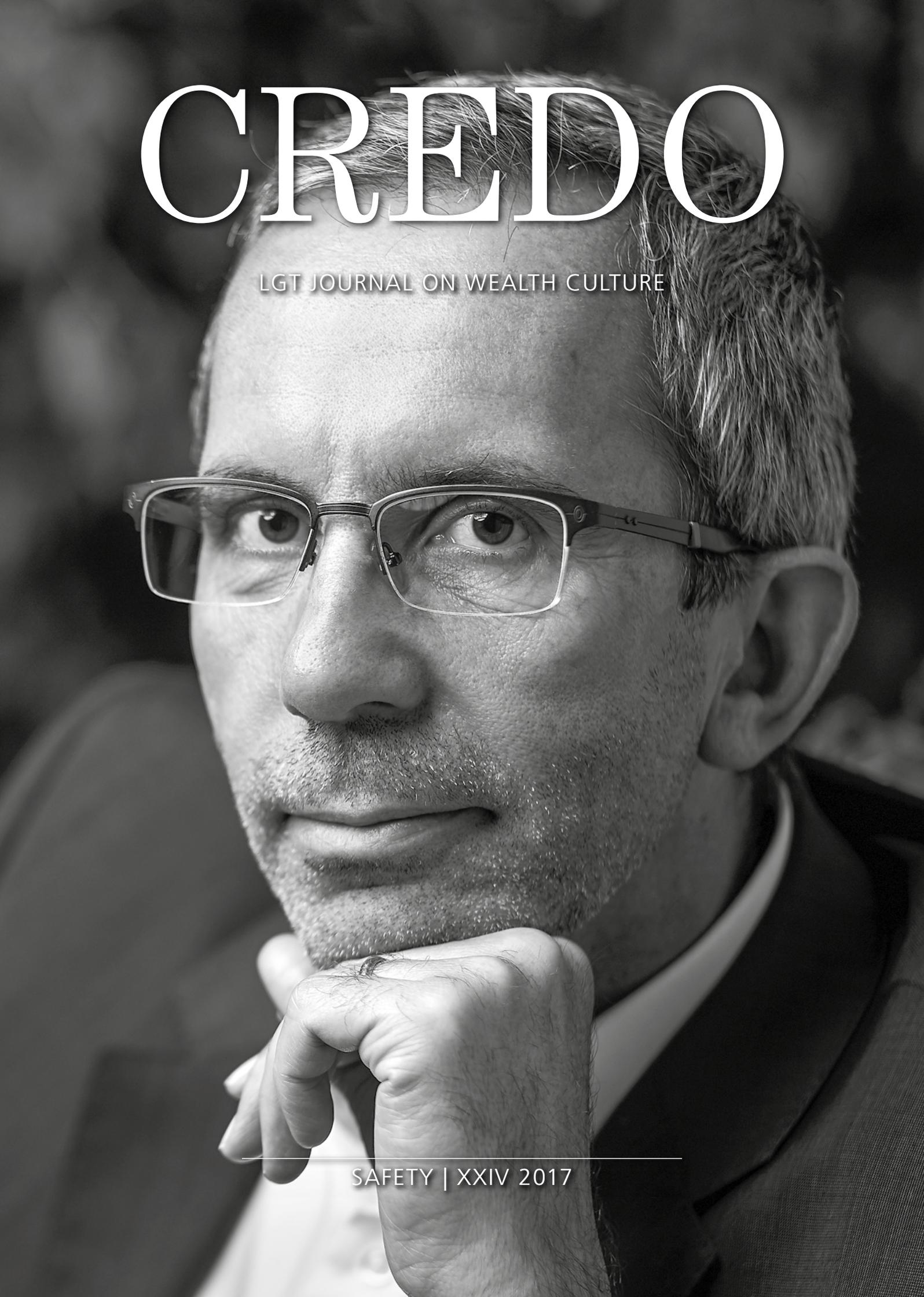


CREDO

A black and white close-up portrait of a man with short, graying hair and glasses. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. His right hand is resting under his chin, with his fingers interlaced. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored collared shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

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Safety

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Dear Readers,

The desire for safety and security is one of humankind's elementary concerns. But the situations in which we feel secure or under threat differ from one person to the next, and there's not always a rational explanation for this feeling. The Swiss BASE jumper Géraldine Fasnacht, for example, leaps off from thousands of feet above the ground in her wingsuit – and yet she assures us she'd be scared of injuring herself if she jumped off a fifteen-foot diving board at the swimming pool. Katrin Stauffer worked for ten years as an explosive ordnance disposal expert, but on a scale of one to ten, she says her risk appetite is “certainly no more than two.” Many Greeks today hoard cash at home because they don't trust the banks – and yet they don't take steps to protect themselves from burglars. And there are people who carefully maintain their privacy when dealing with their fellow citizens, but leave all their personal data out in the open on the Internet.

One of the main tasks of a government is to give its citizens a feeling of security. But this is an area characterized by neglect, says the US network specialist Marcus J. Ranum. In his essay “Until the world burns,” he explains the demands that our digital future will place on politicians and society.

Safety is a topic that our cover personality, Dominik Stillhart, feels very strongly about. He is the Director of Operations at the International Committee of the Red Cross, and his own experiences in many years of missions abroad have taught him to ensure that all his employees undergo a comprehensive training. All the same, he knows that there is no such thing as complete safety.

I hope you find this issue of our journal informative and enjoyable to read.



H.S.H. Prince Philipp von und zu Liechtenstein
Chairman LGT

A life in two worlds

Text: **Paul Herberstein** | Photos: **Carlos Crespo, André Liohn**

Battles in Iraq, the mass exodus from Syria, civil war in the Sudan – often, we can only barely imagine what all this means for the people who are actually affected. For Dominik Stillhart, trying to mitigate the misery they suffer is the motivating force in his daily work. As a Director at the International Committee of the Red Cross, he runs and coordinates relief efforts all over the world, and at the same time he's responsible for the safety of his own colleagues on the ground.



Dominik Stillhart is deeply convinced that personal commitment matters. He has a total of 15 years of foreign deployments – such as here in Iraq – and they have taught him one thing above all: you have to engage with others in a relaxed manner, free of prejudice.

Geneva is slowly waking up. The first warm rays of the sun are chasing away the delicate veil of mist that still lies over the lake. At the landing quays, the gulls shake the cold of the night from their feathers and you can see occasional joggers making their way along the esplanade through the early-morning haze. This peaceful image is more than just a snapshot in time. It's typical of this city, which for many decades has been a symbol of open-mindedness and humanitarian tradition. And these two traits are united in an organization that has its headquarters here: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The manifold security measures in place when you enter its offices on Avenue de la Paix seem at odds with the early-morning friendly feel of the city. Your license plate number and your parking spot are noted down, and you're only given a visitor's pass when you hand over your ID in return. "Regrettably, this is a necessity today for an international organization. After all, we're situated directly opposite the UN," explains Katarzyna Nalband at the entrance to the main building. She's originally

from Poland, which is also where she began working for the Red Cross. She has been working for the Red Cross in Geneva for several years now, and her office is next door to that of Dominik Stillhart, the Director of Operations who is responsible for organizing and coordinating relief deployments all over the world.

Today is no different. An urgent meeting was slotted in and a quick phone call needs to be made before he has time for our interview. As we sit alone in his office, our gaze wanders across the room. It's simply furnished, almost Spartan, with a small desk and plain bookshelves that hold only ring binders and yearbooks, row after row of them. And there's a world map on the wall that is reminiscent of geography lessons back at school. The only modest ornaments are a small ficus tree and a single oil painting near it, depicting a bazaar in bright brush strokes. There's no sense of coziness here. The entries on the annual planner on the wall above the desk leave no doubt as to the job of the man who works here: written on it with a thick felt-tip pen, we see the words "Chad," "Yemen," and "Sudan"...



"There's no such thing as no-go areas for us," insists Dominik Stillhart, confirming the ICRC's commitment to help those in need, even in highly dangerous regions.

Trial by fire in Somalia

Dominik Stillhart enters the office: he's 52 years old, slim, his hair streaked with gray, and he has a firm handshake and a candid gaze. Without beating about the bush, he begins to tell us about himself, and his eyes exude both energy and calm as he does so. "I've now worked for half my life at the ICRC. I was 26 when I started here, after finishing my degree in economics," he recalls. His trial by fire came already one year later in Somalia: "It was my very first deployment abroad. A colleague pressed 20 000 US dollars into my hand and told me that a cargo ship would dock in a few days. It was my job to have the relief supplies unloaded and distributed, all on my own. Up to that point I had never seen such a ship up close, let alone had any idea how to organize the logistics of all that," says Dominik Stillhart. Just thinking about it now makes him shake his head. After the initial shock and the tears of despair shed in his lonely hotel room, he ultimately managed to fulfill the task he'd been set.

"Today, dealing with relief supplies like that would be completely inconceivable. From awarding the contract to the logistics and the documentation, it's all run solely by seasoned experts, professionals who have everything under control," says Stillhart, who is emphatic about the high standards that are applied today at the ICRC.

This father of four also places high demands on himself. He was born in rather modest circumstances in Fribourg, and later grew up in Bern and Zug. After finishing his degree, he didn't just want a job to earn money. He wanted a career challenge to which he could devote himself heart and soul. His assignment in Somalia turned out to be a key moment for this young employee of the ICRC: he had found his dream job.

There followed a total of 15 years abroad in the most varied crisis regions of our Earth, of which his 18 months in Somalia were a defining time – and the most dangerous mission of all. Stillhart's face darkens as he tells us about the worst-ever moment in his career: "I was with a colleague at a meeting of the two warring factions so that we could negotiate relief supplies. The mood was tense, and suddenly one of the soldiers began waving his rifle wildly at us. He started shooting, and my colleague and a Somalian Red Cross employee were killed." The encouragement he received from the families and friends of his dead colleagues was what gave him the strength to carry on with his work on the ground.

A special bond

After that, safety became a core concern of Dominik Stillhart. Today, all his staff undergo a comprehensive training program. They are taught to recognize dangerous situations as swiftly as possible, they participate in realistic role-playing games – such as how to behave at risky checkpoints – and they learn how to send coded proof they're alive if they are ever taken prisoner. Additionally, everywhere it's active, the Red Cross also endeavors to build up its own network of reliable local contacts and sources so that they can assess the situation on the spot as quickly and as accurately as possible.

Yet there is no such thing as complete safety. Dominik Stillhart leads us to a small table in the foyer of the building: there we find a picture of a staff member with a black ribbon around it. Next to it is a burning candle and a book of condolences. He was the victim of a holdup in Africa, killed in his company apartment, far away from the bombs and the gunfire. Such occurrences are the most difficult of all for this level-headed

“It's clear to me that the wave of migrants will be the determining topic of the next ten years. Across the world, about 65 million people are currently fleeing their homes. And some two thirds of them haven't even left their native countries yet.”



