

February 25, 2019

The Need for International Solidarity in Fight Against Terrorism

Historically, terrorism gets back to the origin of human society, but now terrorism and religious-ethnic fundamentalism are considered to be contingent upon each other. The three major incidents of the past three decades, including the collapse of the Soviet Union, the September 11 event and the Arab Spring of 2011, have played a major role in increasing terrorism and religious fundamentalism, especially in the Middle East. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the liberation of many nations from the dictatorship of socialist countries around the world. The collapse of many governments has strengthened decentralized forces as they either established domestic networks or joined foreign terrorist organizations. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are the examples that came out from the heart of two governments, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

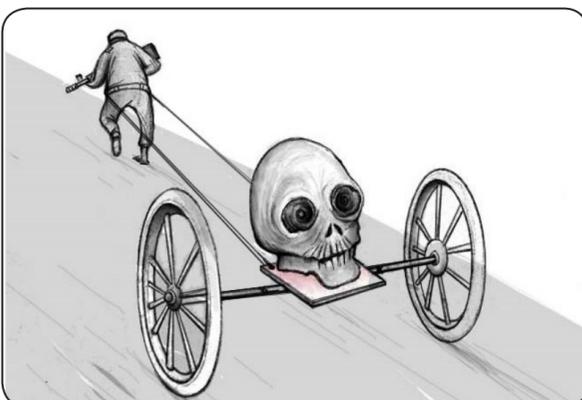
When the world became unipolar, the fundamentalists sought to launch war against the United States and globalize jihad; as a result, they organized numerous attacks on American targets in the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, and elsewhere in the world. The US invasion of Afghanistan and then Iraq caused much great hatred in the Arab world, and so many Arab angry youth considered it aggression on Arab-Islamic identity. During Iraq and Afghanistan war terrorist organizations tried to use religious and nationalist sentiment to foster mobilization and persistence of violence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Arab Spring 2011 has released violent forces across the Middle East and even South Asia. Because the Middle East dictatorships have severely suppressed their people, as soon as democracy voiced from Tunisia, they used the opportunity, and violence became a daily phenomena which resulted in complete destruction of Iraq and Syria. Although geographically Afghanistan was located far away from the heart of the Arab Spring, it badly affected by this process. As the process covered a vast geography throughout the Muslim world, especially in Western Asia, the radical religious forces could not resist against the attraction of this violence. Thus, the Khorasan branch of ISIS group was formed and many members of Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan were also attracted.

Now, the fundamental question is why combating terrorism and fundamentalism requires international convergence? To answer this question, first, the interdependence theory must be explained. Based on this theory which has liberal origins, all countries are in a condition that they cannot survive without affecting or influencing each other. The process of globalization of economics, politics, and culture has more strengthened the theory of interdependency and the view that all human societies are in a situation that they need to interrelate with each other and cannot disregard others as did in the past.

According to this theory, the industrialized countries of West and East Asia need the Third World market and raw materials. On the other hand, the developing countries are in need of advanced technology and industrial goods of developed world; it is impossible to imagine the life cycle of the world without this trade. Based on the theory of interdependence, all countries are affected by each issue. Terrorism and fundamentalism are of social concepts that have a dynamic and fluid state and do not belong to a particular society, and its consequences are not limited to one society. Underdeveloped and poor countries send hundreds of thousands of refugees to the developed countries of Europe and North America annually. These asylum seekers can also transmit these mentalities to the developed countries and spontaneously provide the basis for the expansion of religious or ethnic fundamentalism in the receiving countries. When we look at the globalized world, it is clearly seen that the phenomena of terrorism and fundamentalism in Europe are rooted in the Middle East conflicts due to inability of governments in the Third World and the expansionist policies of the great powers. As think tanks in Washington, Beijing and Moscow can have global effects, terrorism, fundamentalism and drug trafficking, which are prevalent in Afghanistan and Pakistan, can also have global effects because the countries of the world are in a two-way trade.

