

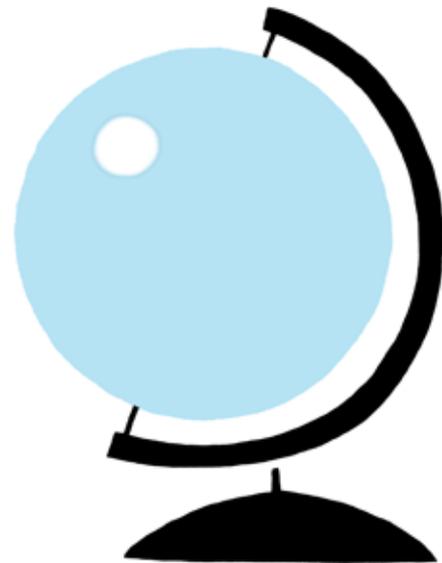


**Clingendael**

Netherlands Institute of International Relations

# The world in 2016

## Views and previews from Clingendael



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In the run-up to the New Year and the first few weeks of January, virtually every newspaper, platform, think tank and watch dog traditionally participates in the risky routine of predicting future developments. A grateful task as long as the forecasts come true, but potentially hazardous business, given the fact that world developments tend to be rather unruly. Granted: in terms of scientificity, the foundations of forecasting are debatable. Even if predictions turn out to be absolutely spot on, it may be a question of luck more than anything else. And on balance, the outcome ex post facto might be painful. The annual comparison between stock market forecasts by professional analysts or monkeys springs to mind and the idea of having to make predictions for the year to come causes many an expert stomach cramps. Why would you risk your reputation and good name by adding tea leaves and crystal balls to your intellectual instruments?

There are ethical reservations, too: doubt might arise concerning potential consequences of looking ahead. Shouldn't influential establishments be taking into account the possibility of self-fulfilling prophecies and the special responsibility such a risk involves? In some industries, after all, predictions or prognoses made by authoritative institutions lead to communicative dos and don'ts that are hardly challenged. Monetary authorities guard against the risk of a bank run the information they issue might cause. Shouting 'fire' in a crowded room could be ill-advised. Could predicting a terror attack be more than merely a scientific prognosis, but be the cause of disaster and panic as well? If that is the case, there would be nothing clever in the art of predicting.

Is it reason enough to limit or even refrain from the exercise altogether? Hardly, the ultimate rationale of an institute like Clingendael is not limited to interpreting events after they have taken place. Apart from the mild end-of-year intoxication that allows looking ahead, there is a responsible margin between prediction and conjecture that experts are granted to tread, but which is forbidden territory for wild speculators or crystal gazers. The knowledge and expertise of Clingendael staff extend to identifying trends, which – by definition – continue to develop. The ability to predict what will happen in the world may be an unattainable aim, the intellectual process of understanding world politics may well be conducted in a much more refined manner than making the rounds at the end of the year asking experts to give their opinion, Clingendael

really is a 'go-to-place' that offers added value. From super-forecasters to big data analysts, from those who take a detached, encyclopaedic approach to the insiders 'in the know', one can find a wealth of sources of wisdom and knowledge. Clingendael by no means commands all of these sources, but it is able to mobilize an above-average number of them. To avoid the chaos, understanding and looking ahead is certainly worth a try, and, according to some, even a solemn duty. In his latest work, *World Order*, Henry Kissinger writes about how the ability to understand – let alone predicts or manage – world politics is crudely organized and should be aspired to (which, in his view, has hardly become easier since the data revolution). 'Data' are not the problem nowadays – there is an endless stream of data that is readily available and can be accessed – but the information, more than ever before, is 'rarely self-explanatory'. A real bottleneck (in spite of all the technological progress) is the sharing of information – even within a relatively small and organized institute such as a government ministry or a think tank. It should also be borne in mind that data do not constitute facts, the information revolution has significantly increased the possibilities to create different 'truths'. It is a challenge to process data to be able to issue relevant information, an operation that requires a contextual and historical grasp of the facts, and according to Kissinger, even a personal relationship between researcher and source, if only in the form of consulting a book or conducting an interview (which, in the era of data that can be found on the internet and may be manipulated, is not as good as it used to be). This phase of refinement of information, at least according to Kissinger, who at the end of his book, breathes a sigh of relief: 'I now know that history's meaning is a matter to be discovered, not declared.' You might add the need to have a degree of politico-administrative affinity and awareness for the process of discovery to be developed into knowledge that may lead to predictions or influence.

