

# Current Concerns

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## The relationship between de Gaulle and Monnet: “The duel of the century”

### What would General de Gaulle have said about the European Stability Mechanism?

by Rita Müller-Hill

*In this spring, the German Bundestag should still hastily agree to the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). Apart from the billion sums that should be extorted from the joining states' taxpayers and which we can read about now and then in the daily press, the ESM contains an extensive surrender of sovereignty rights. It intervenes in particular extensively in the “budget law” of every parliament: namely the right to determine the own national budget. The ESM takes away the biggest part of still remaining sovereignty from the state peoples and subjects them to a dictatorial board of governors and a board of directors. Members of the executives of the joining countries belong to these committees, including also non-Europeans. A control or say by the national parliaments is not intended. The fund volume can be raised arbitrarily without approval of the respective national parliaments, that is be taken from the budgets of the member states. These, in turn, have no right of objection. A notice of the “contract” is also not intended. The approval is “irrevocable”. The fund is not subject to national law. Its supervisory board committee, its board of directors and all its employees are juridically immune and exempt from all taxes.<sup>1</sup>*

De Gaulle had already envisaged what Eric Roussel wrote ecstatically about Jean Monnet: “What really counts is the spirit of beginning. In my opinion, the expression ‘genius’ is not out of place in this regard. While he struck this first blow against the absolute sovereignty of the states, Monnet hit major gaps. This is where the truly essential can be found.”

Why do most media not report about this planned “enabling act” which comes along as “a stability mechanism”? Why do most politicians not speak openly about that or play it down?<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of the 60s General de Gaulle as French president, whose relation to Monnet is also called the “duel of the century”, commented again and again on the issue, how a European community could be designed, which conditions

would have to be given, so that the single state people would not have to hand over their sovereignty rights. The intention was to live in a free and peaceful Europe of independent, democratic states, linked in friendship and mutual respect. It is good to remember this. De Gaulle's vision can serve definitely as a compass in the current European politics of the “experts” without any principles and aloof

centralized states. We see a more federal Europe with increased power in Brussels, less power in Paris, Madrid or Berlin, but more in Barcelona or Toulouse. The traditional nation states will never be exactly the same again. They will become less powerful, but this will be to Europe's benefit. If some day we became a state, we wouldn't have our own army, foreign policy, border control or customs, currency or

#### In the service of peace

De Gaulle saw the opportunities which an independent Europe of the nations would have had between the priorities of tension during the cold war: to be a conciliatory power devoted to peace between the blocks. Today's world is in urgent need of such a power.

from every democratic say. Uncontrolled by sovereign people, they brood measures in the back rooms, obliged to the interests of their “former” employers (e.g. *Goldman Sachs*). Recently the present Italian Prime Minister *Monti* has not spoken any more of the “people” or “state people”, but of the “populations” of Europe, a concept, that so far has not been used for the sovereign, the state people.<sup>5</sup>

“[...] how a European community could be designed, which conditions would have to be given, so that the single state people would not have to hand over their sovereignty rights. The intention was to live in a free and peaceful Europe of independent, democratic states, linked in friendship and mutual respect.”

#### Dictatorship as “regionalism”

Maybe he should prepare already for the nation states split up into regions as they have been welcomed in “Le Monde” on 17 February 2012 to the example of Catalonia: “We envision a Europe that places greater emphasis on Europe and the territorial governments and less emphasis on

central bank. But we *would* have local policies, basic public services, infrastructure, internal security and a tax system [...]”, said *Artur Mas*, president of the regional government of Catalonia.<sup>6</sup> All European nation states will be under disability. The president of Catalonia demonstrates it to us: ideal model of a EU member – from the start he renounces all civil rights and liberties and degrades Catalonia to a service enterprise for Europe. Then the achievements of the enlightenment, the civic mentality of the citizen will be gone!

At this point let us recall the American programme as *Jean Monnet* describes it in his memoirs: “The cooperation on equal terms between the United States and divided and fragmented Europe is impossible. It is possible alone if France and Germany unite, and they have already started creating a wide European entity in the perspective like a second America.”

Uniting Germany and France was de Gaulle's heartfelt wish. Let us remember the Elysée treaty of 1963 whose principal item was the reconciliation and free cooperation of both nations. Without any intrusion by a third party. But: this was prevented by the famous preamble whose author very likely was Monnet himself as we can learn again from his memoirs. “In the meantime we had

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### "The relationship between ..."

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edited [...] text, which the parliament strategists translated into a form of a preamble and which was unanimously accepted by the Bundestag on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. In it we mentioned 'the retention and the strengthening of the cohesion of the free peoples, in particular a narrow cooperation between the United States and Europe, a common defence within the scope of Nato, the unity of Europe with Great Britain.' This preamble and the unanimity moved the things again in place, and the contract as such lost the character of an exclusive political alliance to become a purely administrative expression of the German French reconciliation which had been decided 12 years before with the *Schumann plan*.<sup>8</sup>

De Gaulle's vision of Europe of sovereign states has become clear at the latest since the failed enforcement attempt of the European defensive community (EVG) 1954: *He argued in favour of a Europe of sovereign nations, against supranational Europe*. For him the fact that people submit to a majority decision of foreign representatives ("l'aréopage" – areopagus) is synonymous with the danger that one submits to a "fédérateur" (unifier) or hegemon coming from outside who could be able to force the reluctant nations to compliance of foreign decisions.<sup>9</sup>

"It might be clear to everybody that no people would allow to entrust his destiny to an areopagus which would consist primarily of strangers [...]. Furthermore it is clear to everybody that multilateral Atlantic politics would mean for the position of Europe that it would no longer have any [...]."<sup>10</sup> "The duty of national independence in the areas of defence and economy would amount to a connection with an Atlantic system that is consequently with the Americans, one would be subordinated to what the Americans call their 'leadership'. [...] Therefore France refuses to let sink itself and Europe in an underhanded undertaking, which exposes the states, which brings people on wrong ways and prevents the independence of our continent [...]."

### Mix chestnuts to chestnut puree

A supranational European integration leads to a dissolution of the nations ("like sugar in coffee") and to a uniformity of the European people: "France knew as well as all the others, however, above all, much better than those who are no Europeans that Europe only exists due to its nations and their nature and history; that our continent has developed into what it is now and that the fusion can only mean confusion here if not even oppression; that one is no European if one is without native country; that mentioning for example Chateaubriand, Goethe, Byron, Tolstoy –

to mention only the Romanticists – they would not have served Europe much if they had written in some form of Esperanto or Volapuk, but they are great writers of Europe, because every one of them drew inspiration from his country's heritage."<sup>12</sup> [For the French the epoch of the Romanticism lasts 40 years and begins with the French Revolution. Note of the author.]

"Every people differs from the other by its incomparable personality which is invariable and irreversible. If you want the nations to unite, do not try to mix them with each other as one mixes chestnuts to a chestnut puree. [...] I believe, that presently, not different from other eras, a unification in Europe cannot be a merger of the peoples, but that it must arise from systematic convergence."<sup>13</sup>

De Gaulle was explicitly against the supranational character of the institutions at European level and *recommended a political body which is formed by members of the national governments and respects the sovereignty of the European nations*.<sup>14</sup>

### Plebiscites must be held

Charles de Gaulle wanted to create a "Europe of the peoples and the nations" and to take into account the democratic and realistic circumstances according to this double claim.

For de Gaulle the democratic postulate implicates to build up Europe on the acceptance of the peoples, beyond the sole will of political leaders. Hence Charles de Gaulle advocated plebiscites:

"This Europe will be born if the peoples decide deep inside to join it. It is not enough that the parliaments decide ratification. Plebiscites must be held."

"On which pillars can Europe be built? In reality these are the states which are of course absolutely different, one from the other, with every single state having its own soul, its own history, its own language, its misfortune, its fame, its own ambition; but the states are the only bodies with right and authority to act. To imagine that there would be something outside and beyond the states, which would have a chance of succeeding and which would be favoured by the peoples is a figment."

In every sentence of these statements of de Gaulle, the reader notices the respect for the will of the people, for the democratic state. In the same breath the possibility of subordination to a "leadership" of any kind whatsoever, is called self-abandonment.

The "duel of the century" was exactly about this issue: On the part of de Gaulle it was respect of the people's will and thus the protection of sovereignty versus the surrender of sovereignty and rule of the "experts" by avoiding the people's will on the part of Monnet and his American friends.

The ESM with its uncontrolled board of directors and board of governors and

their de facto authorisation to intervene in the budgets of the "contracting partners", whenever it seems necessary to them, does not correspond with national sovereignty so highly estimated by de Gaulle. It leads us directly to his predicted "oppression": Slavery of a foreign power. The connection between surrender of sovereignty and subordination under a hegemon was evident for de Gaulle. A nation's people losing its sovereignty can make no independent decisions, neither inwards nor outwards. And if many "beheaded" peoples are mixed together like a "chestnut puree", this does not lead to independent decisions, but the "third person who benefits" will take the lead and order.

De Gaulle saw the opportunities which an independent Europe of the nations would have had between the priorities of tension during the cold war: to be a conciliatory power devoted to peace between the blocks. Today's world is in urgent need of such a power.

Nevertheless should we not reflect on an alternative? Even if the prophets in the towrope of Monnet repeatedly try to persuade us that there is no other alternative to supranational Europe than a war?

The EFTA, unwanted by the USA, was and is such an alternative: "[...] an own grouping, a small foreign trade zone, in which the sovereign nations worked together on an equal and liberal base with each other."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.krivor.de/bilder/esm-vertragsentwurf.pdf](http://www.krivor.de/bilder/esm-vertragsentwurf.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Gérard Bossuat et Andreas Wilkens, *Jean Monnet, l'Europe et les chemins de la paix: actes du colloque de Paris du 29 au 31 mai 1997*, p. 490

<sup>3</sup> Schäuble on the occasion of the European Banking Congress 2011

<sup>4</sup> Eric Branca, de Gaulle – Monnet: le duel du siècle. [www.observatoiredeleurope.com/De-Gaulle-Monnet-le-duel-du-siecle\\_a1434.html](http://www.observatoiredeleurope.com/De-Gaulle-Monnet-le-duel-du-siecle_a1434.html)

<sup>5</sup> Mario Monti, *Fremde Federn*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15/02/2012

<sup>6</sup> [www.it-intransit.eu/le-monde-interview-president-mas-catalonia-could-easily-be-state-within-european-union](http://www.it-intransit.eu/le-monde-interview-president-mas-catalonia-could-easily-be-state-within-european-union)

<sup>7</sup> Jean Monnet, *Mémoires*, Fayard, Paris 1976, p. 547

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 551

<sup>9</sup> *Press conference of 15 May 1962*. All quotations translated by the author, quoted from Laurent de Boissieu, *Une certaine idée de l'Europe*, [www.gaullisme.net/europe-gaulliste.html](http://www.gaullisme.net/europe-gaulliste.html)

<sup>10</sup> *Press conference of 31 January 1964*, cf. annotation 9

<sup>11</sup> *Press conference of 23 July 1964*, cf. annotation 9

<sup>12</sup> *Press conference of 12 November 1953*, cf. annotation 9

<sup>13</sup> De Gaulle, *Mémoires d'Espoir*, p. 181, quoted after Laurent de Boissieu, *Une certaine idée de l'Europe*, <http://www.gaullisme.net/europe-gaulliste.html>

<sup>14</sup> *Press conference of 15 May 1962*, cf. annotation 9

<sup>15</sup> *Press conference of 14 November 1949*, cf. annotation 9

<sup>16</sup> *Press conference of 5 September 1960*, cf. annotation 9 (All Press conferences of General de Gaulles can be found according to their date on the Internet.)

<sup>17</sup> Werner Wüthrich, *Making resound the "European orchestra"*. *Current Concerns* No 4, 5 February 2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

## “La France et l’Allemagne face à l’Union européenne” “France and Germany vis-à-vis the European Union”

In late January 2012 a conference on “La France et l’Allemagne vis-à-vis l’Union européenne” was conducted at the Université Paris 8 in St. Denis. It was organized by the French “Comité Souveraineté Nationale” and chaired by Alain Bournazel and Zeit-Fragen (Horizons et débats).

hg. After a welcoming address by Alain Bournazel and the representative of Zeit-Fragen, Jean-Luc Schaffhauser, délégué général de la fondation CAPEC and président de l’Académie Européenne spoke on the topic “Can there be a German Europe?”

### Today we are working for the banks

Schaffhauser began his presentation by reflecting the unity of Europe as it had been conceived by *Charlemagne*, as a universal idea of Christianity in cultural, spiritual and political respects. By comparison, today’s EU and its institutions, which were oriented merely economically from the very outset, are nothing but a perverted project that does not consider the diversity and specificity of nations. We used to have a social market economy: the economy worked for the society, for the benefit of the people. *Public politics was the regulative power for the common good. It was about the benefit of all. Today we are working for the banks. Liberal policy defies all ideological revisions.*

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As long as the individual countries were still in control of their monetary sovereignty, they were able to balance the course of their economies by revaluation and devaluation of their currencies. With the introduction of the euro this possibility was gone, and the differences between the economies deepened. Germany benefited from that situation and was able to keep up its wage and inflation levels. Furthermore it had a competitive advantage with its traditional industries. 85% of German profits are made within the EU. The German export surpluses determine the other EU countries’ deficits. While Germany mainly exports to the euro area, France and Italy export much more to the dollar

area and to other countries. This model is not sustainable and results in anti-German feelings. When the southern countries collapse, Germany will collapse as well. *This system would have been sustainable only in case the profits of the north would have been invested in the south, so that the south would have been in a position to export to the north in return.* Instead, failed real estate investments and services were carried out in the south which, however, did not at all improve these countries’ payment abilities. A phantom called tourism was made the “sacred cow”.

