst perpetrators. The case of the Turkish diaspora, one of western Europe's largest and most diverse, constituting approximately 5.5 million people, illustrates how multi-faceted transnational repression is among the most insidious geopolitical challenges of the 21st century.

THE ROOTS OF THE DIASPORA

The bulk of the diaspora traces back to a labour agreement signed in 1961 between Germany, desperate

1 "Compromised Space: Foreign State Reprisals against Unrepresented Diplomats in Europe". *Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization*. 15 April 2021.

NICK ASHDOWN
is a journalist based between Brussels and Istanbul, covering mostly Turkey.

for workers, and Turkey, suffering from chronically high unemployment. Similar accords were signed with Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and others. These countries continue to be home to some of the largest diasporas with roots in Turkey.

These *Gastarbeiter* – guest workers – mostly poor and from rural Anatolia, amounted to over 2.5 million people by the late 1970s, with entire villages sometimes migrating together. Needless to say, most of the "guest" workers stayed, and their families soon joined them, helping to build Europe's strongest economies but forming a marginalised underclass in the process. This first generation still constitutes the majority of the diaspora in Europe today.

Following the 1980 coup and three-year military dictatorship in Turkey, these economic migrants were joined by a flood of political refugees – largely leftists, but also many Islamists – seeking asylum in Europe. Islamist, leftist, Kurdish, and Alevi associations, severely restricted or outlawed in Turkey, began to flourish in Europe. This included the Millî Görüş (National Outlook) Islamist movement, out of which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan originally emerged. The 1990s saw a third wave of migration as large numbers of Kurds arrived, fleeing government persecution and an insurgency.

When these newcomers began to raise the political consciousness of the diaspora, the Turkish government decided to keep a closer eye on them. Ankara deployed its State Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet) to send imams to mosques all over the continent who would keep the more radical Islamist groups in check. There are around a thousand Diyanet-controlled mosques in Europe today. Large numbers of teachers were also sent from Turkey's education ministry to teach Turkish in Germany and other countries.

FREEDOM HOUSE FOUND THAT TURKEY HAS RENDERED MORE OPPONENTS FROM ABROAD THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN RECENT YEARS

CRACKDOWNS AT HOME AND ABROAD

In the past decade, the diaspora has been joined by many thousands of Turkey's most highly educated citizens, escaping political and economic instability, as well as political refugees fleeing Ankara's wrath. President Erdoğan used the brutal failed coup of July 2016 as an excuse to launch a crackdown against hundreds of thousands of people. The primary targets have been followers of Fethullah Gülen, Erdoğan's partner-turned-enemy and leader of a global Islamic movement, who is blamed by Ankara for the coup. Others include leftists and Kurdish nationalists critical of the government, among them many top academics and journalists. The vast majority of these people had nothing to do with the coup or any other violent acts.

Erdoğan's crackdown soon became transnational, as Ankara pursued its enemies, many of whom hold citizenship in EU member states, in dozens of countries across the world. Democracy watchdog Freedom House found that Turkey has rendered – essentially kidnapped, usually with the

help of local state authorities – more opponents from abroad than any other country in recent years.[2] The organisation has documented 58 people rendered from 17 countries, acknowledging that this is likely an undercount. The Turkish government has itself boasted of arresting 116 "terrorists" from 27 countries.

"Turkey is quite proud of this campaign," explains Yana Gorokhovskaia, an expert on transnational repression with Freedom House. "They often take credit for kidnapping someone and bringing them back to Turkey, and that's presented in the media for the domestic audience as a success."

Most cases have happened outside of the EU, but not all. Several alleged Gülen supporters have been taken to Turkey from Bulgaria, in at least one case despite two local courts ruling against extradition to Turkey because they cannot be guaranteed a fair trial.

Ankara has also obliterated the norms of statecraft in its pursuit of political opponents in other ways. Interpol has been flooded with requests to extradite or provide information on Erdoğan's political targets, for which German Chancellor Angela Merkel sharply rebuked Ankara. Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MİT) reportedly handed German intelligence a list of over 300 Gülen supporters to be put under surveillance; instead, the Germans warned them to be careful and avoid Turkey and Turkish consulates. In September 2021, police in Düsseldorf arrested a man believed to be working for Turkish intelligence who was found with weapons and a list of Gülen supporters. Even German parliamentarians have been warned they may be under Turkish surveillance. Switzerland and Austria have also complained about Turkish spying on dissidents.

THE LONG ARM OF THE TURKISH STATE

Aside from its intelligence operations on European soil, Ankara has mobilised a host of other resources against its perceived enemies. Ordinary people at home and abroad have been encouraged to inform on their fellow citizens. Imams at mosques run by the Diyanet, superpowered with funds under the Erdoğan government and full of party loyalists, spy on Gülen followers. Turkish consulates in Germany have allegedly told Turkish teachers and students to spy on teachers and report any material that is critical of Erdoğan's government.

Violent groups with close ties with Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP), such as the biker gang Osmanen Germania, banned by Germany in 2018, are also used by Ankara to target dissidents. According to the German authorities, AKP member and Erdoğan confidante Metin Külünk funded the gang, whom he told to "beat Kurds over the head with sticks".[3]
In July 2021, Turkish journalist Erk Acarer was attacked by unknown Turkish men in Berlin who told him to stop writing. At around the same time, German police in Cologne warned journalist Celal Başlangıç that his name had been found on a list of targeted dissidents.

This repression has left a fog of bitterness in Europe. "There's this real dislike of MİT, what it does, and how it pressures the diaspora [and] causes trouble," explains Alexander Clarkson, a specialist on the Turkish diaspora at King's College London. He says European authorities are hesitant to react too harshly

2 Freedom House (2021). *Turkey: Transnational Repression Case Study (Special Report 2021)*. Washington, D.C.: Freedom House.
3 Chase Winter (2017). "Turkish AKP politician linked to Osmanen Germania boxing gang in Germany". *Deutsche Welle*. 14 December 2017.

ERDOĞAN'S CAMPAIGNING ABROAD HIGHLIGHTS THE REAL DISCRIMINATION FACED BY THE DIASPORA IN EUROPE

because MİT is the intelligence agency of a NATO partner.

Various EU states have, however, cracked down on Diyanet. The German government has investigated imams working for the Turkish government and started training its own. Other countries have expelled and blocked the visa applications of Diyanet imams and closed Turkish mosques. Paris has placed restrictions on the foreign funding of mosques.

Turkish politicking within EU borders and harsh rhetoric from Erdoğan and other AKP politicians, particularly in the last five years, has not helped with relations between Europe and Turkey. In 2017, a row erupted over restricting Turkish politicians' rallies in Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands ahead of a vote proposing to massively increase Erdoğan's presidential powers. Erdoğan and other top politicians likened European governments to the Nazis and, later that year, told members of the diaspora to have more children and that they should "teach a lesson" to Germany's "anti-Turkish" mainstream political parties in the 2017 federal election.[4]

Turkey is a unique case for the European Union due to the country's candidate status, its diaspora, and the huge amount of trade via the customs union. As Sinem Adar, a specialist on Turkey's diaspora policy at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) notes, for the EU, Turkey is both a domestic and foreign policy issue. "A functional relationship with Turkey isn't a choice, it's a necessity," she explains.

Under the AKP, Turkey has asserted itself internationally and expanded relations and influence in Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Over the past decade, this policy has taken an aggressive, militarised tack in the Eastern Mediterranean, with interventions in Libya and Syria. Coinciding with this foreign policy expansion, the AKP has deepened its institutional outreach to and influence within the diaspora. It has developed Turkey's first proper diaspora policy under a new government agency which opened in 2010, the Presidency For Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). Citizens were finally allowed to vote in Turkish elections from abroad in 2014 (previously a trip to Turkey was required), consular services have been improved, and a vast infrastructure of NGOs, think tanks, schools and cultural centres has been established under the aegis of the Union of European Turkish Democrats, essentially a branch of the AKP. These efforts would be commendable were it not for the fact that this infrastructure has been weaponised as a tool, not only of soft power, but of transnational repression. Like the rest of the Turkish state, it serves not the citizens of Turkey but rather the person of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his party.

THE PRICE OF INACTION

There are a number of ways that EU countries can take on transnational repression. Clear red lines must be established and harmonised across the EU, with high costs for crossing them. These could include targeted, EU-wide sanctions involving asset-freezing and travel bans. Europe-based companies could be further restricted from selling surveillance technology to

4 "Merkel attacks Turkey's 'misuse' of Interpol warrants". *Reuters*. 20 August 2017.

authoritarian regimes. Asylum programmes need to be streamlined and expanded, so that targets of transnational repression are not left waiting for years in countries outside of the EU where they are unsafe. Law enforcement agencies need to be trained in identifying and dealing with transnational repression; Interpol, though recently reformed, continues to list individuals who are targeted for political reasons. Migrants who are isolated are most at risk of transnational repression, and EU countries need to increase outreach, resources, job-training, and integration efforts towards their diasporas, with special programmes for those at risk.

When it comes to Turkey specifically, the controversial 2016 migration deal, whereby the EU pays off Ankara to keep refugees out of Europe and which the Erdoğan government brandishes as a weapon against the EU, should be scrapped. It turns Turkey into an unsafe country for migrants at risk and gives Ankara powerful leverage. European countries also need to continue the delicate task of replacing Diyanet mosques with independent ones, without further marginalising Muslim communities or resorting to Islamophobic policies or rhetoric.

Despite increasingly draconian border policies, diasporas in Europe will continue to grow. The EU only stands to benefit. In addition to further enriching European culture, migrants make a crucial contribution towards meeting labour demands and preventing demographic decline in the continent's ageing populations. However, EU countries must do a better job of integrating and engaging with diasporas, who above all want to be treated as equal citizens. In the case of the Turkish diaspora, the AKP's transnational repression campaign is made easier by the higher rates of support for Erdoğan in the diaspora than in Turkey. Erdoğan's campaigning abroad highlights the real discrimination faced by the diaspora in Europe; meanwhile he presents himself as their fearless champion. "You are never, never alone," trumpets one cover of the YTB's diaspora magazine *Artı 90*, which features a photo of Erdoğan waving in front of a crescent and star emblazoned over European flags.[5] This message appeals to many among the diaspora who do not feel fully accepted in their countries; diasporic communities are often the target of far-right politics and have disproportionately low levels of income and education.

Transnational repression is not some inconvenient front in a wider geopolitical picture. It is an assault on those fundamental rights – the rights to life, liberty, and freedom of expression – on which the European Union is founded. The actions of Turkey and authoritarian states like it threaten not only the rights of diaspora communities, but those of all people living in Europe. By turning a blind eye to violations of human rights by undemocratic regimes on its borders and failing to enact a strong response to those taking place on its territory, the EU not only emboldens authoritarianism abroad, it effectively invites it in. ■

5 *Artı 90*. January 2013, no. 5.

POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY

PUTTING HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE CENTRE OF EU FOREIGN POLICY

AN INTERVIEW WITH
HANNAH NEUMANN

To what extent do human rights principles underpin the European Union's policies towards the rest of the world? The EU's power to promote the core values enshrined in its treaties is weakened by the frequent misalignment between the rhetoric of EU leaders and the actions on the ground. Can these gaps be bridged to place respect for human rights, equality, and social justice at the heart of foreign policy? Hannah Neumann explains how change will not happen overnight, but how progress can be made through painstaking efforts, compromise, and dialogue.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: What does the West's withdrawal from Afghanistan tell us about the link between foreign policy and human rights? Is it an indication of the West abdicating its responsibilities to strive to protect human rights around the world more generally?

HANNAH NEUMANN: Those of us who work on foreign policy have not given up on the idea that it can be a means to improve human rights and people's living conditions; this is one of our core interests in foreign policy that is also laid down in the EU treaties. In my opinion, Afghanistan has shown that the approach taken does not work. The decision to intervene in Afghanistan was made 20 years ago, but in more recent cases, such as Mali, the same basic objective is being pursued: supporting a government and an army in a country, regardless of how they are perceived, and focusing on counter-terrorism. The focus is on security in the sense of police and military security, rather than on food, human, and other kinds of security.

This method has failed and we need to re-evaluate and reconsider before we go on another similar "adventure". With the military-centred approach in Afghanistan, we were dependent on the US. The EU would not have withdrawn at that speed and with such an uncompromising attitude had the US not decided to leave the country so quickly, which I still think was a mistake. But it's also important to remember that Afghanistan was a NATO mission, not an EU one.

Is the US's view of its role in the world changing, or at least in the way it couches its foreign policy actions in moral terms?

The moment when the shift became clear was when Donald Trump started to negotiate with the Taliban without including the Afghan government or civil society. That was unprecedented in the sense that, up until then, we understood pluralism within countries and respected governments and national sovereignty, as well as human rights. The Taliban is just one group amongst many in Afghanistan, but the talks involved neither women nor any non-Taliban actors. There may be more moderate and more fundamentalist Taliban, but in the end, they are all fighters; they believe in a religious state and reject democracy.

This decision by Trump was a major shift. President Biden did not negotiate the agreement with the Taliban, but nor did he walk away from it. The population of the US was war-weary after 20 years of military presence in Afghanistan. Moreover, the US is now very focused on China. The trend we might now see, when it comes to US foreign policy – and I hope the EU will not follow down this road – is to frame geopolitical power dynamics as "us" against China or Russia.

How does the EU fit into this changing picture?

If we want to improve people's lives around the world – which I believe is still the aim of foreign policy, rather than being the most powerful kid on the block – the small and concrete steps matter most. For example: how can we make sure, even with the Taliban in power, that humanitarian aid reaches everyone in Afghanistan? We should provide financial support, but we should insist that these projects also support women and not just men. If we are going to spend money on education, it should benefit everyone, and if girls are the most vulnerable, then more money should be spent on girls' education.

If we are to apply these principles, we need to be able to take sovereign decisions as one European Union and have the capacity to implement them. We need to join forces with other nations, but if they are reluctant, we need the capacity to act on our own. It's not so much about having more money, ships, or soldiers; it's about joint EU decision-making.

HOW CAN ONE EU COUNTRY IMPOSE AN ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA WHILE ANOTHER EXPORTS ARMS THERE?

A joint EU foreign policy would have so much more impact. Why do we need to have 27 embassies in so many countries? Why don't we have a joint EU delegation where member states share responsibilities in different areas? How can one EU country impose an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia while another exports arms there? How can we have one foreign policy on that basis? As long as countries can still block and undermine each other and are unwilling to meaningfully pool their resources, we're not going to move an inch.

When it comes to the EU's tools for supporting human rights abroad, the EU is working on legislation on supply chain accountability, to prevent companies from Europe and elsewhere from directly or indirectly violating fundamental rights. Could this provide strong leverage?

The EU has many kinds of leverage. One is the due diligence legislation. The idea is that companies have a responsibility for human rights violations along their supply chains, such as exploitative practices or inadequate working conditions. They can no longer claim that they were unaware of such violations taking place. Instead, they need to make sure that they and their suppliers comply with high social and – hopefully, this will be included – environmental standards. There has been some progress with discussions at the EU level, but no conclusions have been reached so far. Often, even when progressive forces succeed in pushing similar proposals onto the agenda, these directives can get stuck in the institutional machinery for years. Even with an EU commissioner and a European Parliament in favour, it does not mean this legislation will ever see the light of day.

An import ban on goods that come from forced labour would be another important step. Also, the new EU human rights sanctions mechanism allows for individual sanctions, that is – sanctions against persons or entities rather than entire nations.[1] It can be an effective

1 The EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU GHRSR-EU Magnitsky Act) was adopted in 2020.

tool for targeted sanctions. But it has only been in place for a year, so we are yet to see the real impact.

Trade agreements are an important lever because of the EU's economic power; granting privileged market access provides a lot of influence. For example, we have the GSP+ scheme, which grants trade privileges for countries improving their human rights records.[2] Unfortunately, the commissioner in charge refuses to even reconsider, for example in the case of a country like the Philippines which has a terrible track record on human rights. So we are not using the levers that Europe already has at its disposal.

One area where the EU could improve is in providing support for human rights defenders, especially when it comes to countries where they are deliberately targeted. Due to current visa regulations, human rights defenders often cannot come to the EU even for short-term visits for conferences or networking. This is incomprehensible – providing a Schengen visa costs the EU nothing and would be an important gesture of support, and sometimes also security.

Despite the global nature of the crises we face today, there is still a tendency to retreat into national responses. What do you see as the dominant trend in today's globalised world, and how would you characterise the Green position more generally?

I think we as Greens still believe in global multilateralism, whether it comes to issues of climate or world peace. There is broad agreement among the Greens that the EU needs to have the capacity and capabilities to defend multilateral values and human rights.

But the Greens are not alone on this. Even France now understands that, in the EU, there are only small countries or countries that do not yet know how small they are. Having a global impact is only possible when we work together. Nevertheless, this is often forgotten when it comes to political decisions, and sometimes we even seem to be going backwards.

In areas where the EU has authority, especially trade, we are untouchable. When the EU takes a united position, for example on data protection, others will fall in line. For example, Facebook now applies the EU data protection rules all over the world, because having two sets of standards made no sense

2 The EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) removes import duties from products coming into the EU market from developing countries to alleviate poverty and promote job creation. GSP+ is the special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance that removes tariffs for vulnerable low and lower-middle income countries that implement 27 international conventions related to human rights, labour rights, protection of the environment and good governance.

and they could not afford to give up the European market.