Dominik Stillhart in conversation with women in Iraq. “Time and again I’m astonished and impressed at how even in extreme situations people stay optimistic and keep their dignity.”

philanthrope. “You mustn’t forget that many of us have worked here for 30 years and more, and we’ve been through thick and thin together on tricky deployments abroad. That kind of thing binds you together – more than is the case in other professions or in other organizations.”

So when something special or unusual happens, the staff at the Geneva headquarters gather together on the ground floor or in the cafeteria. But as Director of Operations, responsible for deployments all over the world, Stillhart can sometimes also offer positive news – such as recently, when he was able to announce that a colleague had just been freed in Yemen after having been kidnapped ten months ago.

The challenge of the coming years

Despite his own dramatic experiences, Dominik Stillhart prefers to speak about the happy moments he has enjoyed in his work. “In 2003, I was made head of a delegation for the first time, when the decades-old war in the Sudan finally gave way to serious peace negotiations. My task was actually to start winding down

our activities there, but then clashes broke out between different ethnic groups in the Darfur region further to the west. Despite the catastrophic circumstances, we succeeded in getting help quickly to the civilian population, thereby preventing yet more suffering,” he says. He is a modest man who is nevertheless proud of this personal milestone.

Apart from its operations as humanitarian “firefighters,” the ICRC is also active in averting suffering outside war zones, as its success in land mine prevention proves. Back in 1997, the ICRC worked together with governments, other organizations and committed individuals to set up the so-called Ottawa Convention, which forbids the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of this abhorrent weapon of war. Up to now, the Convention has been signed by 160 countries across the world.

Dominik Stillhart’s personal convictions are also closely linked to those of his worldwide organization: “At the Red Cross, we’re certainly not naïve, starry-eyed idealists. We know that wars have happened, that they are still happening and that they



The new logistics center of the ICRC was built in 2011 in Satigny, just a few miles outside Geneva. Here they keep all manner of relief supplies for their humanitarian operations. Everything from bandages to foot prostheses can be sent swiftly wherever they're needed.

will happen in the future too.” Stillhart, a native of German-speaking Switzerland, is helped by his adherence to the country’s traditional virtues when it comes to problem-solving: “We Swiss are realistic and we like to proceed pragmatically. And as a small nation without any real political influence in the world, we can only get something done or change something through competence and commitment.”

Stillhart hopes that a similarly objective, global approach will be possible for what he sees as today’s most massive challenge: “It’s clear to me that the wave of migrants will be the determining topic of the next ten years. Across the world, about 65 million people are currently fleeing their homes. And some two thirds of them haven’t even left their native countries yet.”

Two different worlds

The day’s work is slowly coming to an end in the Geneva headquarters. The sun casts its last, low rays of light over the city as Dominik Stillhart sits down at his computer and starts to answer his e-mails. “There’s no time for this between 9 a.m.

and 5 p.m. One meeting follows on from another. I mostly use the early morning hours and the evening for everything that’s left undone.” As Director of Operations, he spends an average of three months abroad each year. “In earlier years I was naturally more often ‘at the front,’ but today my calendar is mostly full of meetings with political decision makers, discussion events or media work.” There is no trace of melancholy in his words, even though he refers rather disparagingly to his suit and tie as his “workwear,” and only reluctantly lets himself be photographed in them.

With such a responsible job, how can he ever manage to switch off? Where does he find tranquility and balance? Dominik Stillhart smiles, and answers the question by inviting us to his home. Even just the half-hour drive to his little village outside Geneva helps to provide a welcome buffer between these two so different worlds: the precarious world of humanitarian crises on the one hand, and the rich, safe world of Switzerland on the other. “In all these years I’ve learned that you have to deal with these contrasts in a relaxed manner, and you shouldn’t



Dominik Stillhart's day closes with a game of cards. His wife and their three sons clearly enjoy spending time at home together with their much-traveled father.

differentiate between real and imaginary worries. If I come home from a foreign deployment and the washing machine is broken, I can get incredibly upset," says this global commuter. "But in earlier years, when I was still spending several months at a time in war zones, it often took longer for me inwardly to get back on my friends' wavelength over here."

Beyond the appointment book

His oasis of tranquility is and remains his family. His wife Annika comes from Sweden, and when he arrives home she exudes a gentle, Scandinavian warmth as she comes to meet him. She also works at the ICRC in Geneva, where she is a Gender and Diversity Advisor. His three sons are full of beans as they bustle up to greet him – they're 15, 13 and 10 years old. Only the eldest is obviously fighting with fatigue, for he's just come back home from a strenuous soccer training session. Stillhart's eldest child is a daughter from an earlier relationship, with a woman from Somalia. She has already left home and is studying environmental sciences in Edinburgh in Scotland. "With her education and her social conscience, she's the most likely to take after me professionally. Our sons are still dreaming of careers as soccer players," smiles the proud family man.

Dominik Stillhart lives as he works: it's an open, warm-hearted house devoid of vanity or pomp. The evening meal fits the pattern, too: vegetable soup, bread and cheese. The parents allow themselves a glass of red wine – "From the region around here, of course," adds this adopted son of Geneva. The famous vineyards of French-speaking Switzerland outside have already receded into the darkness. After they've eaten, the whole family plays cards, laughing as they do so. Then they try out a new board game. There's no TV flooding their cozy living room with current news from all over the world. "Our TV is usually only turned on for Champions League soccer games," admits Dominik Stillhart, who for his part enjoys setting off on extended cross-country runs in the woods and spending time up in the mountains. You could almost imagine that you're the guest of a completely normal Swiss family – if you didn't know that in a few days' time, this devoted father will have to embark on an important journey abroad: to Iraq. ♦

Paul Herberstein lives and works in Liechtenstein as a freelance journalist and author. He has written numerous specialist books and writes for special-interest and lifestyle magazines in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

The International Committee of the Red Cross

History

The starting point of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was the Battle of Solferino in 1859, when the troops of the Austrian Emperor fought against the soldiers of the King of Sardinia and the French army under his ally, Napoleon III. The Swiss national Henry Dunant was on a business trip at the time, and he was an eye witness to the carnage that on a single day claimed some 6 000 lives and left 40 000 wounded. The suffering was appalling, but there was insufficient medical assistance available on the battlefield. The dreadful impression this made on Henry Dunant prompted him to found the “International Relief Committee for Injured Combatants” in Geneva on February 17, 1863, together with the Swiss army general Guillaume-Henri Dufour, the lawyer Gustave Moynier and the surgeons Louis Appia and Théodore Maunoir. This was the precursor of the ICRC.

The symbol of the Red Cross has its origins in the Swiss flag, whose colors were simply switched around. In the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, out of consideration for Muslim soldiers and civilians, the Red Crescent was also employed as a symbol for the first-ever time. Analog to the use of the Swiss flag, the Red Crescent uses the Turkish flag with inverted colors. Since 2005, they have been joined by the Red Crystal as an internationally recognized emblem of the organization. According to the region in question, the Red Star of David is also used.

The ICRC has been honored with the Nobel Peace Prize four times in the course of its history: it was awarded to its founder Henry Dunant in 1901, and to the ICRC itself in 1917 and 1944 for its humanitarian activities in the two World Wars, and in 1963 on the occasion of its centenary.

Mission

The ICRC is a neutral, impartial, independent humanitarian organization. As the guardian and sponsor of international humanitarian law, it is responsible for maintaining the Geneva Conventions of 1864, 1949, 1977 and 2005. Its core activities include:

- nursing the wounded and caring for them;
- protecting and caring for the civilian population;
- visiting prisoners of war and prisoners of conscience, monitoring their treatment and care;
- and acting as an intermediary between warring parties.



The flag of the Red Cross has been flying over the ICRC headquarters in Geneva for over 150 years – a symbol that signifies a hope for more humanity in the world.

Worldwide network

There are some 80 branches of the ICRC all over the world, with roughly 14 500 employees. Above and beyond this, 190 countries have their own national Red Cross or Red Crescent societies. These are autonomous and legally independent of each other, though they remain linked by their common principles and goals.

Pretty protection



Scarab

Fashioning amulets in the shape of a scarab has been proven to date back 2500 years before Christ. It was one of the best-known, most popular motifs in Ancient Egypt. The Egyptians were keen observers of nature and were fascinated by the beetle we find depicted in these amulets. The scarab or “dung beetle” tirelessly rolls balls of dung so as to bury them in the ground; later, the female of the species will lay her eggs in them. This reminded the Egyptians of the eternal course of the sun, which is why the scarab is a symbol both of the sun and of resurrection. It was regarded as a lucky charm when used either as a seal or as a piece of jewelry worn around the neck or on a ring. When laid in a grave next to the heart of the deceased during a burial ceremony, it was thought to promise them new life in the beyond.



Chinese cash

China is home to the coin that has been used the longest in the world. The “cash,” a round coin with a square hole in the middle, was in circulation for over 2000 years until the end of the Imperial Era in 1911. The round form represented the heavens, the square hole the Earth – and it was thus a perfect symbol for the power of the Emperor, who in the Chinese imagination figured as an intermediary between them. At the same time, these coins have since time immemorial been regarded as money-bringing and conducive to prosperity. For example, to the present day feng shui consultants recommend keeping three cash coins tied together, either in a desk drawer or hung on a door, because they attract prosperity. These coins have also been turned into swords (and still are), whose purpose is to drive out illnesses and evil spirits.



Thor's hammer

In Norse mythology, the “mjölnir,” as Thor's hammer is also known, was the symbol of Thor, the god of thunder. According to legend, this magic weapon never missed its target and always returned to Thor's hand like a boomerang. The Vikings wore the mjölnir as a protective amulet, and over a 1000 examples in iron or silver have been found in sites from Scandinavia to Britain, Russia and the Baltics. In Norse mythology, the swastika was also equated with Thor's hammer, and it was supposedly Hitler's fascination for the Norse world that prompted him to choose it as the symbol of National Socialism. This might explain why the great popularity of Thor's hammer today also extends, regrettably, to the right-wing scene.

Amulets are something fundamentally human, and we find them in all cultures in every epoch. They are small, personal objects that accompany their owner through life. In the wearers' view they are vested with supposedly magical powers and promise happiness and money, love and good health and ward off illness and evil. In short: they offer protection and safety in all of life's circumstances. Nor have amulets lost any of their significance in our own times. Amulets are an expression of non-denominational belief, but they are also ideal to wear as jewelry – and are thus perfectly suited to our individualistic, modern world.

