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# bulletin

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## German Arms Exports— “Strengthening instead of interference”

By Dr. Marc von Boemcken and Jan Grebe

When German Minister of Defense Thomas de Maizière coined the formula “strengthening instead of interference” he understood this as the supply of third countries with arms, even if they are situated in regions of tension and crisis. At the same time, Minister de Maizière speaks of a broadening of markets and sales opportunities for weapon systems and –technology. He literally said, “it is rather the German industry and not first and foremost the German government that has to decide whether they consider it [the arms deal] to be appropriate.”<sup>1</sup> Is this a sign for a paradigm change in German arms exports policy?

Beyond doubt, there is a desire for stability and security in many regions of the world. The Global Militarization Index (GMI) developed by BICC shows that the state military forces of many so-called fragile states are disproportionately weak and therefore hardly able to enforce their monopoly of violence. Hence, it could be argued that support in enforcing security structures is perfectly reasonable—also with respect to development policy considerations.

At the same time, there is little willingness to engage itself militarily in the international theater—as is indeed foreseen in Germany’s constitution. It may therefore be tempting to furnish states with defense equipment and war material so that these countries in turn can provide stability or even be involved in military intervention activities. Such a strategy, however, is too short-sighted and does not realize the risks involved in the export of weapons of war. A current example for this can be the possible sale of Boxer armored transport vehicles to Saudi Arabia.

This case, in particular, begs the question whether this would really increase ‘regional stability’—as stated by the German government. Only recently did BICC show in the GMI that the

Middle East remains the region in the world with the highest level of militarization. The question of ‘stability via an arms race’—also in the context of the German and European arms exports policy—urgently needs to be put on the agenda of peace and conflict research.

Weapons of war are goods with a long shelf-life and no-one can predict which regime will be in power in one or even two decades. If German technology then even assists in building up a local arms industry in the recipient countries, control will be lost in the long-term. This then will harbor the danger of changing priorities in the criteria for arms exports, which could mean that in the future, human rights issues become less important than foreign- and security policy interests.

The statement by the German Defense Minister that decisions on certain arms deals primarily should lie with the arms industry and “not first and foremost”<sup>2</sup> with the federal government”, is highly problematic as this poses the real danger of losing the ‘primacy of politics’ with regard to arms exports—laid down in the German constitution. As a matter of course, this primacy not only relates to the export of weapons of war produced in Germany but must also apply to arms technology transfers, licenses for production and the delivery of components.

This shift in priorities becomes particularly contentious against the background of the fact that the international arms market increasingly turns into a purchaser’s market on which the arms recipient determines the terms of the contract. Purchasing nations often demand a comprehensive transfer of arms technologies. German arms producers are also faced with these demands which as a consequence leads to a lot more than just the transfer of armament goods and weapons of war but to the provision of local services, training or support in establishing own production capacities in the recipient countries.

Furthermore, a debate must begin on whether the exports of seemingly ‘civilian’ surveillance and security technologies need to be subject to a stricter state control. In autocratic or repressive countries in particular, such goods are much sought after. Under human rights and peace

ethical considerations, such deliveries could have the potential of being just as problematic as the export of combat tanks and machine guns.

In view of latest developments with regard to the arms trade within Europe, a Europeanization of the arms industry, and a number of cooperation activities, it is necessary to strengthen the European arms control regime to control exports into third countries uniformly. Criteria and mechanisms for the control of arms exports do exist. Whether an arms embargo has been imposed on the recipient country, how human rights are observed, whether there are internal conflicts, the regional stability of peace and security and finally, whether there is a disproportion between military spending and development, are some of these eight criteria.

The weaknesses of an effective and restrictive arms exports control regime on the European level in particular are the different approaches regarding the implementation of the EU Common Position in the different member states and the fact that the criteria still leave far too much room for interpretation. The latest review of the European regulations was linked to the hope that the states would agree on a more uniform and binding application of the criteria. This hope has only partly materialized. It is still open how to improve and adjust the tools so that they are more effective in practice and whether they can foster a more harmonious European arms exports control regime. Arms exports policy has been and still remains the responsibility of each individual country.

<sup>1</sup> Spiegel, 26 November 2012, p. 28

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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## Staff Spotlight



Professor Dr.  
Conrad Schetter

Professor Dr. Conrad Schetter (46) started at BICC in March this year as Director for Research. In the past two decades, he has had a strong record of cooperation with many researchers at BICC and has thus become very familiar with the work of BICC even before joining the Center. Together with Michael Dedek, Director for Administration, Conrad Schetter is responsible for business development, project acquisition, and national and international cooperation. The main task ahead of Conrad Schetter is the framing of BICC's future research agenda and ensuring the quality standards of research at BICC.