Instead of a strictly liberal point of view in which “freedom” rules over co-operation Germany would have to find its way back to the path of solidarity. Moreover, Europe should return to protectionism in the individual countries.

### The dissolution of the EU must soon take place in an orderly manner

Roland Hureaux, essayist, member of the scientific board of the *Fondation Charles de Gaulle*, talked about “*La monnaie unique, un problème culturel*”.

Each European country has its history, its language, its cultural, ideological and economic characteristics and attitudes. Correspondingly, their economies are shaped differently. Prior to the introduction of the euro – Hureaux explained – the differences in the economies could be compensated via different currency rates. Mrs *Thatcher*, for example, did not enable Britain’s economic boom primarily by liberalizing the country’s economy but by devaluating the pound. National currencies and their exchange rates were used as reliable warning signals for a country’s indebtedness.

Then, the euro was introduced with the promise to harmonize the European economy. The opposite was the case. The differences between the countries worsened. While Germany has an inflation rate of 5–6%, it is on a 20–30% level in Spain and on a 50% level in Greece.

Another consequence of the European integration was the decreasing interest to learn about the neighboring European states, especially in the field of language and culture. Nowadays, fewer people learn German and French and visit each other. Instead, China and other distant countries are being visited and everybody is learning English. Today *the EU is fueling animosity instead of promoting cultural and linguistic knowledge* – Hureaux explained. Among other things it also obstructs the Franco-German friendship by promoting the English language. The EU was in fact directed against a Franco-German coop-

eration. Hureaux was outraged that Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain are called PIGS countries. His indignation together with his claim that relations within the EU ought to be based on mutual respect was exactly how the audience felt.

*The dissolution of the EU has to happen soon, in an orderly manner.* We should return to the recognition of differences, based on the realities and the cultures, on respect and not on disregard. We are the true Europeans who stand for a Europe of nations.

### No to the world-empire

Nicolas Stoquer spoke on the topic of “*Les relations franco-allemandes, pour quelle France et quelle Allemagne?* »

The centralization of the EU was shaped on the model of the Holy Roman German Empire with its emperor. *The forces that wanted to build the EU, did basically not want to build Europe but a world empire.* Stoquer contrasted a Europe of nations with a Franco-German motor just as General de Gaulle had intended it to be with this idea. Gaullism had not been an anti-European movement. The issue had been a Europe of nations, without steering committee, but with democratic structures and the necessary respect for the identity of others. Switzerland, with its direct democracy was an important example. Since it had a democratic structure, respect for each other always prevailed – so Stoquer.

### Goldman Sachs’ euro dictatorship

Jürgen Elsässer, writer and editor-in-chief of the magazine *Compact*, expressed his ideas on the subject of “*L’euro dictature de Goldman Sachs face à l’axe Paris-Berlin-Moscou*”.

At the beginning Elsässer commented on what he had previously heard as follows: The danger was great that the euro would destroy Europe. Therefore, we had to cooperate as sovereignists. The German policy, the export surplus and the German capital were not the problem. *The motor of destruc-*

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This system would have been sustainable only in case the profits of the north would have been invested in the south, so that the south would have been in a position to export to the north in return.

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**"La France et l'Allemagne ..."**

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tion was international financial capital. Prior to the euro all countries were in a better situation. We should return to that state.

In Schaffhauser's presentation he had noticed the concern that Germany might utilize the export surplus to buy up other countries. This risk was small, he said, which showed in the relationship between Germany and Russia. The German government was the one that supported *Putin* most. The German surpluses were invested in Russia and used for Russian development under Russian command. Everything was under Russian control. The former German attitude as it had been at its most extreme level during the Second World War, had disappeared among the German political elite. If there were still German-Russian animosities they came from groups that were associated with the United States. One could take the Russian example to shape a Europe of nations: *Making export surpluses available to the weaker countries without any imperialist neo-colonialist claims*. Three points – Elsässer said – were central to Europe: It ought to be a *Europe of nations*. It would have to be shaped in a *continental manner rather than in a global one*. It should be considered *transcontinental and not transatlantic*.

At the beginning of his lecture Elsässer showed how the American private bank *Goldman Sachs* had been maneuvering Greece into a debt crisis since 2000/2001, with large profits for the bank.

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The motor of destruction was international financial capital. Prior to the euro all countries were in a better situation. We should return to that state.

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At the time being, *Goldman Sachs* had channeled informants into the leading bodies of the ECB and the ESM. *Goldman Sachs* and the Anglo-Saxon financial industry do not want to destroy the euro, but use it as a milking machine to redirect continental European capital into their pockets. According to *Merkel's* plan the Greeks, Spaniards, and Italians would have to save even more money before they are given credits from the rescue package. According to *Sarkozy's* plan the support funds will be granted prior to the debt brake. Both plans lever out national sovereignty in favor of an EU economic dictatorship.

"Both models will result in a dictatorship, a EUSSR. It will differ from the historical USSR, only by the fact that it *does not rest on a socialist but on a financial capitalist basis*, and that its command center is not in the Moscow Kremlin, but in *Wall Street*

and the City of London" – Elsässer concisely characterized the situation.

This is neither the wish of the German people, the genuinely German industry, of family businesses nor of the MSEs. The idea is to reclaim the Europe of nations prior to the Maastricht Treaty of 1991, as suggested and originally designed by de Gaulle and Adenauer. "To put it briefly: EC instead of EU, Eurasian orientation instead of Euro-Atlantic orientation, sovereignty instead of globalism" – were Elsässer's concluding words.

**"Role of the SMEs in democracy"**

Eike Hamer, editor of the magazine *Wirtschaft Aktuell*, addressed the "role of the SMEs in a democracy" (*Rôle des PME dans la démocratie*).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the social middle class are the driving forces for our economies, for example by providing 80% of jobs in the private sector and generating more than 80% of the net government revenue in Germany. This makes them an important cornerstone of democracy. In order to fulfill their social responsibilities as the most innovative units of the economy, SMEs need the entrepreneurial freedom and a reliable legal framework in a decentralized system. One of the most positive examples for that was Switzerland – Hamer explained.

SMEs need a reasonable state, not too little of it but above all not too much. However, in the EU the state is increasingly expanding at the expense of the citizens by curtailing personal freedom, overloading the SMEs with bureaucracy and depriving them of the means they need for their growth. The *European Stability Mechanism ESM* is a new dimension of this patronage. Democratic rights of participation are eliminated; the wishes of entire population groups do not play a part in decision taking processes. The EU expands permanently, aggravates the financial burden and thus automatically pushes back the SMEs. This also leads to shrinking wealth, because SMEs are the main driving force of our economy.

In Europe, we are all in the same boat: International capital powers want to patronize us and state officials want to control us. Both represent strictly hierarchical, centralized systems. The SMEs, however, need decentralized systems, just like in Switzerland. A Europe of nations (with monetary sovereignty) is required, with nations working in partnership and providing the people with enough personal freedom and adequate conditions for the SMEs. This could spark off economic miracles, similar to the 1950s and 1960s with its social market economy under the leadership of *Ludwig Erhard*.

**Revitalization of communes**

Henriette Hanke Güttinger, historian and psychologist, spoke about "Putting an end

to the straitjacket of the EU – the revitalization of communes and the encouragement of the citizens" (*Pour en finir avec le carcan de l'UE: Revitalizer les communes en encourageant les citoyens à s'engager*). The lecture is reprinted in full below.

Alain Bournazel summarized the meeting as follows:

The event shows that the dialogue between different nations is very easy if you share common values. The contact between the various groups and disciplines is very simple.

The national aspect dominates; the nations do not disappear, they are alive.

The event has shown the will to opt out of the EU with its rigid supranational institutions and perverse mechanisms. A class of bureaucrats claims they could impose their decisions onto the countries. At the national level the EU behaves as if it were an extreme straitjacket. This monster takes away the air we breathe.

The EU is not conducive to peace. In reality it is a source of permanent conflict.

A membership in the EU is nothing but a voluntary servitude, which can be waived. The desire of the citizens to get out of this straitjacket is obvious. The idea is to give the citizens their will back. It must be the guiding principle and must have priority over the head of this organization.

In the European countries there are democratic deficits. *Therefore, we need to introduce instruments of direct democracy: the Referendum and the People's initiative*.

Switzerland as a non member of the EU must be envied. It has a privilege: people can live and breathe. Switzerland as a voluntary nation is based on the respect for the individuality of others, respect of the four national languages and cultures. The speakers all agreed that *Switzerland could be a model for Europe*.

In a Europe of nations, as for example, demanded by General de Gaulle, there is no contradiction between the nation, patriotism and the spirit of cooperation. The countries are neither isolated nor do they cut themselves off. On the contrary: They develop through mutual cooperation and debate. Different nations respect their differences and identities in free cooperation, in mutual respect. What unites people from different countries is this: We want that responsible citizenship and international solidarity prevail.

The event showed how important and productive a careful and thorough exchange between the different countries at the citizens' level may be if it is based on mutual respect and esteem.

Stop the straitjacket of the EU – revitalization of communes through and by encouragement of the citizens. •

(Translation Current Concerns)

# Putting an end to the EU straitjacket

## Revitalizing the communes through encouragement and strengthening of the citizens

by Dr phil Henriette Hanke Güttinger, historian and psychologist

### Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for us to attend this important meeting and make a contribution to the issue: *How do we get to making the EU dispensable?*

First of all we want to say a few words about why we were so happy to be invited. Being Swiss citizens this invitation from France means something special to us. Our western neighbour, who we feel very close to, is a nation with a long and great history, and we do have much in common with you. Above all, we have a great appreciation for the important contribution of France to the Western culture, the European Enlightenment, the development of democracy and human rights.

We share the quest for freedom and the opposition to foreign domination in the historical development of both France and Switzerland. The French word "résister" carved in a stone tower of the fortress at Aigues-Mortes corresponds both to the basic attitude of both French citizens and Swiss Confederates. We only have to remember *de Gaulle* or the founding ideas of our Swiss Confederation.

Now let us return to our conference topic:

In many European countries we observe a similar trend. In context with the merging of communes and later in the course of globalization, more and more villages have been emptied. The post offices, pubs and bistros, the village groceries and soon also the local schools have disappeared. This also meant that the common work and with all its everyday conversation, one of the foundations of political and democratic culture, have disappeared.

So we were asking ourselves the following question:

*How can we revitalize life in the communes – in France you call them "municipalités" – and in the cantons (in France these are the 'départements'), which means to take democracy seriously again?*

*What is in our hands – in the hands of every one of us – to shape our communal life, to organize ourselves instead of waiting to see what the top-down policy or the EU centralization has to offer? It is ultimately the question: if Europe is to be different and if we do not want to allow the cancer to spread, what do we have to do? We must set off at the root of political and social life, which is in the communes. Life*

*must be revitalized in the basic unit – the municipalité or the commune in Switzerland. This will spread and have an influence on the whole country.*

*This also answers our question on how the EU can be made dispensable.*

We want to start at what is already there. Enjoying companionship and community is something that is part of our human nature. Thus, in the communes we are very likely to find some musical groups, sports clubs (*cercles sportives*), women's circles (*amicales des femmes*), hunting clubs, volunteer firemen (*pompiers*), veterans associations (*associations ancien combattant*), *pétanque* (*boules*) clubs, reading societies (*club de lecture*), libraries, etc. Being active in the interest of the Bonum commune – not for personal profit or merely egocentric pleasure – we can begin to revitalize our communes. Not to forget the wonderful French tradition of the "tables d'hôtes" (guest tables).

France is in the fortunate position of having a *great number* of communes.

As far as I know, France with its 65 million inhabitants has a total of 36,500 communes with an average population of 1,700, which are a manageable number and not an anonymous mass. France is the European country with the largest number of small communes. This is of enormous advantage, because it can get the people involved optimally. It is a condition that has to be reactivated and asserted. In addition, these communes have been enjoying considerable autonomy since 1884. As I have heard there have not been any systematic communal reforms in France for over 200 years. This basic state forms have thus a long tradition and grant the people *support and identity*.

### Where is the problem and where is the solution?

Under American hegemony, along with the establishment and consolidation of the EU, initiative and political participation in terms of thinking things through on the part of the citizens was no longer desired. The consequences are pervasive. Until the 1960s a lively communal life, supported by the initiative of each individual, had been prevailing. It was followed by an EU policy, characterized by steamrolling conformity by means of nonsensical laws and regulations. The countries with their communes had to depend on these rigid requirements, because money was only granted for very specific projects. This resulted in a tunnel vision aimed at realizing only those projects for which money was

given. Thus the EU reiterates the policy of *centrally planned economy*, for which the former Soviet Union was denounced by the so-called free West in the strongest terms.

With its subsidy policy, the EU has generated a sense of dependency among its citizens and has tried to stifle individual initiative. One may assume that the EU wants to prevent the participation of its citizens, because it fears for its own loss of power. This can result in an attitude in our people to hopefully look up and wait, instead of using our own minds and think: What do we have, what do we need, what can we build by means of our own skills? Have our ancestors not created all this spiritual substance and political culture, science and technology in order to establish the foundation of our civilization and Western Christian culture?

Anything that keeps a commune together and enables the living together, from water supply to forestry, from waste management and nature conservation to the regulation of social affairs – everything is working very well without a route-one approach from Brussels. On the contrary, the EU brings everything to a halt and paralyzes life.

Let us take a look at how communal life develops.

It emerges from joint action, through the joint development of possible solutions to common challenges. Growing together and becoming stronger results in a sense of belonging, a sense of responsibility for the whole. This also increases the confidence in everybody's own power. Individuals become friends and comrades who like to cooperate, and our sons and daughters, our students and young people like to prepare their own future in a joint effort with us. This is *the* one and only cure for the feelings of helplessness and resignation. And it has been like that since time immemorial, worldwide, because it corresponds with the social nature of man.