If we were to have a similarly united EU foreign policy based on human rights and multilateralism, we would be a stronger global actor. If the EU had a clear stance, then other powers would have to position themselves in relation to it. Until that happens, other countries will take advantage of our divisions. Rather than negotiating with the EU, they go to France and then to Germany…

Some EU countries adopt a market-driven approach to foreign relations and appear willing to overlook rights violations for economic reasons, as we have seen in Germany's attitude towards China. How much does this undermine the EU's capacity to defend human rights and democratic freedoms around the world?

With regards to China, there was a lot of hope in Germany that if we just scaled up trade, the country would move in the right direction in terms of social and human rights. This hope has been dashed; even some Conservatives in Germany would admit that. Lately, the EU's attitude towards China has changed drastically. Following the rightful criticism by some members of the European Parliament – including myself – of Chinese human rights violations against the Uyghur population, and the subsequent introduction of EU sanctions against some of the Chinese individuals responsible, China retaliated with severe sanctions against us. Ambassadors, think-tank researchers, and the entire European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights were put under sanctions. Since then, the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment has been put on hold, which, in my opinion, is an important move that may hopefully have an effect on similar deals in the future.

In a nutshell, these are exactly the debates we are having now, not only within the EU but also in Germany and elsewhere: how fundamental are climate, human rights, and social issues to our markets and economic relations? Is respect for human rights a condition from the outset, or just discussed via backchannel diplomacy? And I would say we are moving slowly in the right direction.

IF THE EU HAD A CLEAR STANCE, THEN OTHER POWERS WOULD HAVE TO POSITION THEMSELVES IN RELATION TO IT

What about the human rights abuses taking place within the EU? Several member states have been criticised for failing to uphold minority rights.

Of course, we have our problems, which other countries' governments will not fail to mention when we start raising human rights issues. As an example, nearly 2000 EU citizens who fought for ISIS in Syria are still there; we have not yet taken them back. This reluctance may seem understandable given that these people may have committed serious crimes. On the other hand, they are our citizens, they are held in terrible conditions, and they need to undergo fair trials and subsequent punishment according to international standards.

Another issue is how we treat refugees. Societies with a strong sense of *Gastfreundschaft* [hospitality], which treat every stranger with respect, would not treat refugees in the same way we treat them at our borders. Yet then we come and start lecturing these societies about human rights. We talk about the rights of migrant workers in Qatar while at the same time, people are dying at EU borders.

How do you balance engaging with certain governments and your human rights agenda in your daily work?

That's a very important question. Let's take the example of Saudi Arabia. How can you engage with the country? I am the head of the delegation to the Arabian Peninsula. If I decide not to engage with Saudi Arabia, someone else will take the job, and, if things go really wrong, that person may even use it to facilitate arms deals. If you ask me, I prefer using the influence that I have for goals that I find important. My question is always: how can I strengthen the people and issues that I consider vital, such as fostering human rights and climate protection? If Saudi Arabia does not leave its oil underground, then we can save as much carbon dioxide as we want to; they will sell their oil to someone else and someone else will blow the CO_2 into the air. So how can we work with Saudi Arabia to ensure that the country

can have a working economic model without selling its oil? And that's when we start talking constructively about clean energy, pipelines, renewables, whilst never holding back from raising human rights concerns. That is the kind of constructive way of dealing with things that I prefer.

Another question is: how can I help to strengthen the women's movement in Saudi Arabia? Every time I visit the country, I make sure to meet with women's organisations and female members of parliament before meeting others, to give these women the confidence to speak up. Again, I raise the case of those behind bars for their activism on women's rights. Foreign policy is not always the geopolitical approach where you have a big action plan to change the world; more often it's about consistently taking small steps to make the world a better place.

What can others, like civil society actors, do to push for the application of existing legal mechanisms and for the EU to act in line with its rhetoric?

In general, every push from activists is helpful. Pushing for transparency is especially important. My experience is that public opinion is always on the side of human rights and peace over economic interests. So once we know, for example, where arms are exported to and where they end up, we can spark a public debate about arms exports that engages citizens – and we have a lot to gain.

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THE NEW WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER

ARTICLE BY
RODERICK KEFFERPÜTZ

Countries enacting economic sanctions and counter-sanctions, regional trading blocs emerging, supply chains disrupted, and international institutions such as the World Trade Organization under pressure; the world economy is not what it used to be. The happy days of an open global trading system are over, as the economic order undergoes a profound transformation. Several factors lie at the heart of this change: the rise of China, the "securitisation" of the economy, the pandemic, the need to rein in climate change, and a long-overdue social rebalancing.

China's economic success story has reshaped the global power constellation. After all, the economy is the fundamental basis of power, as well as military and geopolitical strength. Countries with successful economies have greater means to invest in technologies and infrastructure and more capabilities and resources at their disposal. It was America's economic and technological superiority that gave it the edge in the Cold War. Now that China has become an economic giant, it naturally also challenges the United States in hegemonic terms.

For several decades, the world economy had a clear division of labour. The United States was the world's unassailable economic leader, while China was the workshop of the world, producing cheap products for Western markets. But it was illusionary to think that China would remain content in that role. The People's Republic has become an economic magnet that is slowly displacing the US. While in the 1980s, China's share of world trade amounted to a meagre 1 per cent, that figure has

risen to about 15 per cent.[1] China is the largest producer of hundreds of industrial goods and a key exporter of important natural resources. Expected to drive a third of worldwide growth and with its share of global GDP increasing to 18 per cent China is once again becoming the economic centre of gravity.[2]

Economic success also leads to technological progress. Beijing is investing in emerging technologies from artificial intelligence to quantum computing. The aim is to dominate the industries of the future, the very areas from which the US and Europe derive their economic competitiveness. Numerous Chinese strategies, ranging from the Made in China 2025 strategy to the 2021-2025 Five-Year Plan, highlight the need to achieve technological leadership. China aims to become a technological leader by 2035 and the world's leader in science and innovation by 2050.[3] Technological leadership will also bring military advantages.

CHINA'S GEOPOLITICAL RISE

Beijing needs a strong, high-tech economy to provide its citizens with prosperity and assure Communist Party rule, but also to become a great power and win influence. The Chinese Communist Party believes that the Middle Kingdom is facing a once-in-a-lifetime chance to surpass the US and become the world's hegemon. It considers China to be in a "period of strategic opportunity", the ideal time to take a more central role in the international arena.[4]

China's economic influence translates into geopolitical leverage. China is the largest trading partner for more than 130 countries as well as the EU, where it has recently surpassed the US in terms of total trade. Numerous trade deals and its Belt and Road Initiative are cementing this shift, contributing to the establishment of a Chinese sphere of economic influence. The strategy is to marginalise the US in the broader struggle for geopolitical hegemony but also to enter regions where the US is leaving a vacuum, such as Afghanistan and central Asia more broadly. North America is the only continent not included in China's Belt and Road Initiative. China is following the principles of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*: avoid the main power, penetrate the open spaces. It is playing *Wei qi*, the board game better known as Go, in which the strategy is to encircle territory and control empty spaces, rather than attack your opponent head-on as in chess.

1 Alessandro Nicita & Carlos Razo (2020). "China: The rise of a trade titan". *UNCTAD*, 27 April 2021.
2 Wang Tianyu (2020). "OECD: Global GDP projected to rise by 4.2% in 2021, China to account for over a third of that growth". *CGTN*. 2 December 2020.
3 Robert Lawrence Kuhn (2021). "Technology and innovation in China's path to 2035." *CGNT*. 27 September 2021.
4 Helena Legarda (2021). "China's new international paradigm: security first". *Mercator Institute for China Studies*. 15 June 2021

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC HAS BECOME AN ECONOMIC MAGNET THAT IS SLOWLY DISPLACING THE US

China uses its economic leverage to influence and punish countries for behaviour it considers harmful to its interests. Norway was frozen out for awarding the Nobel Prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo in 2010. Mongolia suffered after a visit of the Dalai Lama in 2016. The Philippines faced consequences following tensions in the South China Sea in 2014, as did Australia after demanding an independent investigation into the origins of Covid-19.

China is making a run for the commanding heights of the world economy. It represents a challenge to Western and particularly American dominance of the existing economic order. Ideologically, it is also a clash between two different systems of political economy – the Chinese authoritarian state capitalist system and the Western liberal, democratic free market economy.

The world economy has become more Sino-centric. The centre of economic gravity has moved away from the transatlantic basin back towards Asia. The US-China trade war is therefore not just a trade war. Nor was it a Trumpian obsession. President Joe Biden, after all, has not touched Donald Trump's China tariffs. Instead, it is one theatre in the grander competition for hegemony. US sanctions are meant to halt China's economic expansion. Likewise, US export controls on key technologies are intended to constrain China's development and cut it off from high-tech supply chains.

The same holds for new initiatives, such as Biden's Build Back Better World and the EU's Global Gateway. These connectivity proposals, designed to increase the ties between the US, EU, and countries in regions such as southeast Asia and Africa, are meant to push back against the influence of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

China's rise is therefore leading to a battle over the future world economic order. Simultaneously, there has been a wider trend towards the securitisation of the economy.

WEAPONISING INTERDEPENDENCE

Economic relations and interdependence have been weaponised. In the energy sphere, Russia has used natural gas as a means to exert pressure on Ukraine, as well as to strongarm Europe into issuing a permit for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. China has used its monopoly on critical raw materials, such as rare earth minerals, in the same way. In a diplomatic conflict with Tokyo, Beijing banned rare earth exports to Japan.

When it comes to finance, the US has used the dollar as a weapon against Iran, shutting Tehran out of the world's most important

TRADE WARS, SANCTIONS, AND TECHNOLOGY BLOCKADES – A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER IS EMERGING

financial network, and barred Americans from investing in companies with links to the Chinese military. Several firms on the New York Stock Exchange have ended up de-listed. The US even forced a Chinese company to sell its stake in the gay community dating app Grindr, arguing that potential Chinese government access to sensitive user information was a national security risk.

This is what decoupling between the US and China is all about. Neither wants the other to control economic choke points. As part of its "dual circulation" strategy, China wants to decrease its reliance on foreign economic materials and markets, such as semiconductors and Wall Street, while increasing other countries' economic reliance on China. Beijing, for example, does not want Chinese companies listed on US stock exchanges for fear of new disclosure requirements. So, it is discouraging Chinese firms from listing on Wall Street, while opening the door to foreign direct investment.

Both the US and China have acknowledged that the economy is an essential element of their security. While Washington has stressed that "economic security is national security", China has put forth its concept of "comprehensive national security", which frames economic affairs in security terms.

Trade wars, sanctions, and technology blockades – a new economic order is emerging. To paraphrase Clausewitz: the economy has become the continuation of war by other means. This is what Edward Luttwak, the father of geoeconomics, called "the logic of conflict, translated in the grammar of commerce".[5] In Europe, French president Emmanuel Macron in particular has understood this new reality, stating in a speech on defence policy that we must "confront the direct and indirect effects of globalisation on our sovereignty and security", that the "control of material and immaterial resources and flows is key

5 Edward Luttwak (1990). "From Geopolitics to Geo-economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce". *The National Interest*, 20 (Summer 1990), pp. 17-23.

to new power strategies", and that the line between competition and confrontation is now "completely blurred".[6]

COVID-19, THE CLIMATE CRISIS, AND SOCIAL REBALANCING

Three more factors have emerged that are restructuring the world economy.

The first is Covid-19. The pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of a purely efficiency-driven globalisation based on just-in-time production. When assembly lines grind to a halt in China, it has repercussions all around the world. "The kind of globalization of putting everything where production is most efficient is over," Jörg Wuttke, president of the European Chamber of Commerce in China, has stressed.

Resilience has therefore become a key concept. Companies are looking for new production models that are more resistant to disruptions and stress. The current situation, in which many countries face supply-chain disruptions because of surging post-lockdown demand, highlights how the current system lacks the resilience to withstand sudden shocks and swings. Given geopolitical tensions and weaponised interdependence, as well as the rise in dangerous climate events and other accidents such as the blockage of the Ever Given container ship in the Suez Canal, the likelihood of more regular disruption is increasing.

Simultaneously, the pandemic has shown European countries' extreme dependencies on many essential goods, particularly medical products. France, for example, relied on China and other Asian countries for 80 per cent of pharmaceutical precursors.[7] Governments are therefore asking themselves how they can diversify their supply chains to ensure the security of essential products for their citizens. Japan, for instance, has launched reshoring programmes hoping to entice its companies to shift their production back to Japan, or at least away from China to other countries.

Second, the global economic order is facing up to the climate challenge. The necessary restructuring ranges from making industrial production processes climate-friendly and decarbonising the global transport system, for example by using green hydrogen in air transport, to enabling more localised production and reshoring some industries to reduce shipping routes. Advances in robotics, automated systems, and new technologies, such

6 "Speech of the President of the Republic on the Defense and Deterrence Strategy." *Présidence de la République*. 7 February 2020.
7 Catherine Abou El Khair (2020). "Coronavirus : Bruno Le Maire veut réduire la dépendance de la France aux approvisionnements chinois, mais le peut-il ?". *20 Minutes*. 21 February 2020.

as additive manufacturing and 3D printing, are making reshoring more feasible.

Climate-proofing the international trading system comes with its own challenges. The EU's plan to put into place a carbon border adjustment mechanism would add a tariff on products coming into the EU from countries that lack adequate climate policies such as carbon pricing. Many countries, particularly China, have criticised the plans as green protectionism and it is uncertain whether the system will conform with World Trade Organization rules. In this context, the EU's plans to add a climate dimension to trade are increasing tensions and putting more strain on the overall system.

Last but certainly not least, we are seeing a social rebalancing of the world economy. Over the years, income inequality has widened in many countries. Digital giants such as Amazon have achieved quasi-monopoly status, stifling and buying out the competition. Increasingly, government leaders have realised that it has swung too far, and that they need to pivot away from neoliberal economics by tackling inequality and reining in big business. In Japan, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, in office since October 2021, has promised a "new Japanese capitalism" based on a "virtuous circle of growth and distribution of wealth".[8] In the US, President Biden has put forth a 1.75-trillion-dollar spending plan, called for a "worker-centred trade policy", and signed an executive order reshaping antitrust laws to fight anti-competitive practices in Big Tech. In China, Xi Jinping's new narrative is centred on "common prosperity", cracking down on business (and internal opposition within the party) and aiming to lessen inequality. In the United Kingdom, even Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson has increased taxes to pay for social care.

EUROPE IN A BRAVE NEW ECONOMIC WORLD

The world economic order is in the grips of a great transformation. It is, on the one hand, becoming more geopolitical and a battleground of the US-China hegemonic conflict. On the other, it needs to become more resilient to supply shocks, climate-friendly, and fair. Both of these points recalibrate the interplay between government and market forces. The last five years have seen a steady swing towards a greater role for the state. It went full tilt with the pandemic, as states stepped in to save health systems, social security, and the economy. Post-pandemic, the question is what the future role of the state in the economy will be. Such is the fear of China beating the West at the economic game, there have been calls for Western economies to copy

8 Daisuke Akimoto and Larissa Stünkel (2021). "What is Kishidanomics". *The Diplomat*. 14 October 2021.

Chinese methods and take on a greater role in the economy. However, the West's economic success was built on a balance between an open economy in which companies can compete freely and a state that promotes technology and innovation, provides social safety nets, and puts in place rules to nudge the economy in certain directions.

While this balance has been lost over the last decades, Greens have a chance to revive this approach by promoting an economic strategy that recognises the transformations the world's economic order is undergoing. Every policy should ideally be considered from the viewpoint of geopolitics, economic resilience, social balance, and climate. For Greens, who have long thought of issues transversally, the current moment is an ideal opportunity. They bring extensive experience with the Green Deal and the promotion of new technologies and innovation. They have also fought for social issues and pushed for reshoring policies to bring back industry and make Europe's economy more resilient.

The German Greens have a particularly important role to play. As likely partners in a three-party coalition, Europe's largest economy, together with the Liberals and the Social Democrats, they will have to develop an economic transformation strategy that is green, free-market-oriented, and socially balanced (as well as resilient and geopolitical).

Achieving this will not be easy. Discussions between the three parties will be tough, particularly when it comes to investment. The Greens favour a loosening of Germany's debt brake to promote investments in green infrastructure, while the Liberals want to keep it firmly in place. But out of this friction, innovative proposals could be developed that find new ways to deal with the challenges our economies are facing. That is, after all, what is needed. The economy is in the grips of a great transformation; managing it will require new thinking.

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A Geopolitical Europe Starts with Social Policy

The word "geopolitics" conjures up images of a world whose time has passed, of generals and diplomats sliding chess-like pieces across maps. That is not to say that power relations have disappeared. The great powers, Europe included, are vying for leverage in more areas than ever. But it cannot be a top-down project. Any attempt at a geopolitical vision for Europe needs to start with social justice and democracy.

The European institutions have committed themselves to a concept known as "open strategic autonomy".[1] Broadly defined, this refers to the European Union's ability to act using its own resources and reduce its dependencies on other parts of the world. It is one of the key elements promoted by the European institutions as part of Europe's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. In a changing global context, achieving "open strategic autonomy" is the European Commission's strategy for Europe to become a key global actor.

The pandemic has extended the understanding of geopolitics to include new areas such as technology and health. However, this understanding has still not stretched far enough. Any geopolitical vision for the European Union ultimately rests on European societies. To be effective, open strategic autonomy should go beyond conventional geopolitical considerations to incorporate socioeconomic dimensions as well as environmental realities. Policies determined at the highest levels can affect people's lives very tangibly and very rapidly. A geopolitical Europe that overlooks the social dimension risks generating resentment and may lead to a public backlash.