Consequently, the question of whether or not Clingendael should join the recurrent prediction bonanza becomes rather a serious one, whereas making predictions really is within the regular scope of ambition of any think tank (interpretation, research relevant to governmental issues, evaluative and strategic development of scenarios, education...). the degree of certainty of the forecasted, the accuracy of phrasing and simply the scope of knowledge constitute our criteria and define the range of prediction – the lower bound being considerably above wild speculation.

More than 25 Clingendael staff members hazarded one or more predictions regarding over sixty issues, looking ahead at the year to come. They were not asked to deliver the impossible. The idea was not to make predictions that are bound to come true per se, experts were allowed to give their perspective on more uncertain trends or events that may not be ruled out beforehand. Once more, Clingendael has shown to host a pluriformity of abilities: the views that were presented are not always uniform, the diaphragm and shutter time are not necessarily the same, but after a single-handed editing effort there is nevertheless a consistent 'Clingendael view' on political developments around the world. For example: Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton might reside in the White House soon, depending on which of our experts you would consult, the electoral margins are only small. There are multiple 'futures' regarding ISIS or Assad, Afghanistan's fate (Taliban or not?), the United Kingdom (Brexit or not?), the relationship with Putin – as far as Clingendael is concerned, these issues are all closely related. That is to say: electorally, or as exits along the highway of history. The electoral margin is small, but naturally the margin of outcomes is large. You will find both. With regard to the importance of the issues on which the Clingendael staff members give their opinions, views are generally in agreement. Geopolitics is (not quite) back, so the rising countries (China), the countries that are falling behind (Russia), the crumbling regions (Middle East) and struggling blocs (EU) are all extensively represented. We see wide-ranging global issues (maintaining order, climate, security/terrorism, refugees, technology, cyberspace) on the agenda, but the narrower Dutch perspective (EU presidency, our contribution to peacekeeping and conflict management, our position towards neighbouring countries, including Venezuela) is also considered. (It is notable that our candidacy for a seat in the UN Security Council and its accompanying expectations are not mentioned.)

To do justice to the pluriformity, this editing effort has not resulted in the preparation of a homogenous mixture with no recognizable identity. Rather, it has been limited to the occasional subdivision and arrangement of separate contributions and the addition of some introductory paragraphs.

## World order and geodiversity

The world is in confusion. The simplest diagnosis is that the relative stability of the previous multilateral order is giving way to the instability of neo-multipolar order. But is there any order left at all, even if it is governed by power? That is too gloomy a view; it is only the division of decay and coherence, of engagement and disengagement that is different. Geopolitics is not back entirely – as a matter of fact, it was never entirely gone. Territory and natural resources have always been important, but it is access to resources that is key in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, rather than possession. Access to global public goods, such as protection, prosperity and care, afford legitimacy to “world politics”. The realization that access to these goods cannot be gained locally and through power hunger, but should rather be sought in a more global, cooperative context, is by no means gone. This creates modern security issues, or perhaps a more adequate term would be insurance issues. Not that these issues will not be competitive or discordant. Controlling markets, technology and thinking are part of the issue, and the control of the means to achieve these can be competitive, even discordant, but the interests are not purely territorial or physical, nor organized merely nationally and in terms of jostling for power.

There is, however, the threat of a system crisis: the lego bricks of world politics – the nations, western values, rules and treaties – are no longer self-evident, and different realities impede a single shared perspective with regard to conflict solutions. The worlds of governed and ungoverned spaces, of territorial and virtual groups, of communities with shared interests or values, of emerging and declining entities, offer a geodiversity that also presents new opportunities for surprising coalitions, as well as innovative solutions to conflicts considered to be unmanageable. *(Ko Colijn)*

## World (put in) order

Donald Trump, as the Republican presidential candidate, announces during the Rio Olympics that, if elected president, he would form a new Global Stability Force with willing NATO partners, Russia’s Vladimir Putin and Egypt’s al-Sisi, ready to deploy sizeable ground forces in conflict-hit or troublesome areas to restore “order.” Marine Le Pen promises to join if elected French president in 2017. The US election, between Trump and Clinton, is a cliffhanger. *(Ivan Briscoe)*

