

Atlantik-Brücke Impulses

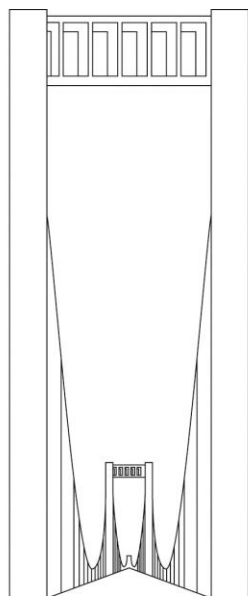
# Maps of Geopolitical Risks and Opportunities

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The Atlantik-Brücke Survey 2015

*Prof. Dr. Burkhard Schwenker and Dr. Tobias Raffel, supported by Mujib Bazhwal*

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# Maps of Geopolitical Risks and Opportunities

*Prof. Dr. Burkhard Schwenker and Dr. Tobias Raffel*

We asked Atlantik-Brücke members and Young Leaders to evaluate important geopolitical trends and developments for the first time in the spring of 2013. The input received was used to produce “The Geopolitical Landscape: Opportunities and Risks” (*Landkarten geopolitischer Chancen und Risiken*). The results proved prescient, as we belonged to a select group that successfully predicted the potential crisis with Russia.

In comparison to 2013, the world has become even more uncertain: the terrorist threats of IS and Boko Haram, the sudden slump in oil prices, the deepening of the Greek financial crisis, a quarreling Europe, the violence in eastern Ukraine, increasing flows of refugees, the growing conflict in the East China Sea, collapsing stock markets in China, cyber attacks – the list of new, unexpected events goes on. Each of these developments alone has the potential to change the geopolitical landscape – when they are combined, they make our world even more threatening and opaque. Correlations are no longer clear-cut,

extrapolating trends becomes increasingly difficult, and aggressors are not immediately identifiable; therefore, it makes sense that the German Federal Ministry of Defense’s White Paper working group concluded that there is a “hybrid” threat situation (see Atlantik-Brücke Impulses: Hybrid Warfare as Challenge for the German Bundeswehr, 2015).

In light of the aforementioned conclusions, we asked Atlantik-Brücke members and Young Leaders to, once again, evaluate geopolitical opportunities and risks in May and June. We wanted to know what has changed since 2013, what we should be prepared for, what developments are probable, and if they – through a transatlantic lens – are good or bad for us. 425 members and Young Leaders participated; many of them are important decision-makers from the fields of politics, economics, media, and culture (see also **Figure A**).

The image of an uncertain world has been affirmed – with multilayered challenges, permanently new protagonists and a large number of sources of danger (see also **Figure B**). Overall, we see seven themes that will dominate and sustainably change geopolitics (we will call them “geopolitical hotspots”; more on that later). Many are threatening, but others also offer