THE BACKDROP TO STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

For a long time, "strategic autonomy" was mainly used in military and foreign policy contexts to refer to the ability of a state to act alone in matters of national security and strategic importance. Today, global geopolitics are increasingly complex. Issues such as climate policies intersect with other areas in a continuously evolving geoeconomic context characterised by competition between the two leading global actors, the United States and China. Over time, the concept of strategic autonomy was thus enlarged to include areas such as technological development and economic interests.

1 "Europe's moment: Repair and prepare for the next generation". Press release IP/20/940. European Commission. 27 May 2020.

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Then came Covid-19. This was not only a severe public health crisis; the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns shook the economic and social fundamentals of societies across the globe. In Europe, the crisis exposed a series of vulnerabilities, revealing the European Union's dependence on other countries in areas of strategic importance. Disruptions in the production and supply of critical goods such as face masks or inputs such as drug precursors produced in India and China left European health systems lacking in the crisis. The concept of open strategic autonomy has been developed to ensure that Europe is better prepared for future crises. Its primary objective is a Europe that is more resilient in the face of challenges, while the prefix "open" is intended to indicate that the EU remains committed to multilateral relations with like-minded partners.

SOCIAL POLICIES IN AN INTERCONNECTED WORLD

In today's context, it is increasingly accepted that different policies are intertwined. Trade policy, for example, is no longer isolated from climate policy; in theory, at least, the two are expected to work together.

The energy transition is a clear example of this interconnection. Faced with climate change and environmental degradation, the green transition requires the transformation of Europe's energy system. This process will involve disruptive changes in how energy is both produced and consumed. As high-carbon sources of energy are phased out, energy costs will rise. The scarcity of certain resources such as rare earth minerals and carbon taxes will further drive up costs. In the coming decades, energy prices will stabilise and eventually fall with the increased availability of cleaner and cheaper renewable sources. In the meantime, however, energy bills are set to rise and more people could find themselves in energy poverty.

In other words, the decarbonisation pathways that a more autonomous and sustainable Europe needs to follow will come with a social cost. Changing dependencies on energy sources will impact energy imports and trade. Without reinforced social protection throughout the green transition, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions could generate public opposition. The yellow vest movement in France was triggered by a rise in fuel prices due to a new carbon tax, adding to an accumulation of existing financial challenges faced by middle and lower-income households. The fear of a similar social reaction seems to be present in the thinking of some policy-makers, who have recognised that society needs to be carried along if there is to be a credible just transition.

WITHOUT REINFORCED SOCIAL PROTECTION THROUGHOUT THE GREEN TRANSITION, DETERIORATING SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS COULD GENERATE PUBLIC OPPOSITION

Socioeconomic conditions are inseparable from energy policies, which are inseparable from trade relations, which are inseparable from geopolitical dynamics, which are inseparable from the control of critical raw materials and resources. Welcome to a world in which (almost) everything is interconnected.

THE STRATEGIC SIDE OF SOCIAL POLICY

Given their many connections across different policy areas, initiatives to enhance Europe's open strategic autonomy can hardly be separated from their social and economic implications. However, social policy remains an under-discussed aspect of the debate when, in fact, it should be intrinsic to it.

Reducing Europe's dependence on other parts of the world involves (re-) developing strategic sectors and industries and potentially includes reshoring critical production lines back to Europe. Reinforced investment in critical skills is central to this effort. Investing in people and their know-how is of utmost importance for a Europe wishing to boost innovation and stay competitive during the twin transitions of digitalisation and sustainability, particularly if it aims to become a global leader in strategic industries.

According to forecasts from the European vocational training centre (Cedefop), Europe faces skills shortages in occupations including the digital industries, scientific research, healthcare, and teaching.[2] Examples include the growing demand for sustainable architects in Italy, and the Europe-wide demand for workers with specialised skills driven by the development of the electric car industry. Needless to say, in order to identify and invest in the right skills for future jobs, coordination with education and training systems is key. If the European Union has determined that nanotechnology and the production of semiconductors are essential to its strategic autonomy, then equipping people with the specific skills needed is equally important. Industrial development, investment in skills, and the creation of decent jobs go hand in hand.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT IN SKILLS, AND THE CREATION OF DECENT JOBS GO HAND IN HAND

Demographic projections suggest that Europe's population will increase slightly until 2026, after which a decline will set in that will last until 2100 and likely beyond.

A combination of longer life expectancies, declining birth rates, and migratory flows indicate a demographic picture characterised by a shrinking workforce. Existing labour shortages are likely to be exacerbated in the coming decades, especially in some critical sectors and particularly for the European regions already suffering from depopulation. According to a study by the EU agency for the improvement of living and working conditions (Eurofound), countries such as Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands are facing unmet labour demand in the digital sectors.[3] The pandemic will worsen the overall situation; sectors such as construction are facing particular difficulties. These demographic trends raise questions about Europe's ability to fill in jobs in critical sectors. Active and healthy ageing policies for the elderly are one way to address these issues. However, raising the pension age, which varies widely across the EU, can quickly become a contentious issue, especially in some countries.

In this context, focusing on youth policy is an important step that could have a decisive effect on the prosperity of Europe over the next decades. Reducing the proportion of young people who are neither in education nor employment, and supporting their transition into the labour market, may help avoid the bitter experience of the 2008 financial crisis that scarred the careers of many young people for years

2 "Skill shortages in Europe: Which occupations are in demand – and why". CEDEFOP. 25 October 2021.
3 Eurofound (2021). *Tackling labour shortages in EU Member States*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

afterwards. The European Commission has indicated that it will invest more in young people through a new mobility programme entitled ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) to help young people find work abroad. While promoting youth mobility is a smart idea as the success of the Erasmus programmes shows, the scheme should go beyond proposing temporary work experience abroad. Curbing the particularly high levels of youth unemployment faced by some European countries and regions should be a priority.

Furthermore, younger people are increasingly aware of the climate emergency and wider environmental challenges, urging politicians to push for environmental protection and increase efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The sustainability of Europe's strategic autonomy in relation to climate politics therefore also depends on the support of the next generation.

A crucial aspect of the social side of strategic autonomy relates to just and fair transitions in the face of climate change and digitalisation. The green transition is a key prerequisite for Europe's strategic autonomy because it can reduce external dependencies around energy and scarce resources. At the same time, it will have unequal distributional impacts, with adverse employment effects on the economic sectors faced with restructuring. Countries will have different experiences of the twin transitions depending on their existing economic and industrial structures, as well as their relative access to raw materials. Potential job losses require careful management to ensure that transition is a fair process for everyone. Social partners need to be involved to a greater extent, at all levels, to make sure that workers are accompanied and supported during all stages of the transitions. Failure to do so risks deepening inequalities, increasing polarisation, and turning the public against disruptive green policies – and may well undermine strategic autonomy.

CITIZENS SHOULD HAVE THEIR SAY ON ISSUES THAT WILL IMPACT THEIR ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES

To ensure fair and just transitions towards a carbon-neutral economy, additional funds will be needed to support the sectors most heavily dependent on carbon-intensive processes. As part of the Fit for 55 package, the European Commission has proposed a Social Climate Fund on top of existing just transition funds to help citizens finance investments in energy efficiency and cleaner mobility solutions. Whether this will be enough to ensure a just transition remains to be seen.

THE WAY AHEAD

The European strategic autonomy debate is set to continue in the years ahead. With France taking over the EU presidency in 2022, open strategic autonomy will likely become even more central to the European political discourse. French disappointment at being cut out of the Aukus military pact between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, and losing out on a lucrative nuclear submarine contract with Australia as a result, will only reinforce this trend. The Aukus affair has shaken the image of a Europe able to maintain its independence and influence in the face of other geopolitical actors.

While the geopolitical context is constantly evolving, one thing is clear: citizens must be front and centre on the path towards strategic autonomy. All initiatives put forward should include citizen engagement and offer support, for instance with job seeking or in the area of education and training. Expectations should be managed early on, and transparency about the proposed impact of the policies under discussion – including an explanation of the trade-offs – will be essential. Socioeconomic considerations lie at the intersection of geopolitics and climate politics. Making this clear right from the beginning – not *ex post* – will increase public acceptance of the policies that are needed in order to move forward with Europe's strategic autonomy. Any attempt at strategic autonomy which lacks an in-built basis for social and democratic legitimacy is bound to fail.

Transformative thinking and participatory policy co-design are examples of how citizens could be directly involved in matters of strategic importance. Despite their limitations, the citizens' climate assemblies in France and the United Kingdom and the citizens' panels organised through the Conference on the Future of Europe are a start. Policies are ultimately about people, and it is people that feel their effects. Citizens should therefore be able to have their say on issues that will strongly impact their economic activities as well as their everyday lives. They should receive proper support with the costs and consequences of these decisions. Failing this, strategic autonomy will be met with resentment and may lead to a public backlash, ending up as little more than an EU buzzword.■

EUROPE'S ENERGY TRANSITION
UKRAINE'S SALVATION?

ARTICLE BY
THOMAS LAFFITTE

As the European Union steps up its energy transition, Ukraine is being forced to accelerate its plans at the risk of damaging its rapprochement with Brussels. The inauguration of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline could add to the pressure being piled on Kyiv by its neighbours in the region. However, Ukraine has been offered the chance of a major role in the production of Europe's green hydrogen. Decisions about the EU's energy future have geopolitical consequences that extend well beyond its borders.

In western Ukraine, in Galicia, lies the small town of Staryi Sambir. Nestled at the foot of the mountains, this town marks the end of the great Ukrainian plain and the beginning of the Carpathians. The Dniester, which rises close to the town and winds its way to the Black Sea, carves out a valley whose two sides overlook the town. It is on these heights that the first – and for the moment, the only – wind turbines in all of western Ukraine have been installed: three in 2015, then six more in 2017. Their blades turn peacefully amid wheat fields just 20 kilometres from the Polish border, as if signalling to the neighbouring European Union.

The EU has been paying increased attention to its Ukrainian neighbour for some years now and sees it as an important partner in the energy transition. As Europe's second-largest country, Ukraine has great potential for the development of all types of renewables. The signing of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in 2014 marked an important step in Kyiv's commitment to green energy. The share of renewables in the Ukrainian energy mix subsequently jumped from 4 per cent to more than 11 per cent by 2021. In 2019 alone, more than 3.7 billion euros

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LA TRANSITION ÉNERGÉTIQUE DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE AU SECOURS DE L'UKRAINE ?

Thomas Laffitte analyse le rôle de l'énergie dans l'évolution des relations entre l'UE et l'Ukraine ainsi que les enjeux pour l'ensemble de la région.

were invested in the sector.[1] Currently, the main renewable source is hydroelectric power, which accounts for 8 per cent of the energy mix. The remaining 3 per cent comes primarily from solar power, which is spread throughout the country. For now, the potential of wind energy remains largely untapped.

President Volodymyr Zelensky has restated Ukraine's climate ambitions and its desire to move in concert with Brussels. "Ukraine is seeking to align its climate policy and legislation with the European Green Deal, he said at the 2020 Climate Ambition Summit.[2] In April 2021, deputy energy minister Yuriy Boyko even announced that Ukraine was on track to meet its target of 25 per cent renewable energy by 2030, five years ahead of the original target date.[3] However, there seems to be a disjuncture between the Ukrainian government's words and its actions on the ground. While Brussels insists on the need for a "green" recovery, Kyiv has gone back on a number of projects since 2020 and has even redirected its aid towards fossil fuels.[4] The main measure here is an exceptional aid package of around 1.2 billion US dollars to Naftogaz, the energy giant fully owned by the Ukrainian state. It aims to keep gas prices, which are exploding all over the world, below the market price. Gas is an important part of the energy mix, making up around 28 per cent, and is largely imported from Russia. The country is also heavily dependent on coal, which accounts for around 30 per cent of total energy consumption and is also primarily of Russian origin.[5]

Beyond the potential geopolitical challenges implied by Ukraine's dependence on Russian raw materials, Brussels cannot afford to have polluting neighbours. One of the major challenges of the European energy transition and the objective of carbon neutrality by 2050 is to avoid the carbon leakage effect, whereby emissions reductions are accompanied by the transfer of carbon-emitting activities outside Europe. But while EU member states struggle to agree on exactly how the Green Deal will work – notably the place of gas and nuclear – can the EU still hope to have enough influence on its Ukrainian partner to guide it in its energy transition?

The last few years have shown a clear willingness on Kyiv's part to meet the requirements of the association agreement and European standards, thanks to the various options offered by the EU. In particular, Ukraine has been a member of the Energy Community

1 "In 2019, about 3.7 billion euros will be invested in a record 4,500 MW of renewable electricity capacity in Ukraine". [Ukrainian]. *State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving of Ukraine*. 4 January 2020.
2 "Zelensky outlines Ukraine's climate ambitions". *Ukrinform*. 14 December 2020.
3 Ministry of Energy: the share of RES in Ukraine in 2021 will reach the target of 2030". [Ukrainian]. *Ukrainska energetika*. 20 April 2021.
4 Olha Polunina (2021). "Ukraine Follows a Fossil Fuel Recovery Pathway". *DiXi Group*. 13 September 2021.
5 IEA (2020). *Ukraine Energy Profile*. Paris: IEA.

– an organisation that aims to create a unified energy market among EU members and some neighbouring states – since 2011. Following the Russian annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the conflict in the Donbas in 2014, the EU also revived the process of integrating the European and Ukrainian electricity grids. In 2023, a step forward will be made with Ukraine's synchronisation with the European network ENTSO-E. Ukraine will then be able to import and export its electricity to and from EU member states. Above all, this connection means a separation from the former Soviet grid, which Ukraine still shares with Russia and Belarus.

However, the completion and probable opening of the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) gas pipeline puts a question mark over Ukraine's rapprochement with Europe. The debate surrounding the construction of this pipeline reveals how the Ukrainian energy issue is inextricably linked to geopolitics, and to the relationships that the EU wishes to maintain with both Kyiv and Moscow. The pipeline, constructed by Russian energy giant Gazprom, bypasses Ukraine through the Baltic Sea. It received its final go-ahead in August 2021 after an agreement was reached between Washington and Berlin. The situation has cast a pall over relations between Europe and Kyiv. Despite Berlin's assurance that Ukraine will be supported if Moscow uses the pipeline for geopolitical purposes, as well as the announcement of the financing of a billion-dollar "green fund" to contribute to Ukraine's energy transition, Kyiv remains sceptical.

A key reason for Ukraine's distrust is that it will lose out on the substantial transit revenues paid by Moscow once the current contract with Gazprom expires in 2024. "The Ukrainian distributor received 1.66 billion US dollars in transit fees in 2020. As soon as the gas no longer passes through Ukraine, the projects declared by Berlin and Washington will hardly be able to replace this windfall," explains Olena Pavlenko, president of DiXi Group, a Kyiv think tank specialising in energy issues. Above all, however, Kyiv sees the completion of NS2 as a serious geopolitical threat. "The biggest risk posed by the completion of NS2 for Ukraine is the loss of a form of guarantee against any new Russian aggression, since Russia would no longer be afraid of losing the European market by attacking Ukraine. No compensatory mechanism, including Germany's willingness to finance a green fund, can address this risk," explains Anton Zorkin, director of energy at the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) in Kyiv. In other words, more than the financial losses caused by NS2, it is the heightened military threat that worries Ukrainian decision-makers.

Ukraine's geopolitical and geo-economic challenges are not limited to its eastern neighbour. To the north, Belarus, with its highly

KYIV IS SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EU TO AVOID ADDING ENERGY ISOLATION TO ITS GEOPOLITICAL ISOLATION

developed capacity for refining crude oil from Russia, is Ukraine's main supplier of hydrocarbons, providing more than two thirds of Ukraine's diesel needs.[6] In addition to the authoritarian nature of Belarus's government, made clear by its violent repression of the protests arising from the 2020 elections, Lukashenko's regime is accused of waging a "hybrid war" against Lithuania and Poland while moving ever closer to Moscow. Ukraine's dilemma is clear: it must try to maintain good relations with its neighbour to continue benefiting from cheap hydrocarbons, while conforming to the EU's wish to isolate Minsk internationally.

In the south, a dispute is threatening relations with Moldova, a traditional ally of Kyiv and a partner of the EU. Since 2016, the Ukrainian authorities have been planning to build six new hydroelectric power plants on the Dniester River, which also irrigates Moldova, where it is one of the country's main sources of water. For Ukraine, the river is also an important source of energy. It supplies the largest hydroelectric power station in Europe, located in Novodnistrovsk, which the local authorities would like to expand. Many experts warn that the construction of additional dams could cause environmental damage downstream or even the silting of the Dniester, which could drastically reduce the quantity of water released into Moldova. For the moment, the slow pace of construction and the ongoing negotiations between Kyiv and Chisinau are keeping the problem in check. But this proffers a reminder that even the development of renewable energies in Ukraine is not exempt from potential disputes between the country and its neighbours.

To the west, tensions with Viktor Orbán's Hungary have persisted since the introduction of a 2017 law stopping secondary school teaching in ethnic minority languages including Hungarian. Orbán's government saw the move as an attack on the Hungarian minority living in Transcarpathia. This grievance is now combined with a pronounced

6 Mark Rachkevych (2021). "Diesel fuel shortages expose Ukraine's reliance on Russian, Belarus imports". *Kyiv Post.* 3 June 2021.