Text: **Mathias Plüss**



Nazar

The notion of the “evil eye” is ancient. Even 5000 years ago, the Babylonians and Sumerians told of people who could inflict injury on others by looking at them. Numerous antique cultures developed protective amulets in the form of an eye in order to protect their owners from the influence of the evil eye – we find them among the indigenous peoples of the Americas, and the Egyptians with their “Eye of Horus.” In the Ottoman Empire, so-called nazar amulets were widespread. These were blue, round balls of glass modeled after the human eye. They remain highly popular to this day in Turkey, the Balkans and several Arab countries. Nazar amulets are hung in taxis and trucks, on front doors and baby carriages, and are sold both as jewelry and as souvenirs.



Mojo

A mojo bag is a bag of textile or leather that is worn for a long period of time and is supposed to bring good luck to its bearer, protecting him or her from harm. It's got to be filled with an odd number of things: herbs, stones, powders, and with a lock of hair or a fingernail clipping of the owner. In order for it to keep working, the little bag repeatedly has to be smoked or dabbed with oils, perfumes or alcohol. Men will typically put it in their trouser pocket, while women attach it to their bra. If it's supposed to attract a lover, then it has to be worn directly against the skin. This custom originally comes from Africa and is especially popular today in the USA. In American English, the word “mojo” has meanwhile come to mean a magical power or charm.



Mupo

“Mupo” is the name of small figurines from the grasslands of Cameroon, mostly made of wood (the one pictured here is a rare example made of ivory). They are used by medicine men for healing and divination purposes. Mupo are also carried to protect the wearer from witchcraft, which is regarded in many regions of Africa as the cause of bad luck and illness. Often, these figures have indentations that are to be filled with magical substances and then sealed with ribbons of cloth or leather to give them special powers. The grasslands of Cameroon are well-known for their special artistic traditions, and mupo often have an unconventional, even grotesque appearance. ♦

Guardian angels in the lodge

Text: **Michael Neubauer** | Photo: **Raphael Zubler**

Natalia Syed is a concierge in Paris. For a long time, her profession seemed not to have much of a future. But today, many property owners and tenants have learned to appreciate these caretaker-cum-wardens – especially since the recent terror attacks.

Someone has placed advertising leaflets at the entrance to the courtyard. Natalia Syed picks them up and tosses them into one of the green trash cans. She looks out through the heavy iron gate onto rue Oberkampf. The newspaper delivery man greets her, and gives her a copy of “Le Monde” for one of the residents in her building.

She takes the newspaper back to her “loge” – that’s what they call the concierge’s lodge or apartment in France. It’s on the ground floor, at the foot of the U-shaped building for which she is responsible. “Hardly anyone calls me ‘concierge’ anymore,” she says. For the French, this older designation conjures up an image of a strict, controlling, prying, rude woman from the previous century such as you see in many movies and read about in novels. Natalia Syed’s profession today has the official title of “gardien” – “guardian.” She never thought that she would ever take on such a job.

“I originally wanted to work in the fashion industry,” she says. But after studying fashion design she realized that its glitzy world was not for her. When her cousin gave up a job as concierge in the 11th arrondissement, Natalia Syed took it on, along with the apartment that goes with it. “I really only wanted to do it for three years.” But she’s now 39 years old, and has been in the job for 17 years. Her parents came from Portugal, and her husband is of Pakistani descent. He and Natalia Syed live together with their three children (aged 19, 12 and 8) in their cramped loge, which measures just over 300 square feet.

“Do you have a package for me?” asks an employee of an office in the building. Natalia Syed goes into her little living room where the TV is running, and fetches it. Accepting packages for people, cleaning the stairs, sweeping the courtyard, taking out the trash cans, changing light bulbs – that’s her everyday life. She calls the workmen when something goes wrong in any of the

apartments, and she also does things that aren’t in her contract. Like watering someone’s flowers when they’re away on vacation. Or knocking at the door of the older residents if she hasn’t seen them for a while. She keeps spare keys in case someone locks themselves out. And she helps to settle disputes if two residents start snapping at each other. “I’m also a mediator. I help people to get along,” she says. And all for 1000 euros a month, net, plus her apartment.

Natalia Syed keeps guard, day and night. Burglars have a hard time of it, because no one can come or go without passing her loge. As a full-time concierge she has to be available from 7 a.m. to midday, and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. And she has to sleep here at night. She even maintains her role as “gardien” in her sleep, she says. “My eyes are closed, but my ears are open.”

There are 70 parties living and working in this six-story building, mostly in owner-occupied apartments. “Most of the people are very nice,” she says. But there’s always someone who’ll look down their nose at her. They ask: A concierge? – We don’t need one of those!

For a long time, that’s what a lot of apartment owners used to think. In the past 35 years, almost 30 000 jobs as concierge were lost in France – there are 52 000 of them left today. Back then, their future didn’t seem rosy. Building owners preferred to sell or rent out the loge when the resident concierge retired. Others turned it into a bike shed. The concierges were replaced by electronic locks with keypads at the front door, a video camera for surveillance purposes and by outsourced cleaning companies. It was cheaper.

Today, many people regret this. Not just because a concierge will often do people favors and help to create a good atmosphere. “Many residents feel safer if they know that someone is keeping an eye on everything,” says Philippe Dolci from the national union of concierges, “Snigic.” In these days when there’s a danger of terror attacks, and the country is in a state of emergency, it’s the owners of luxury buildings most of all who would like to see the return of their concierge. “But if the loge has been sold or rented out, it’s rarely possible.”



She loves her career as a concierge: Natalia Syed

Just how important the presence of a concierge can be for security was demonstrated on November 13, 2015, in Paris, the night of the terror attacks. Several concierges opened up their courtyards as shelter for victims of the attack and to offer refuge to those who were scared. As did Natalia Syed. Her building stands right next to the Bataclan concert hall where three attackers killed 90 people and injured hundreds.

The police rushed to her building and asked if the emergency personnel could use her courtyard. She had hardly opened up the iron gate when injured people began streaming in. Up to 80 people sought refuge in her courtyard. “We even brought people into our tiny apartment if they were panic-stricken or in a state of shock, so that they didn’t have to see the horrific scenes in the yard. Here they were able to feel a little safer.”

The courtyard was hellish, “like a battlefield hospital, with doctors performing emergency surgery.” The walls are very tall, and the screams of the injured echoed around them. Natalia Syed, her husband and their two eldest children helped as well as they could. They comforted the injured, told the paramedics who was the worst affected, and they pressed cushions, T-shirts and bandages on gunshot wounds that were bleeding profusely.

The mayor, Anne Hidalgo, has honored several concierges for their contribution that night, calling them “anges gardiens,” guardian angels. Natalia Syed is one of them, and she shows us her medal with the inscription “She is tossed by the waves but does not sink,” which is the motto of the city of Paris. “Pieces of metal like this are pretty unimportant to me,” says Natalia Syed, “but sometimes, one of the victims from that night stops by to tell me that they’re doing well again, and it makes me happy.” ♦

“I feel like a bird”

Interview: **Michael Neubauer**

She loves the mountains and she loves flying. Géraldine Fasnacht from Switzerland combines alpinism with extreme sports. In the winter, her passion is snowboarding off-piste – so-called freeriding. In the summer, she does BASE jumping – leaping off high places wearing a complex wingsuit that makes her look like a bat. It has fabric surfaces stretched between her arms and legs to act as wings, giving her lift. She was the first person ever to jump off the Matterhorn. She’s an adventurer, but knows precisely what risks she takes, and prepares meticulously for every jump.

Full of concentration before her flight: Géraldine Fasnacht



CREDO: What would you feel most nervous about: having to jump from an apple tree, diving off a fifteen-foot diving board at the swimming pool, or riding in a roller coaster?

Géraldine Fasnacht: The fifteen feet at the swimming pool. I'd be afraid of hurting myself when I hit the water. If I were in an apple tree I'd carefully climb down as far as possible, and then jump from a branch. But I love roller coasters!

In your wingsuit, you jump from far higher up – such as from the Matterhorn, towering at nearly 15 000 feet. That would be a nightmare for many people. What do such jumps mean to you?

Immense pleasure. I feel like a bird. For me it's something natural, nothing crazy. I'm completely in my element in an environment that I love – the mountains.

What do you feel in the moment when you jump?

The first three seconds are the most intense. In that moment I know I can't allow myself a single mistake. I am totally concentrated, and I've got my flight line in my head. I know exactly with which foot I'm going to launch myself, how hard I have to push, and I know exactly how I have to hold my head and my body in order to achieve a perfect flight angle. I feel my wings fill up and my body lies as if on a cushion of air. It's like being on a wave.

What originally made you want to jump off a mountain into the abyss?

It's my love of the mountains, the feeling of freedom. I'm Swiss and I've been doing mountain sports since I was a child. I first stood on skis when I was two years old. At the age of eight I began snowboarding, and at 15 I was freeriding – in other words, skiing and snowboarding off-piste. I've been BASE jumping for 15 years now. Even when I was a child, I wanted to be able to fly. I never imagined that I would one day realize my dream.

The "New York Times" once wrote that flying with a wingsuit isn't a sport, it's more like suicide. What does your mother say about what you do?

I find it interesting what the "Times" writes, because it's actually a reputable newspaper. But it just shows that they have absolutely no idea about this sport. All the same, I can also relate to such a perception.



But last year alone, almost 40 people died BASE jumping.

You can't force anyone to train more or to avoid certain jumps. Even very good BASE jumpers can have an accident. I regard freeriding as far more dangerous than wingsuiting. Even the best freerider or mountain guide can't gauge the snow conditions or the danger of avalanche with complete certainty. But accidents in wingsuits are always a result of human error.

So what does your mother say?

She sees it like I do. She knows that I love life too much to make dangerous decisions. Granted, I make life-threatening jumps. But I prepare meticulously for them. That's why she trusts me. I started planning my jump from the Matterhorn in 2009. I got the right wingsuit for it in 2012, but I only jumped in 2014 – after two years of intensive training.

“The first three seconds are the most intense. In that moment I know I can’t allow myself a single mistake.”

The Swiss BASE jumper Géraldine Fasnacht on September 24, 2013, jumping in her new wingsuit from the Aiguille du Midi (12 600 feet above sea level) to Chamonix in the Mont Blanc massif.



But people surely often tell you you’re risking your life.

Does that get on your nerves?

It annoys me that I keep having to defend my sport. I wouldn’t allow myself to pass judgment on things I don’t know enough about. But it’s human nature. If we’re scared of something in life, we’re quick to say: That’s no good. Once, at a conference, a guy came up to me and greeted me by saying: “Oh, you’re that crazy woman!”

Why do you speak about risk assessment at business conferences?