## US presidential elections

Master populist Trump will face serious competition by establishment candidates such as Rubio and Bush, who promise a swift annihilation of ISIS. After she beats Sanders in March, Democratic candidate Clinton will also start to use bolder language. As the future commander-in-chief, she will frequently have to show she means business. The War on Terror is back. But as Obama – still president – concludes: on 31 December 2016, there is yet no ground war in the US. After the Big Clash between red and blue America, Hillary Clinton will be president-elect. *(Willem Post)*

Trump will be elected president.  
*(Jair van der Lijn)*

## EU internally

### Will the UK remain in the EU?

Yes – Few promises will be made to the British, but in the end they will nevertheless elect to continue their EU membership. It will make little difference to have them in the EU but on the fence, always in two minds about their membership, or out of the EU and constantly being (or wanting to be) involved in EU policy. *(Adriaan Schout)*

Yes – Despite frantic attempts by Boris Johnson and his allies, a narrow majority of the British will vote to stay in the EU. The City of London campaign will do more damage than good to the pro-EU-campaign, but a majority of Brits will realize that the EU most certainly has a few things to offer. Despite Cameron's letter to Tusk not being taken seriously before, Cameron will eventually secure a better deal than expected, and the EU member states will prove to be (somewhat) more lenient than anticipated. *(Sander Streefkerk)*

Draw – The British in-out EU referendum will end in an exact 50-50 draw. The 'out' supporters will demand a recount of the votes; the 'in' supporters will refuse. David Cameron proposes to hold a referendum in 2017 on the question whether or not to hold a new EU referendum in 2018. *(Ko Colijn)*

No – The U.K. will vote, narrowly, to leave the EU. Scots will demand referendum to leave UK and stay in EU. Departure of UK unbalances Franco-German relationship. Rump little England sinks in relevance. France asserts itself in EU foreign policy as security challenges dominate. *(Shaun Riordan)*

### **East-West clash**

It turns out that the new Polish government does not take the slightest notice of Washington and Brussels' disapproval of what many consider to be a constitutional coup. Subsequently, NATO decides to cancel the planned summit in Warsaw in July 2016. The European Commission files a formal complaint and threatens to impose sanctions. However, the European Council are unable to come to an agreement. Moscow and Budapest look on in malicious delight while the government leaders once again fail to make a common stand for European values. Poland threatens to follow in Hungary's footsteps. However, the European Parliament slams on the emergency brakes and starts up the article 7-procedure which allows for the suspension of a member state's voting rights. *(Jan Marinus Wiersma)*

Eastern European countries continue to display different dynamics from Western European countries, because they have not experienced the development of – and discussion about – the multicultural society. Despite challenging Europe's patience, their desire to join the EU remains, if only because their faith in European politics outweighs their faith in their own political structures and figures. *(Adriaan Schout)*

Although the Dutch EU presidency seems ill-fated on the outset, it will run a relatively smooth course as both Germany and the European Commission more or less share the Dutch preferences with regard to many of the issues, such as the approach to the refugee crisis. *(Adriaan Schout)*

### **North-South Clash**

In the coming year, the media will be recounting many more stories of 'too little too late' (with regard to banking resolutions and the approach to the steady stream of refugees, among other things). Nevertheless, the European policy machine will continue to run, so that it will be concluded in hindsight that the EU is capable of containing large problems in a relatively short time, just as national problems are being contained. *(Adriaan Schout)*

France will receive another warning from the European Semester, despite French politicians repeatedly stating the extent of their reforms. Banks in Italy and Portugal will be restructured, but not to a sufficient degree. *(Adriaan Schout)*

Draghi will continue his quantitative easing measures. For the Netherlands, this has the advantage that Draghi will have to push for national reform in order to make amends. All in all, this makes for a balanced ECB policy that combines quantitative easing with enforcing overdue structural measures. *(Adriaan Schout)*

### **South-East Clash**

In a year's time, Malta will blow up a refugee quota proposal submitted by the Slovak EU presidency for ostensibly allocating too many resources to the eastern member states. *(Mariska Heijs)*

## Enlargement

2016 will not be the year of European enlargement, but it will be the year in which preparations for enlargement are continued. *(Adriaan Schout)*

## EU externally

Lebanon is no longer able to handle the refugee crisis and the Syrian-Iraqi civil war threatens to spill over into Lebanon. Expectantly, the world looks to the European Union. As its president, the Netherlands is now expected to take up an active, leading role. *(Bas ter Haar)*