TO UNDERSTAND THE STAKES OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE REGION, WE MUST NOT IGNORE THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: NUCLEAR POWER

Russophilia in Budapest, which has joined Moscow's plan to bypass Ukraine. This strategy does not only have a northern dimension: in the south, TurkStream also transports Russian gas to Europe, this time via Turkey, Bulgaria, and Serbia, and has been connected to Hungary since 1 October 2021. At a time when gas prices are skyrocketing around the world, Budapest has negotiated a 15-year contract with an advantageous option for a 10-year price freeze. Kyiv has not hidden its "surprise" and "disappointment" and says that it will ask the European Commission to examine the legality of the move.[7]

Under these circumstances, Kyiv is seeking to strengthen its partnership with the EU and its member states to avoid adding energy isolation to its geopolitical isolation. As compensation for NS2, Brussels seems to have offered a credible avenue that could help bring Ukraine closer to the EU. In July 2020, as the details of the European Green Deal were being laid out, the Commission published a strategic hydrogen roadmap which highlighted the need to involve the EU's international partners in green hydrogen production. There are plans for half of the EU's hydrogen needs to be sourced from neighbours and partners. Ukraine "in particular" is listed as a priority partner. Under such a system, Ukraine could export up to 8 gigawatts to the European market by 2030, or nearly one eighth of the EU's needs.[8] Since green hydrogen is produced with electricity generated from renewables, the production of this precious gas in line with the requirements of the Green Deal could shift the Ukrainian energy sector towards an increasing use of renewable sources. For Andreas Umland, a research associate at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, this partnership forms part of "a trend that will – and should – continue, in order to both protect Ukraine's importance as a geopolitical player in eastern Europe, and to match the expected further rapid growth of green energy demand in Europe."[9]

7 Joël Le Pavous (2021). "La Hongrie achète du gaz russe en contournant l'Ukraine, colère à Kiev". *Courrier international*. 29 September 2021.
8 "Hydrogen Europe publishes the 2x40GW Green Hydrogen Initiative paper". Fundación para el Desarrollo de las Nuevas Tecnologías del Hidrógeno en Aragón. 27 April 2020.
9 Andreas Umland (2021). "EU should invest in Ukrainian green energy to limit negative impact of Nord Stream 2". *EuroNews*. 1 October 2021.

The Ukrainian government wasted little time in responding to this opportunity. In July 2021, President Zelensky approved a directive of the National Security and Defense Council aimed at "neutralising threats in the energy sector", which includes plans to build a hydrogen-capable EU-Ukraine pipeline network. In August 2021, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation along the green hydrogen value chain was signed between Germany's RWE and Ukraine's Naftogaz. And September 2021 saw the launch of the Central European Hydrogen Corridor initiative, which brings together four gas suppliers from Czechia, Germany, Slovakia, and Ukraine to organise the future transport of hydrogen from the east into the heart of Europe. The beginnings of a partnership are taking shape, one which Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba considers to be "a very serious tool for Ukraine with a view to its European integration". He goes as far as to say that "the challenge of developing hydrogen in Ukraine is not just about energy. It is a major European political project that can radically change the balance of power on the European continent. In the long term, if Ukraine seizes its chance, it could take the place that Russia currently occupies as a gas supplier."[10]

Becoming a green hydrogen supplier to Europe, and primarily to Germany, would not be without its drawbacks. First, Ukraine may itself soon need large quantities of locally produced hydrogen to replace the coal used by the steel industry. Second, there is a risk that exporting electricity to the EU at high prices in the form of hydrogen will increase the price of electricity on the Ukrainian market. Third, the development of green hydrogen is still in the planning stages, and Ukraine will have to invest considerable sums to renovate its electricity network, improve its energy efficiency – the worst in Europe – and above all develop its renewables. For many experts, this need for funding makes the loss of transit fees due to NS2 all the more regrettable." The energy transition, in Ukraine and elsewhere, is a long process. In the short term, it involves a shift from coal to gas. Only after the complete abandonment of coal can we begin to consider the replacement of gas by renewable energy. Nord Stream 2 is therefore far from being a good reason to embark on the energy transition, since its construction contradicts all of Ukraine's interests while strengthening Russian influence," says Anton Zorkin.

To fully understand the stakes of the energy transition in the region, we cannot ignore the elephant in the room: nuclear power. Decisions over its future will have important consequences in Ukraine. With just over half of the country's electricity produced by

10 "Kuleba told how Ukraine can replace Russian gas for Germany" [Ukrainian]. *Ekonomichna pravda*. 30 September 2021. Available at: <https: //bit.ly/3nBDFtq>.

nuclear power, the Ukrainian government is seeking to modernise and even expand its network of ageing Soviet-era plants. If nuclear power were recognised as a form of renewable energy and therefore eligible for subsidies under the European Green Deal, Ukraine could potentially receive European funds to finance the renovation of its power plants. Europe could support Ukraine's energy transition while promoting the country's energy independence, thus helping secure this part of Europe's neighbourhood.

However, as the EU has still not decided on the role to be played by nuclear power within the energy transition, Kyiv has turned to other partners, primarily the United States. At the end of August 2021, Zelensky visited Washington, D.C. for several days, an invitation largely due to the American agreement authorising the completion of Nord Stream 2. Over several meetings, the Ukrainian operator Energoatom signed a cooperation agreement with American nuclear power company Westinghouse for the development of new-generation reactors in Ukraine.

The energy debate illustrates the geopolitical significance and the material consequences of the decisions taken by Brussels, especially for a neighbour and partner such as Ukraine. This is yet another reminder for the EU, if one were needed, that its influence goes beyond "normative power" and that it has decisive geopolitical weight. With the European Green Deal and the energy transition, the EU has the potential to guide Ukraine in its quest for energy independence, and to anchor its neighbour geopolitically in the years to come. It is now up to both parties to live up to their commitments.

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RISING TIDES, RISING TENSIONS

Across the world, political divides increasingly reflect the front lines of the ecological crisis. Authoritarian leaders face off against Indigenous peoples and pro-democracy activists in the pursuit of fossil fuel extraction, megaprojects, and deforestation. These battles over what should be produced, how, and with what consequences for everyday life spill over into the international sphere. Close ties between Russia and Turkey were sealed through fossil fuel energy. Brazil's diplomatic isolation is a consequence of its destructive policies in the Amazon. For the European Union, this means that decisions over energy and climate policies are also geopolitical interventions, reaching into and reshaping the internal politics of countries elsewhere in the world. The speed of Europe's energy transition, as well as its plans for how much energy it needs and in which form, have global consequences for justice, peace, and security that require careful consideration. We hear from writers about the geopolitics of climate change in Brazil, Morocco, Nigeria, Serbia, and Turkey.

FOSSILISED POLITICS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The summer of 2021 witnessed one of the biggest disasters Turkey had ever seen. In total, approximately 178,000 hectares of forest were reduced to ash. According to the European Forest Fire Information System, this area is approximately 755 times the average size of the areas that had burned in Turkey over the previous 12 years. Elsewhere, over 100 people lost their lives in disastrous floods that hit the country's north.

When these devastating climate impacts hit, the Turkish government was busy acquiring rights over fossil fuels in the Eastern Mediterranean through its exclusive economic zone, as well as consolidating ties with Russia, already close thanks to the natural gas trade, by accelerating the construction of the Akkuyu nuclear plant.

Ecological damage and the erosion of a culture that allowed for social dialogue and coexistence are among the most destructive effects of the regime of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has been in power for almost 20 years. During this period, domestic opposition to ecologically damaging policies has been seen as an external (foreign) enemy, a form of action endangering the integrity and safety of the state. This narrative of course overlooks the fact that a substantial number of these projects are backed by foreign investment. This anti-democratic environment has polarised issues such as sustainability, coexistence, and the commons, as well as basic rights and freedoms.

The fact that calls to request international assistance from members of the Turkish public in the midst of the fires were met with a negative response from the government speaks to how division permeates all discussions. The fires are presented as a security problem with no connection to the climate crisis; for the government to implement preventive policies would be to admit otherwise. A large part of society stands behind the claim that these fires, which lasted two weeks, were started by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

In this context, it would be insufficient to see Turkey's active expansion of natural gas extraction in the Eastern Mediterranean solely as conflicting with the commitments it made when ratifying the Paris Agreement with the promise to reach net-zero emissions in 2053.

Turkey's energy policies are closely linked to its broader objectives: securing Northern Cyprus as a region under its auspices, maintaining regional power status through patronage relationships, and, in turn, strengthening the regime's legitimacy and support within Turkey with power drawn from its actions abroad.

The various actors, including Turkey and the EU, vying for a share of the region's natural resources are not only casting a shadow over the hopes of the island's people for peace and a common future; they are also creating a new fossil fuel sector that will lock in future carbon emissions. In the age of the climate crisis, this represents a failure to learn from the wars fought for years in the region over the control of fossil fuels.

The fact that the European Union considers natural gas a transition fuel and prioritises the security of its members over global action in the fight against the climate crisis is undermining regional peace in the Eastern Mediterranean. Considering the humanitarian crisis that followed the Syrian war, the EU should avoid making room for new fossil energy sources that endanger its neighbours' freedom and security. Ignoring the problems that democracy faces in the region or going it alone against the climate crisis are out of the question.

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EXTRACTION AND ENERGY TRANSITION IN SERBIA

In a world affected by climate change and sharp energy price rises, Serbia, as a semi-peripheral country, is increasingly caught between the need to implement the energy transition while guaranteeing its energy supply and securing its geopolitical position between the EU, Russia, and China. It is likely to become a source of cheap resources to fuel the transition, but at what cost?

Serbia's energy mix is still largely based on fossil fuels. The largest energy source is lignite coal, mined domestically, from which about 70 per cent of electricity is obtained. Oil and natural gas, which Serbia mainly imports, are also important sources. The rising energy prices that hit Europe in autumn 2021 did not bypass Serbia, raising the question of energy sovereignty. The Serbian president recently commented that thanks to domestic coal and "favourable" gas from Russia, the country will be safe this winter. This narrative is an obstacle to starting a green and fair energy transition.

Serbia's energy transition is stuck at its very beginning. Despite frequent discussion, not much has been done politically. Over the second half of 2021, the minister of energy and mining began to advocate accelerating the energy transition. The senior management of Elektroprivreda Srbije, the largest state-owned energy company, remains fiercely opposed. Serbia's opposition political parties are only in the initial phase of adopting a green agenda, so they rarely take public positions on energy matters. The exception is the local green political movement Ne davimo Beograd [Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own], which argues that a fast but fair energy transition can be achieved through the rollout of energy efficiency measures.

Serbia's energy and climate policy lies at the crossroads between several major powers. The former state oil company was privatised in 2008 and is now owned by Russia's Gazprom as a private monopoly. Despite announcing its intention to cut CO_2 emissions, Serbia is building a new block of the Kostolac B3 lignite-fired power plant with the help of Chinese loans. At the same, the country is in EU accession negotiations and, by joining the Energy Community, has committed to moving towards EU energy and climate policies.

Meanwhile, jadarite – a mineral that contains a large percentage of lithium – was recently discovered near Loznica in western Serbia. Lithium is a strategic resource necessary for the green transformation, and demand for this mineral is expected to rise. This has sparked the interest of foreign companies in its exploitation. Australian giant Rio Tinto, known primarily for leaving devastation and war in the wake of its mines, is the main contender. According to current economic and geopolitical trends, Serbia may become one of Europe's main lithium suppliers, but questions remain. Whose green transformation will this power? And who will pay for the environmental and agricultural damage wrought by the exploitation of Serbia's mineral wealth?

Lithium batteries and electric cars will not be made in Serbia; they will be manufactured much closer to the economic centre. Aside from the revenue received from the ore, which is nearly the lowest in Europe, it is feared that all that Serbia will be left with in exchange is polluted land, water, and air.

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CLIMATE COLONIALISM IN MOROCCO

Morocco is a key player in climate politics. First, the country is an important energy corridor bringing Algerian natural gas to Spain. The closure of the gas pipeline between the two north African countries due to diplomatic problems in October 2021 demonstrated how Europe in general, and Spain in particular, is highly dependent on the stability of its Mediterranean neighbours. This dependency makes abandoning the use of natural gas as soon as possible a priority; Europe should instead bet on a renewable, relocalised, and self-sufficient energy system.

Second, for years Morocco has positioned itself as north Africa's climate champion, for example by organising the last COP held on the African continent, COP22 in Marrakech in 2016. Morocco's commitment to renewables, driven by a clear desire to improve the country's external image, is striking for a region still dominated by fossil fuels. However, this strategy contains a huge flaw: half of the renewable production that the Moroccan regime plans to roll out by the year 2030 is located in the occupied territory of Western Sahara. As the European Court of Justice has emphatically reiterated in recent years,[1] Western Sahara does not belong to Morocco but is rather a non-autonomous territory still in the process of decolonisation after occupation by Spain. For any type of project, including renewable energy, the consent of the Saharawi people is necessary, as well as dialogue with the Polisario Front, their legitimate representative.

The reality on the ground is quite different. As the NGO Western Sahara Resource Watch has documented,[2] many solar plants are already operating in Western Sahara with the illegal approval of Morocco. These projects are in the hands of European companies such as Siemens Gamesa, Enel, and ENGIE, as well as international firms including General Electric and ACWA Power. Since none of these companies have sought the necessary consent of the Saharawi people, these projects contravene international and European law.

If that were not enough, Morocco has illegally included Western Sahara in its plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the context of the Paris Agreement. It is a clear case of "climate colonialism" that challenges any serious approach to climate justice. Renewables, yes, but only through legality and justice.

Faced with this situation, the EU and Spain must raise their voices against the colonial use of renewable energy. European companies should stop intervening in Western Sahara until they obtain the consent of the Saharawi people. When it comes to international climate commitments, Morocco should present nationally determined contributions circumscribed to its territory as recognised by the United Nations, while Western Sahara should be endowed with its own nationally determined contributions as required by international law.

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1 "EU court cancels Morocco trade deals over Western Sahara dispute". *France 24*. 29 September 2021.
2 Western Sahara Resource Watch (2021). *Greenwashing Occupation: How Morocco's renewable energy projects in occupied Western Sahara prolong the conflict over the last colony in Africa*. Brussels: WSRW.

NIGERIA AS A "CLIMATE HOTSPOT"

Global warming has risen to the forefront of concerns worldwide, accompanied by dire predictions of catastrophic consequences for humanity. Sub-Saharan Africa has been identified as the region most likely to be hit by the negative consequences of climate change. Experts at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have identified Nigeria as a climate change "hotspot" likely to experience major shifts in weather in the 21st century.[1] Temperature rises, variable rainfall, rising sea levels, flooding, drought, desertification, and biodiversity loss are all signs of Nigeria's changing climate.

Agriculture is the primary occupation and source of income for a large percentage of the country's population. As a result of climate change, evidence shows that farmers are finding it difficult to plan their operations due to unpredictable rainfall, given that the majority of Nigeria's agricultural produce is rain-fed. Droughts, desertification, and rising temperatures reduce farmland and lower agricultural productivity. Agricultural production is also harmed by increased rainfall intensity in the coastal region, sea level rise, flooding, and farmland erosion. According to a 2009 study by the UK's former Department for International Development, climate change will cost Nigeria between 6 and 30 per cent of GDP by 2050, representing 100 billion to 460 billion dollars, unless strong action is taken.[2]

Climate change has also resulted in severe resource shortages in Nigeria. The first issue is land scarcity. More heat combined with less rain raises the risk of widespread desertification, particularly in northern Nigeria. Flooding caused by sea level rise is contaminating freshwater aquifers, rivers, and stock-watering points in parts of southern Nigeria, leaving them with high salinity and with higher levels of sediment and sewage pollution, affecting the ability to fish. Conflicts over scarce resources have been a depressingly common feature of Nigeria's social order for a long time. Communal violence, the majority of which involves contested resources, is thought to have killed at least 10,000 Nigerians in less than a decade, according to one estimate. Nigeria's frequent farmer-herder conflicts are an example.

Nigeria is Africa's top crude oil producer, ranking 13th in the world with a daily production capacity of 2.4 million barrels. Crude oil-based products currently account for 90 per cent of Nigeria's exports and roughly 80 per cent of the country's revenue. Despite a slew of policies aimed at harnessing Nigeria's abundant renewable energy resources, the country's excessive reliance on oil has slowed the development of alternatives and the country is completely off track. To attract private sector investment and boost the renewable energy subsector, policy coordination and institutional reforms are required.

Nigeria requires and deserves assistance from more developed countries in the area of adaptation. It has received only a small amount of multilateral support for climate change from the United Kingdom, the EU, and other countries such as Canada. The availability of investment capital and external assistance will be critical for achieving Nigeria's necessary energy transition and adapting to climate change.

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1 UN General Assembly (2009). *Report of the Secretary-General: Climate Change and Its Potential Security Implications*. A/64/350. 11 September 2009.
2 DFID/ERM (2009). *Impact of Climate Change on Nigeria's Economy*. Abuja: DFID.

BRAZIL'S BATTLE LINES OF DEFORESTATION

The environmental losses Brazil has experienced since 2019 are frightening. The spring of 2021 was marked by the biggest water crisis in 91 years. Hydroelectric reservoirs are at near-record lows, threatening electricity supply, and agriculture in the Centro-Sul region is suffering from a severe drought. Land grabbers, miners, and other traditional enemies of Brazil's natural heritage are burning, deforesting, and invading Indigenous territories and environmental preservation areas. The Brazilian state has failed to react. As a result, in 2019 and 2020 alone, 9216 square kilometres were cleared in the Amazon, and the devastation of the Amazon, Cerrado, Caatinga, and Pantanal regions has reached record levels. Negligence and half-hearted firefighting efforts caused deforestation alerts in the Amazon region in 2019 and 2020 to rise to levels 82 per cent higher than the average number registered in 2016, 2017, and 2018, as shown by data from Brazil's National Institute for Space Research. So far this year, at least 661 square kilometres of forest have been cut down in the Cerrado, a region recognised as the "water tank" of Brazil. In the Pantanal, an area larger than Belgium was destroyed by forest fires. In addition to the destruction of flora, an estimated 10 million wild animals died in forest fires, with 4.6 billion more suffering from their effects.