**Figure A**

## Methodology of the Atlantik-Brücke Survey 2015

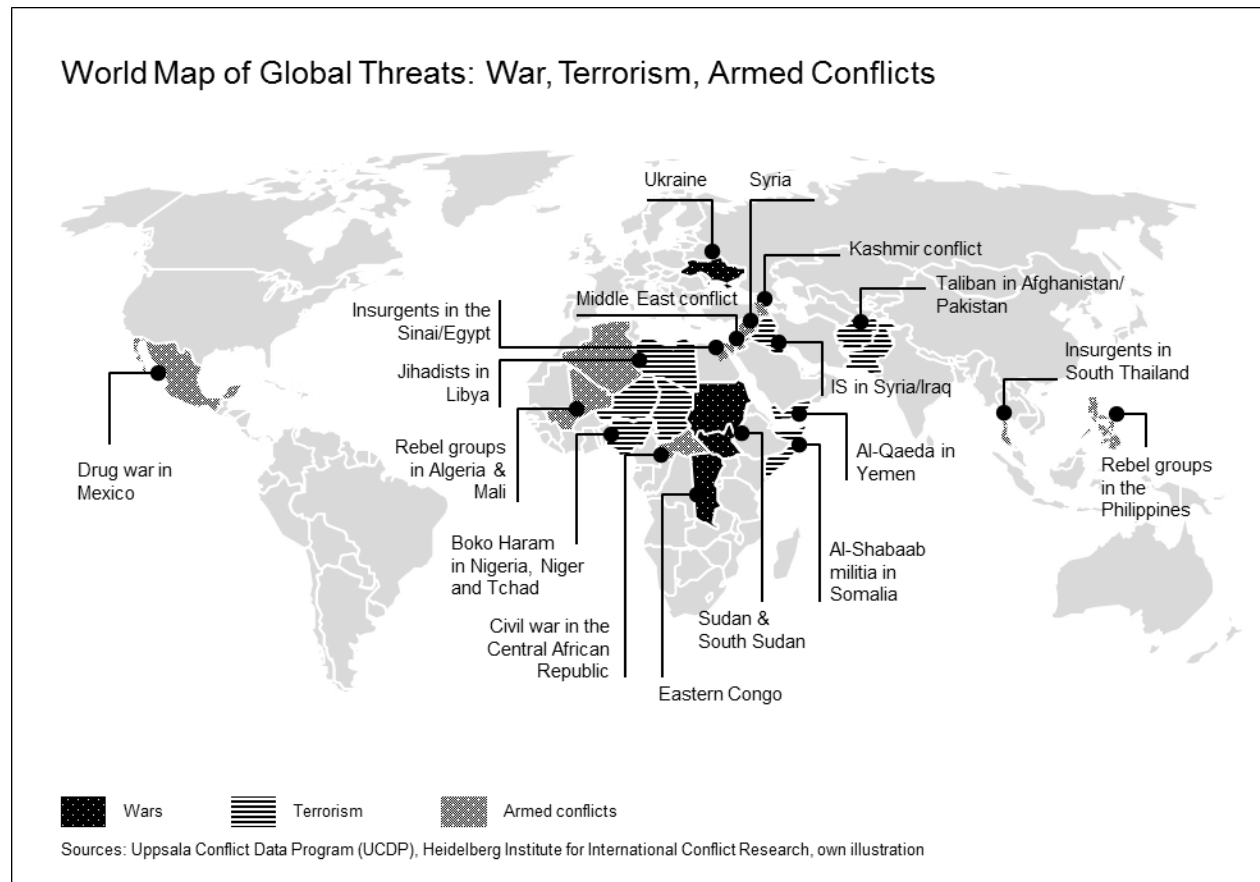
- 425 members and Young Leaders from Germany and the US participated in the online survey (May 20 – June 15, 2015):
  - Affiliation: 212 Atlantik-Brücke members, 213 Young Leaders
  - Professional fields: 50.4% economics, 49.6% politics, science, and media
  - Age: 39.6% between 40 and 55 years old, 30.3% younger, 30.1% older
- Participants had to evaluate 25 possible geopolitical developments (all of the possibilities are listed in the attached overview).
- Participants were asked to evaluate the likelihood of the developments, when they occur, whether they were positive or negative, and if a transatlantic solution is needed.

opportunities. In any case, it is clear: in light of the increasing uncertainty and ambiguity, it will become increasingly difficult for governments to make decisions on security policy and answer geostrategic questions and for companies to develop tenable global growth strategies. In sum: geopolitics has become increasingly important! This statement can be verified by the degree of interest in our survey: in 2015, the amount of members and Young Leaders that participated in our study doubled from 2013.

opportunities – 15 of 25 developments were negatively evaluated. Particular risks (likely developments with negative impact) include:

- a new wave of military armament,
- Russia’s sphere of influence continuing to grow (and developing strategic partnership with China),
- the escalating conflict between China and Japan in the East China Sea,