Just to give you one small example of a community from the Cevennes. More than 100 years ago, the inhabitants there established a "Club Cévenol" which campaigns for the preservation of the traditional Cevennes culture and nature. The people there have always defied the harsh natural conditions with great tenacity and impressive ingenuity. I quote from *Current Concerns*: "To irrigate a small meadow of 20 m width, a one kilometer-long water-channel was cut into the

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<sup>1</sup> Citoyen refers to the citizen, who is – in the tradition and spirit of the Enlightenment – participating in the affairs of the community and contributes to shaping it.

**"Putting an end ..."**

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rocks from a source [...]. In many other places, chestnut trees were planted and maintained whose fruits were used to produce flour among other things. Or beautiful terraces, called 'faisses', were set up there in order to wrest grain from the soil."

Just as they defied the natural conditions, they defy the threats of today: With a fine sense for genuine nature protection the "Cévenois" revealed the true agenda of the EU and they are now fighting back, aware, against the robbery of their uniquely developed cultural and religious identity and history by a new Charter for the National Park of the Cévennes.

Here is another example how community life can be established: Citizens from a German commune got together to establish a food service and a transportation service for older people. In an Austrian municipality, the municipal council purchased three vehicles for the villagers to borrow them when they needed transportation. In another commune, it is the major concern of the mayor to ensure that the village does not suffer from urban sprawl. He knows the importance of a village center, which provides the people with a chance to meet. In an Italian municipality a resident looks after older people who are ill and gives them their required syringe to spare them the arduous journey to the city.

These examples can be found wherever people live together. They show how everyone can do something along the lines of the common good by his or her own initiative and capability, without having to wait for things being controlled or maintained 'from above'. These are suggestions 'from below', not 'from above'. Next to an individual's healthy sense of self-importance for the benefit of all, the certainty develops that every task in life can be handled in a joint effort.

As Swiss citizens we do not ask ourselves what the state can do for the citizens; we say, "We are the state." And so we are of course part of the responsibility that goes with it.

With the revitalization of the communes we also have to raise the question: Where is the basic knowledge still to be found, where does it require refreshment? Where does it require encouragement, the impetus to action? *In order to make the forces augment* and the people remember that their contribution is crucial!

This is true even for our children in the family and later at school. Especially the young ones should be involved in the everyday tasks of the community as well as in everyday family life: think things through and help. It is astonishing how many skills are shown or developed, what efforts are taken when we take our youth as young 'citoyens'<sup>1</sup>, guide them and give them responsibility. In this way, something that has been proven in the past is passed on and secured for future generations. A hand-in-hand work of all generations in the community is the basis for a revitalization of our communes. All generations in the community are needed in this process.

#### **The co-operative: a sustainable solution**

In the context of a revitalization of communes the importance of cooperatives must be mentioned – and emphasized accordingly.

In the field of self-help and mutual aid France possesses a true wealth: names such as *Charles Fourier*, *Philippe Joseph Benjamin Buchez*, *Charles Gide*, *Louis Blanc* may be mentioned here. (See *Faust*, "Geschichte der Genossenschaftsbewegung"). They have all contributed to utilize the idea of self-responsibility, self-help and self-government for the common problems we are facing in the economic and social areas. In the appendix you will find some references.

**Conclusion**

Every one of us has the noble task to participate in this delicate work. The contribution of each individual counts.

*Man is not a grain of sand, but he is a citizen of this planet. This is our effective counterweight to the EU. If this idea begins to revive in many places and in many countries in Europe, the EU will be a simple rubber duck: as soon as the plug is pulled out, the air evades by itself and the whole puppet collapses.* •

*Appendix with references:*

These basic ideas have been written down worldwide since time immemorial, in various fields, in science, world views and religions, to enable the coming generations to secure a better, more peaceful and more profitable co-existence. We are provided with a whole treasure chest (trésor). Let us just quote some examples:

*Seneca* taught that we are all members of a large body, since nature conceived us as relatives and sociable beings. (*Höffner*, p. 50)

*Etienne de la Boétie*, who in his "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" presented a problem of humanity as early as in the 16th century: "For the present I should merely like to understand how it happens that so many men, so many villages, so many cities, so many nations, sometimes suffer under a single tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him; who is able to harm them only to the extent to which they have the willingness to bear with him; who could do them absolutely no injury unless they preferred to put up with him rather than contradict him."

In 1947, the Swiss historian *Adolf Gasser* published his book "Gemeindefreiheit – kommunale Selbstverwaltung" (Communal freedom – local government), which was also published in French. He saw the establishment of free communes in Europe after the Second World War as a bulwark against totalitarianism.

Even Pope *John Paul II* said in his encyclical "Centesimus Annus" of 1991: "By intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, the Social Assistance State leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies, [...] which are accompanied by an enormous increase in spending." ([http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html))

Each member of a community bears responsibility for the common good and each community is responsible for the welfare of individuals. (*Bernhard Sutor*, Political Ethics, p. 33)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



## Election farce in the US: “Israelis are basically blackmailing Obama”

**“He will either have to support the war, or lose the support (of the influential Jewish lobby).”**

An invasion of the United States and Israel in Iran will take place by the end of this year, the daily «Kommersant» reported on Wednesday referring to a senior employee of the Foreign Ministry of Russia.

“Israelis are basically blackmailing Obama”, the newspaper quotes the diplomat, “he will either have to support the war, or lose the support (of the influential Jewish lobby).”

“During the negotiations on Monday in New York, US Secretary of State *Hillary Clinton* is said to have requested the Russian Foreign Minister to inform the Iranian government that the negotiations which have been planned for April between Iran and the sextet of international mediators

are the last chance for Tehran to prevent a war”, the paper wrote.

Russia has already set for the case of a starting war. “We have counted our actions in case of war with Iran. We have mobilized our forces”, a Defense Ministry official is quoted by the “Kommersant”. As he noted, the fighting in Iran could “aggravate the already complicated situation in the Caucasus.”

Even a senior diplomat is said to have confirmed that Moscow “has an action plan for the case when a hit is made against Iran”. “An appropriate program has been designed by an inter-governmental commission concerning the protection of the Russian citizens”, he said.

The US President and administration officials constantly emphasize that they are not ruling out any scenario in relation to Iran, but would prefer a diplomatic regulation of the problem. Meanwhile ever more media contributions are being published indicating that the US and Israel are planning a military operation against Iran.

The results of a survey published on Tuesday by the independent organization World Public testify that a majority of Americans do not support the use of force against Iran. In their opinion the US should remain neutral and continue their diplomatic pressure. •

Source: *Ria Novosti* from 14.3.2012  
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Germany delivers submarine to Israel

**De Maiziere warns of «incalculable risks» of a military escalation with Iran**

Germany delivers the sixth submarine to Israel. This was confirmed by Defence Minister *de Maizière* on Tuesday after a talk with his Israeli ministerial colleague *Ehud Barak*. “We are completely in favour of that and believe it to be right,” said de Maiziere in a joint statement. Germany also shares in the costs. According to Marine experts they are submarines of the “Dolphin” class, which are powered by fuel cells and are hardly discoverable. They have torpedo tubes through which nuclear cruise missiles can be fired according to media reports. Thus the submarines would be able to serve as a second-strike weapon of deterrence against a predictable enemy. The nuclear weapons capability however has

not yet been confirmed officially, neither by de Maizière.

De Maiziere and Barak agreed that Iran must be prevented from building nuclear weapons. The accent was different in terms of the options to prevent a nuclear arming of Iran. Barak reaffirmed Israel’s position that all options must remain on the table. The so-called containment, a nuclear armed Iran being accepted but the country being politically “stemmed”, is not an option in his opinion, Barak added. Whereas de Maiziere warned of the incalculable risks in case of a military escalation, “also to the damage of Israel.” However he asserted at the same time: “Israel can be certain about the national integrity and the exist-

ence of the German solidarity.” Here the word of Chancellor *Merkel* is true, who had declared that the existence of Israel was part of the German reason of state. De Maizière didn’t make a specific statement on the concrete, also military implications of this commitment, neither did Barak. The German Minister thanked the Israelis for support for the Afghanistan deployment. Israel has supplied Heron surveillance drones by leasing to the Federal Armed Forces and advises in the fight against roadside bombs. •

Source: (lőw.) *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* from 20.03.2012, © All rights reserved Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH, Frankfurt. Provided by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Archiv.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Afghan Air Force said to be the greatest smuggling operator for drugs, weapons and money

A huge scandal is looming in Afghanistan: The *Afghan Air Force* (AAF) is supposed to be the greatest smuggling operator for drugs, weapons and money. The AAF, officially sponsored by NATO, is financed by the Americans. Currently it owns 86 aircrafts, among them 16 C-27 cargo aircrafts, 42 Russian Mi-17 transport helicopters and 11 Russian Mi-25 helicopter gunships. There is an obligation (!) for the Western states to expand the fleet to 145 aircrafts till 2016! The Americans provide the total fuel and carry out maintenance and repair work. Moreover, they train the Afghan pilots and are responsible for their coaching.

The Training Mission Afghanistan has spent 2 billion dollars (!) for equipment and training yet. After initial suspicions about misuse of aircrafts the Americans set up two commissions through the military coalition and the *Drug Enforcement Agency*, which ought to screen and examine everything. With the result that seven American officers of the investigation commission were brutally murdered on the airfield. The Taliban promptly took the responsibility for the attack, the assass-

sin was found soon after: suicide was the official cause of death. But for the Americans it is obvious that an unwelcome witness was eliminated.

Afghanistan is – according to American estimates – responsible for 90 percent (!) of the opium distributed worldwide. When transports of opium went to the frontiers a blind eye was often and regularly turned on rebel leaders from various provinces – as an award for their cooperation in combating the Taliban. But it seems that eventually the Afghan Air Force became a mafia-like transport organization. Ever more frequently helicopters “disappeared for hours” without any flight plan. American requests were blocked, parts of the Kabul airport were shielded by Afghan soldiers. The Americans are convinced that the greater part of the Afghan stock of opium and heroin is daily trafficked that way beyond control (at night). And weapons are imported regularly on the way back to the frontiers and end up with the tribal leaders or the Taliban. “And we pay hundreds of millions of dollars for the Afghan Air Force’s operation each year.

“Israeli submarines of the Dolphin class are world-wide the first submarines which are equipped with an active protective system against torpedoes, comparable with the systems on armored vehicles. The ‘Hard Kill Torpedo Defence System’ is called ‘Torbuster’ and has been developed by the company Rafale. Different from the sonic Soft Kill decoys, which have the function to divert an attacking torpedo from the submarine, the Torbuster steers the torpedo by acoustic signals into a so-called ‘Killing Envelope’ and detonates besides the torpedo, whereby this becomes dysfunctional. Each submarine is to be equipped with ten Torbusters. One Torbuster weighs 150 kg, of which 50 kg is the weight of the warhead.”

Source: *Schweizer Soldat*, No. 04, April 2012, p.56.

What a mockery!,” an American senior official complains.

Source: *Vertraulicher Schweizer Brief*, Nr. 1316 from 13.3.2012

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## How to withdraw from Afghanistan? Russia considers an agreement with both US and NATO Orderly retreat would be essential for fending off the spread of terrorism and illegal drugs out of Afghanistan

A new deal allowing the United States and its Nato allies to use a Russian air base for transit of troops and military cargo to Afghanistan would help ensure Russia’s own security, Russia’s foreign minister said Wednesday.

*Sergey Lavrov* said a plan to permit the US and other Nato nations to use the base in the city of Ulyanovsk on the Volga River will soon be considered by the Russian Cabinet. If approved, the deal could help repair Russian ties with the United States, which have become increasingly strained over Washington’s missile defense plans in Europe and the Syrian crisis.

Moscow has provided the US and other Nato member states with air corridors and railway routes for carrying supplies to and from Afghanistan. The new agreement would for the first time allow alliance members to set up a logistics facility for troops and cargo on Russian territory.

Lavrov strongly defended such a deal, saying the success of Nato’s mission is essential for fending off the spread of terrorism and illegal drugs from Afghanistan

into ex-Soviet Central Asian nations and Russia.

“It’s in our interests that the coalition achieves a success before withdrawing and makes sure that the Afghans are capable of defending their country and ensuring an acceptable level of security,” Lavrov told the lower house of Russia’s legislature. Some lawmakers argued that the US military’s use of the Ulyanovsk facility could threaten Russia by allowing foreign troops on its soil.

“We want those who are fending off threats directed at Russia to efficiently fulfill their tasks,” Lavrov said. “We are helping the coalition to proceed from our own interests.”

In Belgium, Nato spokeswoman *Oana Lungescu* said boosting cooperation on the Afghan transit would benefit both the alliance and Russia.

“Clearly we welcome the cooperation we have with Russia already on transit from and to Afghanistan,” she said. “We look forward to reinforcing that agreement because [...] Nato and Russia have a joint interest in a stable and secure Afghanistan.”

Lavrov said the deal to be considered by the Cabinet would allow the transit of Nato troops but that they wouldn’t be allowed to stay there.

“They aren’t going to live there. They will only be moving from one transportation means to another,” Lavrov said. He sought to assuage the lawmakers’ concern by saying that Russia would reserve the right to check the cargo, but provide specifics about the deal.

Earlier this week, Russia’s daily “*Izvestia*” published excerpts from an official letter sent to parliament by Russian Defense Minister *Anatoly Serdyukov*, which said that the Ulyanovsk facility would be overseen by the civilian authorities and include customs control.