According to the Climate Observatory's Greenhouse Gas Emission and Removal Estimating System (SEEG Brasil), even with the pandemic and economic recession, Brazil's greenhouse gas emissions increased by 9.5 per cent in 2020. The global trend was a drop of almost 7 per cent. The current Brazilian government's environmental policy does nothing to contribute to the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels by 2030. On the contrary, according to a report released by the global organisation Climate Transparency, that brings together NGOs from 16 countries, its current climate plans contribute to 3 degrees of warming – this is double the limit set by the Paris Agreement, signed in 2015. This poor record has led to Brazil's diplomatic isolation.

Nevertheless, states and municipalities in Brazil are beginning to react to the dismantling of environmental policies by the central government. State governors are trying to fill the void left by President Jair Bolsonaro and to show the world that other actors in Brazilian society are committed to the climate agenda. In August 2021, 25 heads of state governments met the president of COP26, Alok Sharma. Earlier in the summer, they had met with US climate envoy John Kerry. At least 10 state representatives were at COP26 in Glasgow.

The actions that Brazil needs to take are clear and proven: combating fires, deforestation, and mining; strengthening its environmental agencies; providing resources for social development and the reforestation of devastated areas; and ensuring respect for Indigenous and traditional populations. Without these, Brazilian diplomatic isolation may long continue.

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THE LIMITS OF EUROPE'S CORPORATE-LED HYDROGEN PROJECT

ARTICLE BY
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& **MARIO DIAZ**

What would it mean to fulfil the promises of hydrogen replacing fossil fuels in Europe? Beyond the inflated expectations, there are important geopolitical implications that are not being seriously considered within democratic debate. The complicity of current hydrogen policies with the corporate powers of the energy sectors and the expansion of the frontiers of extraction both within and outside Europe risk making hydrogen a further step into colonial and expansionist capitalism rather than a tool to overcome it.

Anyone following climate and energy news will have noticed the hydrogen boom. Optimistic outlooks and projections – usually referring to tropes like "the most abundant element in the universe" or "the energy of the future" – circulate in online events, political debates, and technical reports trying to find an emergency exit to the twilight of fossil fuels. But neither hydrogen itself (a synthetic fuel) nor the promise of a "green hydrogen" produced with renewable energy are recent technological breakthroughs. Hydrogen has a long history of being the "next big thing". The first wave of interest followed the oil price shocks of the 1970s; another came in the wake of incipient concerns for climate change in the 1990s.

Hydrogen and its surrounding technological ecosystem come with a series of serious concerns that cast doubt on its possible global role as a bread-and-butter fuel. First, the renewable energy infrastructure needed to produce green hydrogen has enormous material requirements. It will require intensified mining for rare earth minerals and other metals such as copper; such processes have already destroyed entire ecosystems. The Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflicts has

reported on the dangers of opening up new frontiers of extraction.[1] Second, the promotion of hydrogen is closely associated with industries with doubtful sustainability credentials, such as natural gas and carbon capture.

This time, though, something seems different. Hydrogen is a clear winner in the rush of post-pandemic proposals. "Kick-starting a clean hydrogen economy in Europe" is at the heart of the European Union's Next Generation plan for its recovery in the wake of Covid-19, announced in 2020. The implications of the EU setting this objective have already triggered rapid geo-political movements at a transcontinental level.

In Chile, the idea of becoming a green hydrogen world leader was seized upon aggressively throughout 2020. The proposal for Chile's green hydrogen strategy released in June 2020 posits Chile as the world-leading, export-oriented producer by 2030. The country's main advantage, ministers and business-people argue, is its huge potential for renewable energy generation. The oft-repeated suggestion that Chile could become the "Saudi Arabia of renewables" promises economic success to whoever gets on board.

Who will buy these tons of "made in Chile" hydrogen? Europe provides the technical, political, and economic backdrop to this drive, a "safe" engine committed to climate action under the banner of hydrogen and offering a rush of foreign investment.

THE WINNERS AND LOSERS OF A HYDROGEN-POWERED EUROPE

On 8 July 2020, the European Commission presented its hydrogen strategy, a vision and road map for the role of hydrogen in the EU economy. In a document highly influenced by industry and fossil fuel lobbyists – represented by the organisation Hydrogen Europe – hydrogen is framed as a "key priority" to decarbonise hard-to-abate industries such as steel or chemical sectors while keeping them competitive in the global landscape.[2]

Currently, the vast majority of hydrogen is produced by fossil fuels, with no CO_2 abatement (i.e. removing the emissions from the atmosphere, generally through carbon capture and storage). So-called "blue hydrogen" is created by treating natural gas in a process known as "steam methane reforming". The European Commission's hydrogen strategy embraces the combination of this process with carbon capture and storage as a key element of the "transitional phase" towards decarbonising the economy, before

1 Lucio Cuenca Berger (2021). "Hidrógeno verde o cómo profundizar el extractivismo (Parte I)". *Observatorio Latinoamericano de Conflictos Ambientales*. 28 August 2021.
2 Corporate European Observatory (2020). *The hydrogen hype: Gas industry fairy tale or climate horror story?*. 7 December 2020.

green hydrogen – produced using renewable electricity – can take over.

Research assessing the full-cycle emissions of blue hydrogen production has studied the material consequences of this transitional phase, pointing out how the use of natural gas in the carbon capture process will create large amounts of fugitive methane emissions. The authors conclude that blue hydrogen is "best viewed as a distraction", a safe-line for industry and fossil fuel companies looking to lock in carbon-intensive processes and entrench gas infrastructure for years to come.[3]

Irrespective of whether the intention of using gas as a purely transitional fuel is genuine, the approach has a fundamental flaw. As the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has found, countries across the world lack the ambition, pace, and scope to meet climate targets. In other words, there will just not be enough renewable energy to meet this extra demand.

The EU hydrogen strategy envisions scaling up hydrogen production by outsourcing it to countries outside the EU. It endorses Hydrogen Europe's "2x40GW Green Hydrogen Initiative" that calls for ramping up electrolyser capacity to 40 gigawatts in Europe and 40 gigawatts in Europe's neighbourhood.[4] By way of "re-designing Europe's energy partnerships", green hydrogen imports will grow, mainly from north Africa and Ukraine as well as countries such as Chile and Australia.[5] Europe's technological innovation advantage on electrolysers technology will thus be used to obtain green hydrogen via bilateral agreements with regions with high renewable energy potential. As a result, renewable energy projects in countries aiming to become world-class hydrogen exporters are proliferating, in turn, triggering processes of land and resource appropriation.

In early 2021, the Chilean Ministry of Energy and the Port of Rotterdam signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the country's future green hydrogen exports to Europe. The European Investment Bank signed an advisory agreement in July 2020 with Hydrogen Europe to provide advisory and technical support and financing, cementing the corporate dream of public guarantees for their investment in breakthrough technologies. In Africa, the European Commission is looking for partners to produce green hydrogen for European industry under the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative. Germany and Namibia recently closed a green hydrogen partnership.[6]

3 Robert W. Howarth & Mark Z. Jacobson (2021) "How green is blue hydrogen?". *Energy Science and Engineering*, Vol. 9 (Issue 10), pp. 1676-1687.
4 Prof. Dr. Ad van Wijk & Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (2020). *Green Hydrogen for a European Green Deal: A 2x40 GW Initiative*. Brussels: Hydrogen Europe.
5 European Commission (2020). "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe". COM (2020) 301 final. 8 July 2020.
6 "Karliczek: Germany and Namibia form partnership for green hydrogen". *Federal Ministry of Education and Research*. 25 August 2021.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS IN COUNTRIES AIMING TO BECOME WORLD-CLASS HYDROGEN EXPORTERS ARE PROLIFERATING

According to Germany's then-federal research minister Anja Karliczek, Namibia has "large, so far unused areas", an indication of the persistent extractivist and productivist approaches to resource use driven by aggressive profit-seeking.

The sense of political urgency that this flurry of partnerships betrays can only be understood in geopolitical terms. From the European Commission side, there is a geopolitically motivated race to position the EU as a "maker" rather than a "taker" of technological breakthroughs such as electrolysers. Securing the euro's place as a benchmark currency for transactions in hydrogen would consolidate its international role. From the perspective of industry, the nature of investment cycles in the energy sector – lasting over 25 years – makes for an urgent case for investing now to maintain a long-term strategic advantage. Corporate and geopolitical interests are thus aligned. Only the prevailing approach based on attracting and de-risking private investment can determine what is politically possible.

With the climate crisis rapidly unfolding, unless these underlying logics can be challenged and subordinated to the needs of people and planet, the European Commission will be making stubborn efforts to remain competitive in an uninhabitable world.

THE REAL PRICE OF HYDROGEN

What is at stake in Chile's ambitious hydrogen plans? As it all comes down to generating cheap renewable energy, the technology to make this possible and the foreign investment to make this feasible must be attracted to the country. Chile's right-wing government, led by the conservative Sebastián Piñera, has insisted that the proper role of the state in this race is to provide the right investment conditions – or, as it is formulated in Chile, *certeza jurídica* (legal certainty) – so that capitalism can deliver its promises of painless technological cheapening. The focus on certainty for investors is not casual: it is a not-so-subtle reference to Chile's ongoing constituent process and social upheaval that, since October 2019, has aimed to dismantle the structures and institutions still in place decades after Augusto Pinochet's neoliberal dictatorship. For, in a process endorsed by a 2020 referendum, the Chilean people are redrafting the country's constitution.

The demands of grassroots movements and Indigenous communities to defend their territories from invasive energy projects are essential elements of the process. Emblematic demands such as taking water out of private ownership and the rights of nature also make capital owners fear new legal tools that may offer a means of resistance against their projects. The Chilean Commission for Human Rights,

Truth, Justice, and Reparations has detailed the intimate relation between mining, ecocide, and the violation of Indigenous rights.[7] A significant proportion of the convention's representatives are from grassroots environmental movements. While coal-based and hydroelectric projects have faced most resistance, voices are warning of similar practices in projects such as wind farms in southern Chile, where protests have surged against threats to delicate ecosystems and first nation's rights. For those betting on hydrogen, no political revolution can get in the way of the industry's rise. The first experimental plant in Magallanes will open in 2022, deaf to the changes that the new constitution could soon introduce.

The uncomfortable truth of the expansion of the frontiers of extraction is that "cheapening" any resource is never a simple and smooth matter of technological improvement. Things must be actively cheapened. The fantastic expansion of energy generation – there are plans to build the hydrogen equivalent of Chile's entire existing central electric capacity within nine years – depends on expanding energy generation and transmission, often in territories in the process of reclamation by Indigenous peoples and already strongly affected by previous extractive waves.[8]

CORPORATE OR POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY?

The term "strategic sovereignty" has been put forward by the European institutions as the capacity to act autonomously, relying on one's own resources in key strategic areas and to cooperate with partners whenever needed. The development of Europe's hydrogen strategy shows that the devil is in the details when zooming into the specifics behind this idea of sovereignty. Who has the capacity to act autonomously? Relying on one's own resources for what purposes? To cooperate under which conditions?

The energy transition makes mineral supply chains a key strategic area of the economy. In the case of mining, infrastructure and labour costs, along with environmental legislation and the dramatic reduction in shipping costs, have resulted in Europe relying on raw materials mined elsewhere. Under the banner of strategic sovereignty, the EU is changing the regulatory framework for mineral extraction to spur the opening of new mines and prospecting projects within Europe. As part of the same political project, hydrogen will only exacerbate these dynamics of newer "internal" frontiers of extraction.

7 Comisión Derechos Humanos, Verdad Histórica y Bases para la Justicia, Reparación y Garantías de No Repetición (2021). *Informe Ejecuivo Sobre Verdad Histórica, Reparación Y Garantías De No Repetición De Los Pueblos Originarios Y Triabel Afrodescendiente*. Santiago.

8 Electrolysis capacity is projected to be 25 GW by 2030 according to the Green Hydrogen Strategy. The current capacity of the *Sistema Eléctrico Nacional* is 26 GW. (Chilean Ministry of Energy (2020). *National Green Hydrogen Strategy*. November 2020. Santiago: Ministry of Energy, Government of Chile.)

THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE AND THEIR NEEDS ARE STRIKINGLY MISSING FROM DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SOVEREIGNTY

The European Commission's New Industrial Strategy for Europe concentrates on energy-intensive industries at the heart of the European economy. Specifically, steel production is a centrepiece of Europe's search for autonomy and sovereignty, lying "at the heart of the twin green and digital transition".[9] The end of coal as a key ingredient for steel production implies its substitution by electricity and hydrogen. The long-lasting capital assets of the steel industry pit the European strategy against the clock in the race for "green" steel production, while hydrogen is put at the centre as a resource capable of aligning industry, energy companies, and governments to maintain the growth-oriented status quo and, therefore, Europe's competitiveness in the global landscape.

One could fairly ask whose competitiveness is being taken care of here while 50 million people in the EU cannot afford to heat their homes.[10] The problem with European strategic sovereignty is defining who is sovereign in a sovereign Europe. The European people and their direct needs are strikingly missing from high-level discussions about sovereignty. They are not the only ones. The transnational processes triggered by Europe's search for autonomy call for broader inclusion of all those affected by the transition. Of course, steel will be necessary for the transition: it is essential for wind turbines, for one thing. But questions such as "How much steel do we need?" and "For what?" are essential to ground the discussions around European sovereignty.

The democratic deficit engrained in European policy-making runs parallel to the private-profit-inclined nature of its funding schemes. Since the hydrogen strategy is embedded in the funding mechanisms of the European Green Deal, public money will be used to de-risk private investment. The danger is that public money will put hydrogen innovations and their economic benefits in the hands of private investors, instead of public institutions or communities. Under these regulations, the development of decarbonisation technologies will not spill over to benefit the European people, but will entrench inequalities and power imbalances within Europe as well as between Europe and other countries and regions.

Hydrogen's appeal rests on broader political ground. While some policy objectives point at absolute limits on energy consumption (such as the EU energy efficiency targets), it is not clear how this reduction will materialise without significant changes to our sociotechnical infrastructure. The lifestyles that many people in Europe take for granted were cemented in "high energy modernity", that short period

9 European Commission (2021). Commission Staff Working Document: Towards competitive and clean European steel. SWD(2021) 353 final. 5 May 2021.
10 Harriet Thomson & Stefan Bouzarovski (2018). Addressing Energy Poverty in the European Union: State of Play and Action. *Brussels: EU Energy Poverty Observatory.*

during which the fossil fuels that provide us cheap energy were flowing freely.[11] What is not under discussion are alternative visions of how society – or Europe – could be re-organised and which values should be prioritised. According to these assumptions, there is no way to de-escalate our high-energy civilisation in a democratically – self-limited, autonomous – way. Expansion is the only (often left implicit) desirable horizon, a necessity, and an inevitability. Through this lens, planetary boundaries become a challenge to circumvent through technological improvement. In the words of the UK government's plans for a green industrial revolution, there will be "no change in experience for domestic consumers".[12] The discussion is reduced to how to ensure autonomy while remaining economically competitive. This is the imaginary we believe must be challenged.

Fair trade regulations offer possibilities known to capitalism. Any attempt to create a just market for hydrogen has a clear starting point: the challenges that exist when building renewable energy infrastructure. Hydrogen will inevitably put more pressure on them. Regulations should have zero tolerance for "green grabbing" (incursions on Indigenous peoples' autonomy and rights) and the overlooking of the so-called externalities that are usually left out of environmental impact assessment processes.

New circuits of certification and standards might ameliorate (significantly, if we are optimistic) the most harmful consequences of expanding the frontiers of energy extraction. But more importantly, we need to assess fair trade mechanisms critically as only one element of a wider ecosystem of measures on the road to energy democracy. Fair trade has been criticised for focusing too much on what happens at the point of exchange, eluding the questions of what is produced, for whom, and for sustaining what kinds of life. No trade regulation can remove the need to face these deeper political questions.

Such political possibility falls within the terrain opened up by the post-growth and degrowth communities; degrowth in energy consumption not as a choice for individual consumers but as a rearrangement of our shared social infrastructure. It will be possible to tame hydrogen under this political and ethical horizon of justice only if we transform our energy systems to allow all lives to flourish. Then, hydrogen might have more to offer to Europe and the world than its current pharaonic dreams. Energy cooperatives and networks of associations, groups, and citizens

11 Thomas Love & Cindy Isenhour (2016). "Energy and economy: Recognizing high-energy modernity as a historical period". *Economic Anthropology*, Vol. 3 (Issue 1), pp. 6 -16.

12 Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy et al (2020). *The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*. November 2020. London: HM Government.

like the Network for Energy Sovereignty in Catalonia are the tangible alternatives to build public-community energy governance and democratise energy production, distribution, and consumption.

Harnessing hydrogen as a transformative tool will demand more conversations on sufficiency, absolute limits beyond efficiency improvements, and the democratisation and redistribution of the corporate-captured political power to subordinate energy to projects of shared prosperity.

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UNDERSTANDING THE NEW SILK ROADS OF ENERGY

ARTICLE BY
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European plans for a "Global Gateway" initiative to fund infrastructure around the world, and the commitment of the G7 countries to a similar programme, are Western responses to almost a decade of Chinese international investment via the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). More than a tool to gain influence or boost trade, the BRI is a means to achieve social and economic security in China. This vast and ambitious project underlines three essential geopolitical points for the 21st century: access to energy is key, technology is a source of power, and points of interconnection are more important than ever.