Because our experiences are similar. Whether it’s insurance companies, banks or pharmaceutical companies: executives have to assess risks. They make calculations for themselves and their teams. How can you prepare yourself and reduce anxiety

about risks? Incidentally, after my speech, the same guy came up to me and said he was impressed at how I’d prepared myself. He apologized to me.

So what do you find crazy?

I don’t see my sport as an “extreme” sport. Living in a big city would be extreme to me, or riding through Paris on a motorbike, for example. That’s suicidal! And I couldn’t imagine spending my whole life working in a tax office.

Is there anything you’re afraid of?

Please don’t say spiders!

Oh yes, I’m scared of them. And I’m scared of large groups of people – I’m claustrophobic. The only concerts I go to are in the open air.



Géraldine Fasnacht was born in Lausanne on June 18, 1980, and she lives today in Verbier in the Canton of Valais in Switzerland. She grew up with two sisters and three brothers; one brother died at the age of eight in a car accident. In March 2002, Géraldine Fasnacht took part in the freeriding competition Xtreme Verbier. She snowboarded down the face of the Bec des Rosses and came in first. This was the start of her snowboarding career. She won eleven international freeriding prizes, including Xtreme Verbier three times. She started parachuting at the age of 18, and three years later she made her first BASE jump in a wingsuit that cost some 3000 euros. On June 7, 2014, Géraldine Fasnacht and Julien Meyer jumped off the Matterhorn – the first people in the world to do so. Her latest film, "4634 – Perception," documents her jump from the massif of the Monte Rosa in the Valais Alps. Fasnacht's first husband, the Swiss mountain guide Sébastien Gay, died before her eyes in 2006 when speed flying – which is a cross between paragliding and skiing. Her friend, the freerider Estelle Balet, died in April 2016 at the age of 21. She was buried by an avalanche as they were filming together.

<http://geraldinefasnacht.com>

Have you ever read books about the early aviation pioneers?

Yes, about the Wright Brothers, for example. I love planes and have seen several movies about the first flights across the Atlantic. I have a pilot's license myself, and rent a plane from the club in Bex. Then I fly over the Alps or to southern France. Before I jumped off the Matterhorn, I often flew there so as to study the terrain and the conditions from above. As for crazy: there was a time when people thought you were nuts if you claimed human beings would one day fly planes across the Atlantic. The "crazy" people are often simply the real adventurers. It's thanks to them that progress happens.

Do you see yourself as a discoverer and a pioneer?

At the least, I want to do new things. I'm not interested in doing what people have always done before. For example, I want to help in the development of wingsuits.

Did you want to do adventurous things when you were still a child?

My father was an entrepreneur. He was the first to sell color TVs in Switzerland. My mother was the head of a language school and a travel agency. They worked really hard, and I romped around outside a lot after school. I strung up ropes and used them to climb out of my room. I'd jump onto a mattress that lay one floor below. And I built huts in the woods with my friends. I did a lot of kids' sports – BMX and skateboarding. TV and computer games didn't interest me.

You've been BASE jumping for 15 years. Is it an addiction that you can't get rid of?

It's addictive, and the sport takes up a lot of my life. You can only do it a hundred percent, or not at all. It demands precise preparations. You can never let it become routine. If you want to be good at freeriding, you also have to be very good on the piste. And if you want to be good at BASE jumping, you have to be a good parachutist. That's why I made 300 parachute jumps from planes before I began BASE jumping. Overall, I've now got 3000 BASE jumps behind me, 2000 of them off mountains.

Is it true that you once left a partner because he wanted you to stop jumping?

Yes. It's important to me to have a partner who can accept my passion for the sport. I train four to five times a week – technical, physical and mental training. Then it's like I'm in a bubble, and I can't afford to have any outside worries.

You jump off mountains in Switzerland, in Mali and in the Antarctic. Some people say you're leaping into the unknown. Is that true?

No, I know exactly where I'm jumping and whether the jump is possible or not. In order to practice this sport, you have to be a perfectionist. There is no room here for chance. I analyze maps beforehand and go on Google Earth. I use a laser pointer to make exact vertical and horizontal measurements. I make a precise graph of my flight line. I jump with two GPS devices that measure where I am every second. For every foot of drop, I travel forward more than three feet. That's pure math. I wasn't generally good at school, but I was good at math and geography.

How important is your equipment?

I have to know it very well. I don't just know my wingsuit, but also the man who makes it: Robert Pecnik. I trust him implicitly. He's a perfectionist like me. Wingsuit development has made lots of progress in recent years. You can compare it with the shift from straight skis to shaped skis. The increase in knowledge about the profile, the fabric and the wings means that the load-bearing capacity and the precision of flying has risen drastically.

At the age of 36, do you feel you already belong to the older generation of wingsuit pilots?

Yes, and I'm lucky in that. It means that I've grown into this sport in tandem with the development of the equipment. It's more dangerous for beginners today – they start out with top-class equipment, watch YouTube videos, and get easy access to a series of jumps – but they often don't have much experience of the mountains.

You have to make split-second decisions. Do you develop an instinct for this?

There's the survival instinct – but everyone's got that. All the training, all my many jumps out of planes, helicopters, balloons and off mountains help me too. I also practice in a wind tunnel in Sion. It allows me to fly on my back, on my side and upside down.

People also call you the bird woman. How does a bird woman steer herself in flight?

With my whole body. That's instinctive. I move my head, my shoulders, arms, legs and feet.

When do you say: "I'm not going to jump"?

When the weather conditions are bad. When the wind is erratic,

for example. Before my jumps off the Matterhorn and off Monte Rosa, I was in constant contact with my weather expert Yan Giezendanner. He knows the mountains and knows how I feel up there. And if I have to climb down again, then I will – even if I've just spent hours climbing up.

Do you follow your gut feeling?

Yes. I have to be honest with myself. If I feel unfit – if I've slept badly or I'm uneasy – then I stay on the ground. I have to listen to those small voices in me. A little fear isn't bad, though. On the contrary, it helps me not to lapse into a routine.

Are you ever able to appreciate and admire the nature around you when you fly?

Not in the first three seconds. But then I enjoy the view, until I have to concentrate on my parachute. My horizontal velocity can reach up to 110 miles an hour. My flight from the Matterhorn lasted almost two minutes. When I jumped off Monte Rosa it took three minutes. I open up my parachute some 700 to 1000 feet before landing.

You don't have a second, emergency chute with you. Do you always fold your parachute yourself, just to be sure?

Mostly, yes. Sometimes my partner does it for me, or my best friend Julien Meyer. It has to be someone I trust completely.

Have you ever made a mistake that could have been fatal?

Making a mistake when BASE jumping doesn't have to end in death. But it can cause an accident. Once, I made a mistake opening my parachute just before landing. I ended up in a tree and sprained my ankle.

You're up in the heavens a lot. Do you believe in God?

I believe that there is a power of some kind. But I don't find it in any religion or church. I find it in nature. When I hug a tree and talk to it, I feel close to this power. Or when I stand on the summit of a mountain.

Do you have a guardian angel that watches over you when you fly?

We all have guardian angels around us. But I don't rely on them when I do what I do.

Several times, you've had to witness the death of people close to you – sometimes even while doing sports. Are you afraid of death?

No. I don't believe it's the end. But I don't have any desire to die. I love life too much and there's still so much I want to experience,

accomplish and learn. I consider myself very fortunate to have met these people, even if they had to go before me. I find it more difficult to bear when people die in traffic accidents or of terrible diseases, not through sport.

Aren't you worried about all the young people who die in your sport?

Of course. That's not normal. This sport has developed so quickly over the past four years. When I started 15 years ago, we all knew each other. I only knew two of those who died last year, and not very well at that.

Are a lot of newcomers too impatient?

I've spoken with beginners who bragged that they didn't need any parachute training before they start BASE jumping. I don't even feel like talking to them in the first place. You can't learn the sport by watching YouTube videos. This sport won't forgive you if you skip part of the learning process. The problem with this generation is that everything has to go quickly.

You could have had a normal career if you'd wanted. You trained as a member of ground staff at Swissair.

I thought I'd spend my whole life working for Swissair at Geneva Airport. Then I experienced the grounding of Swissair in late 2001, when we had to tell the passengers for a flight to London that there was no more fuel. Those were bad times.

You chose nature instead of a steady job.

When I was given the opportunity to take part in the freeride competition Xtreme Verbier at the age of 21, I knew that I couldn't keep working for Swissair. Because I had to train for it. I asked for unpaid leave for three months, but they didn't want to give it to me. So I handed in my notice and never returned to the airport. I pursued my sport instead.

A family, a steady job, a settled life – don't you ever long for that kind of security, like so many other people?

Of course. But you have to live your dreams – in the here and now. My main sense of security comes from waking up in the morning and feeling happy about my life. ♦



Until the world burns

Text: **Marcus J. Ranum** | Illustration: **Markus Roost**

Have our politicians missed the boat when it comes to the latest technological developments? The US network specialist Marcus J. Ranum speaks about illusions of security in the Internet, and the need for a comprehensive defense strategy.

A few years ago, if you had asked about government plans with respect to cyberwar, you would expect a sober response to the effect that it is an important consideration which must be assessed carefully within the framework of statecraft. In other words, it is a dirty trick that needs to be responded to thoughtfully after it has been correctly attributed. In the context of military operations, cyberwar was rolled into information operations – the battlefield use of data networks, rapid intelligence

“It is easier to take the offensive than the defensive in cyberspace, because the aggressor needs to only find a single point of attack.”

dissemination and data fusion amplified situational awareness. The catastrophic cyberwar scenarios that governments feared in the 1990s – the collapse of power grids or aircraft flying into the ground – slowly became replaced by more mundane and practical fears.

Business as usual?

One instance where statecraft has lagged behind technology is in the disciplined use of cyber-attack. It is easier to take the offensive than the defensive in cyberspace, because the aggressor needs to only find a single point of attack whereas the defender must successfully defend every possible point of attack. Thanks to Edward Snowden and other leakers, we learn that the US government (and others) have invested heavily in cyber-weapons, and have fielded them for reasons of state.

For example, the USA coyly admitted to its involvement in the Stuxnet Trojan horse software, which was used to incapacitate Iranian enrichment centrifuges and damaged power systems at the Iranian nuclear reactor at Bushehr. By all measures,

Stuxnet was a narrowly-scoped and successful attack, and is probably a good example of how the future of cyberwar will play out: instead of massive attacks aiming to take down the power grid we can expect sophisticated narrowly-targeted dirty tricks. Statecraft, however, lags behind the technology because the present international system has not yet determined an appropriate response to such dirty tricks: are they acts of war? Are they economic sabotage? Or are they just business as usual? I suspect that, per Thucydides’ Melians: “The strong do what they will, and the weak endure what they must.”