The proposal comes amid shrinking supply options to coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Earlier this month, US Defense Secretary *Leon Panetta* met with Kyrgyzstan’s leaders to stress that America needs the continued use of the U.S. air base there

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## Alain Juppé accused by his own administration of having falsified reports on Syria

On 19 March 2012, a high French official invited Arab journalists based in Paris to inform them of the internal battle being waged within the French government and, in particular, the Quai d'Orsay [the French Foreign Ministry] regarding Syria. According to this person, the French Ambassador in Damascus, *Eric Chevallier*, whose embassy had just been shut down and who had returned to Paris, challenged Minister Juppé in front of his colleagues. He accused *Alain Juppé* of having ignored his embassy reports and of having falsified summaries of them to provoke a war against Syria.

### French ambassador sticks to the facts

In March 2011, at the beginning of the events currently besetting Syria, the Foreign Ministry hurriedly dispatched fact finders to Deraa to appraise what was happening. Their report, submitted to Paris, indicated that tensions had dissipated following several demonstrations, information that contradicted *Al-Jazeera* and *France 24* reports that the city of Deraa was being violently torn apart. The ambassador requested the mission be extended in order to follow developing events. The Foreign Minister, furious about the first report, telephoned him and demanded that he alter it to state that a bloody repression of the city was occurring. The Ambassador then arranged a teleconference between the Chief of Mission in Deraa and the Minister and had him repeat that no such repression had occurred. The minister then threatened the Ambassador and the conversation ended icily.

Immediately afterwards, Alain Juppé's cabinet pressured *Agence France Press* to publish cables aligned with the view of the Minister. During the months that followed, altercations between Ambassador Eric Chevallier and Alain Juppé continued to multiply, until the moment of the Iranian

hostage crisis in January 2012 and the death of "journalist" *Gilles Jacquier*. At this moment, the Ambassador was ordered to pull the covert DGSE agents working under press cover out of Syria, at which point he realized the importance of the secret operation being carried out by Alain Juppé.<sup>1</sup>

As former minister of defense, Alain Juppé appears to have maintained tight friendships within the armed services and to be able to rely on agents loyal to him.

The same source affirms that the ambassadorial reports were either ignored or falsified which led the Ambassador himself to shore up his position by having forwarded to the Foreign Ministry equivalent European diplomatic reports attesting that Syria was not in the throes of a cycle of protest and crackdown but was rather being destabilized by armed groups coming from outside the country. On his arrival back in Paris, Ambassador Chevallier allegedly requested an internal administrative inquiry to confound his own Minister.

### More revelations

These revelations led to still others. Another high official revealed that Alain Juppé was not only in conflict with his administration but also with his colleagues at both the Defense and Interior Ministries. Their respective ministers, *Claude Guéant* and *Gérard Longuet* had not only negotiated the exfiltration of the French intelligence agents present in the Islamic Emirate of Baba Amr with General *Assef Chawkrit*, as previously reported by *Voltaire Network*<sup>2</sup>, but had also arranged the release of three French commandos detained by Syria.<sup>3</sup>

On Sunday, 18 March, the pro-Syrian daily *Ad-Diyar*, edited in Beirut, confirmed that three French prisoners had been released to Admiral *Edouard Guillaud*, Chief of Staff of the Military of France (CEMA), during a trip to Lebanon

supposedly undertaken as the French contingent of the *UNIFIL* (UN Interim Force for Lebanon) was being reorganized. According to a high-ranking Syrian source, the Admiral had in exchange personally overseen the complete dismantling of the French military's rear operating base in Lebanon.

The conflict between Ambassador Chevallier and Minister Juppé had been simmering for a long time. On 4 April 2011, the online journal *Rue 89* published an article attributed to an anonymous Franco-Syrian author.<sup>4</sup> It reported that the Ambassador "had become a mouthpiece of the regime, asserting that the revolts of Daraa and Lattaquie were fomented by foreign forces and that the media were lying about reality." Ten days later, *Georges Malbrunot* on his blog at "*Le Figaro*" followed suit, claiming that the Ambassador had been "completely Bashirized".<sup>5</sup> Finally, on 5 May, *France 24*, a station owned by the French Government and under Alain Juppé's supervision, accused the Ambassador of "minimizing the revolt."<sup>6</sup>

The conflict between Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Admiral Edouard Guillaud and Alain Juppé has also been in the public eye for a long time. The Admiral did not appreciate that Alain Juppé, while Minister of Defense, had planned in advance the overthrow of *Muammar Qaddafi*. With veiled support of his new Defense Minister Gérard Longuet, he publicly manifested his disagreement when commanded to mobilize French troops against Libya.

In addition, relations between Guéant and Juppé are notoriously bad. In one of his usual displays of arrogance, Alain Juppé stipulated as a condition of his entering the *Fillon* government that Claude Guéant leave the General Secretariat

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### "How to withdraw ..."

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beyond the end of its contract in 2014, largely as a transit center to bring troops home from Afghanistan.

The supply routes across the former Soviet Union also have become vital after *Pakistan shut down its ground supply routes following the US airstrikes in November that killed a number of Pakistani troops*. The high-speed rail route through Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan handles the bulk of the ground supplies.

"Izvestia" quoted Kremlin-linked analyst *Vyacheslav Nikonov*, who said the deal on the Russian air base would allow Russia to ask for US favors in return.

"By providing a transit hub, Russia will get the chance to make its demands," Nikonov said. "It will be a very good foreign policy argument."

US-Russian ties have been strained recently over Moscow's support of the Syrian regime and U.S. missile defense plans in Europe.

Washington said the missile shield is intended to fend off the Iranian mis-

sile threat, but the Kremlin has seen it as a threat to Russia's nuclear deterrent and urged Washington to provide security guarantees.

"If the US doesn't want to change anything in its plans, it should provide reliable guarantees that their missile defense sites around Europe aren't directed against our strategic nuclear forces," Lavrov said Wednesday. "If our partners continue to ignore our legitimate interests, Russia will have to take retaliatory security measures." •

Source: *The Associated Press (AP)* from 14 March 2012.

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## Syria

## Since when has Al-Qaeda been a friend of the West?

### Foreign fighters amassing on Turkish and Jordanian borders

Damascus, 5:50 p.m. – Several hundred Libyan Al-Qaeda fighters (former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group) have arrived in recent weeks at various hotels in Amman (Jordan). They suddenly moved out on Friday, 16 March 2012 to relocate to an unknown destination.

Simultaneously, a coming and going of buses, throughout the days of Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, transported at least 2,000 combatants to a “refugee” camp in Hatay (Turkey). This ferrying continues, and is managed by the Turkish Army.

Colonel *Riyadh Al Asaad*, who had been temporarily assigned to house arrest following the Syrian-Turkish agreement of 7 February, is again in full command of the Free “Syrian” Army from Turkey.

It is estimated that the forces already assembled are constituted by 500 to 1000 Takfirists at the Jordanian border and between 2000 and 3000 at the Turkish border. No significant jihadi group has been reported at the Lebanese border, the Lebanese Army having dismantled in recent weeks an assembly area and a communications base.

Hundreds of foreign fighters still remain on Syrian soil after the fall of the Islamic Emirate of Baba Amr and the clean-up of Deraa and Idlib. Although totally disorganized and running out of steam, they are still capable of organizing these new troops attacks.

The Syrian National Army is in the process of strengthening its borders to prevent any infiltration into the country. •

Source: *Voltairenet.org* from 17 March 2012

#### “Alain Juppé accused ...”

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at of the Élysée because he didn’t want to speak to him. After the agreement reached by Washington, London and Moscow to calm the situation in Syria, Alain Juppé can still count on the support of Ankara, Riyadh and Doha along with that of the mainstream media. He now finds himself isolated in France and deprived of the means to enact his policies,

unless of course President *Sarkozy* starts pushing for war to boost the poll numbers for Sarkozy the candidate. •

<sup>1</sup> “Le fiasco des barbouzes français à Homs,” by Boris V., *Komsomolskaïa Pravda, Réseau Voltaire*, 17 January 2012.

<sup>2</sup> “The journalist-combatants of Baba Amr”, by Thierry Meyssan, *Voltaire Network*, 4 March 2012.

<sup>3</sup> “France restores military censorship”, *Voltaire Network*, 5 March 2012.

<sup>4</sup> “A Damas, le régime de Bachar el-Assad prépare un bain de sang”, by Sadik H., *Rue89*, 4 April 2011.

<sup>5</sup> “Syrie: quand l’ambassadeur de France déjeunait avec la bête noire des frondeurs”, by Georges Malbrunot, *L’Orient indiscret/Le Figaro*, 14 April 2011.

<sup>6</sup> “L’ambassadeur de France en Syrie a clairement minimisé la révolte”, by Julien Pain and Peggy Bruguère, *France24*, 5 May 2011.

Source: *Voltaire Network* from 22 March 2012, [www.voltairenet.org/Alain-Juppe-accused-by-his-own](http://www.voltairenet.org/Alain-Juppe-accused-by-his-own)

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## Strengthening and enlarging EFTA as an alternative to Brussels!

### Economic goals only without sacrificing national sovereignty

by Dr phil René Roca

*cc. The EU is behaving as if it had invented or at least bought the term "Europe". During the years of feverish eastward expansion, the newly alured eastern countries and all immigrants had been taught that they had to adhere to the European "values": But whoever was consulted with regard to this discussion, one after the other – whether political scientist, sociologist, futurist or otherwise think-tank-kinsman – had to admit that a consensus on "European values" does not exist. Even with the loveliest colors of the respective revolutions, one could not be deceived that there was nothing but the pursuit of money and power with a large hollow space underneath.*

*Then came the Lehman Brothers and the warning that something was wrong with the system. Today nearly the whole of Europe looks like Russia during the Yeltsin era. Even constantly changing presidents do not obscure this fact.*

*It's time to consider an alternative "Plan B". In order to solve economic problems the liberal way, there is still no better construction that works than the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which lets the countries have their dignity and independence and coordinates the economic processes. Exactly that is what the German people should now teach their new "Bundespräsident".*

*The Swiss have to tutor Schneider-Ammann, Didier Burkhalter and Widmer-Schlumpf.*

*Either they finally take note of the fact that the sovereign does not want any annexation to a dictatorial and bankrupt big power structure, because Switzerland with its good services and international humanitarian law has its place and its responsibility at the side of the other countries – or a debate is due that will finally lead to their stepping down.*

*All the other countries have to get to work each within the framework of its own sovereignty and make clear to their respective exponents, what they want their democracy to be like.*

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) was founded in 1960 by seven Western European countries, Switzerland being one of them. Today, the EFTA has four members, namely Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The resigned members joined the European Union (EU).

The governing body of the EFTA is the Council in which all member states

are represented with equal rights and with one vote each; decisions require unanimity. From the very beginning the EFTA was a purely economically designed free trade zone and pursued the elimination of trade barriers among their member states as their main objective. The so-called Stockholm Convention, adopted on 3 May 1960, stipulates in Article 2,

- "a) to promote in the area and in each member state, the continuing expansion of economic activity, full employment, increased productivity and efficient utilization of resources, financial stability and continuous improvement of living standards,
- b) to ensure that the trade between the member states takes place with fair conditions of competition,
- c) to avoid significant differences between the member states in the conditions of supply with the raw materials produced within the zone and
- d) to contribute to the harmonious development and expansion of the world trade and the progressive elimination of its restrictions."

The EFTA convention does not include the creation of supranational bodies or authorities. Accordingly, the institutional structure of EFTA as compared to the EU is very simple and causes no great cost.

The EFTA Council and the EFTA member countries have explicitly only economic goals without giving up their national sovereignty. Therefore they could and can do without transferring national competencies to common institutions. The EFTA countries agreed to reduce their tariffs for industrial goods by stages. They explicitly excluded agricultural products from the liberalization of the movement of goods. A common agricultural policy would have contradicted the basic structure of a loose association. In this context the member states have been able to largely achieve their goals in the course of the last fifty years. Since 1994, the EFTA has promoted more relations to the so-called third-countries and has developed its economic relations beyond the European region.

Unlike the EU the EFTA never intended to develop itself to a political body. It supported economic cooperation on a voluntary and liberal basis and left the political field to the European nation states and the Council of Europe. With the statute of

the Council of Europe the European countries (now 47 countries, including Russia, the United States are not a member) declared their support for the "spiritual and moral values, which are the common heritage of their peoples", for the principles of personal and political freedom and the rule of law. Since its creation, the Council of Europe has been a platform for political discussion and preparation of agreements between the participating states. The Council of Europe, whose members have signed the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), is the central political body in order to strengthen democracy in Europe. The EU, however, promotes the opposite.

In contrast to the supranational orientation of the EU the EFTA does not want to create a "common market". The EFTA states resolutely reject the free movement of the production factors labor and capital as well as the introduction of a common transport and agricultural policy and thus brace themselves against the "Monnet method" and against the intention of the U.S. to make Europe a vassal state. Since 1989, the EU has aimed at weakening the EFTA countries (with the exception of Switzerland, which in 1992 refused to join the EEA) with the "lever" of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA then was the idea of the president of the European Commission, *Jacques Delors*, who implemented the "Monnet method" dutifully this way. The EEA is of supranational nature as is the EU, which means that union law is superior to the respective country's law.

The EFTA should again make a name of herself as an alternative to the EU and should *actively* reflect its original goals as well as its historical roots and concerns. This can only happen if it faces the EU with self-confidence, so that the present generation in the European countries will get to know this model at all and think it through as a way forward into the future.

