

## Ongoing Postdoc Research

(Dr Tilo Wagner - Executive Summary Update - 02.02.2020)

### Superpower Reborn : Understanding China`s Geostrategic Silk Road Relations with Europe

Four decades of breath taking growth as engine for the *global economy*, China`s leaders stress the paramount need for progress and stability in the international environment to fulfill the pledge to their population to re-rise from the current position as the "leading developing country" back to pre-1800s status as *one* of the world`s major powers by **2049**.

A rather good example of geopolitical miscalculation, the US-sponsored "Arab Spring" of 2011-16 had finally failed to develop and democratize post-colonial spaces stretching from northern Africa via the Middle East to central-south Asia with traditional civilizations of Europe and China edging the huge Eurasian landmass` far-off ends. Identifying regime change and nation building concepts a complete failure, **2016** incoming US President Donald Trump - inspired by Brexit - was likely to kick-start an era of "religious nationalisms" to lick war-torn wounds at home and abroad. 100 years after the USA in **1917** had entered the global stage, turning it at times into a *perceived* unilateralist superpower, the new era is to replace the post-**1991** time which unparalleled in "liberal internationalism" had aimed to push the West`s global order dominance under US auspices after the Opec-backed implosion of the Soviet empire or Russia`s "geopolitical disaster". For the "end of history" idea, as Francis Fukuyama had proclaimed, by 2016 had rather fuelled "global radical islam" resembling Samuel Huntington`s "clash of civilizations" instead.

Facing deep divisions over *eastern* non-interference ideas (which do understand extrinsic imposition of pluralist democracy as dangerous violations of domestic laws) juxtaposed to *western* "missionizing" of universal human rights (which must be intrinsic in nature to survive and thrive), a "robotizing world" in fragile socio-economic condition is caught in between firmly competing supremacy concepts of descending "Anglo-American liberalism" and ascending "Eurasian-Pacific authoritarianism".

With some calling it the frightening return of geopolitics driven by “revisionist” powers, China had started preparing a decade *prior* to US President Georg W. Bush`s threats in **2002** to crush “axis of evil” undemocratic regimes. Linking post-9/11 counter-terrorism efforts with (back then) oil and gas interests resulted in sending US-troops into the Greater Middle East and messed up a delicate regional (Sykes-Picot **1916**) stability balance between regional powers of Sunni and Shia Islam. Yet also 2008 US-mortgage crisis ripples left “Arab Spring” without chance.

Aware of Europe`s (esp. the UK`s) “Great Game” past and of *ambitious* Transeurasian neighbors (post-2003 Iran, post-2014 Russia, post-2016 Turkey), in **2013** China revived the ancient Silk Road (Belt & Road Initiative, BRI) by establishing Grand 21<sup>st</sup> Century “win-win” trade-investment corridors which are to aid “Made in China 2025” AI revolution, too.

Aiming to gain more independence from Western cultural and economic influences and fragilities, ever since Beijing`s brilliant global diplomacy has been sponsoring its very own globalization project linking China in Asia with ASEAN, EAEU-CIS, Europe, Africa and the Americas. In an effort to overcome a omni-present trauma reaching back into the 1840s with European and Japanese powers being instrumental in semi-occupying China facilitating the end of unique but fatigued confucius empire.

With the US, meanwhile burdened by telling Presidential impeachment, practising self-isolation and “blackmail diplomacy” which life threatens very fabrics of liberal-minded regional (eg NAFTA, EU) and international stability architectures (eg UN, WTO, UNFCCC, JCPOA), the West`s rapid geopolitical decline (often driven by double standards or blunt racism - its tribal populisms longing for “Global” Weimar Republic desperation) is massively minimizing scope of what used to be the world`s dominant guidelining and policing block. As US political elite in **2020/1** is likely to continue the *grave strategic mistake* labelling China “enemy” hoping to “Americanize Beijing” via Taipei - Hong Kong, EAB *independent analysis* dedicates to cover: The Chinese Rejuvenation Dream and its support of European Integration; Europe`s options in China`s BRI and Russia`s EAEU-CIS initiative; Arctic Sino-Russian “Greater Eurasian Partnership”.