**Figure B**



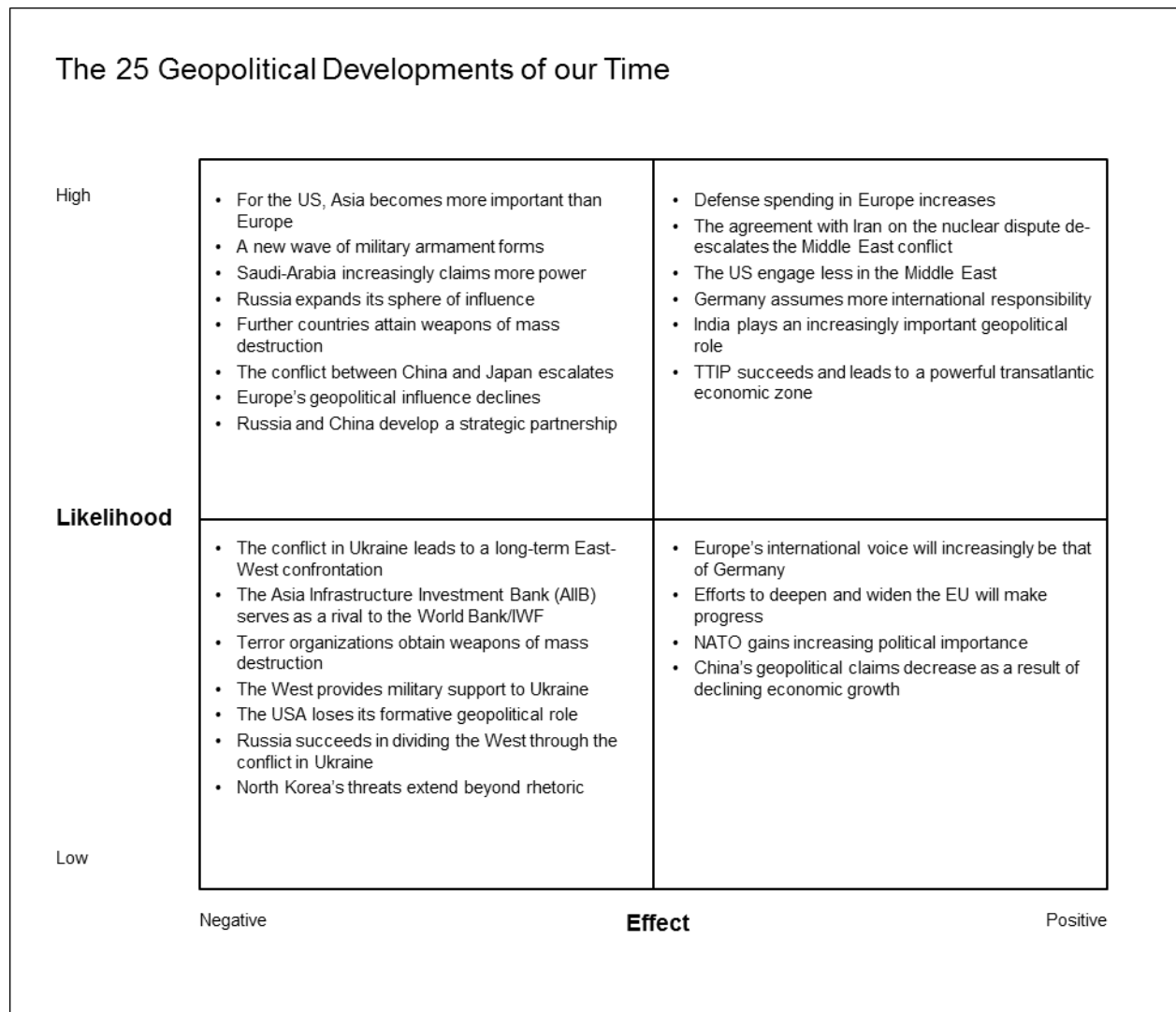
### The Geopolitical Hotspots 2015

In order to evaluate potential geopolitical scenarios, we included 25 possible developments in our sample.

**Figure C** provides an overview of the results; all developments are sorted by likelihood and if they are viewed as positive or negative. What is clear: in contrast to 2013, we see considerably more risks than

- additional countries or terrorist organizations obtaining weapons of mass destruction.

**Figure C**



Also included in these risks – more on this later –, is the possibility that Europe's geopolitical influence will continue to wane just as the probability of a political deepening and strengthening of the EU is evaluated low.

However, our survey doesn't merely focus on threats and risks; it also shows opportunities (likely developments with a positive impact) that could positively affect the geopolitical landscape and lead to elevated stability and security. The following are included in these opportunities:

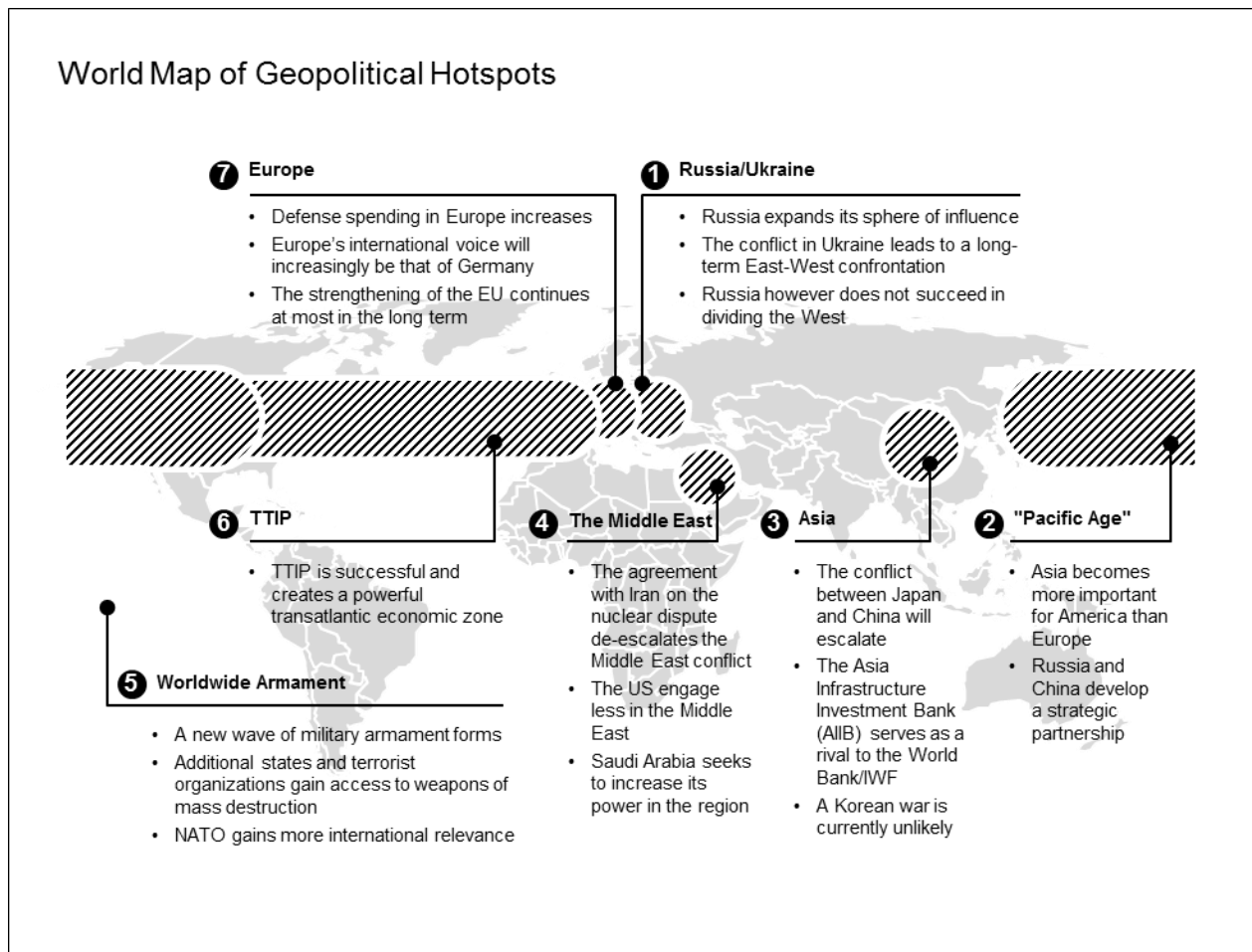
- the agreement with Iran on the nuclear dispute as an important step towards de-escalation in the Middle East,
- the free-trade agreement TTIP as prerequisite for a reinforced transatlantic alliance (and as a counterbalance to the "Pacific Age"),
- a new role for Germany as an (increasingly) influential geopolitical actor – on both sides of the Atlantic Germany will be asked to play an increasingly active role in formulating and executing solutions to international conflicts.

In order to try to summarize the results of our survey, we worked with a group of geopolitical experts to analyze the effects and side effects of individual events and draw correlations. The results of this endeavor are illustrated in our new map of geopolitical “hotspots” (see **Figure D**). The following seven overarching themes emerged: Russia/Ukraine, the “Pacific Age”, Asia, the Middle East, military armament, TTIP, and Europe.

a war would commence in eastern Ukraine. However, today we know that our prediction was (unfortunately) true and that events in Moscow have the potential to create further geopolitical friction.

For this reason, we focused intensively on this topic in our new survey and asked our panel:

**Figure D**



**Russia and the Crisis in Ukraine: A New East-West Confrontation?**

In early-summer 2013, when we conducted the first Atlantik-Brücke survey, it was nearly impossible to predict that only a few months later the Maidan Protests would begin, Moscow would annex Crimea, and

- Will Russia attempt to further expand its sphere of influence? More than three-quarters of our panel participants expect this – and consider Russia’s policies threatening.
- Will the conflict in Ukraine lead to a long-term East-West confrontation? Nearly two-thirds of our

panel participants predict that this will occur – and fear a retreat to the political divisions that we thought were overcome 25 years ago.

- Will Russia and China develop a strategic (economic) partnership in light of continuous sanctions? Nearly two-thirds of our participants believe that this is plausible and evaluate this development critically, as it implies a further pivot away from Europe.

The good news is that Russia will not succeed in dividing the west – only 29% of our participants consider this to be possible. However, only if the west succeeds in establishing an “alignment” in regard to Russia. Russian aggression has necessitated a strong transatlantic response, and these findings show that continued cooperation between Europe and America will be an important task (priority-level 3 of 25 items). In other words, Russia poses one of the biggest challenges, but simultaneously presents an opportunity for a new level of transatlantic cooperation.

### America’s Pivot to Asia: From Transatlantic to Transpacific?

What has been dubbed, the “Pacific Age” – the increasing significance of transpacific partnerships as opposed to those across the Atlantic – is the geopolitical development identified as most likely to occur by our survey. 83% consider it probable or very likely that Asia will become more important to the USA than Europe in economic, political, and military terms.

The economic pivot of the USA to Asia is not a new development. Already in 2010, in cooperation with the (former) Financial Times of Germany poll, we could see that 80% of the 500 most important European economic leaders considered good transatlantic relations vital, while 70% of American CEOs saw greater prospects in Asia. This does not come as a surprise, because economic trends support these views: the trade volume between the USA and Asia is growing more dynamically and substantially faster than between the USA and Europe (see **Figure E**).