We only obtain "more of Europe" (*Gauck*) if we go back to strengthening the sovereignty of the nation states in this sense and give preference to the model of the EFTA compared to the EU structure. The EFTA would thus be – especially in the current social and economic crisis – a hope for the peoples of Europe, enabling them to live together in peace and freedom and to foster honest economic ties beyond Europe. •



## A little more considerateness would be beneficial for the Europe of today

*ts. Since the opening of the Iron Curtain the total of what is called Europe today has been engaging in a series of wars. The result: a world economic crisis, and an inner-European economic misery that threatens to eclipse everything that ever happened before. And all that in order to enable Goldman Sachs and other banks to even further enlarge their x-figured assets which they have robbed in their excessive greed. And yet the next NATO deployment is already planned, this time in Somalia ...*

*Would Europe not have other things to do? Instead of beating the war drum, Europe could make a halt and honestly start thinking about wars and their consequences. The following text by J. R. von Salis written in 1945 brings to mind what war means for the people of war-torn countries in emphatic words and pictures: Psychic breakdown, hopelessness, the awareness of having been deceived all along. And this not only on the side of the attacked, no, the boomerang*

*tossed into the sky by the aggressor will strike back in hundred-fold and thousand-fold furiousness smashing their own cities.*

*Von Salis gives us, the later-born generations who lack the respect of war, cause for serious concern, since war leads to the total reversal of all things: "Who once was powerful, is condemned to powerlessness, who once was oppressed and suffering, becomes the master." The extract printed below conveys the insight that wars of aggression are always a crime, neither are they predictable nor to speak of limitable. In the words of the Swiss author and dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt, war is always taking the worst possible turn, leading to a catastrophe, even so for the wrong-doers. After disastrous wars like the Thirty Years War or the Napoleonic Wars and all the other wars innumerable poets put it down in writing, like Andreas Gryphius, writer of the baroque era in "Tränen des Vaterlands" (Tears*

*of the Fatherland) and like Heinrich von Kleist in his masterful novella "Die Marquise von O ..." (The Marquise of O ...): War is never justified under whatever heading, since war is always coined by inhuman motives and entails inhumanity. It would suit the highly educated, well-fed youth of the Western World, well-equipped with bag and baggage to commit themselves – together with the considerate elder ones – to an honest politics that is oriented towards human dignity in the footsteps of the European Enlightenment and the humanitarian ideals of the Weimar Classicism.*

*The world is watching us. A world that has become multi-polar and would like to join in the values of the West as far as they are honest and universal, as Kishore Mahbubani has emphasized several times. There is but one thing to do in order to prevent the boomerang from striking back: You must just not throw it; this is the great J. R. von Salis' legacy.*

### *With the army, "Rhine and Danube", April 1945*

*by J. R. von Salis*

Before the beginning of the foray to Lake Constance, in the alpine réduit and our participation in the complete victory of the Allied armies in Germany and Austria, the French army had to fight out their last major battles of the war, like their American and British comrades in the other sectors of the front. It is obvious that the Germans by means of a "hot reception" had hoped to defraud the enemy of bearing the fruit of their Rhine crossing, and that everywhere, from the Dutch border to Baden and Württemberg, the German military and party officials were surprised by the impact and success of the Allied offensive despite previously suffered setbacks. As unlikely as it may sound since we are standing in front of the ruins of the Third Reich: during the Allied offensive of Germany, the element of surprise played again an important role, and all you saw was evidence of the complete surprise and confusion about the successful invasion of the enemy's territory of the Reich on the right bank of the Rhine.

In particular, the civilian population had obviously not expected anything like this, and the sudden appearance of the French in the valleys of the Black Forest, in the small towns on the Neckar and the

Upper Danube above all stunned, confused and dismayed the residents. At that time many residents of Baden and Württemberg were hoping that German troops would orderly retreat to the alpine réduit in order to confront the onslaught of enemies. But when endless processions of German prisoners of war, who, in a deplorable state, were led through cities and villages and along the country roads to the camps, which had previously served as accommodation for the allied prisoners, the people lost their last hopes and illusions.

#### **Raised to a nation of hypocrites**

The population of occupied Germany may have later changed the pattern of their behavior and reactions: First, one has the impression of a complete mental collapse and utter hopelessness. Everything had been deceptive and the Germans had been cheated of everything; in some places in the southernmost areas, from the Danube to the Swiss border, the French were welcomed in a friendly way, in Konstanz even joyfully. There may have been relief in many places that the bomb threat had ceased, indeed, in Stuttgart, we were told by a passer-by, an elderly, ordinary man we chatted with, that

it was good that one could speak one's mind again without feeling spied on or threatened for every careless word: "The Nazis have raised us to a nation of hypocrites, and it is high time that we wean ourselves off hypocrisy and say openly what we think." On the other hand, there is still the prevailing sentiment of distrust of the new and unknown – in a word, of the occupation by enemy forces; moreover, there is the complete uncertainty about the fate of the country. Depressed, anxious, but not unkindly, on the contrary available to any service and any information, giving the latter even conscientiously, obeying orders of the occupying power with the usual discipline and punctuality, ready to work and to work diligently when a station commander requisitions workers, accurately following the curfew or other orders: this was how the French found a people who disciplined in their defeat and disappointment had remained industrious and orderly, which, by the way, made the first difficult tasks of the occupation authorities significantly easier. Throughout, the cooperation between local authorities and the French military authorities was smooth.

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# Hunger takes hold in Greece

by Gerd Höhler

*Endurance rallying performed by their politicians sounds just cynical to many Greeks. After years of recession and countless austerity programmes they are disheartened and demoralised. Hunger and despair take hold.*

Sotiris Panagopoulos counts the money once again. This doesn't help to change the result. 599.95 euro: this is meant to sustain his wife and two little children over the next 4 weeks. "How is this supposed to work?", the 35 year old asks frantically. The rent alone takes 320 euro, not to mention invoices for energy and heating. "At the end we are left with 7 euro per day for a living." He lost his job as a welder 5 months ago. All of a sudden his employer went out of business, 23 people were out on the street.

Panagopoulos is not the only one picking up his unemployment benefit from the Perama job centre. The queue of those waiting there keeps growing every month. Perama is situated at the Saronian gulf, about an hour's drive to the west of Athens, the town used to be the centre of the Greek ship-building industry. Today the town of 25,000 inhabitants has an unemployment rate of 60%, one of the highest in Greece. Most of the factories have had problems for years because they could not put up with the competition from the big

Asian shipyards. The recession put them over the edge.

"There is nothing going on here any more", says Panagiotis Kosmas. He sits in his takeaway waiting for customers. But most of the factory gates down here in the embankment street have been locked for a long time. Workers' voices, the sounds of their hammers and welding torches can be heard from just a few shipyards. "Perama is dying a slow death", says Kosmas. He wants to leave, is looking for a new place to move his takeaway to.

The Greeks in the year 3 of the crisis: a disheartened, desperate people, demoralised by ever more austerity measures. The economy has shrunk by almost 15% since the beginning of the crisis. According to calculations of the EU statistical office Eurostat, 28% of all Greeks between 18 and 64 years of age are already living at the poverty line. In a survey one out of four small business owners or middle class persons said they were afraid of having to close their businesses "in the near future".

The Greek society is approaching the limits of their resilience. At least this is true for the poor people and the middle class. Because not all Greeks are devastated – those oversized SUV's can still be seen parking in front of the night clubs at Iera Odos, the holy street, and at the expensive beach cafes in the coastal suburb Vouliagmeni.

Euro states and International monetary fund have already transferred 73 billion Euro to Athens since May 2010, now another 130 billion are provided by the second rescue package. Today, at yet another of their meetings in Brussels, the EU heads of state will again emphasize how important the development of growth in the member states is to them. Actual concrete measures will probably not be decided.

## "We have to face a humanitarian crisis – here in our own country"

Anyway, most Greeks don't feel as if this aid was actually aiding them. They are fed up with hoping in vain. With the assurances of the politicians about the imminent reversal of the economic decline. "At the end of 2011", former minister of finances *Giorgos Papakonstantinou* had proclaimed 2 years ago, the economy would start to grow again. In fact the decline keeps accelerating, economy shrunk by almost 7% last year. Later 2012 was announced to become the year of change. Now this already turns out to be an illusion, too.

*Nikitas Kanakis* of the Greek chapter of the humanitarian organization "Doctors of the World" gets to know the actual fates behind these number, every day. Since the organization had been founded 22 years

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## "A little more considerateness..."

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### War leads to the reversal of all things

Today, Europe is experiencing the reversal of all things: whoever used to be powerful is doomed to powerlessness, whoever was oppressed and suffering, is now the master. In Germany there are two kinds of happy people: the soldiers of the victorious armies, who, covered with a new military glory, finally receive the reward for long, bloody battles, with serious setbacks over the years, and the foreign workers, deportees and prisoners of war whose slavery has ended and who have regained their freedom and new hope due to Germany's defeat. The destroyed regime of National Socialism has undoubtedly burdened itself with one last heavy debt to the German people when it left its civilians unfit for military service – women, old men and children – defenseless with the foreign workers. According to one senior French officer, the departure of the German Wehrmacht from Stuttgart was followed by a "slave revolt". Foreign

workers, who were half-starved, clad in rags, under oppressive working and living conditions were suddenly free, wanted to eat their fill and clad themselves properly. Such foreign workers and deportees were everywhere; their number must have been enormous, because they dominated the image of the streets in the towns and villages in southern Germany. Moreover, "Stalag" dismissed their occupants, and even those POWs who were not interned in camps, but housed in "command" by farmers and business people participated in the great, joyful liberation.

### People snatched from their native soil

The French occupation authorities were faced with no easy task, because it was necessary to channel these flows and to regroup the freed prisoners and slaves, to do them justice but also to prevent disorder and violence or to put an end to any if such occurred. In a country where no railway runs – and even could not run because the Germans with their unequalled thoroughness made their entire rail network unusable by blasting opera-

tions after the Anglo-American bombers had already destroyed numerous main-line stations and bridges – and where the road network is loaded by the car transport of a belligerent army, the evacuation of the liberated prisoners and deportees is met by all sorts of problems. They are found throughout the country, in the villages of the Black Forest as of the Swabian Alb, and on all roads, as they prepare to leave the inhospitable country in small groups with their bundles, often dragging a cart behind them. Most numerous among these are the French who do not have far to Alsace; but also many Russians are not deterred from going northward. One can recognize these strangers by the bands in their national colors, which they wear on their lapels; most are still in the places where they were interned, waiting for transport. We met a remarkable number of Dutch. There are a surprisingly high number of children of all ages among these abducted foreigners. Russian boys

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Greek austerity measures at a glance	
<b>576 million euro</b>	spending cuts for medical products
<b>537 million euro</b>	cuts in health and pension funds, 500 million taken from the budget of a new national organization meant to provide basic coverage in the health service, 15 million from the assets of telephone company OTE and 21 million from the funds of the public energy providers
<b>400 million euro</b>	cuts in the defence budget, 300 million by slashing planned purchases and 100 million from the running costs
<b>400 million euro</b>	cuts in public investments
<b>386 million euro</b>	cuts in pensions and retirement pension supplements
<b>205 million euro</b>	cuts in payroll costs
<b>200 million euro</b>	cuts in ministerial administration costs
<b>86 million euro</b>	cuts in agricultural subsidies
<b>80 million euro</b>	cuts in education, 39 million by slashing payroll costs for teachers at schools abroad and 10 million for research and technology grants
<b>70 million euro</b>	cuts in election campaigning
<b>66 million euro</b>	cuts in the ministry of finance budget (pensions)
<b>59 million euro</b>	cuts in community spendings
<b>50 million euro</b>	slashing compensation payments for doctors working extra hours in public hospitals
<b>43 million euro</b>	cuts in supporting families with more than three children
<b>25 million euro</b>	cuts in the culture and tourism budget
<b>3 million euro</b>	cuts in payroll costs of public providers

ago, their 600 members have helped in approximately 50 countries. Now they concentrate on Greece. They run health centres in 4 cities, where those in need are

treated free of charge. One focus is the unemployment capital Perama.

"We have to face a humanitarian crisis – here in our own country", says doc-

### "Hunger takes hold in Greece"

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tor Kanakis. During the Iraq war his organization had sent 150 truck loads of aid goods to Bagdad. Even last year 6 container ships with food had been sent to Uganda. "Today we need all the food here", Kanakis says.

Every day here are more people coming to the health centre in Perama. Being unemployed in Greece means losing one's national health insurance after a year at the latest. However, the people who come to the "Doctors of the world" in ever growing numbers need more than just medical aid. "More and more callers don't ask for medication", Kanakis points out. "They are hungry and ask for something to eat." "Such scenes in our country", the doctor says, "that's a shame and disgrace".

### Athens' biggest soup kitchen

What is going on in Athens, Piraeus street, is also shameful for a EU country. House number 35, an old, two-storey building. Behind the blue wooden door

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### "A little more considerateness..."

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of ten and twelve years are wandering about the streets and, together with other fellow sufferers they are an appreciative audience for the military parades of the French. On a Sunday morning, as we were patiently waiting for the repair of our car at a forest edge of the Swabian Jura, a beaming Polish father, his two little girls by the hand, came by and told us in a hardly comprehensible German that he was coming from mass. After five years of imprisonment and humiliation it must have been an unprecedented feeling to walk to church in the nearest village through the woods and across the country on a bright spring morning with his children and enjoy his freedom. Very quickly, the French organized so-called "Centres d'accueil" for freed prisoners of war and foreign workers, where they can spend their time, eat meals, drink coffee or stay for the night. In Speyer, we met some of them during an afternoon snack in a cafe requisitioned for this purpose, where the German band now plays for these people, who are not all happy because they have seen too much suffering and do not know whether they will find their families alive and their town or their village intact on their return; old men sit in front of their coffee next to boys. What unholy fury all this misery

has brought about, torn all these people from their native soil, chased them around in the world until all remains in the small German cities is a kind of Tower of Babel, where nobody understands each other's language, and where a French army must come into the country to see to the right and repatriate the unfortunates ...