Doomsday device

Governments have neither yet developed sensible frameworks for responding to state-level cyber-attacks, nor for justifying their use. Most importantly, governments have not yet developed a workable threshold for attribution: at what point is it acceptable to conclusively pin a particular attack on a particular state? As usual, they have approached the problem backwards: first devise the weapons, then test them, and only then figure out what their use means. In terms of current affairs, that results in weird situations in which attribution is communicated to the press by anonymous government sources regarding alleged hacking by anonymous hackers.

The place where all of this falls down is the human tendency to assume that we have a single enemy at a time – that we are neatly aligned in power-blocs which define one side or the other. The reality of cyberwar and hacking is that any given target may be under attack from multiple entities, some of which may share an agenda, and others which may be opposed. That constitutes a crucial point that many policy makers miss: it means that any cyberwar security policy based on deterrence is fundamentally flawed.

“Instead of massive attacks aiming to take down the power grid we can expect sophisticated narrowly-targeted dirty tricks.”

The only form of deterrence that might possibly work in a cyberwar scenario is a doomsday device – meaning that if you attack us, we will do such horrible damage to everyone that nobody in their right mind will consider us a target. Unfortunately, the key phrase in that is “in their right mind.” Policy makers have consistently failed to appreciate the streak of sociopathic nihilism that runs through parts of the cybersecurity world. Deterrence does not work against someone who just wants to see things burn.

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth

The biggest danger cyberwar reveals is governments’ general incompetence regarding information technology. The basics of attack and defense are well understood and, while defense is not inexpensive, it is part of competent system administration. When you have important people like John Podesta clicking on elementary phishing attack e-mails, there is a deeper problem than simply that an attack succeeded. Regarding the US 2016 elections, it is important to remember that the alleged Russian hacks did no more than reveal what was being said.

In that particular situation the main thing we can learn is that important people do not know how to hire IT staff which can set up an e-mail server, and that important people are really stupid about e-mail. This is rife within government IT, unfortunately: the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) breach did not teach us that the Chinese (or whoever) are spying on government agencies, but it did teach us that government agencies are lackadaisical regarding important information assets, and that the checks and balances are not working. Although there were multiple auditor reports flagging the OPM database as vulnerable, it was not remediated.

Many governments’ cyberwar strategies amount to the so-called “Department of Glass Houses” investing in stone-throwing technology: they are not competent in defense, so they favor attack or tit for tat retaliation because it is something they know how to do. Ultimately, that is a dangerous strategy because “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” results in a lot of half-blind, toothless survivors. Investing in the skills and discipline necessary to defend oneself in cyberspace is a gift that keeps on giving: it blocks attacks from amateurs as well as professionals and translates into reduced long-term system administration costs, as well as fewer incident-response costs. Expecting governments to forgo attack in favor of defense is depressingly difficult, unfortunately. It’s not just hackers who want to see things burn. ♦

“Many governments’ cyberwar strategies amount to the so-called ‘Department of Glass Houses’ investing in stone-throwing technology.”

Marcus J. Ranum was born in New York in 1962. He studied psychology at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and has worked in the security industry for almost 30 years. A pioneer in the development and commercialization of firewall and VPN solutions as well as other technologies that create secure data rooms, he implemented the first e-mail server for the whitehouse.org domain including its intruder-detection system. As an internationally recognized network and security specialist, he consults for numerous companies of various sizes and is a much sought-after speaker for IT conferences. Marcus J. Ranum holds several US patents. He has authored a number of books and publishes in magazines and on the internet. On the freethoughtblogs network he blogs under the name “stderr.”



Living with fear

Text: **Gerald Drissner** | Photos: **Pierre Marsaut**

During the current crisis, many Greeks have stopped trusting their banks, preferring instead to hoard their cash at home under their beds. But burglars have cottoned on to this. Here, an Austrian expatriate in Athens offers his impressions of a deeply insecure country.



People protect themselves any which way they can. In the affluent areas of Athens, private security men patrol the streets. They try to remain as low-key as possible, and note down anything unusual.

On the day I moved in, the man on the ground floor advised me to give him a call if I saw anyone who looked suspicious. He knows everyone here, he said. Like the young Afghan who stands at the intersection every day – he’s already checked him out. “He’s harmless, he’s just begging.” My neighbor lives in constant fear of thieves. Meanwhile, he’s had a new front door installed – one with three locks. In Greece, they say that every lock gains you an extra ten minutes.

Nor is my neighbor alone with his worries. At night, red and blue alarm lights flash on the building façades of Athens, and their sirens ring out if there’s an emergency. In the house opposite, one family has resorted to traditional means by buying two big dogs. The idea is that they’ll scare off burglars, but instead they rob the whole neighborhood of sleep with their barking. In Greek newspaper advertisements, the best apartments to rent usually mention two things: independent heating (so you don’t freeze in the winter), and a security door.



In times gone by, the Athenians used to sleep with their balcony doors open in the summer. Today we see iron meshing, flashing alarm lights and cameras on the façades.

At least since 2010 – when this country at the borders of Europe stood on the verge of bankruptcy – the roughly eleven million inhabitants of Greece have been mired in misery. But what began as a financial crisis has long turned into a profound crisis of trust. Greeks had always mistrusted their own state, but now they don’t believe a word anymore of what their banks or other institutions say – and certainly nothing that the European Union tells them. They’re afraid for their money, emptying their accounts and hiding their cash in secret places. Such as under a mattress, in the freezer compartment of their refrigerator, or even under old olive trees, with a treasure map to help them find it again. Some nouveau riche residents in the Athens suburb of Kifisia even buried their money under a tennis court. The amount of money that’s stashed away is mind-boggling – economists think it might be as much as 18 billion euros.

Easy game for thieves

The mailman recently told me that most retirees are once more having their pension paid out in cash, just like in days gone by. At supermarket checkouts, it can happen that elderly customers pay with a 500 euro note. A few years ago in Spain, this banknote acquired the name “Bin Laden,” because everyone knew it existed, but hardly anyone had ever seen one. But it makes money easy to transport, which is why it’s appreciated by terrorists, money launderers and the mafia. And by wealthy Greeks. A million euros in 500 euro notes would only weigh a little more than four pounds. And if you prefer to save even more space you can buy gold in Greece instead. If the rumors are correct, this gold actually comes from Turkey – the archenemy of the Greeks – and is said to have its origins in dubious dealings with Iran.

This game of hide-and-seek has just one catch. Thieves used to have to rob a bank to strike it rich, but now they just have to break into private homes instead. It’s easy money. Almost every Greek knows someone who has been a victim of theft. At parties, telling stories about being robbed is part of the small talk. For example: August 15, the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, is also called the “day of the thieves.” Half of Athens has already fled to the islands to escape the heat by this time in the summer, and because it’s one of the holiest festivals in the country’s calendar, hardly any of the 50 000-strong Greek police force is at work. So thieves have a fine time of it.

It’s the horror stories most of all that make the rounds – how an elderly woman was threatened with a hot iron until she handed over her savings, or how someone’s young daughter was stripped to make her horrified father break his silence. In January 2016, a 63-year old retired sailor was found dismembered



The photographer Andreas Pliatsikas was the victim of a brutal burglary. When he ran after the burglars, he was struck down with an iron bar. For weeks thereafter, he and his wife stood at their window at night, often for hours on end, too afraid to go to sleep. Now he has installed a camera at every corner of his house.

in the freezer of his Athens apartment. Not long before, a large amount of cash had been taken out of his bank account. And since then, both his cleaning lady and her son have disappeared without a trace. In the fall of 2016, the property of Anna Vissi was robbed – a singer of Cypriot origin who is a superstar in Greece. Several members of the large gang of robbers responsible have been caught. According to the police, one of them was driving a Ferrari.

A growing sense of threat

The Greek word for insecurity is *anasfaleia*. The media have been nurturing this feeling for years with their reports and their statistics. In 2011, the number of break-ins across the country topped 100 000 for the first-ever time. In 2015, it rose yet again, when there were 104 614 so-called property crimes. In other words: one holdup and eleven thefts every hour. Some 60 percent of these crimes take place in Greater Athens.

It is a matter of dispute just how accurately these statistics really reflect reality. Many Greeks hoard illicit earnings and will do all they can to prevent the authorities from finding out about it. So many a burglary remains unreported. The Greek government is desperate for money and is stuck in a dilemma. Hundreds of thousands of citizens are cheating the state of tax revenue, but in response, the only idea the politicians could come up with

was to hike direct and indirect taxes even higher than before. VAT rose to 24 percent in some sectors in 2016. Many company bosses have long left for better pastures. From 2010 to 2016, a total of 17 000 Greek companies moved their base of operations to Bulgaria. But the Finance Ministry isn't backing down, and has set up a special task force to hunt out fraudsters: the so-called "Committee for tracking down liquid funds." Its officers deploy German and Belgian shepherd dogs at airports and sea ports to try and discover illicit money that's carried in people's suitcases.

The Greek language has given us the word "phobia": an exaggerated, compulsive fear of something. If we combine this unpleasant feeling with the Greek word for theft, we have "kleptophobia" – the pathological fear of stealing or, more accurately, of being stolen from. People who have lived through the nightmare of a burglary usually feel it all the more intensely.

Fighting fear with alarm systems

Almost everyone in Andreas Pliatsikas's family lives in Chaidari, on a hill on the outskirts of Athens. The Nazis once ran a concentration camp here; today's inhabitants put up signs warning visitors to beware of vicious Rottweilers. Pliatsikas is a photographer, and from his balcony he has a clear view of the city. A lot of things seem far away here. The crisis, the homeless people, but also the next police station – it's five miles away.



Dr. George Adzaktas, 70, meets his friends in a café every day, discussing the problems of their country, great and small. He's an economist, and says the crisis is not just the fault of the Greeks: "The EU wanted illusions. Now the EU is accusing my generation of having believed those illusions."

In the early hours of March 9, 2013, it was cold and wet. Just before four in the morning, two men opened the balcony door to the first floor of Pliatsikas's apartment. They sneaked into the bedroom and drugged their victims by spraying a sedative into their noses. Then they dragged their spoils onto the balcony to avoid making too much noise. Pliatsikas suffers from respiratory difficulties, and he did not inhale much of the spray. He heard strange noises, woke up, staggered into the living room, and saw two shadows. "Kleptes! Kleptes!" he called, "Thieves!" One of the burglars threw a dagger at him. Pliatsikas, in a state of shock and with blood flowing from his forehead, ran after them until one of them struck him down with an iron bar.

