

Interdisciplinary conference organised by the Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung (BKHS)

## **From the “workshop of the world” to “systemic rival”? International Perspectives on a Global China**

*Thu 30 – Fri 31 March, 2023*

*Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Germany*

In 2019, the EU agreed on a common position on the People's Republic of China (PRC). It is considered as a partner, a competitor and “systemic rival”. Russia's war in Ukraine, however, has created new realities and is testing relations with the PRC in many regions of the world. “Global economic powerhouse”, “equal partner”, “global investor”, “aggressor”, “strategic rival” or “force for peace” - these are just some of the competing buzzwords currently dominating discussions about China or propagated by the country itself.

Helmut Schmidt was deeply impressed by China's development throughout his life. Good relations with the PRC were sometimes more important to him than a German foreign policy that demanded respect for human rights without any compromises. With this attitude, Schmidt continued to influence the perception of China in Germany even after his term as Federal Chancellor. Such narratives shape our ideas and discussions. They can influence interests that are followed by (economic) political actions or serve political actors as rhetorical and strategic instruments of persuasion in political decision-making processes.

This international and interdisciplinary conference brings together renowned China experts from politics, academia, business and media to analyse the changing narratives on China in different regions of the world and to discuss their political implications: Which actors shape the view of China, what are their driving motives and to what extent do they reflect reality? Do the different narratives facilitate international cooperation or do their discrepancies hinder international partnerships? In five panels, we will focus on the differences and similarities of the regional narratives on China in Europe, Africa, Asia and the United States.

We are proud to cooperate with some of the most renowned institutions in the field: Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS), Africa Policy Research Institute (APRI), European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and the Wilson Center's Kissinger Institute on China and the United States (KICUS).



## Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (speakers only)

### 17:00 GUIDED TOUR OF FORMER HISTORIC CHINA TOWN HAMBURG

With **Dr. Lars Amenda**, Historian

### 19:00 DINNER WITH FIRESIDE CHAT STLYE DISCUSSION

With **Felix Lee**, Journalist and Book Author, China.Table

### 21:00 END OF DAY

## Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### 9:00 WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**Elisabeth Winter**, Programme Director Global Markets and Social Justice, Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung (BKHS)

**Hendrik Heetlage**, Research Assistant, Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung (BKHS)

In retrospect: A short review on Helmut Schmidt's view on China

**Dr. Martin Albers**, Historian, City of Hamburg

### 10:00 THE EVOLUTION OF GERMAN NARRATIVES ON CHINA

*In cooperation with the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)*

For decades (West-)Germany benefited from China's rapid economic growth and participated willingly in knowledge-exchange. Now the tide seems to have been turned; what are the political and economic motivations or conditions for the changing China narratives in Germany? Confronted with an intensifying great power confrontation; what are the chances for a new German policy on China now that Germany is implementing its first ever China Strategy?

Speakers:

**Dr. Sabine Stricker-Kellerer**, Lawyer; Consultant; Arbitrator of the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC); Chairwoman of the Foreign Trade Advisory Council of the Federal Minister of Economics and Technology

**Reinhard Bütikofer**, Member of the European Parliament (GREENS/EFA)

**Dr. Jing Bartz**, Author and Cultural Manager

**Dr. Martin Thümmel**, Director for East Asia, Southeast Asia and Pacific, German Federal Foreign Office

Chair: **Bernhard Bartsch**, Director External Relations, Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)

### 11:30 LUNCH BREAK & NETWORKING

**13:00 US NARRATIVES ON CHINA**

*In cooperation with the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States (KICUS)*

Fifty years ago, only Nixon could go to China and what followed was the integration of the People's Republic of China into the world economy and global institutions. How have China narratives in the United States changed between rapprochement and "decoupling"? What impact does economic policy have, particularly the "China shock" and US trade policy? How is China's increasing influence on international organisations and the formation of its own international institutions being perceived in the US?