### "War – a dreadful boomerang"

War – a dreadful boomerang thrown at the European sky five years ago by *Hitler* and *Göring* intending to erase foreign towns by their air force – has returned with a hundredfold and thousandfold rage from its disastrous flight to eliminate the German cities. A look at these towns which used to flourish is a very desolating and shocking sight, and nobody is able to sum up his conflicting feelings and form a logically founded judgment when he is facing these giant toys that are broken, dilapidated, burnt and scattered in complete chaos. Flowers of lilac and broom, [...] tulips and other flowers in the gardens belonging to houses that have been destroyed, flowers that reach out their young colors despite all those dreadful events, and very bright green coming from trees and bushes which come to leaf with impatience, witness nature's triumph of over man's work. Stuttgart is in ruins, only the residential areas are left intact, on

the hills that rise up over the heart of the town. The station with its front smoked in grey is still there, there is a wild mess of bent iron (verbogenes Eisen), the hotel Marquardt is totally burnt, the royal castle is but one front of baroque that has been partly preserved, beside there is the grand building which housed the center of the propaganda to foreign countries of the NSDAP that is destroyed, for Stuttgart was the centre of Germanhood abroad.

### Sounds of the Marseillaise in Stuttgart

Near the main street a battalion of French infantrymen got into line in order to hand over the flag. Those are former F.F.I. (Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur) who had voluntarily enrolled for two years' military service and who were then accepted as a regular unit by the French army after they had gone through a military training and after they had gathered their first experiences of man-organized campaign. In the French army (installed) in southern Germany there might be but one or two regiments of F.F.I. which have been accepted, meanwhile the officers of Maquis – as far as they wanted to join the army – had had a cadre instruction, the rest of the cadres of these new units had been recruit-

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**"Hunger takes hold in Greece"**

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the biggest soup kitchen of Athens is situated. Here the queue of people waiting for a warm bean soup or a plate of noodles keeps growing day by day. Almost 15,000 people get fed in the soup kitchens of Athens alone, every day. The Orthodox church feeds another 250,000 people in need throughout the country. "Together we can make it": with this slogan customers are asked to donate food in Greek supermarkets, an action of the broadcasting company SKAI. Next to the cashiers there are containers where those who still have plenty may leave tins or olive oil, potatoes, noodles or rice for the soup kitchens.

**"Chew your food as long as possible"**

"Recipes of hunger" – that's the name of a book which might become a bestseller in Greece. More and more Greeks are willing to invest 12.90 euro to buy a copy,

many hoping they could use this information in order to save money. The author is historian *Eleni Nikolaidou*: "I got the idea when I stumbled upon a newspaper headline from the war years which read: 'How to collect breadcrumbs'", the writer recalls. *Nikolaidou spent 18 months in the archives researching Greek newspapers from the time of the German occupation (1941–1944)*. She collected useful recipes to somehow feed a family under harshest conditions. "Chew your food as long as possible, that way the stomach feels full longer", is one of her suggestions.

*In the winter of 1941/42 300,000 people died of cold or starvation in Greece, after the German occupation forces had confiscated fuel and food.* Today the situation is far from being as desperate as in those days. But for the first time since the end of the war more than one in five Greeks are unemployed today. Among the youth, even one in two is without a job. Those burnt down ruins and soot-blackened facades

which remind of heavy clashes in the inner city of Athens two weeks ago may illustrate the potential of violence lurking behind this piece of statistics.

**Away from the EU**

Nine out of ten Greeks view their country to be on the wrong track according to a recent self-administered questionnaire. Greece enters the fifth year of recession. Because the economic output keeps declining, deficit and debt quotas rise. Consequently the minister of finances once again raises taxes and slashes the budget in order to satisfy the international debtors' austerity set points. That way he drains the economic circuits of even more money and drives the country further into recession. This year the gross domestic product is expected to shrink by another 5%. •

Source: *Handelsblatt* from 21.3.2012(Translation *Current Concerns*)**"A little more considerateness..."**

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ed among professional officers. The very young in perfectly lined up columns who are wearing khaki uniforms and white spatter dashes are presenting the guns in front of the flag of the regiment, while their orchestra is belting out the sounds of Marseillaise into the ruined town. Foreign women and men workers, some natives, pale girls and children are looking at the colorful spectacle, totally spellbound. The orchestra which is playing the resounding tune, the battalion marching towards the castle in the main street, in front of yearning holes amidst it and decorations amidst it, which have remained there. The first march of a French regiment that takes place in the capital of Württemberg which has been conquered. The battle around Stuttgart will write history in the history of wars as a model of an excellently performed operation in modern mobile warfare.

On crossing the Rhine between Speyer and Germersheim by night on 30 March, the units of de Lattre found four German divisions beyond the Pforzheim basin in front of Stuttgart, expecting a front attack by the enemy. De Lattre, however, let only smaller troops west of Stuttgart install, while he was sending a tank division through the Black Forest to

the South where the Germans judged an enemy attack to be improbable because of conditions of soil. Near Freudenstadt where a massive battle was taking place, the tank division turned North-East, thus arriving South of Stuttgart. The defenders of Stuttgart got confused when they were menaced behind their backs and attacked ahead from Pforzheim, thus being forced to abandon the city to the French on 21<sup>st</sup> April. At the same time a French convoy had advanced on the right bank of the Rhine from Karlsruhe (which had fallen into the hands of the French on 4<sup>th</sup> April) southward where – in Rastatt – we have seen the traces of those severe and vehement fights taking place there. At the station of Rastatt you could see the writing torn into pieces, but still readable "German victory or Bolshevik chaos". This convoy took hold of the town of Kehl and after combing the heights of the Black Forest it eliminated the last menace coming from Baden to Strasbourg. Near Freudenstadt there was another unit – beside the unit carrying out the attack against Stuttgart –, which was advancing to the South, towards the Swiss border whereupon parts of the four divisions which were on the Rhine and on the southern foothills of Black Forest were cut off from any possibility to retreat. When a general who was in command of these troops tried to

join the majority of the German army positioned on the Lake of Constance by making a breakout – these four remaining divisions, there were but 12,000 men – were destroyed by French planes and mobile artillery. The rest of the German troops were imprisoned. It was only the elimination of the enemy (Taschen) that made it possible for the French to start the advance towards the Lake of Constance and Constance in the last week of April. Before that the line of Neckar, near Donaueschingen and Sigmaringen on the Danube had to be forced, a French convoy had to occupy Ulm, from the Sigmaringen direction.

**Ripe for total defeat**

This, in broad outline, is the course of the French campaign in south Germany which precisely lasted four weeks. The resistance of the German Armed Forces was broken; the German 19<sup>th</sup> army and the two army corps added in the last phase, which to their big disadvantage lacked the support of the air force, were fragmented, partly wiped out and mostly captured together with their generals. On the French side the leading Corps Generals of this operations were the generals de Monsabert and Béthouart. The aim of de Lattre and his American colleagues

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## How American capitalism came to us

### The problems are systemic in nature

*American capitalism is characterized primarily by a short-term focus on returns with maximum dividend (quarterly dividends, exorbitant bonuses), while risk considerations, prudence, government regulations (instead of protecting the national economy, Cassis de Dijon principle and free movement of capital), moral and social concerns (social security, health care, public education, direct democracy) or environmental protection (GM, patents on life, CO<sub>2</sub>) are being suppressed or completely blanked out.*

pa. The following example will show how globalisation, since the neo-liberal political changes – starting with the United States – has prevailed in almost all states, particularly through the privatisation of public services.<sup>1</sup> This development can be reconstructed by looking at the career of one of its main protagonists in Switzerland – with an international impact:<sup>2</sup> In 1971 Ernst Buschor, born in 1943, was assigned a mandate for financial professionals in the Council of Europe after having received a law degree from the University of St Gall (HSG). In 1975 he became chief of the financial administration of the Canton of Zurich, where he introduced – as a prototype for Switzerland – the “new accounting model” which was borrowed from the private sector.<sup>3</sup> It allows, in contrast to the previous governmental statement of revenues and expenditures (accounting), an extended debt policy and balance sheet cosmetics (e.g. “wealth creation” by activating non-marketable forests, roads etc.). In 1985 Buschor was appointed professor at the HSG, where he promoted the import of theories from the Anglo-American countries, carried out

extensive consulting activities and contributed significantly to the creation of a Swiss model of the American administrative reform, “New Public Management (NPM)”,<sup>4</sup> the so-called “action-oriented governance” (*Wirkungsorientierte Verwaltungsführung*, WOV) “.

In 1993, Ernst Buschor became a member of the government of the Canton of Zurich. In the 1990s, applying the policies of “the cash-strapped”, promising the politicians of all parties that they could save money without having to cut benefits or social services, flouting large parts of the democratic process in budget planning and imposing a rigorous communication strategy, Buschor succeeded in implementing neoliberal reforms with unpredictable consequences for public administration, health and education.<sup>5</sup> After he had, as head of the Directorate of Health and Welfare, turned health care inside out with NPM reforms, Buschor was Director of Education between 1995 until 2003<sup>6</sup>, with responsibility for the radical and anti-pedagogical NPM reforms in the educational sector. Initially, he failed to push through his ambitious “School Project 21”, with English and computers from the first primary school class, the model for which had inspired him in California. Later, he introduced Early English and the controversial teacher evaluation system MAB, as well as establishing schools with headteachers as “profit centres with CEOs”. In late 2002, when Ernst Buschor wanted to secure his NPM reforms with twelve sub-projects in elementary school law, the Zurich citizens rejected it with a majority of 52 percent. At the same time Buschor implemented the NPM reforms at the university, resulting in a change of cul-

ture towards “self organisation” and – as at American universities – in an increasing influence of corporate sponsors on the formerly free science.

Buschor’s ability to exercise influence in the interests of American capitalism – well beyond Switzerland –, was extraordinary. Accumulation of elite positions in various social power fields made Buschor a powerful reformer: He was a member of numerous commissions and committees, including *Swiss harmonization of public budgets* (Chair), President of the “effectiveness of government measures” National Research Programme, President of the Swiss University Planning Commission, President of the Swiss Society of Administrative Sciences, which in the 90s became an important forum for the dissemination of “New Public Management”.

From 1998 to 2003, Buschor was a member of the *Council of Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences* and in 2001/02 Vice President of the *Swiss University Conference*. From 2004 to 2007 he was Vice President of the Council of Swiss Universities (ETH-Rat). Since 2003, he has been a member of the Board of the *Jacobs Foundation* and the Board of the *Careum Foundation*, Zurich, and since 2004 the Advisory Board of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHE). In 2005 he became a member of the Steering Committee of the *Avenir Foundation*, Zurich. From 2005 to 2007 he was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the *Bertelsmann Foundation*, Gütersloh. He is a corresponding member of the German Research Institute of Public Administration, Speyer.<sup>7, 8, 9</sup>

Although early criticism (e.g. *Fred Malik*, HSG) of the supposedly success-

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#### “A little more considerateness...”

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was to reach the “Alpenreduit” so quick that for the enemy a longer lasting resistance would not be possible; therefore in the west Feldkirch and further east Immenstadt were designated as targets of the French advance. Because the annihilation of the enemy was already a fact before he had time to fall back to the alps in an orderly withdrawal. The armies Patch and de Lattre finally invaded South Bavaria and Austria without finding any resistance. The German Armed Forces were ripe for the total defeat after

they had for years set their enemies the example of the total war.

When we returned to Switzerland by passing Konstanz during the night of the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, we knew that the war was ending. In practice it was all over, because it is not possible that an army can be more totally defeated, a country more collapsed than Germany and the German Armed Forces. There are still towns in Germany which are completely undamaged like Baden-Baden and Speyer; there are little towns like Sigmaringen and Tübingen which have hardly suffered or even not at all, there are countless intact villages, a rich soil, cultivated

fields, large forests. On this basis, under foreign occupation, probably without an own statehood for a longer time, but with modesty and diligence, the German people will have to build up a new existence for themselves in the course of many years.

Source: J.R. von Salis. *Kriege und Frieden in Europa. Politische Schriften und Reden 1938–1988.*

Orell Füßli. Zürich 1989. extraction of the text: “Bei der Armee” “Rhein und Donau”, april 1945. S. 79–85. ISBN 3 280 01921 4s

(Translation Current Concerns)

### "How American capitalism ..."

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ful and media-hyped American model was raised, and although American capitalism and its accounting practices contributed to the world's largest corporate failures (WorldCom, Enron – "The World's Greatest Company," Arthur Andersen [one of the Big Five], Tyco, Global Crossing) in 2002 and although Swiss companies had to support their American subsidiaries with billions of dollars, American capitalism continued to be a model. The Swiss administrative and legal reforms (reform of company law, etc.) were continued along the same lines, American managers were hoisted to the top of Swiss companies and the "rip-off bonuses" were also common in Switzerland. The great recession of 2008 began in America and within a short time spread to the whole world – in China alone, 20 million jobs were lost – and many millions became impoverished. Modern economics, with its belief in free markets and globalisation, had promised prosperity for all. These free market doctrines had claimed for the last 25 years that free and unfettered markets would be efficient and correct errors quickly. The state should limit itself to the necessary tasks because regulation inhibited innovation in the economy.

Nobel Laureate *Stiglitz* sees the way out of the current global economic crisis in a reorganisation of the world economic system (see *Zeit-Fragen*, No. 21 from 25 May 2010, "Freefall"). "The current crisis reveals fundamental flaws in the capitalist system or at least in the particular brand of capitalism that has emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States (this variant is sometimes also called 'American Capitalism'). [...] Whenever problems are so persistent and pervasive, as has been the case of the US financial system, one can draw only one conclusion: The problems are systemic in nature. The high bonuses and rampant greed on Wall Street may have attracted a disproportionate number of unscrupulous

### Swiss Federal Council: Mobile ban in consequence of espionage activities?

The mobile ban during Swiss Federal Council sessions has been issued due to safety reasons. Is the Swiss Federal Council being spied on? For experts it is absolutely imaginable.