Conrad Schetter studied Geography and History at the University of Bonn. He was a Researcher at the Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn from 1999 to 2013, where his most recent position was that of Acting Director of the Department for Political and Cultural Change.

The main strands of Conrad Schetter's research focus on civil wars and policy intervention. He is particularly fascinated by the dynamics at the boundaries between the civil and the military. Besides topics such as human security, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and counter-insurgency (COIN), his research concentrates on the recently developed concept of 'ungoverned spaces' and the War 2.0 (drones, cyber space, etc.).

The regional focus of Conrad Schetter's research lies on Afghanistan and Pakistan at the core, and Central Asia, South Asia and Iran in the wider realm. Conrad Schetter has always aimed at combining fundamental with applied research. This has given him many opportunities of providing advice to German ministries, Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations such as GIZ, Concern and Welthungerhilfe. He has a record of more than 200 publications, among them 10 books and over 20 peer-reviewed journal articles.

Conrad Schetter is married and has one daughter. Besides reading and gardening, his hobby is to occasionally stir up Bonn's nightlife as a DJ. As a child of the Rhineland, he has a passion for Carnival and is a big fan of the 1.FC Köln.

→ For further information, please contact  
Conrad Schetter at [schetter@bicc.de](mailto:schetter@bicc.de)

## Geospacial intelligence in EU External Actions support

**G**-SEXTANT (Service provision of geospacial intelligence in EU External Actions support) is an EU FP7 project which—within the context of the Copernicus (former GMES) Initiative—aims at consolidating a portfolio of Earth Observation products and services that support the geospacial information needs of the European External Action Service. Its main focus lies on the development of pre-operational services in the framework of pre-defined scenarios (e.g. humanitarian crisis, exploitation of natural resources), the definition of products to respond to the user's demands, and the development of a standardized product portfolio.

The G-SEXTANT project consortium under the lead of INDRA consists of 14 partners from industry, universities, research institutions, and EU organizations. The two-year project started on 1 January 2013.



Together with its partners DLR and Z\_GIS, BICC is mainly involved in developing processing chains and products that aim at the provision of conditioned geospacial information on the mining of minerals, oil exploitation, land use changes and large-scale land acquisitions:

Natural resources are sometimes exploited beyond a sustainable level, spoil natural habitats, affect people's livelihoods and even fuel armed conflicts. Large-scale land acquisitions, often labeled as 'land grabbing', tend to be highly obscure and conflictive. There is also a lack of information as to how these investments change land use practices and affect people's livelihood security in the affected areas. Precise geographic information is one necessary component for designing appropriate provisions to prevent and to respond to ongoing crises related to natural resources exploitation or large-scale land acquisitions.

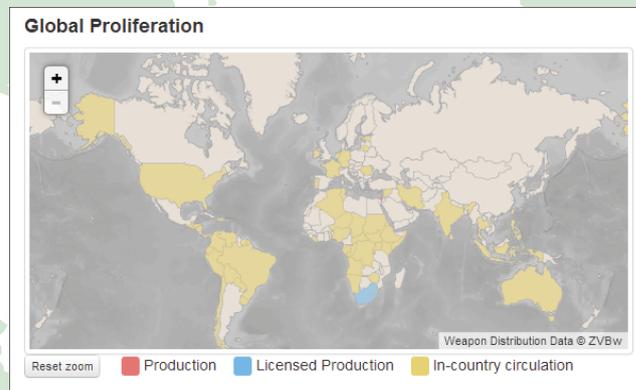
On the basis of user needs identified during the course of the project and by combining remote sensing methodologies and data with social and political sciences research methods and data, existing pre-operational services can be enhanced.

→ For further information, please contact Lars Wirkus at [wirkus@bicc.de](mailto:wirkus@bicc.de)

## Interactive guide on small arms and light weapons now online

**I**n close cooperation with the Bundeswehr Verification Center (ZVBw), BICC (Bonn International Center for Conversion) has developed an online small arms and light weapons guide. The Guide is available via <http://salw-guide.bicc.de/>. The application is based on the printed SALW Guide by the ZVBw and complements it with a WebGIS mapping component. The online SALW Guide is financially supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

The SALW Guide contains technical details on individual types of weapons, their different versions, and their proliferation. Interested parties will be able to retrieve information that could be decisive for many arms control procedures and projects, including photos of weapons, detailed photos of differentiating criteria as well as photos and sketches of the markings, used by producers and countries of origin, and their position on the weapon. The database also provides information on SALW ammunition. Besides that it answers questions such as: What types of small arms and light weapons are to be found in which countries and where are they produced?