**Figure E**

How Transatlantic and Transpacific Trade Develop					
Development of the container trading (in thousands of TEU)					
	2005	2015	2025	CAGR 2005-2015	CAGR 2015-2025
<b>Transatlantic</b>	5,764	7,010	9,826	1.98%	3.43%
<b>Transpacific</b>	16,366	22,654	38,941	3.30%	5.57%
<b>Worldwide</b>	84,874	135,508	228,081	4.79%	5.34%

Source: IHS Economics, own calculations

The “Pacific Age” follows a predictable geopolitical trajectory; in our survey two years ago, 80% of participants anticipated this scenario. The latest evaluation has returned similar results: from the American perspective, this trend is viewed positively (median 2.7), while from the European perspective, it is seen as negative (3.6). The resulting conclusions and implications for Europe are also shared by a majority: we must effectively and sustainably promote Europe in the USA. To this end, we must ensure that TTIP is swiftly passed and not overshadowed by the Trans Pacific Partnership (TTP).

### **Asia: Rivalries for Regional and Geopolitical Influence**

In this year’s survey, regional conflicts and developments in Asia are considered some of the most important geopolitical hotspots. In sharp contrast to two years ago, our participants critically evaluated the growing conflict between China and Japan in 2015:

- Whereas in 2013, only approximately 20% of participants were of the opinion that the conflict (keyword: East China Sea) would manifest, today more than 70% consider this possible, representing one of the largest changes that we were able to measure between the two surveys.
- At the same time, the rivalry between Japan and China is seen as threatening by the overwhelming majority (median 4.1) – and therefore, a joint transatlantic strategy for de-escalation is considered important (priority-level 5 of 25).

It is also germane to note that the predominant majority of those surveyed assume that China’s geopolitical claim to power will remain high despite domestic political problems as exemplified through the new security laws, the effects of the corruption campaign, projected declining growth, and even rumors of assassination attempts of the political leadership. We find evidence of continued increased geopolitical claims to power as suggested by the steep increase

in military spending (see below), but also in the Chinese-led initiative Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). 60% of participants in our panel consider that the AIIB could become, in the medium-term, a serious competitor to the World Bank and the IMF.

Nevertheless, there are also positive developments: a Korean War or a large military aggression by North Korea is considered unlikely by four-fifths of those polled. Furthermore, two-thirds predict that India will take on an increasingly important geopolitical role (in 2013 this was 52%), which is viewed as providing a positive influence and increased balance in Asia.

### **Middle East Hotspots: A New Geopolitical Constellation?**

Whereas the results of our geopolitical survey in 2013 painted a consistently pessimistic portrait of the situation in the Middle East, the latest results offer several nuances. Naturally, the conflicts in and around Syria, through the IS (and its financing), the threat to Israel, and the problems in Iraq continue to play a significant (and threatening) role. However, there are new developments that have led to further predictions that were until recently inconceivable:

- Almost three-fourths of our participants expect that the agreement with Iran on the nuclear dispute will lead to a tangible medium-term de-escalation in the Middle East,
- more than two-thirds assume that the USA, as a result of its increased energy autonomy (keyword: Fracking), will decrease its engagement in the Middle East in the medium-term,
- more than three-fourths consider it probable, or even highly probable, that Saudi Arabia will aim to increase its relative power.

While, on one hand, the potential withdrawal of the USA from the region is evaluated differently by the respective countries represented in the survey – positively from the American perspective, negatively from

the European one – both see the further strengthening of Saudi Arabia, as exemplified by its increased military spending (see next section), as a danger to freedom and stability in the region. It is possible that the withdrawal of America from the Middle East (positively evaluated) could accelerate the strengthening of Saudi Arabia. These are the kinds of paradoxes and ambiguities that must be taken into account in today's geopolitical climate.

What is viewed as unanimously positive and clear-cut is a solution to the nuclear conflict with Iran. For Europeans as well as Americans, there is hope for pacification and a new equilibrium in the Middle East. "Reaching an agreement with Iran on the nuclear dispute will de-escalate conflict in the Middle East", is second on the list of probable and positive developments that we highlighted in this survey.

#### **A Result (and a Cause?): Worldwide Military Armament**

It is clear from the aforementioned hotspots that geopolitics will become increasingly militarized in nature. The quantitative data from the survey reinforces this assumption: More than 80% of participants are certain that we are on the cusp of a new phase of military armament. We can already point to empirical

evidence of this development; in 2014, after years of decline, worldwide defense spending started to increase again – 1.7% worldwide and this trend is especially pronounced in the defined hotspots (for more details see **Figure F**):

- in China +9.7%, from 197 to 216 billion US dollar
- in Russia, +8.1%, twice as strong than in 2013,
- in Japan to 40,2 billion US dollar, the highest figure since the end of World War II,
- and in Saudi Arabia +17%.

