

WELCHE ZUKUNFT?! (Which Future?!)

by Andres Veiel and Jutta Doberstein



Laboratory - 16 September 2017 (10 a.m. - 8 p.m)
at Deutsches Theater Berlin
(Registration to participate at welchezukunft.org)

Workshop

Geopolitics: Intersections

War an peace and who can afford it?

(this workshop will be conducted in english)

Expert: Dr. Rodger Baker (Stratfor)

Geopolitics - the politics of space - but not just. The dream of a world without borders might already be over and done with - we're back to talk of hegemonic powers, access to commercial routes, naval capacities and a world war fought in space. At Stratfor Rodger Baker advises governments, secret services and transnational corporations.

Geopolitics studies the intersection of place and organized people over time, the way they interact with one another, the way strategic cultures are shaped, and the implications for the future. In building out a future scenario, there are several elements we will look at, taking a synthetic approach blending geography, politics, economics, military, society, technology and history.

We will build off of historic trends, identify constraints and compulsions on states and nations, and identify where these trends are likely to bend, intersect or diverge.

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Hypothetical Futures

Washington is more tolerant of localized instability

The United States is shifting its global posture following well over a decade of intensive military action abroad. This re-orientation means Washington is more selective in direct intervention abroad, more tolerant of regional and localized instability, and encourages its allies and partners to take a stronger regional role.

intra-regional competition rises

The world system continues to seek a new equilibrium following the 2009 global financial crisis, which broke the structure of the previous pillars of the global system - the United States, Europe and China. Informal blocs are formed, intra-regional competition over influence rises. The Middle East and East Asia are the most intense areas of internal competition.

new bloc structures forming in Europe

The European Union continues to face the dual drives of multilateralism and nationalism (and even sub-nationalism). European dis-integration will prevail, even if the Union itself does not disappear. A central core of Europe, dominated by Germany, strengthens connectivity, while the fringes of Europe formally or informally realign. There are new bloc structures forming in Europe based on shared primary concerns, from a Poland-centered security bloc looking cautiously at Russia to a core industrial section centered on Germany to a looser affiliation of the Mediterranean states.

In China, revolution traditionally starts in the interior.

China undergoes a very difficult economic transition, from an export-oriented economy to one based on domestic consumption. This is never something done easily or quickly, and Beijing is facing increasing internal pressures as it implements national macro-economic policies that contradict provincial and local interests. The Chinese leadership faces a major challenge from its population - while more than 400 million individuals are now part of China's middle and upper class, that leaves 900 million who realize, that it will never be their turn at getting rich. In China, revolution traditionally starts in the interior.

A military confrontation, rather than a political solution.

The resolution of North Korea's nuclear crisis heads toward a military confrontation, rather than a political solution. The war in Korea quickly spreads to involve most of the large northeast Asian powers, and has tremendous humanitarian but also economic consequences. The cost of the post-war reconstruction will be massive.

Moscow creates a stronger buffer space.

The Russian leadership expands Moscow's sphere of influence and insulates Russia ahead of an expected shift in demographics on top of an economic crisis. Russia's peripheral policies, particularly along the European front, becomes more aggressive as Moscow creates a stronger buffer space. A crisis in Central Asia challenges Russian influence and Moscow's relations with Beijing.

Advanced manufacturing techniques coupled with increased economic nationalism

...drives on-shoring of industry, leaving many developing nations without the traditional path of low-end manufacturing to climb through their development stages. In parts of the world, this is exacerbated by rising population rates in

these areas. Global trade regimes move away from the multilateral and toward the bilateral, breaking down some of the broader globalized trade patterns.

Competition for access to less developed resource exporters

Advances in energy storage technologies, particularly large grid-storage solutions, trigger a new run on newer key commodities, creating competition among the developed states for access to less developed resource exporters.

Narrowing space for upward mobility exacerbates resistance to traditional policies

The narrowing space for upward mobility in developed "western" nations exacerbates social patterns and resistance to traditional policies, accelerating the turnover of fringe parties. This is particularly strong among the youth, adding to the levels of uncertainty.

Rise of robotized farming and health will allow for further opposition to immigration

Aging populations in Asia in particular are driving technologies for farming and medical services. The rise of robotized farming and health and aging care counteracts some of the declines in population, but will also allow for further opposition to immigration. Many of the technologies also have rapid dual use applicability to military activities.

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Expert:

Dr. Rodger Baker leads strategic analysis and guides the forecasting process for Stratfor, an Austin, Texas-based firm that provides globally engaged individuals and organizations with objective geopolitical intelligence and analysis that reveals the underlying significance and future implications of emerging world events. He develops custom reports for clients and frequently delivers executive briefings to investors, businesses and universities across the globe, from the National Defense University in Beijing to financial institutions in New York. He is regularly invited to participate in dialogues and panel discussions in China, Japan, Thailand, Mongolia and South Korea and often appears as an expert in major media. Stratfor was one of the first organizations to identify the growing problems with the Chinese economy, with Rodger Baker spearheading the company's assessment. Before joining Stratfor, Mr. Baker studied and worked in South Korea and graduated with honors from Southampton College, Long Island University. He also has a master's degree in military history from Norwich University, the oldest private military university in the United States.

<https://www.stratfor.com/people/189108>

Workshop moderator:

Dr. Angela Wilkinson is a leading strategic foresight and scenario planning expert, specialising in practice and scholarship of global futures thinking and design. She gives strategic advisory support to senior leaders in government, business, and civil society and many different business sectors. Wilkinson's previous positions include: Head of Strategic Foresight, OECD; Director of Futures Research and Scenarios, University of Oxford; Shell Global Business Environment ('Shell scenarios'). Currently she is Senior Director of Scenarios and Business Insights, World Energy Council www.worldenergy.org

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