Since then, his family has found it difficult to return to their normal lives. They've installed no less than four cameras outside the entrance to their apartment. In order to open the front door, you have to press a button inside. The light of an alarm system

flashes on the balcony. Pliatsikas and his wife went to therapy for two whole years afterwards. "At the beginning, we stood every night at the balcony door," he says. The baby woke instinctively each day at four in the morning for weeks afterwards, screaming and crying. The doctor said their child might have seen the burglars.

"Of course we asked ourselves why they singled us out," says his wife, Aslanidu. Back then, one of the apartments was rented out to a soccer player who drove a Mercedes. "Andreas's father has a Mercedes – and his sister too," she says. "As for us, we drive a Skoda. But the thieves didn't know that, I'm afraid, so they broke into our apartment."

The party's over now

At a time when everything is becoming abstract and digital, the feel of cash in the hand gives you a sense of security. What's

more, it doesn't leave any trace in the systems of the banks, the financial authorities or intelligence services. Greece is a country full of cash. The total cash held by the population amounts to some 25 percent of the country's GDP. Elsewhere, in the biggest eurozone countries, the figure is under ten percent. The Greek banks are hurting because they've been well-nigh plundered by their savers in recent years. They desperately need deposits in order to go about their main business, extending loans on a long-term basis. Since 2009, almost 50 percent of bank deposits have been withdrawn – some 120 billion euros.

In the Café Meli on Victoria Square in the center of Athens, an illustrious group of people meets every day to talk about their worries and their suggestions to mend this broken country. Eighties music plays in the background – “Time After Time” by Cyndi Lauper and “Caribbean Queen” by Billy Ocean. A giant TV screen shows what's happening out in the world. Tsipouro brandy is served in pint-sized water jugs, alongside small bowls of sausages, olives and pickled fish. A man in a suit with smartly combed hair is sitting at the table. Next to him sits Vassilis, 59, who worked for the state electrical company and who's complaining that his pension has been cut from 1800 to 1200 euros.

Then Dr. George Adzaktas begins to speak. He's a handsome 70-year-old in a white shirt and a leather jacket. In his younger years he worked for the United Nations in Geneva. “We're eating with golden spoons” is what people said 20 years ago in Greece, he says. The politicians knew what counted: “If you want to get reelected, there's only one thing to do: give, give, give.” Another member of his group points out you could saunter through the main streets at three in the morning 20 years ago, looking at the shop windows. “Today those shops are either bust or the shutters are down and they're boarded up.”

George Adzaktas explains how it happened. “The EU wanted illusions. Now the EU is accusing my generation of having believed those illusions.” As an economist, it was a mystery to him right from the start: “We Greeks were earning far too little money to be able to pay euro prices.” So people borrowed money from the bank to be able to enjoy the good life. Back then, the bankers simply leafed through the phone book, calling up everyone. “They were peddling loans on the phone,” he says. “One loan for Christmas, one for Easter, and another for a nice summer vacation.” When it became obvious that no one was ever going to pay it all back, the banks postponed the payment deadlines. “Then people took out new loans to be able to pay back the first ones.” At some point, the interest rate reached 20 percent. “Believe me, some people had up to seven credit cards!”



People who are afraid of burglars come to him: Vikentios Tsirigakis, 45, is specialized in training dogs. It costs about 1000 euros to train a guard dog.

Many Greeks amassed considerable assets at the time and are still living off them today. Adzaktas knows people who have been out of work for six years but are still able to go and eat out in restaurants. But this money, too, will run out. “At some point, the party will be over.”

Trading in fear

The fear of thieves comes from an absence of security. In some places, it's the presence of the police that reassures people. In others, just seeing a lot of people on the streets makes you feel safe. “Or just hearing a dog bark can make you feel better,” says Vikentios Tsirigakis, 45, who has been training dogs for three years. “The crisis has made people lonely,” he says. Some of them have no one left to wait for them at home. Or they've lost their trust in people and see a dog as a possible friend.



The video surveillance for some houses is more reminiscent of a bank or an embassy. Like this property in Chaidari, a suburb of Athens where many wealthy people live.

Harry Georgiadis's sales figures offer proof enough of just how unsafe people feel. He's 47 and the owner of the gun store "Hellas" on Omonia Square in the center of Athens. When his father started the shop back in 1963, there was a park on this famous square. Today, Afghan and Moroccan gangs battle here for dominance in the drug business.

"Business is booming," says Georgiadis. There's a samurai sword in his shop window selling for 280 euros. His bestseller is an air pistol by Smith & Wesson that costs 290 euros. "People are scared now," he says. "Those without a gun license buy air guns and knives. Really big knives."

According to statistics, the eleven million citizens of Greece own a total of 2.5 million firearms. In the villages along the border, some of them even have military weapons in their closets. "We have difficult neighbors," says Georgiadis, and points out that Greece is a gun-friendly country. "A gun is something that you pass on to the next generation in Greece. Every family in

the countryside has two or three beauties they've inherited from their grandfathers." But people rarely take the law into their own hands, he assures us. "No one says: if you steal my car, I'll find you and kill you. That's not possible in Greece. We're not Charles Bronson."

Professionals don't think much of alarm systems, dogs and guns, however. "You have to be a step ahead of the thieves," says Panayotis Touloupas, the manager of "Kolossos Security." He supervises residential complexes that are home to foreigners and diplomats – and also to fearful Greeks. One of these expensive gated complexes lies by the sea to the south of Athens, in Glyfada. The area is popular among millionaires, politicians, stars and starlets. A lifestyle magazine once called Glyfada the "Hamptons on Hellas." The complex is an unobtrusive building, with a small entrance protected by a barrier. Tall walls and lots of greenery block the view of it. There's a golf course nearby. A heavy Mercedes is pulling out of the garage, and a well-dressed man is bringing his daughter to the early-morning school bus.



The inner city used to have good neighborhoods, but now the Athenians steer clear at night – especially from the parks. Homeless people and refugees hunt for places to sleep here, while drug dealers and prostitutes look for customers.

Second-class burglars

Touloupas is a slim man. He has a striking face and only talks when he has to. He leads me on the double through the complex. “We are moving in a completely monitored environment,” he says. The innumerable cameras, microphones and spotlights are well camouflaged, as are the lasers that alert the control room if there is any activity. And his men go out walking undercover in the surrounding area. “Everything is recorded. If you come back a year later, we’ll know who you are.”

Up to now there has been just one attempt at a burglary. The thieves managed to get over the wall, but they had no idea that it was dotted with tiny razors, so they cut their hands open on them. The spotlights shone in their faces, and in their panic they jumped back over the wall, cutting their hands yet again. “The injuries don’t hurt,” says Touloupas. “But your hands are wet from the blood and then you imagine the worst.” The thieves were only just able to get away. But after that it was quiet. “That kind of news spreads quickly among them.”

Touloupas does not think that the security situation is quite as dramatic as most of his fellow citizens believe. Greece is simply following all the important countries, he says, “but ten or twenty years behind them.” The same is true of crime. “New techniques aren’t being developed here. Greeks have relatively little money, that’s why we only get second-class burglars.” The best thieves, he claims, go to Germany and Switzerland – “where the money is.” ♦

Gerald Drissner is an economics graduate who also studied at the Henri Nannen School of Journalism. He grew up in Wald am Arlberg in Austria. After living in Egypt and Tunisia for ten years, he has been resident in Athens since January 2016. His reports and analyses have been published in the “Berliner Tagesspiegel,” the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung am Sonntag,” and in the magazines “Stern” and “profil,” and have won several awards including the renowned Axel Springer Prize.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682), "The Madonna and Child," c. 1650. © LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna



Changeful relationships

Alpha and omega, at once the beginning and the end. This is embodied in our painting here by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, one of the truly great Spanish masters of the 17th century. In no other work of his is its context so important for our comprehension of it. If we look upon it as belonging to the historical series of great depictions of the Madonna and Christ Child, then we are situating it at the close of a centuries-old body of paintings that began with the “Panagia Hodegetria” in the Early Christian, Byzantine world. In that tradition, the mother points the way to her little boy – a way that is predetermined and from which there is no turning left or right. Like an empress of antiquity, Mary presents the future ruler of the Earth on her left arm: inapproachable, and detached from the real world.

At the moment of transition from the late Middle Ages to the early modern period, another archetypal image of this mother-and-child relationship emerges: the “Madonna dell’Umiltà” or “Madonna of humility” in which the Christ Child increasingly becomes a living, approachable, human child. The Mother of God undergoes a similar process, for she is no longer seated on her throne, but resting in a meadow, for example, and the Christ Child is a baby who is actively seeking her attention. These Marys have the looks of a “girl from next door,” and there are many stories from the time about how altarpieces came to depict the facial features of a painter’s girlfriend or lover. These paintings portray small gestures between Mary and Jesus, and can also draw observers into their interplay of gesture and gaze.

Murillo is situated at the end of this process of development. In his painting, the Christ Child does not even have his halo anymore – a feature he had long retained as the Son of God made man. With infinite tenderness, mother and child nestle together. Mary is a summation of all earthly beauty, and is dressed in the most lavish, sensuously depicted silks; the Christ Child in his ingenuous aura immediately captivates every onlooker.

This painting thus does not just bring to a close a specific phase in the history of art. It also stands at the outset of a long series of works whose topic is this profane mother-child relationship, giving expression to the intimate connection between the child and the woman who bore him. It is a symbol of the security, protection and basic trust that can hardly be more deeply felt or experienced.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo was well-nigh predestined to arrive at this form of depiction. He knew the inhabitants of his native city of Seville well, and more than any other Spanish painter he endeavored to paint the simple people, their children,