After coming to power in 2013, Chinese president Xi Jinping soon looked to respond to Barack Obama's "pivot to Asia" and take advantage of the West's economic slump in the years following 2008. The Chinese president developed a threefold plan: strengthen ties between Beijing and its immediate neighbours to bring peace to the borders and push American influence out of Asia; provide outlets for Chinese overproduction; and secure the many strategic routes to and from China while rebalancing its development. The new Silk Roads were born.

The plan was officially announced in September 2013 in a speech delivered in Nur-Sultan (formerly Astana, Kazakhstan). Invoking the spirit of the ancient caravans which once crossed central Asia, President Xi proposed a strategic partnership between China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, consisting of major investments in roads, railways, and energy infrastructure. A month later, President Xi proposed strengthening ties between China and

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XINJIANG IS SET TO BECOME A MAJOR ENERGY HUB, SERVING AS THE GATEWAY FOR HYDROCARBONS FROM CENTRAL ASIA

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through the development of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative".[1] It was not until March 2015 that the National Development and Reform Commission published materials on the initiative, emphasising its "win-win" approach, under the official title: One Belt, One Road. This name was quickly abandoned and replaced by Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to capture the fact that, far from being about one road, the project was about an entire network.

Breathing new life into China's underdeveloped western provinces is a fundamental goal of the new Silk Roads. Xinjiang, the cornerstone of the BRI, is set to become a major energy hub, serving as the gateway for hydrocarbons from central Asia. Situated 3000 kilometres west of Beijing, the region covers an area of 1.6 million square kilometres and is made up of vast desert basins bordered by high mountains. Historically, this region was not part of the Han Chinese sphere of influence and its inhabitants are Turkic-speaking Uyghurs. Uyghur aspirations for greater autonomy for Xinjiang have met with a brutal response from the Communist government. The harsh measures employed include forced sinicisation, involuntary sterilisation, and internment camps.

MAPPING THE SILK ROADS

The vast BRI network stretches across Eurasia and has branches in Africa, the Americas, and even the Arctic. Because China regularly changes the participating routes according to its political agenda, they are difficult to list accurately. Some countries have also pulled out of the project. Australia, for example, left in April 2021 due to concerns about Chinese espionage and political corruption.

1 ASEAN brings together 10 countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Nevertheless, certain routes are critically important for Beijing. The Xi'an-Duisburg route follows the path of the ancient roads, passing from Xinjiang through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey to carry manufactured products destined for Europe, as well as raw materials and energy to China.

Central Asia is the heart of the project, for both energy security and geopolitical reasons and there are branches across the region, including into Russia, Pakistan, and south Asian countries sympathetic to China such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia. At sea, the Venice-Shanghai corridor is key, linking Athens, Djibouti, Gwadar (Pakistan), and Hambantota (Sri Lanka) along the way.

All roads lead to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Sharing its borders with eight countries – Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, and Tajikistan – the region is the ideal gateway for Chinese influence in central Asia. Since the 1990s, China has built multiple border crossings and has integrated the Chinese and Kazakh rail networks. "Dual cities" such as Horgos (China) /Khorgos (Kazakhstan) that straddle the Chinese-Kazakh border are essential to this strategy.

These new corridors aim to redefine the world order by creating a "string of pearls", a series of home ports (both maritime and dry) that can receive Chinese goods and double as potential forward bases for business interests and the military.[2] So as not to alarm its partners, the construction of these infrastructure projects is delegated to arms-length, state-owned companies such as the China Communications Construction Company.

Between 2013 and 2015, around 60 countries were involved in the BRI. By 2020, there were nearly 130. China would like to bring as many countries as possible into the fold, but a few partners are central: Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and Myanmar.

Pakistan has pride of place in the initiative. In 2015, 46 billion dollars were allocated to create an economic corridor between the port of Gwadar and Kashgar in Southern Xinjiang. The deep-water port of Gwadar is strategic in more ways than one. A Pakistani military base grants China a certain stability and could eventually allow the People's Liberation Army to set up an outpost. Close to the Gulf of Oman, it is ideally located to bring hydrocarbons from the Middle East into China. A liquified natural gas terminal will allow both imports from Qatar and the liquefaction of Iranian gas;

2 Kevin Merigot (2019). "« Collier de perles » et bases à usage logistique dual". *Geostrategia*. 7 February 2019.

a refinery combined with an oil pipeline will send crude to Xinjiang.

Due to its vast hydrocarbon resources, Kazakhstan accounts for more than 70 per cent of Chinese investments in central Asia.[3] The Kazakh economy is primarily based on the export of gas and oil, of which it has 3 per cent of world resources, as well as uranium, of which it holds 12 per cent of world resources. Several oil and gas pipelines run through this immense country, which has one of the world's lowest population densities.

Myanmar is an additional source of energy security for China. The opening of a corridor between the port of Sittwe in Myanmar and Kunming in China has diversified China's energy routes. Beijing has also established a presence on Myanmar's Coco Islands in the north-eastern Bay of Bengal. In 1992, it constructed an electronic intelligence gathering station on Great Coco Island to monitor maritime traffic off the coast of India's Andaman Islands around 20 kilometres away. There are also plans to build a military base on neighbouring Little Coco Island. Following recent turmoil, the situation in Myanmar is being closely monitored by China; a restored dictatorship would allow Beijing to regain control and brush aside US and Japanese influence.

THE QUEST FOR ENERGY

The strong economic growth that has characterised China for decades has rested on a sharp increase in energy demand, reinforced by artificially suppressed prices. Due to a lack of oil and gas resources despite the country's vast size, coal is China's primary source of electricity. While the country has abundant coal deposits, these are largely located far from urban centres, in Xinjiang, Shanxi, and Inner Mongolia. This factor, coupled with environmental and health considerations, low productivity, and supply shortfalls, has meant that Beijing has imported coal on a massive scale since 2009 (304 million tonnes in 2020).[4]

The Communist regime's continued existence is based on a social pact that depends on strong growth. In its quest for survival, the party spares no expense in maintaining energy-intensive industries such as cement, steel, and glass. This explains the proliferation of excessive and often irrational infrastructure projects. Ensuring a constant energy supply for industry is therefore of utmost importance.

While the pharaonic BRI is generally presented as a means to allay overproduction, its geostrategic energy dimension is vital, in

3 Alain Cariou (2018). "Les corridors centrasiatiques des nouvelles routes de la soie: un nouveau destin continental pour la Chine". *L'Espace géographique* 47 (1), pp. 19-34.
4 "China's coal consumption seen rising in 2021, imports steady". *Reuters*. 3 March 2021.

THE COMMUNIST REGIME'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE IS BASED ON A SOCIAL PACT THAT DEPENDS ON STRONG GROWTH

particular because current energy routes depend on a few choke points. The tricky passage through the Strait of Malacca, for example, lies in an area plagued by piracy, while US ally Singapore is situated at the strait's southern end. In the event of a conflict with the United States, a blockade of Malaysia and the Sunda Strait could paralyse China.

Energy imports into Xinjiang via central Asia are therefore key to the BRI. More than anything, Beijing wants to secure an oil pipeline that runs from Atasu in Kazakhstan to Alashankou in China. Already in place, the crucial pipeline linking Turkmenistan to Shanghai through Horgos allows China to receive 55 billion cubic metres of natural gas from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan every year. Via the BRI, this energy route spreads to the four corners of central Asia. The resulting energy corridor is 9000 kilometres long, running from the Caspian Sea to the Chinese coast.

GREENING THE SILK ROADS

Renewables also have a place in the BRI, but in a different form than fossil resources. While China hopes to secure incoming energy supplies, it is also keen to send advanced, particularly green, technology the other way.

A scientific power for many centuries, China experienced a long period of stagnation in the modern era. This began to change in the 1970s, when technological development became a key reform objective. The requirement that foreign companies operating in China establish joint ventures with local partners massively strengthened China's role as a source of innovation. President Hu Jintao (2003-13) was the first Chinese leader to pursue an explicit national innovation policy. Xi Jinping's subsequent Made in China 2025 plan, issued in 2015, aims to put the country at the forefront of high-tech sectors globally, especially green and digital technologies.

Since signing the Paris Agreement in June 2017, and even more so after Donald Trump's withdrawal, China has positioned itself as an environmental champion. On 22 September 2020, President Xi unilaterally pledged that China would reach carbon neutrality by 2060, followed one year later to the day by an announcement promising to end investment in coal plants abroad and to "step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy".[5] In addition to increasing market share in a booming, high-value-added industry, this stance is designed to force the West to choose between human rights and cooperation on climate. China's dominance in the rare earth metals industry, with 90 per cent of global production in 2016 and processing capacity equivalent to 75 per cent of global demand, is a powerful asset in this regard.[6]

In this context, the idea of encouraging a "green" BRI that would allow China to export its low-carbon technologies is gaining ground. China has already succeeded in creating leading international firms in the environmental sector, in the fields of wind power, batteries, and photovoltaics in particular. Now that the market is developed, the new Silk Roads are destined to become conduits for green energy technologies to flow from China to the rest of the world. More than a dozen projects are underway in Pakistan, including renewable power plants such as the HydroChina Dawood Wind Power Project east of Karachi.

POLITICS INTRUDES

Despite its strengths and the unwavering support of Beijing, the BRI project has many weaknesses that risk undermining the entire strategy. The first, and no doubt most dangerous, is China itself, or rather the version of the country it portrays on the international stage.

Since Xi Jinping came to power, China's traditional restraint has gone in a completely different direction, known as "wolf warrior diplomacy". In the hope of promotion, Chinese diplomats compete to demonstrate their nationalist fervour and no longer hesitate to attack critics of the People's Republic. Although this strategy is designed to pander to the Chinese population, its consequences outside China can be very damaging. Polling conducted by the Pew Research Center in 14 countries in 2020 showed that 74 per cent of respondents have a negative view of the People's Republic.[7]

5 Vincent Ni (2021). "'Betting on a low-carbon future': why China is ending foreign coal investment". *The Guardian*. 22 September 2021.
6 Édouard Lanckriet and & Joël Ruet (2019). "La longue marche des nouvelles technologies dites « environnementales » de la Chine : capitalisme d'État, avantages comparatifs construits et émergence d'une industrie". *Annales des Mines – Gérer et comprendre*, 136 (2019/2), pp. 3-14.
7 Laura Silver, Kat Delvin & Christine Huang (2020). "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries". *Pew Research Center*. 6 October 2020.

THE NEW SILK ROADS ARE DESTINED TO BECOME CONDUITS FOR GREEN ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES TO FLOW FROM CHINA TO THE REST OF THE WORLD

The consequences of this diplomacy are also felt in China itself. In April 2020, Australia publicly requested an investigation into the origins of Covid-19. China retaliated by stopping imports of Australian coal, causing power cuts in winter when production could not meet demand. As a result, China was forced to increase imports from Pakistan. However, Islamabad did not have the capacity to meet Chinese demand. So, in turn, Pakistan began to import more from Australia, only to sell it on to China. More broadly, growing distrust could undermine the BRI's key objective of exporting green technologies to Europe.

Loss of sovereignty is also a concern for emerging economies. The Sri Lankan port of Hambantota on the Pakistan-China route cost about 350 million dollars to build, funded almost exclusively by the Export-Import Bank of China. But its disproportionate size and inability to compete with the thriving port of Colombo meant that profits were insufficient, forcing Sri Lanka to open debt restructuring negotiations with China. Beijing wiped the slate clean in exchange for a 99-year lease on the port, starting in July 2017. As early as 2018, the International Monetary Fund warned against Chinese loans, as their interest rates of up to 7 per cent are often unsustainable.[8]

Europeans are divided on the issue. Both Greece, with Piraeus, and Italy, with the ports of Genoa and Trieste, are dependent on Chinese investment and have joined the BRI. Northern Europe, and Germany in particular, is wary of criticising Beijing because of its economic dependence on exports to China. France, ordinarily cautious, was forced to break its silence after multiple provocations by the Chinese embassy in Paris around cultural and academic freedoms.

Any analysis must also reckon with China's "sublime isolation". The Middle Kingdom dreams of being a hyperpower but lacks allies. Relations with Russia are erratic. Both countries want to overthrow the post-war international order and share certain ideological similarities, but they are also rivals. China's push into central Asia encroaches on a region traditionally beholden to Moscow. In 2015, Russia had just launched the Eurasian Economic Union, comprising Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan, when Vladimir Putin announced that this union would join the new Silk Roads. Behind its adherence to the BRI, Russia is acting to maintain its influence, for example by proposing to China that Moscow guarantee the security of central Asia.

8 Speech by Christine Lagarde in Beijing in the framework of the forum "New Silk Roads", April 2018. See also: Florine Maureau (2021). "Le piège de la dette chinois se referme sur les intérêts français". *Portail de l'Intelligence Économique* 25 March 2021.

THE INVESTMENT NEEDED IS BETWEEN A MASSIVE 4000 BILLION AND AN ASTRONOMICAL 26,000 BILLION DOLLARS

Few countries share a real ideological affinity with China. Vietnam partially cut its ties with its powerful neighbour after the 1979 China-Vietnam war and is not interested in the BRI or Chinese loans. North Korea is seen as an unpredictable but indispensable protectorate that secures China's north-eastern border. While its coal mines feed Chinese industry, the extreme weaknesses of North Korean production and infrastructure make it a bottom-rank trade partner. While China accounts for 83 per cent of North Korean exports, that represents a turnover of only 2.8 billion dollars. North Korean GDP is estimated to be 1.5 per cent of that of its southern neighbour.

Other states close to China are driven by strictly economic, national, or personal interests. The recent shifts in the stances of the Solomon Islands and Kiribati, which broke off diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan) to recognise the People's Republic, were motivated by Beijing's largesse. While China may be getting stronger, its soft power remains weak. Despite all of President Xi's efforts, the "Chinese dream" is having trouble scaling the Great Wall.

A further complicating factor is that the weight of the Communist Party and its bureaucratic "cliques" that fight for influence impedes decision-making. The hunt for political enemies, under the pretext of fighting corruption, leads to instability in key ministries. Above all, appointments are made based on loyalty to Xi rather than qualifications. Once more in this initiative, China is its own worst enemy.

Finally, the companies – officially private but in reality backed by the state – that invest along these energy routes are anxious to receive subsidies. They are eager to enter into projects to stay well regarded in Beijing, even if it means defying rules of good management. The new Silk Roads, and especially their energy component, require a great deal of capital. Building ports, oil pipelines, and refineries is expensive. The level of investment needed is estimated to be between a massive 4000 billion and an astronomical 26,000 billion dollars.

Beijing's attempts at attracting foreign investors are mostly met with polite refusal as enormous infrastructure projects are not highly profitable and the countries targeted unstable, while China itself is cloaked in secrecy. A first slowdown in financing can already be seen: from 150 billion dollars in annual lending in 2014 to 2015, the figure dropped to below 100 billion dollars in 2017 and 2018.[9]

Japan, a traditional ally of the United States who maintains good relations with India but whose relationship with China is not uncomplicated, has expressed its opposition to the new Silk Roads. In 2015, Tokyo unveiled its Indo-Pacific strategy in partnership with the Asian Development Bank. Based on liberal values, the heart of this 100 billion dollar "Partnership for Quality Infrastructure" is energy. Tokyo hopes that Japanese companies, through public-private partnerships in Asian and African countries, will increase their electrical production capacity, mainly in geothermal energy. By 2019, the project's funds had nearly doubled to 200 billion dollars. Japan emphasises the high quality of its technological expertise and infrastructure to set itself apart from a still unappealing "Made in China". In 2017, Japan's former Prime Minister Abe and Indian Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the first high-speed rail line in India, with 80 per cent Japanese financing.

The new Silk Roads are critical to China's strategy of independence and growth. Beijing hopes to diversify its energy supply sources while increasing its regional and global influence. Part of this is about breaking the post-war liberal order. While China has the means to bring this project to fruition, it faces many challenges. Costly financing, concerned partners, political blunders, and the implementation of rival projects all risk hampering the rebirth of the Silk Roads.

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9 Data from RWR Advisory Group's The Belt and Road Monitor website.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP MEANS BUILDING BRIDGES

AN INTERVIEW WITH
ROBYN ECKERSLEY
BY **BEATRICE WHITE**

For climate negotiations to succeed, all the stars must align in a way that often appears impossible, so numerous are the obstacles and pitfalls. Building alliances and coalitions across cultural, economic, and geographical divides is crucial to any breakthrough. In this context, argues Robyn Eckersley, leadership becomes the delicate art of bringing various parties together to forge agreements that move the process forward, however incrementally.

BEATRICE WHITE: Global crises have heightened understanding of our interdependence, yet we also see growing discourses around regional and national autonomy. The trends are pulling in different directions. What is the state of play with multilateralism, and where might we be heading?

ROBYN ECKERSLEY: There are some interesting and conflicting trends. The international order is in a state of flux, with its liberal nature and stability in question. A multipolar order is always less stable than a bipolar one. We've been there before. In 1815, the Concert of Europe provided a period of stability,[1] but then things started to buckle later that century. What's new today is a multilateral order in which two of the most significant powers are outside the West: China and India.

We certainly need reform in our global governance institutions. Institutions like the UN Security Council and the G7 are anachronistic and favour certain states in the West. These countries will need to

1 The Concert of Europe was a general consensus between the Great Powers of Europe (Austria, Prussia, Russia, the UK, and later France) which acted to ensure the European balance of power from the fall of Napoleon to the outbreak of the First World War.

relinquish some of their privileges and powers if the institutions are to maintain legitimacy. We also see China and the BRICS[2] countries developing their own financial and lending institutions. However, the UN General Assembly remains crucial to developing countries as they are the majority and it's one vote one state, whereas in the Bretton Woods institutions like the International Monetary Fund it's one vote per dollar. If I had to bet, my money would be on the growth of more regionalism, rather than larger or more concerted multilateralism.