The fact that the clear majority of survey participants see increased military armament as a danger is endemic to the nature of the subject matter. However, it also demonstrates the complex and ambiguous nature of the possible geopolitical scenarios, as a large majority also considers it both a possibility and positive development that the EU will increase its military spending – surely a result of the conflict in Ukraine.

In this context, the meaning and role of NATO has also changed: in 2013, the majority considered it possible that NATO would lose significance; but today, most of the participants predict that our North Atlantic defense alliance will become increasingly influential geopolitically.

**Figure F**

#### **How Military Budgets Develop Worldwide**

- In 2014 the worldwide defense spending increased for the first time since 2010 (+1.7%)
- European military budgets were recently – as yet – decreasing (on average 2.0% per annum since 2010)
- The USA maintain the most powerful military force in the world by far (budget 2014: 581 billion US dollar which is the equivalent of 38% of the worldwide defense spending), but reduce their budget clearly (-6.5% in 2014) and shift their geographical focus more and more towards the east (less Europe, more Middle East and Pacific)
- The military budgets increase particularly strongly in east Europe, for 2015 (SIPRI prognosis): Russia +15%, Ukraine +50%, Poland +20%, Lithuania +50%, and Latvia +15%.

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)



### **Our Biggest Geopolitical Opportunity: TTIP**

In 2013, our participants already unanimously determined that, amidst all other geopolitical hurdles, TTIP offers the greatest chance for opportunity in the next several years. In detail:

- Of all of the 25 geopolitical developments that comprised our survey, TTIP is the development with the most positive evaluations.
- American participants were particularly optimistic in regard to the potential growth and increased prosperity that will stem from TTIP, while the Europeans were more restrained (which is also reflected in the current skepticism displayed by the German and European public).
- Despite discussions and delays, two-thirds of those surveyed believe that TTIP will pass and lead to a strong transatlantic economic zone, at least in the medium-term.
- In order to advance more swiftly, TTIP should stand at the top of the transatlantic agenda: 56% percent of those surveyed consider the joint promotion of TTIP to be vital.

In comparison to the first survey in 2013, it is clear that over the last two years, more people have been convinced of TTIP's merits: while the clear majority of Atlantik-Brücke members (80%) had already positively evaluated TTIP, two-thirds of Young Leaders (67%) were still skeptical. Today, both groups are equally convinced.

### **Europe: On the Path to Increasing or Decreasing Influence?**

Looking ahead to the next several years, our panel is uncertain on how European geopolitical influence will develop:

- Only 45% predict that the problems in Europe will be solved and that the strengthening of the EU will continue (and if so, only in the medium-term).

- 65% predict (also because of that) that Europe's influence in geopolitical decisions will continue to decrease.

This is a clear reversal of the results of our survey in 2013: Two years ago a majority of participants was still convinced that the strengthening of the EU would continue – the difficult discussions regarding Ukraine and the Russian sanctions, in addition to the Greek debt crisis and negotiations, have clearly left their mark.

In addition, there is a new challenge: A clear majority, 73% of those polled, predicts that the defense spending in Europe will increase in the face of geopolitical threats. From the American perspective, this is seen as a positive trend (median 2.4); from the European perspective, it is evaluated with more skepticism (Median 2.8), even though it is still viewed favorably by the majority.

After many years of decreased defense spending, we must be prepared to increase spending on the military. In other words: the peaceful status quo enjoyed since the fall of the Soviet Union that allowed for an increase in non-military expenditures, is rapidly shifting. The constructive resolution of the associated conflicts will greatly depend on whether or not Europe is successful at effectively and efficiently building up and utilizing its military resources. The implementation of the long-discussed "Sharing and Pooling Concept" will prove crucial in determining if we can demonstrate more European unity.

### **Consequences for the Transatlantic Agenda**

Our survey depicts an image of the geopolitical world that is confronted by multifaceted threats, ambiguous developments, and new challenges. As a result, there is a need for direction and stable anchoring points that necessitates particularly strong transatlantic

relations between America and Germany/Europe. We see three important elements to achieve this:

*Firstly: It is about more political responsibility.*

The need for security and direction from the USA and Europe, and Germany in particular, is clearly illustrated in the results of our survey:

- Only a third of our participants predicts that the USA will lose its role as the most important geopolitical decision-maker – in other words, two-thirds are convinced that America will continue to be the key player in shaping geopolitics in the future (and view this favorably).
- Nearly 70%, a clear majority, assume that Germany will continue to assume more responsibility in the resolution of international conflicts.
- Approximately 60% of those polled are of the opinion that Europe's international voice will become proportionally more representative of Germany's.

The prospect that Germany will assume more global responsibility (and become a stronger voice within Europe), is welcomed by the majority of Americans and Germans/Europeans – this creates the basis for a mutual agenda.