Some countries in the world are trying to exploit fundamentalists and terrorism to reach their national interests. Pakistan is one of the countries that have always been criticized by international community. Pakistan in the last decade of the Cold War, with the help of religious fundamentalists from both Afghanistan and the Arab world, was able to achieve great benefits in the region. Receiving billions of dollars from the United States and Saudi Arabia are examples of it. Pakistan, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, tried to support the Taliban and interpreted the Taliban's radical regime in line with its national interests because Pakistan's political and security thinkers believe that are not in a position to compete with India in the field of economic and technological power. Pakistani strategists think that fundamentalists and terrorism are relatively inexpensive tools that can be used to secure the interests of that country. The last week terrorist attacks in Kashmir and also Zahidan showed that no place in the world, especially in Middle East is safe. It is true that terrorists and fundamentalists are categorized as irrational actors, but Pakistani thinkers and strategists are very rational actors. Whenever Pakistani interests are truly pressurized by the world, they will desist from supporting terrorists because they will calculatedly choose a right way. Therefore, the unilateral efforts of governments, including Afghanistan, India, Iran, China, Russia and even the United States, to combat terrorism will not lead to a conclusion because it is a global phenomenon and Needs comprehensive and International mechanism to deal with it.



Why a US-China Trade Deal Is Not Enough

By: Minxin Pei

As Chinese and American trade negotiators meet in Washington to try to forge an accord on trade, observers are largely focused on the countries' economic disagreements, such as over China's subsidies to its state-owned enterprises. But to think that an agreement on trade will protect the world from a Sino-American cold war would be as premature as it would be naïve.

Of course, a trade deal is highly desirable. The collapse of trade talks would trigger a new round of tariff hikes (from 10% to 25%, on \$200 billion of Chinese goods exported to the United States), driving down global equity prices and spurring businesses to move more of their activities out of China. Amid tit-for-tat tariffs, bilateral trade would plummet, and the unraveling of the US-China economic relationship would accelerate, creating widespread uncertainty and higher costs. But even if a comprehensive agreement is reached – either before March 1 or a few months from now – that unraveling will continue, albeit in a more gradual and less costly way. The reason – which many investors and corporate executives have failed to recognize – is that the trade war is not fundamentally about trade at all; rather, it is a manifestation of the escalating strategic competition between the two powers.

True, the US has legitimate complaints about China's trade practices, including its violations of intellectual-property rights, which, after more than a decade of failed diplomatic engagement, warrant a tougher stance. But if the US and China were not strategic adversaries, it is unlikely that the US would initiate a full-blown trade war that jeopardizes trade worth over a half-trillion dollars and billions in corporate profits. While China may lose more from such a conflict, American losses will hardly be trivial.

The US is prepared to sacrifice its economic relationship with China, because the risks posed by the two powers' conflicting national interests and ideologies now overwhelm the benefits of cooperation. At a time when China, which has been rapidly gaining on the US in terms of international influence, is pursuing an aggressive foreign policy, America's emphasis on engagement is no longer tenable.

A growing number of other stakeholders, including China's nearest neighbors, seem to agree with US President Donald Trump's move toward confrontation. This shift is epitomized

by America's attacks on the Chinese telecom giant Huawei. Beyond having Canada arrest the company's CFO, Meng Wanzhou, who now awaits an extradition proceeding, the US has been warning allies not to use Huawei technology for their 5G wireless networks, for security reasons.

A US-China trade deal cannot resolve these issues. Indeed, even if the current trade conflict's most acute manifestations are resolved, both countries will internalize one of its key lessons: trading with a geopolitical foe is dangerous business. In the US, there is a growing consensus that China constitutes the most serious long-term security threat the country faces. Trade agreement or not, this is likely to lead to more policies focused on achieving a comprehensive economic decoupling. Severing an economic relationship built over four decades may be costly, the logic goes, but continuing to strengthen your primary geopolitical adversary through trade and technology transfers is suicidal.

Likewise, for China, the trade war has exposed the strategic vulnerability created by overdependence on US markets and technologies. Chinese President Xi Jinping will not make the same mistake again, nor will any other Chinese leader. In the coming years, China, taking advantage of any lull in the trade war, will also work to reduce drastically its economic dependence on the US.

But, however compelling the strategic rationale may be for China and the US, the economic decoupling of the world's two largest economies – which together account for 40% of global GDP – would be disastrous. It will not only fracture the global trading system, but also eliminate any constraints on the Sino-American geopolitical rivalry, raising the risk of potentially devastating escalation.

The only way this outcome can be avoided is if China steps up credibly to assuage America's security concerns. This means that rather than focusing on, say, purchasing more American soybeans, China should be dismantling the military facilities it has built on its artificial islands in the South China Sea. Only such a bold move can arrest – if not reverse – the rapid descent into a Sino-American cold war.

Minxin Pei, a professor of government at Claremont McKenna College and the author of China's Crony Capitalism, is the inaugural Library of Congress Chair in US-China Relations.