What kind of changes does the current global governance framework need?

There needs to be more effort to green the institutions of economic governance, and more effort by major powers to green their economies. At the WTO [World Trade Organization], ministers are currently working on a declaration on trade and climate change. But they are likely to focus on the easy synergies and ignore the deep contradictions. The WTO does not require international trade to be sustainable, and it is premised on a continually expanding international economy. Neither the WTO's trade agreements nor preferential trade agreements require the internalisation of the negative ecological externalities associated with trade. Unless we see the great powers like the US and China start to bring ecology and not just climate into their grand strategies, we're in trouble.

The carbon border adjustment mechanism that the EU is putting in place is a good development because it will impose a carbon price on carbon-intensive exports from recalcitrant countries like Australia, which repealed its carbon pricing mechanism in 2014. Under the climate regime's burden-sharing principles of differentiated responsibilities, developed countries are supposed to take the lead in mitigation while assisting developing countries. In effect, one might argue that the EU mechanism forces a carbon price on exports from developed countries that have failed to take the lead in mitigation and would steal an unfair competitive advantage over those who have made an effort. However, it seems contrary to these burden-sharing principles to impose the same price on exports from developing countries. At the very least, the additional charge should be collected by the EU and recycled back to the country of origin to assist in their decarbonised development.

2 BRICS is the acronym coined to associate five major economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

How do you assess the development of global climate and environmental governance? Did the Paris Agreement mark a turning point?

From the start, we knew the journey was going to be hard. Whatever agreement was negotiated, if it didn't have all the major emitters present then it would not be effective. For all of the US's faults, President Barack Obama understood that. He appeared to have a very weak hand, with a hostile congress, but he played it well domestically and engaged in diplomacy that eventually got China and India on board. The idea of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) came from the US, who knew that China and India would not accept legally binding commitments and that the US Senate might be prepared to accept a new agreement with this kind of flexibility. Of course, this flexibility worried the most vulnerable countries. Thanks to the leadership of the late, great Tony de Brum, the foreign minister of the Marshall Islands, working with the EU, a High Ambition Coalition was formed, which demanded that a global rise in temperature be limited to 1.5 degrees in the agreement, among a range of other things.

The grand bargain of Paris was flexibility for the major emitters. To give the vulnerable countries something back, we got a more ambitious temperature target and, thanks to the EU, some very hard procedural language that stated that each successive NDC will be more ambitious than the previous one (but with a non-punitive review – thanks to China's strenuous negotiation).

I thought, at the time, it was a historic breakthrough because we couldn't really expect more. But the very presence of a durable climate agreement with a more ambitious temperature target of 1.5 degrees is working some magic in driving governments, business, financial institutions, and international organisations to try harder. Plus, environmental NGOs can point to the target to hold governments to account to at all levels.

So that's where we've landed. Will this be good enough? It is certainly not optimal. There have been many compromises, but we have to make the treaty we have work. In the current context, the 1.5-degree target appears as the one light on the hill, thanks to the High Ambition Coalition. As a result of this success, we're seeing similar coalitions forming in the biodiversity negotiations that are taking place. The beauty of this coalition in Paris was that it cut across those stale, well-worn negotiating groups which are either in the Global South or the Global North. What we need now are more coalitions that bridge this divide, bringing the relative leaders like the EU and vulnerable states together.

THE 1.5-DEGREE TEMPERATURE TARGET OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT APPEARS AS THE ONE LIGHT ON THE HILL

So coalitions with ambition are crucial. But these do not necessarily form organically. What is climate leadership? How would you evaluate the EU as a climate leader?

I distinguish between two types of leadership. One is just being a frontrunner in a field of performance. Australia is a frontrunner in global fossil fuel exports; it's a leader in that sense, but it's not something we're very proud of. China is a leader in producing solar panels, just like it's a leader in financing coal, but that is fortunately changing. In a performance field, frontrunners can be cooperative or competitive. They might be trying to compete at the expense of others, or they could be leading because they actually want to set an example. This type of performance or directional leadership can feed into the second kind of leadership, which is political leadership. This entails building support around a common goal and enabling collective action. It often starts by building a like-minded coalition of the willing.

The EU's finest diplomatic moment was at COP17 in Durban in 2011, where it played a key political leadership role in brokering a new roadmap and building support through a promise of performance leadership. Here the EU agreed to a second commitment period (2013-2020) under the Kyoto Protocol in return for the major emitters in the developing world agreeing to negotiate a new roadmap. This broke the deadlock. Kyoto was so important to developing countries because that was their interpretation of common but differentiated responsibilities: "Why should we do anything until the rich countries have demonstrated their leadership in mitigation?" Bridging those differences was really important and got us to Paris.

So despite not always showing a great performance – especially under the earlier iterations of its emissions trading scheme – the EU has shown directional leadership. The EU has committed to an enhanced 2030 target of cutting emissions by 55 per cent and has dedicated 30 per cent of its budget to climate action. It is also contributing around a quarter of the 100 billion dollars that will be mobilised annually up to 2025. But the EU cannot solve this problem by itself, and it will need to muster all of its diplomatic skills to develop a productive relationship with China to accelerate the decarbonisation of the biggest emitter of all.

What is the likelihood of other major powers stepping up to the plate?

There's always been a lot of bad faith by both the US and China. Obama showed his commitment to the common purpose by engaging in active climate diplomacy at Paris. But the US has walked away twice from the

UNLIKELY COALITIONS THAT CROSS TRADITIONAL POLITICAL BOUNDARIES ARE VERY VALUABLE

climate regime, first with the second Bush administration's repudiation of the Kyoto Protocol and second with the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. China has made much of this sorry record and highlighted how the US has contributed the lion's share of historical emissions. Yet China is the biggest aggregate emitter (since around 2007) and the world's second-biggest historical emitter. China keeps hiding behind its poor and ignoring its rapidly growing middle class, which is bigger than the total US population. China's average per capita emissions are now higher than the EU's but still lower than the US's giant yeti carbon footprint and big military carbon boot-print.

However, one promising idea that China has developed – and maybe it's just empty rhetoric – is the idea of ecological civilisation. Given that climate change is a civilisational challenge, I love the term. "Let's build an ecological civilisation." China meant it purely for domestic consumption and it's not trying to proselytise, but we should congratulate China for working with that idea and use it as a form of track-two diplomacy by building cooperation between citizens and universities and organisations, but also diplomatically at a very high level.

Non-state actors, such as civil society groups and the worldwide movements and networks of people calling for climate action, are also involved in this process. How significant are these forces?

Absolutely crucial! The failure of Copenhagen[3] created a new generation of anti-fossil fuel movements such as Keep It In The Ground, driven by organisations like 350.org and figures such as Bill McKibben. The whole idea of a carbon budget was born then, as well as the idea of un-burnable carbon. These are powerful concepts for campaigning and crunching numbers, and climate think tanks such as Climate Action Tracker and Climate Analytics have been providing critical analysis and guidance for developing countries, particularly small-island developing

3 COP15 in 2009 was widely recognised as a failure, as the negotiations concluded without a fair, ambitious, or legally binding treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

nations. Non-state actors have demonstrated incredible innovation and brainpower, and they're mobilising across all levels of society and governance, from cities and municipalities to businesses and organisations.

Then you've got Fridays for Future with the school strikes and Extinction Rebellion. These are wonderful developments, born out of frustration with inadequate action nationally. The climate emergency frame plays a significant role in galvanising declarations and enhanced commitments.

Your work contrasts an inclusive multilateralism, which aspires to get everyone around the table, with exclusive "minilateralism", where smaller groups of countries reach agreements to move forward together. There is often a dilemma in foreign affairs between insisting on the principles of equity and solidarity as a pre-condition to any engagement or adopting a pragmatic attitude to make progress in any configuration that allows for it. What is your advice?

Both inclusive multilateralism and exclusive minilateralism have their problems. The former is too slow and can lead to the lowest common denominator. The latter is simply unfair and self-serving if confined to the major emitters. It's like putting the foxes in charge of the hen house. More promising is inclusive minilateralism that includes representation from the most responsible, the most capable, and the most vulnerable. This ensures a diverse range of views and is more representative, while the smaller size can facilitate a deeper discussion and trust-building. Agreements reached in forums of this kind can also be scaled up.

Unlikely coalitions that cross traditional political boundaries are very valuable, particularly at the national level. If climate NGOs can find other organisations with at least some common interests – discovered via careful "back channel" diplomacy – then this can be the basis for campaigns with wider political reach. This might include faith groups, social welfare groups, unions, farmers' groups, and certain industry associations. Building looser and broader, cross-cutting coalitions is an important development, not just in decarbonisation but in building ecologically sustainable economies more generally. It can depolarise. You'll find that folks on the other side of the divide don't have horns; that they're real people who have real concerns that must be respectfully acknowledged and taken on board.

Taking a longer view, is the move away from fossil fuels good news for the international system?

If you think of some of the terrible events that have happened during the 20th century, many were about oil. Think of

the OPEC [Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries] oil embargo of 1973 to 1974 that sent the price of oil sky high. And why did the US decide to establish a military command centre in the Middle East after the 1979 Iranian Revolution if not for concerns about access to oil? The Iran-Iraq War and the first and second Gulf Wars also had much to do with oil. A lot of blood has been spilt and treasure wasted over securing access to oil. Once the world is hooked on renewable energy, countries will enjoy much greater energy independence. We know some countries may not be able to be fully independent, but with developments in battery storage and the green hydrogen revolution – which might be over-hyped but will have a role – we can take a lot of that out of the equation. Gazprom won't be holding the EU to ransom in a cold winter, for instance. That's going to create a lot more energy independence, relative to last century, and a lot less blackmail, price gouging, and military conflict.

Renewable energy is such a good news story on so many grounds, but it is very important that we assist developing countries in building their own capability, and I do worry about who will control the lithium, cobalt, and rare earths that will feed the renewable energy revolution.

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THE ROAD TO A FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

ARTICLE BY
PETER NEWELL

Fossil fuels – coal, oil, and gas – are the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Yet governments around the globe are on track to produce 120 per cent more than is compatible with the goals of the Paris Agreement.[1] If those stocks are to be kept in the ground, an alternative approach is necessary.

The climate emergency is a "code red" threat to the world. But the main approach to climate policy – regulating end-use emissions through taxes and emissions trading – does not get to the source of the problem. The Paris Agreement does not even mention the F word: fossil fuels. The text from COP26 in Glasgow only refers limply to "inefficient fossil fuel subsidies" and a coal "phase down" rather than "phase out". Enter a new approach: supply-side policy to limit the production and extraction of fossil fuels in the first place. The idea for a fossil fuel treaty surfaced on the 50th anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2018. In view of the clear need to leave a large proportion of the world's remaining fossil fuels unburned, the treaty's three-pillar structure of non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use provides a fair basis to work from: agree not to increase fossil fuel extraction (non-proliferation); agree a fair phase-out of existing infrastructures and investments (disarmament); and build an alternative low-carbon pathway (a just transition away from fossil fuels).

First proposed in the pages of *The Guardian*,[2] the idea for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty was quickly followed by a letter of support from activists such as Bill McKibben, Naomi Klein, British Green MP

1 SEI, IISD, ODI, E3G, and UNEP (2020). *The Production Gap Report: 2020 Special Report*.
2 Andrew Simms & Peter Newell (2018). "We need a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty – and we need it now". *The Guardian*. 23 October 2018.

Caroline Lucas, and the heads of major NGOs such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. From there, a global campaign developed, headed initially by Canadian activist Tzeporah Berman, which has now spawned a worldwide network of supporters and activists.

WRITING A FOSSIL FUEL TREATY

What the treaty would look like has since been elaborated on further. The starting point would be a global registry of fossil fuel reserves. This registry would act as a precursor to phased and sequenced commitments not to expand the extraction of new fossil fuels and then to accelerate the phase-out of existing investments and infrastructures. A "first movers club" (already in motion) could move ahead with unilateral and then minilateral agreements to leave fossil fuels in the ground, encouraging others to join over time and providing incentives to do so. Importantly, such commitments could also be included under the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that governments are already obliged to make under the Paris Agreement by quantifying the emissions saved by leaving carbon unburned. A new fossil fuel treaty, most likely under the umbrella of the United Nations, would complement the Paris climate regime by addressing the neglected supply side of climate policy and orchestrating a transparent and fair multilateral phase-out of fossil fuels which is not dealt with by current accords.

The goals and timeframes of the agreement would need to be guided by an international scientific assessment of the percentages of each fossil fuel that need to remain in the ground in line with commitments to keep warming below 1.5 degrees. Given uneven endowments among countries, a calculation of their financial value would have to be made in order to determine what degree of sacrifice each country is making for the common good and allocate commitments equitably. Negotiations towards a treaty would necessarily link across different fossil fuels based on these respective reserves. Some countries would leave more coal, oil, or gas in the ground depending on their reserves' locations and value, as well as other countries' targets.

Commitments would employ differentiated timetables for first halting and then phasing out fossil fuel production by countries. The allocation and sequencing of the phase-out would be determined by set criteria and principles. First, the costs of action should be borne disproportionately by those who have the greatest ability to pay, defined by per capita income levels, and that are best placed to redirect finance, production, and technology towards lower-carbon alternatives. Second, the greatest emitters of greenhouse gases generated by the direct burning of their own fossil fuel reserves should act first. Third, cumulative emissions should be assessed in order to take adequate account of historical responsibility and the use of fossil fuels to date.

A PROCESS BASED ON RATIONALITY AND SOLIDARITY

For reasons of historical responsibility and equity, richer, primarily OECD countries and the Russian Federation would need to move furthest and fastest.[3] Many of the world's largest and most powerful private fossil fuel companies are based in OECD countries. To ensure compliance and avoid emissions simply being moved from one place to another, fossil fuel assets held overseas by a country's domestic companies would be subject to supply-side commitments. A second tier of "next mover" countries would be large non-OECD emitters such as China, India, Brazil, and Indonesia, all of whom belong to the top 10 global emitters who together account for nearly three-quarters of global emissions.

Support would then have to be provided to poorer developing countries with reserves of fossil fuels to fund the shift to renewable energy. According to the International Monetary Fund, global fossil fuel subsidies reached 10 million US dollars a minute in 2020.[4] Redirecting these staggering sums in combination with public and private finance in the form of aid, export credits, and investments would fund low-carbon energy pathways. A global transition fund could support this under the umbrella of the treaty. As with other environmental agreements, inducements such as exclusive market access could be provided to encourage parties to join, as well as disincentives in the form of border-tax adjustments on imports from countries not part of the treaty. This is something that the European Union has put forward as a climate policy lever: its proposed carbon border adjustment mechanism would apply import tariffs to goods entering the EU amounting to the EU carbon taxes applicable to equivalent production.

Why would fossil fuel producers sign up to such a treaty? The phasing out of fossil fuels is inevitable and already underway (albeit not progressing rapidly enough); such a multilateral initiative would coordinate the process more equitably. Orderly oversight with reporting and compliance measures can deter freeriding among major producers. Any treaty with this level of ambition will of course run up against opposition from some of the most powerful states and corporations in the global economy. Their power was again on display in Glasgow, as the final texts were watered down to allow for further loopholes and delay. But the costs of renewables are falling, and pressure from activists and the wider public is growing. Meanwhile, investors fear that their investments in fossil fuels will end up stranded. The writing is on the wall.

3 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation bringing together 38 of the world's richest countries. It includes most of Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, and Australia, among others.

4 Damian Carrington (2021). "Fossil fuel industry gets subsidies of $11m a minute, IMF finds". *The Guardian*. 6 October 2021.

THE PHASING OUT OF FOSSIL FUELS IS INEVITABLE; A MULTILATERAL INITIATIVE WOULD COORDINATE THE PROCESS MORE EQUITABLY

BUILDING ALLIANCES

Several countries have already shown progressive leadership in leaving fossil fuels in the ground. The first attempt at a supply-side climate policy was adopted by Ecuador in its attempt to prevent oil extraction with its Yasuní-ITT Initiative. In 2007, the country's government announced that it would not drill for oil in Yasuni National Park, a highly biodiverse Amazonian rainforest that is home to uncontacted Indigenous peoples, in return for compensation from donors. The landmark decision was unfortunately reversed in 2013 after sufficient funds failed to materialise, and in 2016 it was confirmed that drilling had begun.

This failed attempt was, however, followed by the announcement of bans on oil, gas, or coal exploration or extraction by a series of global "first movers". Prominent members of this group include Denmark, France, and Spain, alongside Belize, Costa Rica, and New Zealand. France announced the phase-out of oil and gas exploration and production in December 2017. Belize then followed with a moratorium on all offshore oil activity. Denmark ended onshore oil and gas exploration in February 2018 and announced its oil and gas phase-out in 2020. New Zealand banned new offshore oil exploration licences in April 2018, as did Ireland in September 2019. Former major coal producers such as the UK, Spain, and Germany have introduced phase-out policies, and some countries, such as Denmark, have moved rapidly from being major investors in oil and gas to leaders in renewables. This is captured most clearly in the reinvention of DONG (Danish Oil and Natural Gas) as Ørsted, now the world's largest developer of offshore wind power. These countries are charting new terrain in climate policy that, if more widely adopted and developed into a global governance norm, could influence major producers.