Some new details about the mobile ban during Swiss Federal Council Sessions. Cabinet Spokesman *André Simonazzi* confirmed towards "Blick" newspaper, that "security reasons" were behind this decision. Until now it had been speculated that indiscretions in the Federal Parliament Building were the decisive factors. Is Swiss Federal Council being spied on? According to IT-specialist *Ulrich Fiedler* this could be technically possible. "By introducing an appropriate code into the mobile

one could record data or transfer them into the web. Then the mobile is functioning like a bug." For an expert it is sufficient to have the mobile for a short time. Also with a communication intercept station hacking is possible. There is wildcatting who might be interested to spy out the Swiss Federal Council?

Strategy Expert *Albert A. Stahel* sees one main reason: "The US, French, German etc. Governments are interested in information concerning the strategies of the Swiss Federal Council 9999 and ongoing negotiations on the Swiss Financial Centre.

Source: *www.20minuten.ch*  
from 22.3.2012  
(*Simona Marty*)

bankers, but the fact that the problem was universal, points to fundamental flaws in the system."

<sup>1</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Grand Chessboard American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives," p. 48 in the German translation.

<sup>2</sup> E. Buschor: "Das Ausmass der Globalisierung wird nicht in Zürich entschieden." "Wissensgesellschaft: Die Zukunft beginnt auf der Baustelle." Zeitschrift Bilanz, 8.8.2003

<sup>3</sup> Buschor, Ernst: "Das neue Rechnungsmodell für Kantone und Gemeinden" 1978, in: Forum statisticum 10 (1978), pp. 3–12.

<sup>4</sup> Buschor, Ernst: "New Public Management als neuer Retter in der Not: Der Anspruchsvolle Weg zum New Public Management." 1997, in: *Reflegs – Informations- und Personalmagazin des GS EMD* 1997, Nr. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Pelizzari, A.: *Die Ökonomisierung des Politischen: New Public Management und der neoliberale Angriff auf die öffentlichen Dienste*, Konstanz 2001. ISBN 3-89669-998-9, Chapter 3: Finanzpolitik und gesellschaftspolitische Gegenreformen im Kanton Zürich

<sup>6</sup> A few months after joining the Education Department, councillor E. Buschor is said to have promised "to transform the Zurich school system from its high teaching horse into a service enterprise."

<sup>7</sup> Buschor, Ernst: "New Public Management: Reformbedarf auf Bundesstufe." 2000, in: *Vom Service Public zum Service au Public* Zürich, 2000, p. 63–69, ISBN 3858238562

<sup>8</sup> Buschor, Ernst: *New public management. Internationale Erfahrungen und Beiträge Ernst Buschor*, Verlag Heidelberg Zündel & Partner ed. 1996

<sup>9</sup> [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst\\_Buschor\\_%28%C3%96konom%29](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Buschor_%28%C3%96konom%29)

## Current Concerns

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# Russia and the changing world

by Vladimir Putin

*thk. On 27 February 2012, in the run-up to Russia's presidential elections, then prime minister Vladimir Putin published the following article in the Russian daily "Moskovskiya Novosti." This article, rich in substance, got lost due to the loud howling of the West's anti-Russian propaganda. Only a few people took notice of his fundamental statement concerning international law and the constitution as well as his analysis of the global political situation. This is why Current Concerns' editorial team decided to publish the profound article in full wording as documentation for their readers.*

In my previous articles I have discussed some of the key foreign challenges that Russia now faces. This subject deserves a more detailed discussion and not just because foreign policy is part and parcel of any government strategy. External challenges and the changing world around us are compelling us to make decisions that have implications for the economy, our culture, the budget and for investment.

## Russia is part of the greater world

Russia is part of the greater world whether we are talking about the economy, media coverage or cultural development. We do not wish to and cannot isolate ourselves. We hope that our openness will result in a higher standard of living for Russia plus a more diverse culture and a general level of trust, something that is becoming increasingly scarce. However, we intend to be consistent in proceeding from our own interests and goals rather than decisions dictated by someone else. Russia is only respected and considered when it is strong and stands firmly on its own feet. Russia has generally always enjoyed the privilege of conducting an independent foreign policy and this is what it will continue to do. In addition, I am convinced that global security can only be achieved in cooperation with Russia rather than by attempts to push it to the background, weaken its geopolitical position or compromise its defenses.

Our foreign policy objectives are strategic in nature and do not proceed from opportunistic considerations. They reflect Russia's unique role on the world political map as well as its role in history and in the development of civilization.

I do not doubt that we will continue on our constructive course to enhance global security, renounce confrontation, and counter such challenges as the proliferation of nuclear weapons, regional conflict and crises, terrorism and drug trafficking. We will do everything we can to see that

Russia enjoys the latest achievements in scientific and technical progress and to assist our entrepreneurs in occupying an appropriate place on the world market.

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"We are worried that although the outlines of our 'new' relations with NATO are not yet final, the alliance is already providing us with 'facts on the ground' that are counterproductive to confidence building. At the same time, this approach will backfire with respect to global objectives, making it more difficult to cooperate on a positive agenda in international relations and will impede any constructive flexibility."

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We will strive to ensure a new world order, one that meets current geopolitical realities, and one that develops smoothly and without unnecessary upheaval.

## Who undermine confidence

As before, I believe that the major principles necessary for any feasible civilization include indivisible security for all states, the unacceptability of excessive use of force, and the unconditional observance of the basic standards of international law. The neglect of any of these principles can only lead to the destabilization of international relations.

It is through this prism that we perceive some aspects of U.S. and NATO conduct that contradict the logic of modern development, relying instead on the stereotypes of a block-based mentality. Everyone understands what I am referring to – an expansion of NATO that includes the deployment of new military infrastructure with its U.S.-drafted plans to establish a missile defense system in Europe. I would not touch on this issue if these plans were not conducted in close proximity to Russian borders, if they did not undermine our security and global stability in general.

Our arguments are well known, and I will not spell them out again, but regrettably our Western partners are irresponsible and are simply brushing them aside.

We are worried that although the outlines of our "new" relations with NATO are not yet final, the alliance is already providing us with "facts on the ground" that are counterproductive to confidence building. At the same time, this approach will backfire with respect to global objectives, making it more difficult to cooper-

ate on a positive agenda in international relations and will impede any constructive flexibility.

## A vacuum develops in international relations – morally and legally

The recent series of armed conflicts started under the pretext of humanitarian goals is undermining the time-honored principle of state sovereignty, creating a void in the moral and legal implications of international relations.

It is often said that human rights override state sovereignty. No doubt about this – crimes against humanity must be punished by the International Court. However, when state sovereignty is too easily violated in the name of this provision, when human rights are protected from the outside and on a selective basis, and when the same rights of a population are trampled underfoot in the process of such "protection," including the most basic and sacred right – the right to one's life – these actions cannot be considered a noble mission but rather outright demagoguery.

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"By definition, absolute invulnerability for one country would in theory require absolute vulnerability for all others. This is something that cannot be accepted."

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It is important for the United Nations and its Security Council to effectively counter the dictates of some countries and their arbitrary actions in the world arena. Nobody has the right to usurp the prerogatives and powers of the UN, particularly the use of force as regards sovereign nations. This concerns NATO, an organization that has been assuming an attitude that is inconsistent with a "defensive alliance." These points are very serious. We recall how states that have fallen victim to "humanitarian" operations and the export of "missile-and-bomb democracy" appealed for respect for legal standards and common human decency. But their cries were in vain – their appeals went unheard.

## US and NATO striving for a bizarre special role in the world

It seems that NATO members, especially the United States, have developed a peculiar interpretation of security that is different from ours. The Americans have become obsessed with the idea of becoming absolutely invulnerable. This utopian concept is unfeasible both technological-

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ly and geopolitically, but it is the root of the problem.

By definition, absolute invulnerability for one country would in theory require absolute vulnerability for all others. This is something that cannot be accepted. Many countries prefer not to be straight about this for various reasons, but that's another matter. Russia will always call a spade a spade and do so openly. I'd like to emphasize again that a violation of the principle of unity and the indivisibility of security – despite numerous declarations committing to it – poses a serious threat. Eventually these threats become reality for those states that initiate such violations, for many reasons.

**"The Arab Spring":  
lessons and conclusions**

A year ago the world witnessed a new phenomenon – almost simultaneous demonstrations against authoritarian regimes in many Arab countries. The Arab Spring was initially perceived with a hope for positive change. People in Russia sympathized with those who were seeking democratic reform.

However, it soon became clear that events in many countries were not following a civilized scenario. Instead of asserting democracy and protecting the rights of the minority, attempts were being made to depose an enemy and to stage a coup, which only resulted in the replacement of one dominant force with another even more aggressive dominant force.

Foreign interference in support of one side of a domestic conflict and the use of power in this interference gave developments a negative aura. A number of countries did away with the Libyan regime by using air power in the name of humanitarian support. The revolting slaughter of *Muammar Gaddafi* – not just medieval but primeval – was the incarnation of these actions.

**Struggling for inner  
reconciliation in Syria**

No one should be allowed to use the Libyan scenario in Syria. The international community must work to achieve an inter-Syrian reconciliation. It is important to achieve an early end to the violence no matter what the source, and to initiate a national dialogue – without preconditions or foreign interference and with due respect for the country's sovereignty. This would create the conditions necessary for the Syrian leadership-announced measures on democratization. The main objective is to prevent an all-out civil war. Russian diplomacy has worked and will continue to work towards this end.

Sadder but wiser, we are against the adoption of UN Security Council resolutions that may be interpreted as a signal to armed interference in the domestic developments of Syria. Guided by this consistent approach in early February, Russia and China prevented the adoption of an ambiguous resolution that would have encouraged one side of this domestic conflict to resort to violence.

**Counterproductive  
and dangerous logic**

In this context and considering the extremely negative, almost hysterical reaction to the Russian-Chinese veto, I would like to warn our Western colleagues against the temptation to resort to this simple, previously used tactic: if the UN Security Council approves of a given action, fine; if not, we will establish a coalition of the states concerned and strike anyway.

**The logic of such conduct is counter-  
productive and very dangerous**

The logic of such conduct is counterproductive and very dangerous. No good can come of it. In any case, it will not help reach a settlement in a country that is going through a domestic conflict. Even worse, it further undermines the entire system of international security as well as the authority and key role of the UN. Let me recall that the right to veto is not some whim but an inalienable part of the world's agreement that is registered in the UN Charter – incidentally, on U.S. insistence. The implication of this right is that decisions that raise the objection of even one permanent member of the UN Security Council cannot be well-grounded or effective.

I hope very much that The United States and other countries will consider this sad experience and will not pursue the use of power in Syria without UN Security Council sanctions. In general, I cannot understand what causes this itch for military intervention. Why isn't there the patience to develop a well-considered, balanced and cooperative approach, all the more so since this approach was already taking shape in the form of the afore-mentioned Syrian resolution? It only lacked the demand that the armed opposition do the same as the government; in particular, withdraw military units and detachments from cities. The refusal to do so is cynical. If we want to protect civilians – and this is the main goal for Russia – we must bring to reason all participants in an armed confrontation.

**Motivated by someone's interest in a re-  
division of the regional markets there**

And one more point. It appears that with the Arab Spring countries, as with Iraq, Russian companies are losing their dec-

ades-long positions in local commercial markets and are being deprived of large commercial contracts. The niches thus vacated are being filled by the economic operatives of the states that had a hand in the change of the ruling regime.

One could reasonably conclude that tragic events have been encouraged to a certain extent by someone's interest in a re-division of the commercial market rather than a concern for human rights. Be that as it may, we cannot sit back watch all this with Olympian serenity. We intend to work with the new governments of the Arab countries in order to promptly restore our economic positions.

Generally, the current developments in the Arab world are, in many ways, instructive. They show that a striving to introduce democracy by use of power can produce – and often does produce – contradictory results. They can produce forces that rise from the bottom, including religious extremists, who will strive to change the very direction of a country's development and the secular nature of a government.

Russia has always had good relations with the moderate representatives of Islam, whose world outlook was close to the traditions of Muslims in Russia. We are ready to develop these contacts further under the current conditions. We are interested in stepping up our political, trade and economic ties with all Arab countries, including those that, let me repeat, have gone through domestic upheaval. Moreover, I see real possibilities that will enable Russia to fully preserve its leading position in the Middle East, where we have always had many friends.

As for the Arab-Israeli conflict, to this day, the "magic recipe" that will produce a final settlement has not been invented. It would be unacceptable to give up on this issue. Considering our close ties with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, Russian diplomacy will continue to work for the resumption of the peace process both on a bilateral basis and within the format of the Quartet on the Middle East, while coordinating its steps with the Arab League.

**"Soft power"**

The "Arab Spring" has graphically demonstrated that world public opinion is being shaped by the most active use of advanced information and communications technology. It is possible to say that the Internet, the social networks, cell phones, etc. have turned – on par with television – into an effective tool for the promotion of domestic and international policy. This new variable has come into play and gives us food for thought – how to continue developing the unique freedoms of communication via the Internet and at the same

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time reduce the risk of its being used by terrorists and other criminal elements.

The notion of "soft power" is being used increasingly often. This implies a matrix of tools and methods to reach foreign policy goals without the use of arms but by exerting information and other levers of influence. Regrettably, these methods are being used all too frequently to develop and provoke extremist, separatist and nationalistic attitudes, to manipulate the public and to conduct direct interference in the domestic policy of sovereign countries.