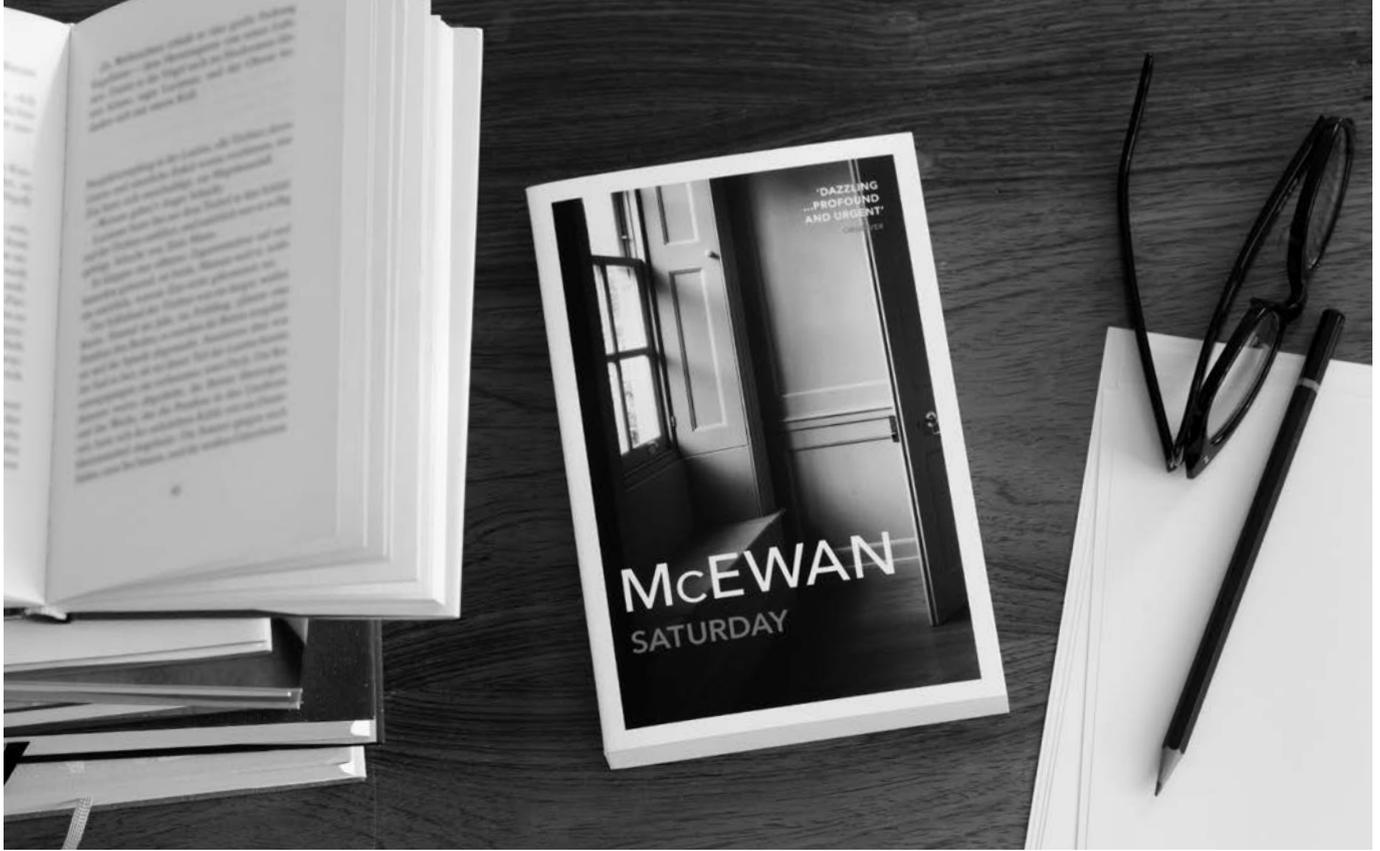
the waifs on the streets and the young beggars, in all their poverty and raggedness. And yet they are characterized most of all by a sense of human pride, not by any external superficialities.

Murillo’s painting thus becomes one of the prototypes of the vibrant, sentimental, mother-child images that we find in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This tradition finds a culmination in the touching self-portrait of the painter Marie Louise Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (1755–1842) with her daughter Jeanne Julie Louise. It was painted in 1789 just before they fled France, traveling eastwards to Italy, then Vienna and Russia. Vigée-Lebrun was a victim of intrigue in Paris, having been accused of an affair with the finance minister Charles Alexandre, vicomte de Calonne. She thereupon felt compelled to leave the country – with the opening salvos of the French Revolution serving to underscore her decision. In the above-mentioned dual portrait, she created a painting that directly symbolizes protection, security and safety. Given the complexity of her private situation, it seems clear that her relationship with her daughter provided her with just such a feeling of refuge.

These ambiguities of the maternal relationship are also inscribed in Murillo’s painting, which are what makes it so special. Initially, we sense the trust and security that the mother offers her child. But conversely, don’t we also feel that the Christ Child is himself a source of support to his mother, as would be natural in such a relationship? Her trust in him later must extend so far as to bear his death on the Cross without being plunged into despair. In that moment when all that a mother holds dear seems destroyed, she cannot let her spirit be broken.

The religious component here seems to have receded completely into the background. But it is immediately there again if we allow ourselves a modern perspective on this religiosity, in which earthly happiness is also of importance for a fulfilled life. In this sense, despite its profane approach, this painting is a pious plea against the notion of suffering Christianity as was propagated by the Counter-Reformation and the Inquisition. It is a plea that we should seek happiness on Earth. We should see this intimate relationship between mother and child, their sense of security and comfort, the effortlessness of their relationship, as a physical metaphor of eternal life after death – but also of a life that we should live in the here and now. ♦

Dr. Johann Kräftner is the director of the Princely Collections of the House of Liechtenstein and from 2002 to 2011 was director of the LIECHTENSTEIN MUSEUM, Vienna. He is the author of numerous monographs on the history and theory of architecture.



That fragile Saturday feeling

He's actually been sleeping well at home in London, but in the night of February 14 to 15, 2003, Henry Perowne wakes up. He gets up and looks out of the window onto a small 18th-century park. He is 48 years old, a successful neurosurgeon, and has two strong-willed, thriving children. He's the protagonist of Ian McEwan's novel "Saturday." And as if the above attributes weren't enough, McEwan tells us: "What a stroke of luck, that the woman he loves is also his wife."

Never before was anything so idyllic. This makes "Saturday" unusual in modern literature, which otherwise prefers to pull out all the apocalyptic stops. Here, McEwan celebrates a miracle of stability, security and success. None of this is self-evident – and yet, thinks Perowne as he looks out at the early dawn, it is astonishing what humanity has managed to achieve, despite all its suffering and misery. We ought to appreciate that. And he goes into raptures – initially about London, then about the very notion of the "city" itself as a paragon of the civilizational project. Cities are miracles of complexity. They are, ponders Perowne, "a brilliant invention, a biological masterpiece – millions teeming around the accumulated and layered achievements of the centuries, as though around a coral reef, sleeping, working, entertaining themselves, harmonious for the most part, nearly everyone wanting it to work."

In his contentment, Perowne thinks about the Saturday that awaits him. God rested on the seventh day, but for the citizens of the 21st century, their free Saturday is a moment of idleness, of relaxation and enjoyment. The shops are open and life bustles around you, though without you, yourself being under the yoke (Sundays, on the other hand, already mean concentrating again on the week ahead). Will this Saturday feeling remain?

Then Perowne notices an airplane in the night sky above London, flying towards Heathrow but with a fire trail behind it. It's February 15, 2003. Since September 11, 2001, airplanes have become a symbol of the vulnerability of the Western world. Osama bin Laden showed how easily the archaic act of a suicide attack can destroy the complexity of modern civilization – that recent object of Perowne's edifying admiration. After New York, is London now to become the next victim of Islamist terror?

Before he makes his way back to bed, Perowne hears on the news that it was only engine damage and that the plane was able to make a successful emergency landing. The Saturday feeling is safe and sound.

On this Saturday, Perowne will play squash with an American colleague, he'll buy the ingredients for a fish stew, and he will

cook for his family this evening. His daughter, a budding poet, is coming back from Paris; his son is already here; and even his father-in-law will be in attendance. Just a perfect day.

Perowne drives to his squash game in his Mercedes S 500. “The street is fine, and the city, grand achievement of the living and all the dead who’ve ever lived here, is fine, too, and robust. It won’t easily allow itself to be destroyed. It’s too good to let go.” While he’s veritably buzzing inside with feelings of ease and of being at one with life, he is involved in a car accident with an oncoming BMW, smashing its side view mirror. Not a big deal – but in the other car there are three men whose world is quite unlike Perowne’s, who possess social manners far removed from his own, and who manage their emotions differently. Once Perowne’s got out of his Mercedes, the central locking system of his car can no longer protect him from this other world. Is this the end of his Saturday feeling?

Ian McEwan’s novel takes place on this one day. There is a large demonstration in progress in London against the Iraq War of Bush and Blair. Perowne belongs to the liberal establishment, as we’d call it today. He is a man of deliberation who thinks through the things of the world. In the matter of the Iraq War he has been ambivalent since a patient with torture scars told him what happens in Saddam’s prisons. Perowne tries repeatedly to establish a precarious balance between the concerns of his own personal happiness and the cares of the outside world. He is no ignoramus who closes his eyes to the problems of the world just because he is living the good life. But he does not wish to share in the miserabilism of the many intellectuals who do business with the unhappiness and the calamities of the world: “Happiness is a harder nut to crack.”

However, there are those three fellows from the car accident who feel that they still have a score to be settled. They burst into Perowne’s world. Can they threaten his happiness? Can the Saturday still be saved? ♦

Ijoma Mangold is in charge of literature in the arts section of the weekly newspaper “Die Zeit” and has won the Berlin Prize for Literary Criticism. He has co-hosted the literary program “Die Vorleser” with Amelie Fried on ZDF (the second German TV channel) and is a member of the quartet of critics featured in the TV program “Lesenswert quartett” on SWR TV in Germany.



Ian McEwan

Born in Aldershot in 1948, Ian McEwan lives today in London. He is regarded as one of the most significant writers on the contemporary English literary scene. His debut book “First Love, Last Rites” was published in 1975. His novel “Amsterdam” was awarded the Booker Prize in 1998.

How can we characterize him? McEwan is always utterly contemporary. His work reflects the political and moral issues of our times in multifarious ways; he joins in the debates of our epoch. Thus in his satirical novel “Solar” (2010) he tackled the topic of climate change; in “Saturday” (2005) he gently challenges the moral self-righteousness of the opponents of the Iraq War; and in “The Children Act” (2014), the atheist McEwan approaches the Jehovah’s Witnesses as a means of portraying the tensions between pre-modern religious convictions and the secular constitutional state.

McEwan is masterly at breathing new life into the forms and genres of literary history. In “Sweet Tooth” (2012) he plays with the quintessentially British genre of the spy thriller. His most recent novel, “Nutshell” (2016), is told from the perspective of an embryo and takes up a quotation from Shakespeare’s “Hamlet”: “O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.”

“It’s not the mines that are the risk”

Recorded by: **Manfred Schiefer** | Photo: **Stephan Rappo**

Katrin Stauffer wanted to find new meaning in her life. So she sold her successful marketing agency, stopped advertising merchandise to which she often felt no connection, and joined the Swiss Army in her late twenties to train as a mine clearance expert.

I was on the road as an explosive ordnance disposal expert for nearly ten years, destroying cluster munition, mines and bombs. I was mostly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Laos. When people hear about what I did, they can hardly imagine anything more dangerous. They see photos of mine victims in the media and read about their fate, while their knowledge of mine clearance is largely gleaned from action movies. What they don't know is that you don't have to be brave to deal with bombs, nor do you have to be a risk-loving adventurer.