*Secondly: We should develop a geopolitical transatlantic agenda.*

The survey results point to what topics should form the foundation of a cooperative agenda. The geopolitical topics that are more effectively tackled together and should be addressed with a high priority are:

- TTIP: the priorities have to be properly set on both sides of the Atlantic, and it must be promoted and swiftly negotiated.
- Russia/Ukraine: further escalation must be avoided, a cooperative strategy for handling Russia should be developed, close transatlantic co-

operation with clear and consequential operations is necessary.

- “Pacific Age”: we need to discuss the consequences for the transatlantic partnership and make the priorities between TTIP and TTP transparent (for a comparison of TTIP/TPP see **Figure G**).
- Middle East: utilize the nuclear deal with Iran as an opportunity for de-escalation and develop scenarios for shifts in regional power.
- Military armament: strengthen NATO, share and pool European and transatlantic resources, develop collaborative answers to hybrid warfare, maintain the primacy of policy-based solutions.

*Thirdly: Promote Europe and Germany in the USA!*

Even though it is difficult in terms of the German/European self-understanding: If the American economic elite continues to focus on Asia, if the “Pacific Age” becomes an increasingly important part of the US foreign and economic policy, and TPP and TTIP are played against one another, we can no longer assume that our community of shared values is enough to sustain a strong, tenable transatlantic alliance.

Therefore, we have to actively promote Germany and Europe in the USA: for our political understanding, for our culture of consensus, for the political and economic potential that Europe possesses. And we have to emphasize that there is no other region in the world that America shares more values, experiences, goods and regulations with.

Figure G

## Planned Free Trade Agreements in Comparison: TPP vs. TTIP

	TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership)	TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership)
<b>Participating states</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall 12 neighboring states of the Pacific in North America (USA, Canada, Mexico), South America (Chile, Peru), Asia (Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei) and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand)</li> <li>4 more countries might join (Colombia, Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea)</li> <li>China is not included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USA and EU (28 member states)</li> <li>Mexico, Canada and European Non-EU states could join later on</li> </ul>
<b>Importance of the economic zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 12 countries constitute about 40% of the world's GDP and roughly one third in world trade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 29 countries represent about 50% of the world's GDP, 30% of the global trade with goods and 40% of the world trade in services</li> </ul>
<b>Possible positive effects</b> (Sources: Centre for Economic Policy Research, ifo-Institute, Bertelsmann Foundation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of the world's GDP by USD 295 bn</li> <li>Boost of the income within the participating countries by overall USD 110 bn per annum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of the GDP in USA and EU by EUR 119 bn and a higher growth rate by 0,5 percentage points</li> <li>Doubling of the trade volume between USA and Germany</li> <li>Creation of 2 million new jobs within the OECD states</li> </ul>
<b>State of negotiations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further progressed than TTIP.</li> <li>Negotiations are ongoing since 2005 (precursor: Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement, TPSEP). USA joined in 2009, Japan in 2013</li> <li>Negotiations on the technical level are in the final stadium</li> <li>President Obama has gained a Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) in June 2015 that would allow a faster completion and a ratification by the Congress before the end of his term. Whether it ends up this way is however questionable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less progressed than TPP</li> <li>Negotiations are ongoing since 2013 (precursor: among others Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement, TAFTA, in the 1990's)</li> <li>The technical negotiation rounds are in progress, vital topics are still controversial</li> </ul>