The database has a wide range of potential uses—from helping to prepare missions involving soldiers or arms control officers in post-conflict countries to determining small weapons 'in the field' or training up-and-coming disarmament experts. The Guide is not only aimed at arms control and disarmament experts but also at supporting people in the fields of politics, research and NGOs in their efforts to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in SALW.

→ For further information, please contact Lars Wirkus at [wirkus@bicc.de](mailto:wirkus@bicc.de) or view <http://salw-guide.bicc.de/>

## Publications

**Occasional Paper VIII.** Grebe, Jan und Christoph Schwarz. 2013 „Sicherheitspolitische Implikationen maritimer Aufrüstung im asiatisch-pazifischen Raum – Australien, Japan, Südkorea und Vietnam im Fokus“. Bonn: BICC (in German)

<http://www.bicc.de/publications/publicationpage/publication/security-policy-implications-of-the-maritime-military-build-up-in-the-asia-pacific-region-focus-on/>

**Boemcken, Dr. Marc von.** 2013. *Between Security Markets and Protection Rackets* (in English). Leverkusen-Opladen: Budrich UniPress Ltd.

<http://www.bicc.de/publications/publicationpage/publication/between-security-markets-and-protection-rackets-formations-of-political-order-383/>

**BICC brief 47.** Ashkenazi, Michael et al. 2013. "MANPADS—A terrorist threat to civilian aviation?" Bonn: BICC, February.

<http://www.bicc.de/publications/publicationpage/publication/manpads-a-terrorist-threat-to-civilian-aviation-382/>

**Kahl, Marius.** 2012. "Starter Guide towards strong Arms and Ammunition Management Practices." Bonn: BICC

<http://www.bicc.de/publications/publicationpage/publication/starter-guide-towards-strong-arms-and-ammunition-management-practices-381/>

On the occasion of a business trip to Côte d'Ivoire from 3 to 8 March 2013, BICC experts exchanged ideas with the national Authority for Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (ADDR) of Côte d'Ivoire and its international collaborators on a possible cooperation project, involving technical support to ADDR in the design and implementation of its national DDR program.

→ For further information, please contact Wolf-Christian Paes at [paes@bicc.de](mailto:paes@bicc.de) Marie Müller at [mueller@bicc.de](mailto:mueller@bicc.de)

The University of Pennsylvania's Global "Go-To Think Tanks"-Report 2012 listed BICC in two categories amongst the leading think tanks worldwide. The ranking is based on an analysis of 6,603 think tanks from 182 countries. 1,100 experts from around the world, across the political spectrum and from every discipline and sector helped nominate and select public policy research centers of excellence.

Amongst others, Svenja Schulze, Minister for Innovation, Science and Research of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Professor Hans Blix, former Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Professor Ernst v. Weizsäcker, University of Freiburg and Janos Bogardi, former Director of the United Nations University, congratulated BICC on its listing in this international ranking.

→ For further information, please contact Susanne Heinke at [pr@bicc.de](mailto:pr@bicc.de)



On 21 February, BICC hosted the German event "Two years after the Arab Spring – An attempt at taking stock" at its premises.

Experts discussed the effects of the Arab Spring on the general geopolitical climate in the Middle East, putting special emphasis on US-politics. Another topic was the interests lying behind the regional militarization by arms importers and exporters. Finally, the results of the militarization on the development of Egypt and Syria were discussed.

This event was accompanied by the private viewing of a photo exhibition by BICC researcher and photographer Ahmed Khalifa who, as an eyewitness, documented the days of the Arab Spring and the Presidential elections in Egypt.

→ For further information, please contact Susanne Heinke at [pr@bicc.de](mailto:pr@bicc.de)

## BICC Notes

Professor Dr. Conrad Schetter attended the international exploratory workshop "The Afghan Crisis in Perspective: Understanding the Vectors of Social Change", which took place in Geneva on 21 and 22 March 2013. The workshop was organized by the Graduate Institute Geneva and the Swiss National Science Foundation. One of its goals was to put together a collective research proposal on the vectors of change in Afghanistan and beyond.

→ For further information, please contact Conrad Schetter at [schetter@bicc.de](mailto:schetter@bicc.de)

Jan Grebe participated in a session of "The Greens/ European Free Alliance" of the EU Parliament in Brussels on 5 March. In his presentation, he focused on current developments in the German arms exports policy and challenges for a stronger parliamentary control. He also illustrated implications of a potential change in German arms exports policy for national and European export control mechanisms.

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