In late June, a Northern African Union will be established on the initiative of the Dutch EU presidency (by mutual agreement with Germany and France, of course), which will enter into a so-called AssociationPlus Agreement with Brussels. In the second half of the year, parties will agree on far-reaching resolutions with regard to trade, investments, migration, refugee take-in, intelligence, posting of lightly armed stabilization units in hotspots, training of police and military, etc. The Euro-Maghreb Agency that is to enforce the agreement will be established in The Hague after intense lobbying by mayor Jozias van Aartsen. *(Lo Castelijn)*

## Russia – Ukraine – Baltic States (near and less near) abroad

### GeenPeil-referendum

On April 6, 51% per cent of the Dutch will vote against the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine in the Geen-Peil-referendum. Putin praises the outcome, referring to the successful Dutch revolt led by William of Orange against the Spanish-Habsburg rule in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. *(Dick Zandee)*

The Dutch referendum on Ukraine will not be a determining factor. Even if the Dutch say 'no', the treaty between the EU and Ukraine will temporarily remain in place until the time is right for some light renegotiation

and a swift signing by the Netherlands. *(Adriaan Schout)*

In the referendum on the Association Agreement with Ukraine, 15% of voters will vote in favour, and 17% of voters will vote against, constituting more than the 30% required for the referendum to be valid. The government will feel obliged to try and reverse the agreement, even if this is playing into Putin's hands. This puts the Netherlands in a very difficult position as EU president. *(Bas ter Haar)*

### Near abroad

Abkhazia and South Ossetia are accepted into the Russian Federation as autonomous republics. *(Paul Meerts)*

In November, Estonia is caught off-guard by the appearance of hundreds of activists dressed in green, who put up road blocks and checkpoints assisted by Russian-speaking Estonians. Moscow denies any involvement, but the entire West is in a state of uproar. The NATO Spearhead Force is deployed. In the Netherlands, the sixth Colijn government, which took office during summer, decides to re-activate conscription. *(Lo Casteleijn)*



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The Donbas region will become independent in 2016, but under Russian influence. *(Kees Homan)*

An unintentional border incident concerning the Baltic States will lead to renewed tensions between NATO and Russia. A conflict is prevented, but the incident provides a boost to the EU defence cooperation. The military tensions that rise near the southern and eastern borders finally lead to a breakthrough. *(Adriaan Zondag)*

### Less near abroad

In 2016, the three South Kuril Islands will be leased out to Japan for nothing. In exchange, Japan will make large-scale investments in Siberian infrastructure. *(Paul Meerts)*

## China and environs

### China's economic power

In January, Greece will announce that the Chinese state-owned company COSCO is to take a majority interest in the Piraeus Port Authority. Later in the year, majority interests in the Thessaloniki Port Authority and the Hellenic Railways Organization will be sold to APM Terminals and a Romanian-American corporation respectively. *(Frans-Paul van der Putten)*

By December at the latest, the EU will grant China the coveted World Trade Organization market economy status, albeit under certain conditions (including conditions with regard to the steel industry). China will object to the conditionality while flaunting its symbolic victory. Beijing immediately adds that now is the time to start negotiations about an EU-China free trade agreement. Washington and Tokyo will express their concerns about what they consider to be another overly accommodating step by the Europeans towards China. These concerns are enhanced by the fact that very little progress has been made this year on the subject of the intended 'trilateral' between Washington, Tokyo and Europe that is to secure their joint position as standard-setters for the next generation of trade agreements. Because although the negotiations between the EU and Japan have indeed been successful, a breakthrough in the controversial Trans-Atlantic side of the

triangle (TTIP) has as yet failed to materialize. *(Maaïke Okano-Heijmans)*

The first projects of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) are unfolding in Southeast Asia. These are welcomed by AIIB member countries as proof of the high labour and environmental standards and conditions that apply to AIIB-projects, however, non-governmental organizations and several interest groups remain sceptical. In the meantime, Euro-member countries and Brussels are more concerned with what they covertly believe to be the AIIB's most significant test: the joint representation of Euro countries on the board of this international organization. By trial and error, lessons are learnt for the joint representation in the IMF that is to follow in a decade. *(Maaïke Okano-Heijmans)*