## Attachment: The Survey Results (Selection)

Possible geopolitical development	Development is probable (% , priority-level)	If it occurs, on a short term (before 2017) (% , priority-level)	Development would be positive/negative (median)	Development requires common action (% , priority-level)
1 For the US, Asia will be more important than Europe ("Pacific Age").	82.83% (1 of 25)	11.88% (20 of 25)	Negative (3.19)	24.61% (13 of 25)
2 The US is losing its role as the most important geopolitical force and international policeman.	34.52% (22 of 25)	8.84% (24 of 25)	Negative (3.47)	15.71% (18 of 25)
3 The TTIP will be realized successfully, creating a powerful transatlantic economic area.	63.96% (13 of 25)	32.26% (13 of 25)	Positive (2.34)	55.50% (1 of 25)
4 NATO's geopolitical significance will increase.	42.12% (20 of 25)	40.12% (8 of 25)	Positive (2.85)	29.84% (6 of 25)
5 The US' future energy independence will mean less involvement in the Middle East.	67.87% (10 of 25)	30.20% (14 of 25)	Positive (2.93)	8.90% (23 of 25)
6 Europe will have less influence on geopolitical decisions.	64.49% (12 of 25)	23.78% (17 of 25)	Negative (3.74)	27.94% (9 of 25)
7 Efforts to deepen and widen the European Union will make progress.	44.81% (19 of 25)	18.13% (18 of 25)	Positive (2.70)	8.82% (24 of 25)
8 Defense spending in Europe will increase again.	72.88% (6 von 25)	44.06% (6 of 25)	Positive (2.63)	17.65% (17 of 25)
9 Europe's international voice will increasingly be that of Germany.	59.05% (16 of 25)	58.14% (4 of 25)	Positive (2.62)	13.97% (19 of 25)
10 Germany will shoulder greater responsibility in the resolution of international conflicts.	68.99% (9 of 25)	42.25% (7 of 25)	Positive (2.45)	45.86% (4 of 25)
11 Russia will continue to extend its sphere of influence.	76.41% (4 of 25)	59.69% (3 of 25)	Very negative (4.17)	45.86% (3 of 25)
12 Russia will succeed in dividing the West over the Ukraine conflict.	29.02% (23 of 25)	57.01% (5 of 25)	Negative (3.75)	28.73% (8 of 25)
13 Russia and China will increasingly become strategic partners.	62.94% (14 of 25)	17.28% (19 of 25)	Negative (3.78)	24.86% (12 of 25)
14 The Ukraine conflict will lead to a new and lasting East-West confrontation.	62.44% (15 of 25)	67.06% (2 of 25)	Very negative (4.01)	27.07% (10 of 25)
15 The West will in future also provide significant military support to Ukraine.	39.64% (21 of 25)	67.94% (1 of 25)	Negative (3.12)	6.63% (25 of 25)
16 Growing domestic and economic policy challenges will temper China's geopolitical ambitions.	20.27% (25 of 25)	24.07% (16 of 25)	Positive (2.81)	11.30% (22 of 25)
17 The conflict between China and Japan in the East China Sea will escalate.	70.19% (8 of 25)	38.24% (9 of 25)	Very negative (4.05)	37.39% (5 of 25)
18 North Korea will no longer be content with propaganda and sporadic shows of force.	22.83% (24 of 25)	33.67% (12 of 25)	Negative (3.75)	13.04% (20 of 25)
19 India will play an increasingly important geopolitical role.	64.84% (11 of 25)	10.18% (23 of 25)	Positive (2.53)	23.48% (15 of 25)
20 The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) proposed by China will constitute a serious alternative to the World Bank and the IWF.	60.00% (16 of 25)	11.84% (21 of 25)	Negative (3.24)	25.22% (11 of 25)
21 The large number of current conflicts will trigger a new military build-up worldwide.	81.66% (2 of 25)	34.02% (10 of 25)	Negative (3.76)	23.81% (14 of 25)
22 More countries will obtain weapons of mass destruction.	76.25% (5 of 25)	7.43% (25 of 25)	Very negative (4.56)	29.17% (7 of 25)
23 Terrorist organizations will obtain weapons of mass destruction.	57.53% (18 of 25)	10.81% (22 of 25)	Very negative (4.50)	47.62% (2 of 25)
24 The US' waning commitment to the Middle East will lead Saudi Arabia to increasingly flex its muscles in the region.	77.67% (3 of 25)	29.73% (15 of 25)	Negative (3.54)	12.50% (21 of 25)
25 Agreement in the nuclear dispute with Iran will lead to de-escalation in the Middle East.	70.99% (7 of 25)	33.83% (11 of 25)	Positive (2.35)	20.83% (16 of 25)

## The Authors

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Prof. Dr. Burkhard Schwenker is vice chairman of the Atlantik-Brücke and leads the working group on foreign and security policy. He was a longtime CEO and Chairman of Roland Berger Strategy Consultants and today is Chairman of the Advisory Council. He works, publishes and teaches among others regarding the topics strategy, leadership and European management. He is socio-politically engaged among others in the boards of trustees of the Zeit-Foundation, of the National Academy of Science and Engineering (acatech) and of the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics. Burkhard Schwenker is married, has three children and lives in Hamburg.

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Mujib Bazhwal is a scholarship holder of the German Foundation of Integration and is mentored by Prof. Dr. Burkhard Schwenker. He studied at the California State University Fullerton and is committed at the youth organization of the German Council on Foreign Relations. As district board of the SPD youth wing he is actively involved in the local political happenings. Mujib Bazhwal is married and lives in Stuttgart.

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## Atlantik-Brücke Impulses

The Atlantik-Brücke is relating a special motivation to this format within its publications. In contrast to the usually more extensive Briefing Papers that grant the points of discussion more depth, the Atlantik-Brücke Impulses shall send as concisely as possible a signal for a debate inside and outside the Atlantik-Brücke. This signal can vary significantly. On one occasion it can be a report on a meeting of experts, on another occasion it can be a guest contribution or also a pro and con. Moreover, the appeal for a debate regarding a not yet explicitly discussed topic within the Atlantik-Brücke is as well conceivable as a series on a central theme.