Speakers:

**Robert Daly**, Director, Kissinger Institute on China and the United States, The Wilson Center

**Dr. Brendan Mulvaney**, Director, China Aerospace Studies Institute

**Nathaniel Ahrens**, Executive Director, American Mandarin Society

**Rui Zhong**, Programme Associate, Kissinger Institute on China and the United States, The Wilson Center

**Dr. Sophie Richardson**, China Director, Human Rights Watch

Moderator: **Elisabeth Winter**, Programme Director Global Markets and Social Justice, Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung (BKHS)

**14:30 COFFEE BREAK & NETWORKING**

**15:30 CHINA AS A SECURITY POLICY ACTOR IN ASIA**

*In cooperation with the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)*

An increasing economic and military influence is experienced by PRC's neighbours, while disputes in territorial questions as in the East China Sea are coming to a head. How does China's approach to regional security in Asia shape China narratives in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Indonesia or India?

Speakers:

**Dr. Manjeet Pardesi**, Associate professor of International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

**Prof. Shin Kawashima**, Professor, Department of International Relations, the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, University of Tokyo

**Esther Song**, PhD Research Fellow, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg

**Dr. Evan Abelard Laksmna**, Senior Research Fellow, Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

Chair: **Dr. Julia Strasheim**, Deputy Managing Director and Programme Director European and International Politics, Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung (BKHS)

Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Patrick Köllner**, Vice President, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA); Director, GIGA Institute for Asian Studies; Professor, University of Hamburg

**17:00 BREAK & NETWORKING**

**18:30 DISCUSSION ON HAMBURG, CHINA AND THE POLITICS OF GLOBALISATION**

Please note: this is a public event NOT held under Chatham House Rule!

In 2022, the discussion about “the West's” economic dependence on China and its recognition as a political threat has intensified. The city of Hamburg and its port – the third largest port in Europe – are at the centre of this debate in Germany and Europe. What is the connecting role of port cities as critical infrastructures and the impact of an economically assertive China in today's reorganisation of globalisation?

Speakers:

**Noah Barkin**, Managing Editor, Rhodium Group & Visiting Senior Fellow, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)

Moderator: **Elisabeth Winter**, Programme Director Global Markets and Social Justice, Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung (BKHS)

This event is followed by a reception.

**21:00 END OF DAY**

**Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

**9:00 CHINA NARRATIVES IN AFRICA**

*In cooperation with the Africa Policy Research Institute (APRI)*

China's growing influence in Africa seems to be a threat to Europe and the West, it is often framed as a threat to the whole continent. But what are Africa's China narratives? How does Chinese foreign policy, such as the “New Silk Road” project, impact the history and current situation in African states? How are China's external development commitments, including within the United Nations, perceived?

Speakers:

**Dr. Cobus van Staden**, Senior Research Affiliate, South African Institute of International Affairs; Managing Editor, China-Africa Project, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Yunnan Chen**, Research Officer, Development and Public Finance Programme, Overseas Development Initiative, London, United Kingdom

**Dr. Lina Benabdallah**, Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Affairs, Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, North Carolina, USA

**Dr. Yu-Shan Wu**, Research Fellow, Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Chair: **Dr. Olumide Abimbola**, Executive Director, Africa Policy Research Institute (APRI)

Discussant: **Dr. Folashade Soule-Kohndou**, Senior Research Associate, Global Economic Governance Programme, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford

**10:30 COFFEE BREAK & NETWORKING**

**11:30 A DEBATE ON CHANGING CHINA NARRATIVES IN EUROPE**

*In cooperation with the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)*

Europe needs to find its position and a new strategy in the intensifying global power competition. What are the implications for EU-members in Eastern and Western Europe? Are there differences and contrasts? Which China narratives dominate the discourses in EU institutions and EU member states? And how does Germany position itself?

Speakers:

**Dr. Miguel Otero Iglesias**, Senior Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute and Professor, IE School of Global and Public Affairs (IEGPA)

**Dr. Justyna Szczudlik**, Deputy Head of Research, China Analyst, Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM)

Moderator: **Dr. Janka Oertel**, Director Asia Programme, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)

**13:00 LUNCHEON WITH CLOSING REMARKS**

**14:30 END OF EVENT**