### From conflict...

In January, Tsai Ing-wen will win the Taiwanese presidential elections. Under her leadership, Taiwan and Japan will strengthen their (non-diplomatic) ties considerably. China is worried, but is unable to stop this process. *(Frans Paul van der Putten)*

### ... to cooperation in East Asia

For some years China, Japan and South-Korea have been on collision course. We have become familiar with stories about these states living in a world obsessed by non-interference in one another's affairs, maritime conflicts about demarcation zones, sovereignty disputes and contested versions of 20th century history interfering with the present. East Asian political leaders are about to turn the page. If North Korea is not going to fall to pieces and put centripetal forces to the test, 2016 will see a change. In theory, East Asia may still be the region with the greatest chance of an outbreak of traditional inter-state conflict. In reality, East Asian governments are determined to back up their economic success story with their own form of détente, creating a way out of East Asia's cold war. They see a historic opportunity for Asia. The 2015 trilateral summit between Li (China), Abe (Japan) and Park (South Korea) and the bilateral meeting between Xi (China) and Ma (Taiwan) in the same year – and a first in 66 years – should have persuaded skeptics: these governments

are about to grasp a major opportunity. In geopolitical terms, Kim Jong-un is reminding East Asians of the stakes and he is doing a good job in promoting glacial movement towards a regional security identity.

*(Jan Melissen)*

## India – Pakistan

In the spring, a border incident between India and Pakistan rapidly escalates and, accompanied by much war rhetoric, both countries concentrate large numbers of armed forces on the border. Pakistan threatens to deploy (tactical) nuclear weapons, India states that it will strongly retaliate against such attacks. Only after the US swiftly intervenes and exerts severe pressure do both countries calm down somewhat. *(Sico van der Meer)*

## Syria – ISIS

### Syria – light at the end of the tunnel

With regard to the conflict in Syria, there finally seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel. ISIS will lose (see below) more territory and its command is weakened by bombings and precision attacks. International cooperation results in a dialogue in Syria, facilitated from above, that seems to clear the way for new elections and a possible suspension of hostilities between several parties in the conflict. *(Adriaan Zondag)*

Syria: The UN/Russian peace plan for Syria will be further developed. However, once more the opposition will remain hopelessly divided. As a result, some armed groups such as Ahrar al-Sham and Jaish al-Illsam will choose not to participate, or will be branded terrorist organizations by Russia/Assad/Iran (causing the opposition as a whole to lose legitimacy). Nevertheless, the UN (peace) train will continue to hurtle forward, aided by the Vienna Process-countries, although not everyone will be on board and the war will drag on in large areas of the country. No matter what, Assad will remain in power while the peace plan is put in place. *(Hans Wurzer)*



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Assad will cease to be president of Syria in 2016. *(Kees Homan)*

### ISIS loses...

On May 8, Raqqa will fall after a coordinated attack by the Syrian Kurds, supported by American Special Forces and Assad's army assisted by Russian attack helicopters. The Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) concludes that Dutch participation in air support is now definitely no longer necessary. *(Dick Zandee)*

The city of Mosul will be militarily liberated from Daesh, but Islamic State forces will continue to occupy surrounding towns and harass Iraqi government forces. The Abadi government will neither be able to enact meaningful reforms nor reassert meaningful government control in retaken towns. *(Nick Grinstead)*

### ... but isn't beaten

With ISIS largely rolled up in Iraq and Syria, most foreign fighters are returning to Europe as well. They are too numerous for adequate monitoring and they cannot all be arrested, so that there are quite a few ticking time bombs out there. Now that terrorist attacks are taking place almost every month – including new attacks in Paris, but also in Amsterdam, Stockholm, Brussels and Berlin – fear is truly starting to take hold. *(Jair van der Lijn)*

In March, an offensive digital operation by the French secret service against ISIS gets out of control. The tables are turned and the attack rebounds, resulting in serious consequences for the French government's digital systems, and cascade effects throughout Europe. The risks of the "backfiring cyber attack" dominate the agenda. *(Lo Casteleijn)*

In 2016, ISIS is put under more and more pressure in Syria and Iraq as a result of better international military cooperation and negotiations about Syria's future. In the meantime, it is becoming ever clearer that Iraq is moving toward a break-up. As a result of the pressure on ISIS in Syria and Iraq, the organization shifts its focus to other areas. The Caucasus and Bangladesh in particular turn out to be fruitful areas for establishing ISIS. (See also: Terrorism) *(Bibi van Ginkel)*