I don't hunt out risks. Quite the opposite. As far as my job is concerned, on a scale of one to ten I'd rate my risk appetite at certainly no more than two. Even though I'm dealing with instruments of death, the work itself is no more dangerous than that of a welder. Being an explosive ordnance disposal expert is a craft that you can learn. I went through a thorough training program and always felt safe at work. Of course I've often been faced with tricky situations where there was cause for concern. But I've never feared for my life on account of bombs or cluster munition.

To be sure, I've felt uneasy or unsafe on occasion, but that was for quite other reasons. On my assignments I had to leave my comfort zone and get accustomed to completely new, foreign environments. I soon learned that you tend to feel less safe when you tread unfamiliar ground. The “unknown” in my case wasn't explosives and grenades, but utterly different living conditions and cultural practices. Even if you work with inter-

preters, communicating with local disposal teams isn't always easy. You need a lot of patience. You're in a faraway country having to spend your evenings alone for months on end because you can't understand the locals – and there's no textbook to tell you how to cope with that.

Rules and regulations can be helpful, but there isn't any manual that covers all eventualities. One evening in Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I had a flat tire after dark. It was then that I experienced the most dangerous situation of any of my assignments. I was just a few miles from my destination. But as I stood there in the dark, changing my tire, a drunken troop of local soldiers came by and began to harass me and threaten me.

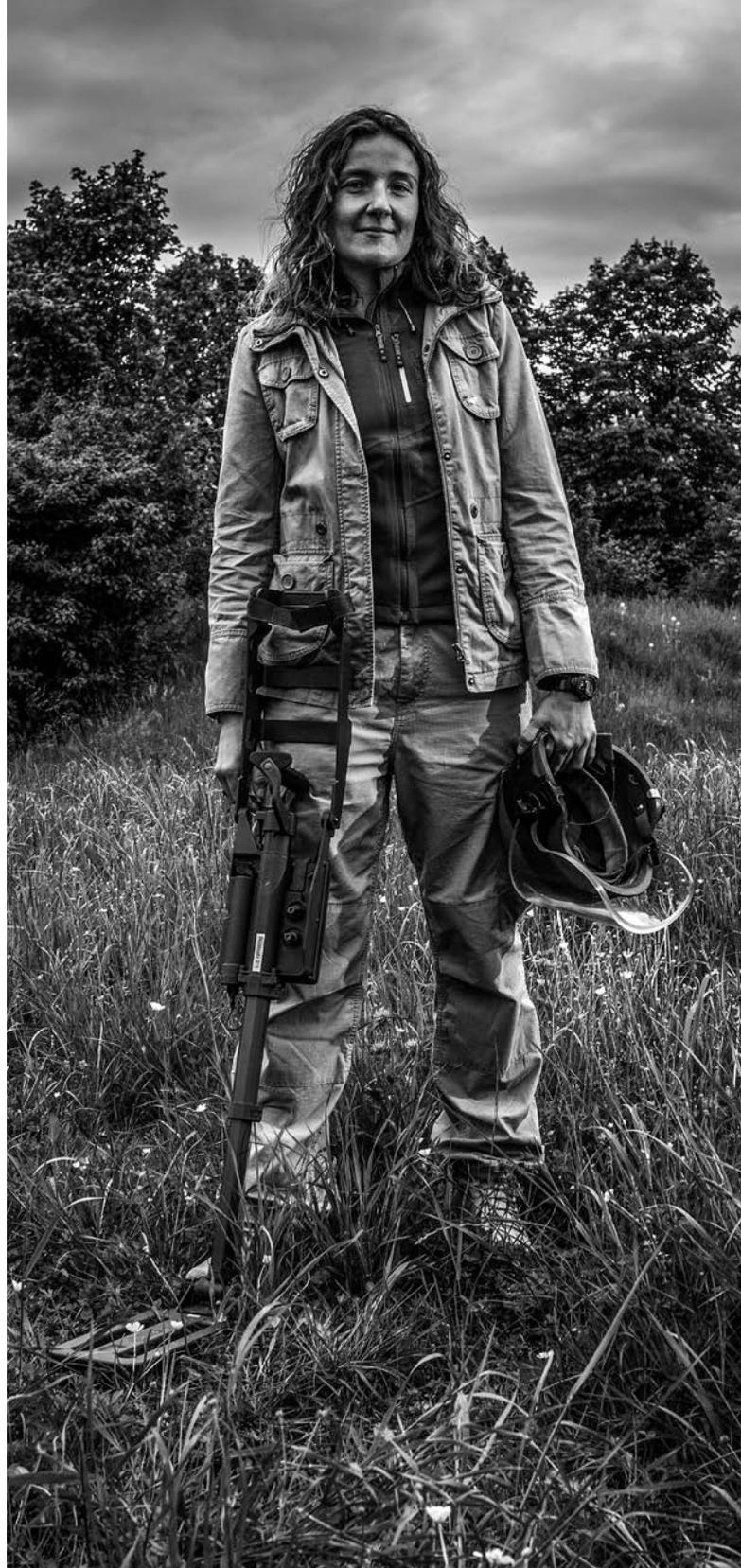
Danger often lurks where you don't suspect it. My experiences have taught me that how safe you feel doesn't depend on the danger you face, be it real or perceived. I've learned that your sense of security increases the more you've managed to cope with insecurity. But it means you have to leave your comfort zone. And the more often you do that, the safer you feel and the broader your scope of action becomes. Feeling safe has something to do with skill, but most of all it's about trusting yourself and your own abilities. I quickly made the rowdy soldiers see reason. I made a show of strength and instinctively switched to attack mode. I shouted at their ringleader – and the fact that a woman would dare to do that served to subdue them all. They didn't help me change my tire, but at least they left me in peace.

Two years ago, I left my comfort zone once more and embarked on a distance learning course in risk, crisis and disaster management at the University of Leicester. I recently completed it. I had initially trained as a graphic designer, and I was by no

means certain how I would fare in a scholarly environment. But I wanted to acquire specialist academic knowledge to complement my practical experience. Not as a means to an end, but in order to get a more comprehensive picture of the tools we can use to master crises and disasters, and above all to learn more about preventive measures.

In my fieldwork in crisis regions, I was repeatedly astonished at how effortlessly the people there deal with crises, even after many years of war and adversity. I think they've become so resilient precisely because of the crises in their lives, not despite them. If you are constantly faced with obstacles, you become more resistant to them. I think nature can serve as our model in this.

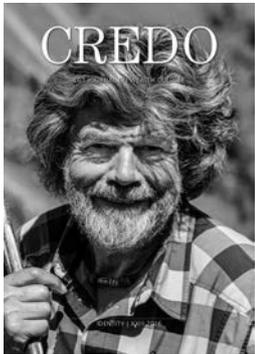
The immune system of the human body functions better if it is subjected to a constant, slight irritation. That stimulates it. I have noticed the same about my own personal development. Every foreign assignment, every new and challenging situation strengthened my capacity to bounce back, making me more resilient. I became more self-confident and better able to cope with crises. I suspect that the same applies to communities, and I would like to investigate this by undertaking field research in small villages in the near future. If my thesis is proved true, then I'm convinced that this experience can also be relevant to organizations. Companies that are constantly faced with small-scale crises will be better able to cope with a major crisis than companies that have pursued a successful path for years without any external opposition. People say that a crisis can be an opportunity. I think that crises offer a lot more than mere opportunities. They strengthen the whole organism – and offer people, companies and even whole communities a greater degree of security. But in return, you have to allow for the possibility of insecurity. ♦



Katrin Stauffer trained as a graphic designer. After several years in the profession, she founded an advertising agency, which she sold in 2008 when she joined the Swiss Army. She trained as an explosive ordnance disposal expert and army diver and was sent on assignments in Asia, Africa and Europe. Since February 2017, Katrin Stauffer's own consultancy firm RISKey has been active in the fields of conventional munitions disposal and mine action, supporting companies and public institutions in increasing their resilience in the face of different types of crises. www.riskey.org

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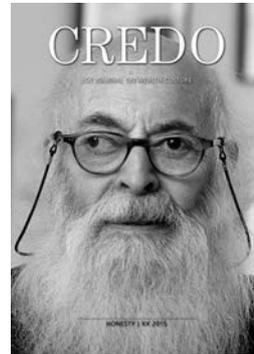
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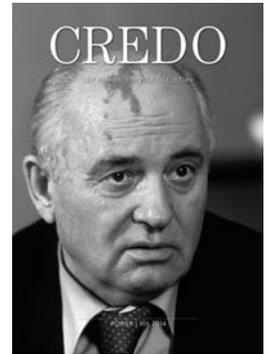
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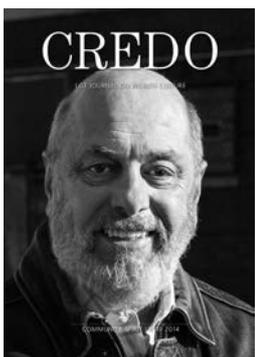
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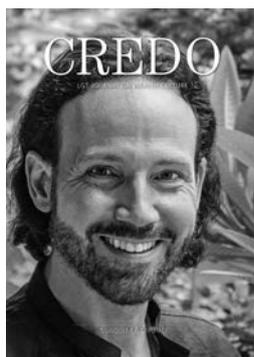
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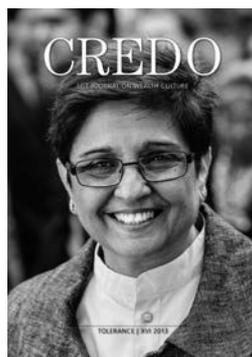
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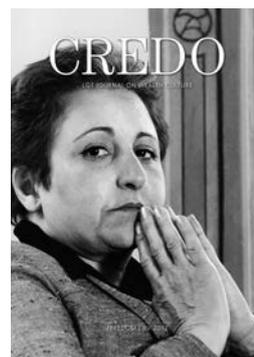
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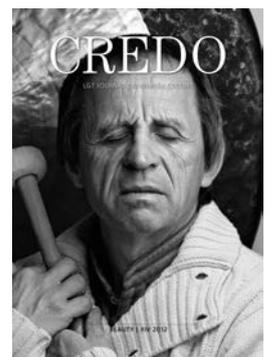
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LGT Bank (Switzerland) Ltd.
Lange Gasse 15, P.O. Box
CH-4002 Basel
Phone +41 61 277 56 00
Fax +41 61 277 55 88
lgt.ch@lgt.com

LGT Vestra LLP
14 Cornhill, London
EC3V 3NR
Phone +44 20 3207 8000
Fax +44 20 3207 8001
info@lgtvestra.com

LGT Bank (Singapore) Ltd.
3 Temasek Avenue
#30-01 Centennial Tower
Singapore 039190
Phone +65 6415 3800
lgt.sg@lgt.com

LGT Bank (Hong Kong)
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