Will Germany Permit Joint European Security?

By: Joschka Fischer

US President Donald Trump has proved truly disruptive to the transatlantic relationship. His questioning of America's mutual-defense commitments presents NATO with an ominous and potentially existential crisis. The US security guarantee, after all, is one of the two pillars upon which European peace and prosperity have rested since the end of World War II. And nor has Trump spared the second pillar: the rules-based global trade system and economic order.

Just two years after Trump's election, Europeans find themselves shivering alone in the icy winds of international politics, rightly wondering what is to be done. It stands to reason that Europe must deepen its internal bonds, close ranks, and strengthen its military capacity. Some might question whether this is what Europeans truly want, given that we are living in the age of Brexit, which will deprive the European Union of its second-strongest military and economic power.

But just because the British don't seem to know what they want doesn't mean the rest of Europe is in the same boat. In fact, most Europeans favor a stronger, more powerful EU with a joint security policy.

The big exception is Germany. As the EU's economic engine and most populous member state, there can be no joint security policy without the country that sits at the very heart of Europe. But it is an open question whether achieving joint European security with Germany's participation is even possible.

Europeans must not allow wishful thinking to obscure important facts, as happened when the European Monetary Union was being formed in the 1990s. From the start, there were pronounced differences between individual member states not only with respect to economic and fiscal policy, but also in terms of political culture and mentality. Nonetheless, willful ignorance prevailed, and the monetary union was launched without the integrated political institutions that such a project requires.

The EU must not make this mistake again. Today, the main fact that cannot be ignored is that a joint security policy will require a compromise between Germany and France, the two largest and most powerful member states. Such a compromise will not come easily. The two countries' political mentalities, historical narratives, and geopolitical interests are simply too far apart, and in many cases diametrically opposed. Still, owing to its particular history, Germany poses the bigger obstacle, even if its official rhetoric suggests otherwise.

For its part, France's traditional self-image reflects its long history as a great European power, even if that era – and Europe's global dominance generally – has passed. As a nuclear power and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, France views its military actions and arms exports not as moral failures but as the prerogatives of a world power conducting foreign policy.

The genius of Charles de Gaulle was to claim the status of a victorious power for his country after World War II. Doing so invited French citizens to forget the Vichy regime, the defeat by the Nazis in 1940, and the internal political rifts of the 1930s. It was thanks to de Gaulle that France maintained its historical course.

The same cannot be said for Germany. During the twentieth century, Germany made two bids for European hegemony and world domination, and the price it paid was its own destruction, to say nothing of Europe's. Its sense of historical continuity was demolished in 1945, at which point its culture and traditions were devalued and its territorial integrity destroyed. Germany became synonymous with aggression, terror, and genocide.

Postwar Germany abandoned military-based power politics and foreign adventurism, and concerned itself primarily with economic development. Germans simply saw no other way to gain reentry to the democratic West, let alone reclaim political sovereignty. This strategy culminated in the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990.

With the shift away from power politics in 1945, Germans on both the left and the right became pacifists. And to this day, many Germans remain deeply and emotionally committed to neutrality, despite many decades of European integration and NATO membership. This has been particularly true in the post-reunification period, owing in no small measure to America's security guarantee and willingness to manage the dirty business of power politics on Germany's behalf. But this cozy division of labor, like the American-led postwar order, came to an end with the election of Trump. A German return to traditional power politics certainly has its risks. But the alternative is to maintain the status quo and forego a joint EU security policy. A policy consisting of more than lofty words necessarily implies a deepening of political integration in the name of European sovereignty. Without common export rules, for example, there can be no meaningful cooperation on European armaments development, let alone more far-reaching and ambitious projects.

Germans are currently engaged in an intense debate over defense spending, which must rise to 2% of GDP by 2024 to meet the country's NATO commitments. Given the foreseeable geopolitical risks on the horizon, in the absence of a joint EU security policy, German defense spending would have to rise even higher to make up for the US's withdrawal from Europe.

Needless to say, Germany's rearmament on its own would raise many questions and historical concerns. Rearmament with and for Europe and NATO, however, would be a completely different matter. One way or another, Europe must grow stronger. It is in everyone's interest that Germany be productively engaged in that process.

Joschka Fischer, Germany's foreign minister and vice chancellor from 1998 to 2005, was a leader of the German Green Party for almost 20 years.

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida
Vice Chairman / Exec. Editor: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019
www.outlookafghanistan.net