Afraid of ISIS fanning out, Russia enters into an alliance with the Taliban in an attempt to prevent ISIS using Afghanistan as a transit area or base of operations. From Bangladesh, where random targets are being hit by smaller terrorist attacks with increasing frequency, ISIS prepares a major attack on India. *(Bibi van Ginkel)*

Trump will be the next president of the US, Wilders will be prime minister of the Netherlands, and Le Pen is practically a certainty for the French presidency... With these new leaders and a common enemy, relations between the West and Russia appear to be improving. *(Jair van der Lijn)*

A longer-term ceasefire in Yemen will be signed in the first half of the year, with a de facto partition of the country running through or around the city of Taiz. The security vacuum in Aden, Mukalla and other places mostly in the south of the country will worsen with AQAP and ISIS taking advantage of the void. *(Nick Grinstead)*

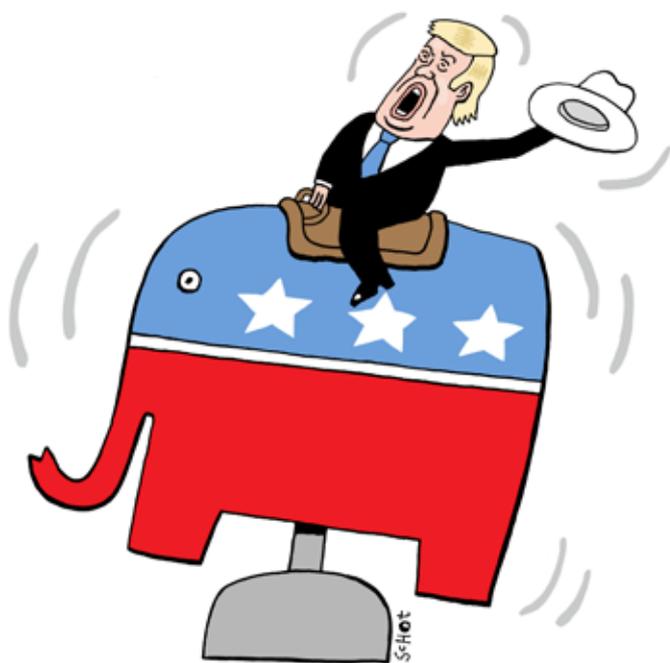
## Turkey

Azerbaijan, facing economic crisis at home and egged on by Turkey seeking proxy war with Russia, will launch military operations to retake Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia will seek support from Russia and Iran, opening new front in Syria conflict. *(Shaun Riordan)*

Tighter US monetary policy will trigger economic crisis in Turkey. Combined with regional refugee crisis and conflict with the Kurds, it will cause break down of law and order, provoking further government repression. Erdogan will look for external distraction (see above). *(Shaun Riordan)*

## Arabian peninsula

After the death of Sultan Qaboos of Ibadi-Shiite Oman, a group of young family members assume power, which immediately leads to further escalation of the friction between the Sultanate and the Royal House of Saudi Arabia that started in 2015. The new Omani government sides with the Shiite opposition in eastern Saudi Arabia, resulting in an increase of the opposition's power. In Bahrain, the Emir is ousted; serious riots arise in Saudi Arabia, followed by a full-blown revolt. With that, the Arab Spring reaches Saudi Arabia at last, and oil prices soar. With 'private' support from Saudi Arabia cut off, ISIS runs into serious difficulties. (See also: Oil geo) *(Paul Meerts)*



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## Afghanistan

Under pressure of expanding extremism and the increasing presence of ISIS, Afghanistan's National Unity Government will be forced to enter into a peace agreement with the Taliban in late 2016, resulting in an amendment of the constitution. The agreement is supported by Pakistan, but is strongly criticized by the US, Europe, Iran and NATO. *(Jorrit Kamminga)*

In October, Taliban fighters occupy the centre of Kabul. The US reconsider their decision to withdraw their last troops from Afghanistan – indeed, president Obama considers sending military reinforcements to Afghanistan, despite leaving office in January 2017 (he will be succeeded by Hillary Clinton). *(Ko Colijn)*

