

# A failed coup, people power in Iran and pages of inspiration

**It's been a seismic year for news in Europe but one of the oddest stories came last week** when 25 conspirators were arrested in Germany, accused of plotting to overthrow the government. The eclectic grouping, known as the Reichsbürger plotters, espoused a far-right ideology but hailed largely from the centre of respectable German society, headed up by an elderly minor aristocrat and including family doctors, judges, a celebrity chef and an opera singer.

Berlin bureau chief Philip Oltermann asks how far the plotters might seriously have got and what it all means for Germany. And columnist Jonathan Freedland argues that the case is more evidence that the greatest terror threat facing the world no longer comes from radical Islam, but the white far-right.

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**Three months have passed since fervent anti-regime demonstrations began in Iran.** As more grim details emerged of public executions of protesters and the grotesque targeting of women by security forces, Christopher de Bellaigue takes a deep look at the movement, in particular the role played by women and young people, and asks what it might take for a popular revolution to succeed.

**Iran's moment of truth** [Page 34](#) →

**If, like us, you've been scratching your head for good gift ideas this festive season,** our entire Culture section this week is taken up with the best books of 2022, from fiction to science and everything in between. Dive in and take your pick!

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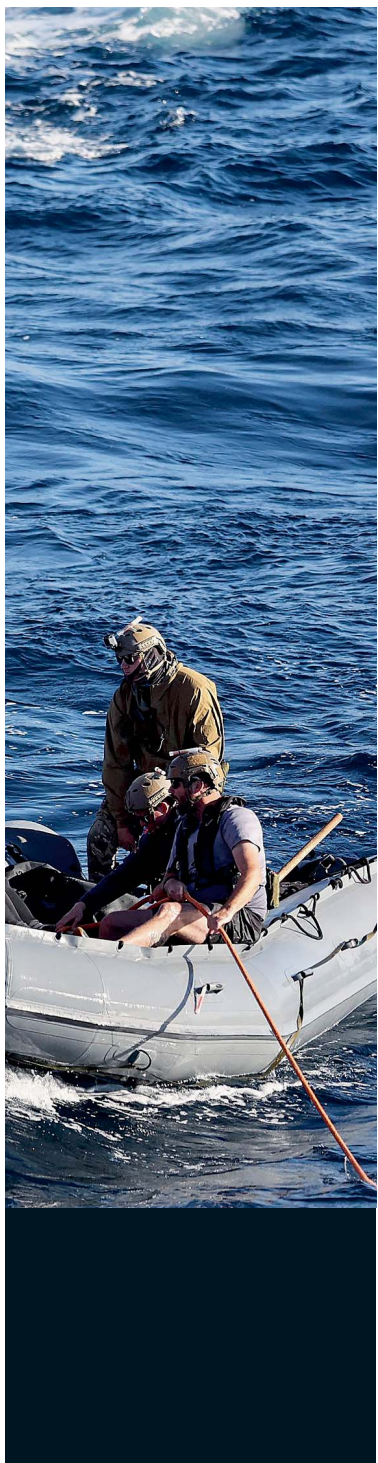
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**On the cover**  
Could the Reichsbürger conspirators have posed a serious threat to Germany's order, or were they just a bunch of eccentrics? "I don't believe ... [they] would have succeeded," said Peter Neumann, a terrorism expert at King's College London. "The important question is how much damage they could have caused trying to do so."  
*Illustration: Guardian Design*