Numerous European countries also belong to the Powering Past Coal Alliance, which aims to secure commitments from governments and the private sector to phase out existing unabated coal power and encourage a global moratorium on the construction of new unabated coal-fired power plants.[5] Forty-one national governments, as well as cities and regions, businesses, and organisations, have signed up. Denmark is also a founding member of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance that aims to encourage first-mover countries to go beyond both oil and gas. In Glasgow, France, Greenland, Ireland, Sweden, and Wales joined the alliance with New Zealand and Portugal as associate members. There is the potential for others to

5 "Unabated" coal power generally refers to coal power plants operating without the use of carbon capture and storage technologies to compensate for the carbon emissions generated by burning coal.

follow in their footsteps. Beyond Europe, 20 nationally elected officials from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific region launched a Parliamentarians' Call for a Fossil Fuel Free Future calling for a global transition away from coal, oil, and gas. These include representatives from fossil-fuel-dependent countries such as Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Rwanda, and the Philippines.

GROWING MOMENTUM

Drawing on a fossil fuel cuts database, researchers from the University of British Columbia found that between 1988 and 2017, 1302 initiatives were implemented in 106 countries across seven major types of supply-side approaches.[6] But while the number of initiatives has grown rapidly over the past decade, their adoption is highly uneven, underscoring the need for a multilateral framework to advance a more universal approach. Indeed, Pacific Island leaders have issued the Suva Declaration within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change calling on parties to initiate moratoria on fossil fuels, especially coal mining. Support for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty has also been forthcoming from senior figures such as former Irish president Mary Robinson and over 100 former Nobel laureates. Even US vice-president Kamala Harris has called for "a first-ever global negotiation of the cooperative managed decline of fossil fuel production."[7]

It is not just governments that are moving in this direction. Campaigns are increasingly aimed at phasing out fossil fuel finance deployed by multilateral development banks and bilateral donors, and governments' use of export finance. Moves from the European Investment Bank to align with the Paris Agreement and commitments from the World Bank to withdraw financing from fossil fuels show these are having an effect. The Lofoten Declaration for a managed decline of fossil fuel production, drawn up in August 2017 and now signed by over 600 organisations in more than 70 countries from all over the world, puts this question front and centre.

Sub-state action might also have an important role to play. SAFE Cities is a growing network of cities, counties, and other communities (55 to date) that "Stand Against Fossil Fuel Expansion", while a number of key cities including Vancouver, Barcelona, Toronto, Sydney, and Los Angeles have endorsed the call for a treaty to limit fossil fuels. There are also moratoria on fracking in place in hundreds of subnational jurisdictions, including in France, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

6 Nicolas Gaulin & Philippe Le Billon (2020). "Climate change and fossil fuel production cuts: assessing global supply-side constraints and policy implications". *Climate Policy* (20: 8), pp. 888-901.

7 Aimee Barnes (2020). "Kamala Harris' Plan For International Climate Cooperation Could Smooth the Transition From Fossil Fuels". *Columbia Climate School*. 20 August 2020.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR A FOSSIL FUEL TREATY EMBODIES KEY PRINCIPLES OF GREEN FOREIGN POLICY

Investors and corporations are also increasingly subject to divestment campaigns, boycotts, and shareholder pressure to withdraw support for new fossil fuel investments. Even ExxonMobil, long one of the most stalwart opponents of climate action, was defeated in a May 2021 shareholder vote by an activist investment firm demanding that the company accelerate its transition to clean energy.

ENTER THE EUROPEAN UNION?

The EU has both a duty and a responsibility to advance a fossil fuel treaty, as well as the means to do so. As members of the UN Security Council, France and the UK have a key role to play. As the birthplace of the industrial revolution and home to the powerful and globally connected City of London, the United Kingdom has a particularly significant responsibility.

Greens across Europe would be obvious backers of such a proposal. The Green candidate for the French presidency, Yannick Jadot, along with other leading French Greens, recently called for just such a non-proliferation treaty.[8] The likely presence of Germany's Green Party in government following the September 2021 federal elections provides another potential avenue for support. In Britain, Caroline Lucas MP has called for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Bill. Cross-party alliances will be critical to the success of the bill, and there are supporters to be found among the ranks of Liberal Democrat, Labour, and Conservative MPs.

The campaign for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty embodies key principles of Green foreign policy: peaceful disarmament, dealing with the root causes of ecological devastation by holding polluters to account, and a belief in internationalism and multilateralism. By channelling a growing tide of social pressure and non-violent direct action into global political

8 "COP26 : des responsables écolos appellent la France à « montrer l'exemple » face aux lobbys". *Libération*. 31 October 2021.

action, this movement also helps to democratise and energise global governance, making it more responsive to citizen demands and directing it towards social and environmental protection rather than merely upholding an unsustainable global economy.

EU frameworks for delivering a just transition will also be critical to ensure that the rapid shift away from fossil fuels is minimally disruptive to workers, and that adequate retraining, compensation, and regional redevelopment programmes are in place. Their convening power can also make sure that trade unions and business associations are part of the discussion. There are important lessons to be learned from the transition away from coal in Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK. The EU can also use its power as an attractive trading and economic bloc and provider of aid and technical assistance to support lower carbon pathways overseas. It can use its presence at the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and other fora to pressure for coordinated efforts to phase out fossil fuels and end privileged support for fossil fuel interests in agreements like the Energy Charter Treaty. If the EU really wants to live up to its claim to climate leadership, it should throw its weight behind the growing chorus calling for a treaty targeting the main cause of the climate crisis: the over-use of fossil fuels.

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A New Geopolitics for the Anthropocene

The Anthropocene requires a fundamental rethink of humanity's place in the Earth system. In the process, the traditional assumptions of geopolitics, with their premises of separate spaces and peoples in rivalry over scarce land, are superseded by a focus on producing flourishing ecologies as new peaceful habitats for humanity.

Geopolitics is a term with troubling historical connotations. Some of the most pernicious thinking of "classical geopolitics" suggested that environmental circumstances determine the character and conduct of states and their inhabitants, a series of arguments which were often used to justify European imperialism. A particularly dangerous strand of this thinking was the concept of "*Lebensraum*", which strongly influenced Hitler's policies after he attained power in 1933. According to this theory, the need for food production and access to other resources required states (*Völker*) to expand. If states fail to grow, they must inevitably be taken over by other more powerful ones. The racist and implicitly violent militaristic assumptions of this *Geopolitik* were rightly condemned after the collapse of the Third Reich.

In the years since the Second World War, the number of states has increased greatly, mostly as a result of decolonisation and national independence movements dismantling European empires. This runs contrary to the idea that states have to grow or die. Likewise, the assumption that more territory is essential for success has been proven wrong by the economic and political successes of various small countries, not least the European state of Luxembourg. Rapidly expanding trade, technical innovation, and, in particular, the expansion of industrial farming techniques have belied the assumption that more food production requires more land.

Much of the success of the European Union can be seen as a direct repudiation of the premises of *Geopolitik*. However, partly as a result of the climate difficulties caused by this fossil-fuel-powered progress, we are now living in an increasingly disrupted world in which the term "geopolitics" is once again being used to refer to the rivalry of great powers. While some of this usage is related to xenophobic nationalism and suggestions of separate homelands for national populations, the geography in all this is also cut across by economic trade relationships

and military alliances.
This complicates the picture. For we are now being forced to address some of the old questions about resources, environment, and conflict, but in a very different way from the classical geopolitical mode of thinking.

IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Today, it is the very success of the fossil-fuelled growth model that the Western world has followed since the Second World War that is at the heart of the difficulties that now need to be faced. The changes that this mode of economy have brought about are so immense that its increasingly recognised that we are living in a new period of earth history, the Anthropocene.

Where classical geopolitics speculated about how climates and environments shaped societies, culture, and hence politics, precisely the opposite processes are the key to the future in the Anthropocene. Human activities and the decisions currently being taken, mostly by the rich and powerful members of our species, will have profound consequences for the future climate of the planet. Climate is not determining the fate of particular peoples in specific places; instead, it is the rich and powerful among humanity who, by what they decide to invest in, build, and produce, will shape the future climate conditions for us all. This is the new reality of the Anthropocene: industrial activities are now a major force shaping the future of the planet.

Regardless of the trajectory humanity takes in the coming decades, these activities will have very uneven consequences across the globe. Some societies will have an easier time of it than others, but it is clear that the future will be easier for most societies with a slower rate of climate change. Adapting to more extreme weather and less predictable conditions will be essential, but the more quickly the climate changes, the harder this will be. A rapid move away from fossil-fuel-based economic activity is imperative to slow climate change. But this will be especially difficult for states that are dependent on fossil fuel production for economic activity and state revenue. Petroleum producer states such as Saudi Arabia, for example, have been opposed to drastic action to deal with climate change.

A SOURCE OF CONFLICT?

A look to the future raises the question of whether climate disruption will cause conflict and whether this will feed into geopolitical rivalries. But a sole focus on this aspect of the discussion fails to grapple with the larger picture about what is causing climate change in the first place: the fossil-fuelled model of economic growth, the huge quantities of carbon that we are burning. This needs to remain our focus, not simply the possible symptoms of climate change, be it the extreme weather, tragedies such as the drought in Madagascar in 2021, or the political disruptions caused by numerous other natural disasters. If one concentrates on the cause of climate change within the fossil-fuelled global economy, then a second question arises: could attempts to deal with climate change also cause rapid economic change and induce conflict, and if so, where is this most likely to happen?

Much of the recent discussion around climate and conflict has looked at the first of these questions: whether climate disruption will cause insurrections, civil wars, violence, and other forms of insecurity that may be linked in some way to great power rivalries. In American thinking, it is widely believed that climate change will be disruptive and may in some cases trigger or at least exacerbate existing conflicts. There is an extended policy debate on "climate security"

and the danger of climate as a "threat multiplier" in fragile states and regions vulnerable to political disruption.[1] While the social science research on this question is decidedly mixed, the case of Syria has been frequently cited as an example of what the future may hold. This argument suggests that drought in eastern Syria in the years prior to the civil war caused agriculture to fail, leading to the displacement of numerous unemployed farm workers. Many of these people, so the argument goes, migrated to Syria's cities, triggering social stress and protests, which in turn led to violent repression by the regime. The resulting resistance spiralled into civil war. Detailed research into the origins of the conflict suggests that the drought was at best a minor factor, and that politics and failed development strategies in eastern Syria better explain what resulted.[2]

Especially worrying is when the link between climate change and large-scale migration is made by xenophobic politicians. Images of refugees walking across eastern Europe in 2015, and of the bodies children who drowned while trying to make the journey across the Mediterranean, highlighted these perceived dangers. If people, when forced to move, are treated as threats rather than as human beings in need of assistance, then strategies of force, violence, and containment attract political attention. This framing is likely to make things worse rather than better, both for people and for the environments in which they live. As climate change accelerates, ecosystems as well as people will be on the move. Intelligent policies will recognise these new circumstances and act accordingly. Efforts to slow climate change are key to making this new situation easier to cope with, but there's no doubt that change is upon us. Welcome to the Anthropocene.

IT IS THIS EXISTING ORDER THAT IS THE THREAT TO LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

To return to our second question: are attempts to deal with climate change likely to generate conflict? Much of the debate on this issue is speculative, as attempts to deal with climate change have not yet begun to seriously reduce the global production and use of fossil fuels. Volatile commodity prices, of petroleum in particular, suggest that the repercussions of an overall rapid reduction in the use of fossil fuels might be severe. The dispute between Russia and Saudi Arabia over oil prices in mid-2020, amid economic disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, reinforce the point that petroleum is a central, but very contentious, aspect of international politics.

The energy transition must take place over the next decade if the rate of climate change is to be slowed sufficiently to make adaptation feasible. States that depend on fossil fuel revenues clearly need transition strategies to build new economies. Failure to cooperate internationally to facilitate these pathways may lead to state collapse, or conflict. The sad case of Venezuela in recent years may be a harbinger of the consequences of relying on petroleum revenues in rapidly changing times. Collapsing states and migration away from political disasters may trigger

1 Joe Bryan (2017). "Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier". *The New Atlanticist*. 16 November 2017.
2 Marwa Dauody (2020). *The Origins of the Syrian Conflict: Climate Change and Human Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

violence, and in the worst-case scenario, political elites may resort to military action in an attempt to stay in power. On the other hand, states that move rapidly to invest in new energy economies and spin-off industries may do well out of the transition.

THE LEGACY OF ECO-VIOLENCE

A look at the issues of energy, transition, and geography at the largest scale of global transformation suggests that the relationships between place, environment, and conflict – the principal themes of geopolitics – now need to be understood very differently. Much of the focus on security thinking is on the disruptions that climate change and climate policy may bring to the existing geopolitical order. However, it is important to circle back to emphasise the key point: it is this existing order that is the threat to long-term environmental security. Change is essential for future security. We must be able to adapt to unavoidable climate change while ensuring that societies can transition away from fossil fuels quickly and without the risk of social collapse and violence. In addition to endangering immediate human security, this would also very likely disrupt attempts to deal with climate change.

IF VAST QUANTITIES OF CARBON DIOXIDE CONTINUE TO BE GENERATED, THE FUTURE SEEMS LIKELY TO BE MUCH MORE VIOLENT

Much of the history of the expansion of European and subsequently American power over the last 500 years has been violent. The conquest of the Americas involved massive loss of Indigenous life. The wealth brought to Europe – whether from the mines of Latin America or plantation agriculture producing tobacco, sugar cane, and most obviously cotton worked by slaves – involved both environmental devastation and the destruction of human life on an immense scale. These practices of extractivism continue at the colonial frontier of the contemporary global economy, as the deaths of environmentalists and Indigenous people who stand in the way of "development" sadly emphasise. The conversion of forests and rural areas into production units for the global economy is often a brutal business, and conventional conservation is frequently inadequate for both peoples and their places.

In the same way, the expansion of the global fossil-fuelled economy involves many violent processes, and most of those who suffer directly are distant from where its products are consumed. Now climate disasters are bringing this destruction home, as it were, to the cities of the Global North. Environmental insecurity is no longer a matter of disasters in distant places and political disruptions in the former colonies. The floods in Germany and Belgium in the summer of 2021, as well as the damage to eastern American cities from hurricanes and to large parts of California from fire and drought simultaneously, make this point clear.

TOWARDS ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

While traditional notions of environmental protection remain valuable, we need to think much more explicitly about industrial activity and the economic forms that promote it, rather than simply protecting environments from the worst disruptions caused by changes in land use, wildlife habitat destruction, and pollution. Thinking of industrial humanity as a geological-scale change agent, which is what we have effectively become, requires a focus on what the rich and powerful parts of humanity produce. In the long run, Earth will work differently if we manufacture electric bicycles

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and solar panels rather than internal-combustion-powered private automobiles. If vast quantities of carbon dioxide continue to be generated, the future seems likely to be much more violent. Instead of concentrating on the short-term disruptions caused by disasters and the political disruptions that frequently go with them, we should adopt a long-term focus. This is key to thinking intelligently about ecological security.

A focus on ecological security – creating flourishing habitats, with permacultures, agroecology, and diverse landscapes as key goals of production – rather than engineering ever-larger concrete and asphalt structures or building fences to make migration even more difficult, promises a saner and more sustainable planetary future. Thinking of and planning in ecology as part of the human project in which we all live, rather than focusing on distant environments that are protected only insofar as they provide resources for consumption, is a very different formulation of what needs to be secured. The Anthropocene, which makes clear that old notions of humanity separate from an external environment are dangerously wrong, requires just these kinds of new thinking.

The key question is how investments in this ecological future are to be secured. Many fossil fuel divestment movements have started down this path, insisting that funds need to be put to productive rather than destructive uses and shape the future of the Earth system in ways that do not involve the burning of fossil fuels. The development banks that are finally phasing out investments in fossil infrastructure and coal-powered electricity generation also point the way. This investment push is much bigger than the still largely underdelivered green development funds that will supposedly be provided to states especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change under the Paris Agreement.

Beyond that is the even bigger question of how central banks view their responsibility to initiate much greater transformations within finance. Kim Stanley Robinson's recent novel *The Ministry for the Future* is fascinating here [see p. 24] for its suggestion that "carbon quantitative easing" might be a new policy tool linking money supply to the reduction of carbon fuel use. If central bankers were able to understand the new conditions of the Anthropocene and act to ensure their states' survival, regardless of the agendas of populist politicians, then financial policy could be dramatically different. *The Ministry for the Future* underlines the important role to be played by Europe in making such key changes.

Making a policy priority of regenerating ecological systems and transforming industrial activity in ways that transcend the nationalist chauvinisms, competitive political rivalries, and xenophobia that haunted earlier understandings of the relationships between peoples, places, and their ecologies is urgently needed.

Given the history of violence and disruption at the heart of old-fashioned European *Geopolitik* in the 20th century, it would indeed be fitting if Europe were to generate the new ecological thinking and the policies needed for a peaceful geopolitics in the 21st century. ■

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MOVING TARGETS
GEOPOLITICS IN A WARMING WORLD

If globalisation once appeared to be moving steadily towards closer cooperation and governance, this trajectory has ground to a halt. Despite shared challenges from environmental upheaval to the pandemic, geopolitical tensions abound as countries increasingly look inwards. World powers of the likes of the United States and China have always struggled over economic and military dominance, but never before has the planet's climate been so starkly at stake. With much in the balance, how can Greens and progressives pick up the scattered seeds of a more just and sustainable world? If they are ready to harness Europe's power as well as recognise its responsibility, progressive forces can help cultivate a new international order, one that upholds democratic principles while promising prosperity and security for Europe and the world.

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