## Africa

After the collapse of the South Sudan government, the situation escalates and multiple genocides simultaneously take place in the country. The international community is at its wit's end and can do nothing but look on as the disaster unfolds. At the same time, the UN Security Council is still divided on the best way to deal with the genocide in Burundi. Because the African Union realizes that the planned intervention of the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi with only 5,000 troops will have little effect, it decides not to take action at all. Despite these black pages, confidence in the capabilities of the UN Security Council remains more or less intact. After all, great progress is being made in Syria! *(Jair van der Lijn)*

In West Africa, Boko Haram is further expanding its area of influence. Attacks in Niger, Cameroon and Benin include Westerners among their victims. Boko Haram enters into a rivalry with ISIS. *(Bibi van Ginkel)*

## Cyber

In autumn, the world will be introduced to the first successful cyberterrorist attack with fatalities when Seattle-Tacoma International Airport's air traffic control is hacked. Terrorists manipulate the data shown on the air traffic controllers' screens so that they give incorrect instructions, causing two aeroplanes to collide and crash. The cyber attack is claimed by an unknown group demanding the withdrawal of American forces from the Middle East. *(Sico van der Meer)*

Foreign policy and diplomatic communities are catching up in the field of cyber security: what does cyber imply for diplomacy and foreign policies? The debates in the context of cyber and cyber diplomacy focus primarily on the use of cyber infrastructure, managing threats, opportunities in the cyber domain and effective governance in the cyber domain. Debates will go more dominantly beyond the realms of the technical spheres and include more matters of geo-strategic interest, norms and values and power balances. *(Ron Ton)*

## Refugees

Lebanon can no longer handle the increasing stream of refugees. The EU is expected to intervene. *(Bas ter Haar)*

Refugee quota: The Netherlands does not manage to get anything done during its presidency. In December, Slovakia submits a new proposal for asylum policy reform. Refugee quota are established, but only voluntarily – member states decide on the number of refugees themselves. Border patrol on both Europe's external and internal borders is increased (even more), and a financial proposal for hosting refugees in East Africa is submitted. Malta blows up the proposal in January 2017 as it would ostensibly allocate too many resources to the eastern member states. *(Mariska Heijs)*

## Oil geo

Gulf: 2016 will see the end of the period of aggressive foreign policy by the Gulf states (led by Saudi Arabia). Low oil prices, large budget deficits and failing policies in countries such as Syria and Yemen (“the forgotten war”) will lead to both internal and external pressure on the ruling elites to change their policies. Saudi king Salman will die, leading to disagreements over who will succeed him. Relations between the West and Iran will improve as a side effect of the nuclear deal. *(Hans Wurzer)*

The oil price will remain below the generally accepted planning norm of \$75 a barrel. Lacking a market superintendent, further cost reductions by oil companies and oil producing countries’ budget deficits will continue to dominate the headlines. Price recovery will not be truly possible until the international oil market gets rid of its surplus. As a result of internal economic reform, oil producing countries involved in the conflicts in the Middle East and Eurasia manage to maintain their geopolitical clout. *(Coby van der Linde)*

## Climate

At the COP 22 conference in Marrakech, the Paris Climate Agreement turns out to be too good to be true. Countries are not implementing any measures to meet their own climate goals. In the EU, Poland obstructs the conversion of the 40% reduction goal into firm policy. *(Louise van Schaik)*

European Delta project: In January, floods in England remain the order of the day. In March, three major floods occur in countries on the Rhine and Danube rivers. As it turns out, the rivers of Europe are much less capable of withstanding large amounts of precipitation than previously assumed. The announcement of a European Delta Project concludes the Dutch EU presidency, England joins in. *(Mariska Heijns)*



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Blue economy will emerge more predominantly in the international debate on economic development and sustainability. The Blue Economy combining maritime economy, sea resource management and the green economy, goes beyond traditional approaches by encouraging us to respond to basic needs with what we have, to introduce innovations inspired by nature and invest less, and to generate multiple benefits – including jobs and social capital. *(Ron Ton)*

## Global Governance – Global Public Goods – Diplomacy

The new strategies with regard to EU foreign and aid policies that are accepted in 2016 will lead to a debate about the UN’s purpose and necessity. Aren’t there too many international organizations? Are these organizations efficient and effective? Should the EU establish alternatives, the way China does, and reduce its financial contributions to a number of organizations? The International Refugee Organization especially comes under heavy criticism. *(Louise van Schaik)*

Attention for negotiation skills in conflict resolution will increase in 2016. Negotiations for peace and reconciliation are extremely complex, difficult and demanding as we witness for example in the cases of Syria, Libya, Ukraine or Colombia. Mediators and

parties in conflict will realize to be more effective due to professional negotiations skills trained at different levels of substance, process, procedures and behaviour.

*(Ron Ton)*

## Latin America

The situation in a number of Latin American countries is getting out of hand. As a result of low oil prices and the changing of the guard, the situation in Venezuela escalates. Maduro, who succeeded the charismatic Hugo Chávez, was never truly running the show – but now it turns out that he does not even have control over his own supporters, including the Bolivarian Militia. They will not quietly acquiesce to a transfer of power and will put up resistance in many ways, including armed resistance. The liberal bloc is unable to withstand this, and will start to show some cracks – if it has not collapsed completely as a result of internal strife.

(Probably less consequential, but worth keeping an eye on: the situation in Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador.) *(Sander Streefkerk)*

The run-up to the UN Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) is profoundly affected by the fall-out of a new crisis in Venezuela, where street protests and political violence have raged following a string of judicial and congressional probes into the links between leading lights in the regime and drug trafficking. News that the president and allies have fled the country prompts a proposal from Latin America to decriminalize and regulate the global cocaine industry, and extract a tax from final sales for use as development aid. The EU say it will agree if the money is used to stem the migration flow from Syria and Africa. *(Ivan Briscoe)*

## Terrorism – ISIS

An attack by ISIS-followers on a church in Bosnia or Austria leads to further polarization of European society. Right-wing extremist organizations in Europe rekindle their bonds and both the severity and frequency of attacks on refugee centres increase, as do serious threats against government officials.

*(Bibi van Ginkel)*

Terrorist attackers start targeting government leaders in addition to civilians. A Pegida-supporter and ex-serviceman hurls a hand grenade into a mosque during a working visit by Angela Merkel (who will receive the Nobel Peace Prize in late 2016).

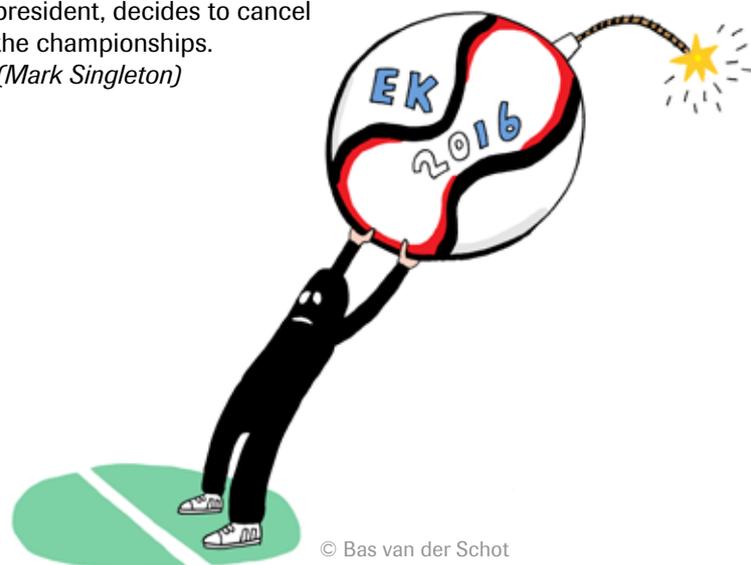
*(Mark Singleton)*

As a result of the pressure on ISIS in Syria and Iraq, the organization shifts its focus to other areas. The Caucasus and Bangladesh in particular turn out to be fruitful areas for establishing ISIS. From Bangladesh, where random targets are being hit by smaller terrorist attacks with increasing frequency, ISIS prepares a major attack on India.

*(Bibi van Ginkel)*

5 June 2016: Less than a week before the start of the Euro 2016 football championships, Paris is startled by yet another multiple terrorist attack. The bus taking the players of the French national team to their training complex is one of the targets. ISIS claims responsibility and threatens to carry out more attacks over the course of the tournament. Michael van Praag, the new UEFA president, decides to cancel the championships.

*(Mark Singleton)*



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## About Clingendael

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' is a platform whose aim is to enhance knowledge and understanding of international relations. The Institute tries to achieve these goals by conducting research, developing training programmes and providing information. Among other things, the Institute publishes research, issues the digital *'Internationale spectator'* and offers a wide range of courses and conferences.

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