There must be a clear division between freedom of speech and normal political activity, on the one hand, and illegal instruments of "soft power," on the other. The civilized work of non-governmental humanitarian and charity organizations deserves every support. This also applies to those who actively criticize the current authorities. However, the activities of "pseudo-NGOs" and other agencies that try to destabilize other countries with outside support are unacceptable.

I'm referring to those cases where the activities of NGOs are not based on the interests (and resources) of local social groups but are funded and supported by outside forces. There are many agents of influence from big countries, international blocks or corporations. When they act in the open – this is simply a form of civilized lobbying. Russia also uses such institutions – the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, International Humanitarian Cooperation, the Russkiy Mir Foundation and our leading universities who recruit talented students from abroad.

However, Russia does not use or fund national NGOs based in other countries or any foreign political organizations in the pursuit of its own interests. China, India and Brazil do not do this either. We believe that any influence on domestic policy and public attitude in other countries must be exerted in the open; in this way, those who wish to be of influence will do so responsibly.

**New challenges and threats**

Today, Iran is the focus of international attention. Needless to say, Russia is worried about the growing threat of a military strike against Iran. If this happens, the consequences will be disastrous. It is impossible to imagine the true scope of this turn of events.

I am convinced that this issue must be settled exclusively by peaceful means. We propose recognizing Iran's right to develop a civilian nuclear program, including the right to enrich uranium. But this must be done in exchange for putting all Iranian

nuclear activity under reliable and comprehensive IAEA safeguards. If this is done, the sanctions against Iran, including the unilateral ones, must be rescinded. The West has shown too much willingness to "punish" certain countries. At any minor development it reaches for sanctions if not armed force. Let me remind you that we are not in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or even the 20<sup>th</sup> century now.

Developments around the Korean nuclear issue are no less serious. Violating the non-proliferation regime, Pyongyang openly claims the right to develop "the military atom" and has already conducted two nuclear tests. We cannot accept North Korea's nuclear status. We have consistently advocated the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula – exclusively through political and diplomatic means – and the early resumption of Six-Party Talks.

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"Illegal drug trafficking has become one of the most urgent threats. It undermines the genetic bank of entire nations, while creating fertile soil for corruption and crime and is leading to the destabilization of Afghanistan. Far from declining, the production of Afghan drugs increased by almost 40% last year. Russia is being subjected to vicious heroin-related aggression that is doing tremendous damage to the health of our people."

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However, it is evident that not all of our partners share this approach. I am convinced that today it is essential to be particularly careful. It would be unadvisable to try and test the strength of the new North Korean leader and provoke a rash countermeasure.

Allow me to recall that North Korea and Russia share a common border and we cannot choose our neighbors. We will continue conducting an active dialogue with the leaders of North Korea and developing good-neighborly relations with it, while at the same time trying to encourage Pyongyang to settle the nuclear issue. Obviously, it would be easier to do this if mutual trust is built up and the inter-Korean dialogue resumes on the peninsula.

**How the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation emerge and who promotes it**

All this fervor around the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea makes one wonder how the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation emerge and who is aggravating them. It seems that the more frequent cases of crude and even armed outside interference in the domestic affairs of countries may prompt authoritarian (and other) regimes to possess nuclear weapons. If I

have the A-bomb in my pocket, nobody will touch me because it's more trouble than it is worth. And those who don't have the bomb might have to sit and wait for "humanitarian intervention."

Whether we like it or not, foreign interference suggests this train of thought. This is why the number of threshold countries that are one step away from "military atom" technology, is growing rather than decreasing. Under these conditions, zones free of weapons of mass destruction are being established in different parts of the world and are becoming increasingly important. Russia has initiated the discussion of the parameters for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

It is essential to do everything we can to prevent any country from being tempted to get nuclear weapons. Non-proliferation campaigners must also change their conduct, especially those that are used to penalizing other countries by force, without letting the diplomats do their job. This was the case in Iraq – its problems have only become worse after an almost decade-long occupation.

If the incentives for becoming a nuclear power are finally eradicated, it will be possible to make the international non-proliferation regime universal and firm based on the existing treaties. This regime would allow all interested countries to fully enjoy the benefits of the "peaceful atom" under IAEA safeguards.

Russia would stand to gain much from this because we are actively operating in international markets, building new nuclear power plants based on safe, modern technology and taking part in the formation of multilateral nuclear enrichment centers and nuclear fuel banks.

**Afghanistan's future**

The probable future of Afghanistan is alarming. We have supported the military operation on rendering international aid to that country. However, the NATO-led international military contingent has not met its objectives. The threats of terrorism and drug trafficking have not been reduced. Having announced its withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, the United States has been building, both there and in neighboring countries, military bases without a clear-cut mandate, objectives or duration of operation. Understandably, this does not suit us.

Russia has obvious interests in Afghanistan and these interests are understandable. Afghanistan is our close neighbor and we have a stake in its stable and peaceful development. Most important, we want it to stop being the main source of the drug threat. Illegal drug trafficking has become one of the most urgent threats. It under-

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mines the genetic bank of entire nations, while creating fertile soil for corruption and crime and is leading to the destabilization of Afghanistan. Far from declining, the production of Afghan drugs increased by almost 40% last year. Russia is being subjected to vicious heroin-related aggression that is doing tremendous damage to the health of our people.

The dimensions of the Afghan drug threat make it clear that it can only be overcome by a global effort with reliance on the United Nations and regional organizations – the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the CIS. We are willing to consider much greater participation in the relief operation for the Afghan people but only on the condition that the international contingent in Afghanistan acts with greater zeal and in our interests, that it will pursue the physical destruction of drug crops and underground laboratories.

Invigorated anti-drug measures inside Afghanistan must be accompanied by the reliable blocking of the routes of opiate transportation to external markets, financial flows and the supply of chemical substances used in heroin production. The goal is to build a comprehensive system of antidrug security in the region. Russia will contribute to the effective cooperation of the international community for turning the tide in the war against the global drug threat.

It is hard to predict further developments in Afghanistan. Historical experience shows that foreign military presence has not brought it serenity. Only the Afghans can resolve their own problems. I see Russia's role as follows – to help the Afghan people, with the active involvement of other neighboring countries, to develop a sustainable economy and enhance the ability of the national armed forces to counter the threats of terrorism and drug-related crime. We do not object to the process of national reconciliation being joined by participants of the armed opposition, including the Taliban, on condition they renounce violence, recognize the country's Constitution and sever ties with al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. In principle, I believe it is possible to build a peaceful, stable, independent and neutral Afghan state.

The instability that has persisted for years and decades is creating a breeding ground for international terrorism that is universally recognized as one of the most dangerous challenges to the world community. I'd like to note that the crises zones that engender a terrorist threat are located near the Russian borders and are much closer to us than to our European or

American partners. The United Nations has adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy but it seems that the struggle against this evil is conducted not under a common universal plan and not consistently but in a series of responses to the most urgent and barbarian manifestations of terror – when the public uproar over the impudent acts of terrorists grows out of proportion. The civilized world must not wait for tragedies like the terrorist attacks in New York in September 2001 or another Beslan disaster and only then act collectively and resolutely after the shock of such cases.

I'm far from denying the results achieved in the war on international terror. There has been progress. In the last few years security services and the law-enforcement agencies of many countries have markedly upgraded their cooperation. But there is still the obvious potential for further anti-terrorist cooperation. Thus, double standards still exist and terrorists are perceived differently in different countries – some are "bad guys" and others are "not so bad." Some forces are not averse to using the latter in political manipulation, for example, in shaking up objectionable ruling regimes.

All available public institutions – the media, religious associations, NGOs, the education system, science and business – must be used to prevent terrorism all over the world. We need a dialogue between religions and, on a broader plane, among civilizations. Russia has many religions, but we have never had religious wars. We could make a contribution to an international discussion on this issue.

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**"But my main premise is that Russia needs a prosperous and stable China, and I am convinced that China needs a strong and successful Russia."**

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#### **The growing role of the Asia-Pacific region**

One of our country's neighbors is China, a major hub of the global economy. It has become fashionable to opine about that country's future role in the global economy and international affairs. Last year China moved into second place in the world in terms of GDP and it is poised to surpass the U.S. on that count, according to international – including American – experts. The overall might of the People's Republic of China is growing, and that includes the ability to project power in various regions.

How should we conduct ourselves in the face of the rapidly strengthening Chinese factor?

First of all, I am convinced that China's economic growth is by no means a threat, but a challenge that carries colossal potential for business cooperation – a chance to catch the Chinese wind in the sails of our economy. We should seek to more actively form new cooperative ties, combining the technological and productive capabilities of our two countries and tapping China's potential – judiciously, of course – in order to develop the economy of Siberia and the Russian Far East.

Second, China's conduct on the world stage gives no grounds to talk about its aspirations to dominance. The Chinese voice in the world is indeed growing ever more confident, and we welcome that, because Beijing shares our vision of the emerging equitable world order. We will continue to support each other in the international arena, to work together to solve acute regional and global problems, and to promote cooperation within the UN Security Council, BRICS, the SCO, the G20 and other multilateral forums.

And third, we have settled all the major political issues in our relations with China, including the critical border issue. Our nations have created a solid mechanism of bilateral ties, reinforced by legally binding documents. There is an unprecedentedly high level of trust between the leaders of our two countries. This enables us and the Chinese to act in the spirit of genuine partnership, rooted in pragmatism and respect for each other's interests. The model of Russian-Chinese relations we have created has good prospects.

Of course, this does not suggest that our relationship with China is problem-free. There are some sources of friction. Our commercial interests in third countries by no means always coincide, and we are not entirely satisfied with the emerging trade structure and the low level of mutual investments. We will also closely monitor immigration from the People's Republic of China.

But my main premise is that Russia needs a prosperous and stable China, and I am convinced that China needs a strong and successful Russia.

Another rapidly growing Asian giant is India. Russia has traditionally enjoyed friendly relations with India, which the leaders of our two countries have classified as a privileged strategic partnership. Not only our countries but the entire multipolar system that is emerging in the world stands to gain from this partnership.

We see before our eyes not only the rise of China and India, but the growing weight of the entire Asia-Pacific Region. This has opened up new horizons for fruitful work within the framework of the Russian chairmanship of APEC. In September

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ber of this year we will host a meeting of its leaders in Vladivostok. We are actively preparing for it, creating modern infrastructure that will promote the further development of Siberia and the Russian Far East and enable our country to become more involved in the dynamic integration processes in the "new Asia."

### **Transition from a unipolar world to a juster world order**

We will continue to prioritize our cooperation with our BRICS partners. That unique structure, created in 2006, is a striking symbol of the transition from a unipolar world to a more just world order. BRICS brings together five countries with a population of almost three billion people, the largest emerging economies, colossal labor and natural resources and huge domestic markets. With the addition of South Africa, BRICS acquired a truly global format, and it now accounts for more than 25% of world GDP.

We are still getting used to working together in this format. In particular, we have to coordinate better on foreign policy matters and work together more closely at the UN. But when BRICS is really up and running, its impact on the world economy and politics will be considerable.

In recent years, cooperation with the countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa has become a growing focus of Russian diplomacy and of our business community. In these regions there is still sincere goodwill toward Russia. One of the key tasks for the coming period, in my view, is cultivating trade and economic cooperation as well as joint projects in the fields of energy, infrastructure, investment, science and technology, banking and tourism.

### **Long-term reform of the world's financial and economic architecture**

The growing role of Asia, Latin America and Africa in the emerging democratic system of managing the global economy and global finance is reflected in the work of the G20. I believe that this association will soon become a strategically important tool not only for responding to crises, but for the long-term reform of the world's financial and economic architecture. Russia will chair the G20 in 2013, and we must use this opportunity to better coordinate the work of the G20 and other multilateral structures, above all the G8 and, of course, the UN.

### **The European factor**

Russia is an inalienable and organic part of Greater Europe and European civilization. Our citizens think of themselves as

Europeans. We are by no means indifferent to developments in united Europe.

That is why Russia proposes moving toward the creation of a common economic and human space from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean – a community referred by Russian experts to as "the Union of Europe," which will strengthen Russia's potential and position in its economic pivot toward the "new Asia."

Against the background of the rise of China, India and other new economies, the financial and economic upheavals in Europe – formerly an oasis of stability and order – is particularly worrisome. The crisis that has struck the eurozone cannot but affect Russia's interests, especially if one considers that the EU is our major foreign economic and trade partner. Likewise, it is clear that the prospects of the entire global economic structure depend heavily on the state of affairs in Europe.

Russia is actively participating in the international effort to support the ailing European economies, and is consistently working with its partners to formulate collective decisions under the auspices of the IMF. Russia is not opposed in principle to direct financial assistance in some cases.

At the same time I believe that external financial injections can only partially solve the problem. A true solution will require energetic, system-wide measures. European leaders face the task of effecting large-scale transformations that will fundamentally change many financial and economic mechanisms to ensure genuine budget discipline. We have a stake in ensuring a strong EU, as envisioned by Germany and France. It is in our interests to realize the enormous potential of the Russia-EU partnership.

### **Building a free trade zone and advanced procedures of economic integration**

The current level of cooperation between Russia and the European Union does not correspond to current global challenges, above all making our shared continent more competitive. I propose again that we work toward creating a harmonious community of economies from Lisbon to Vladivostok, which will, in the future, evolve into a free trade zone and even more advanced forms of economic integration. The resulting common continental market would be worth trillions of euros. Does anyone doubt that this would be a wonderful development, and that it would meet the interests of both Russians and Europeans?

We must also consider more extensive cooperation in the energy sphere, up to and including the formation of a common European energy complex. The Nord Stream gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea and the South Stream pipeline under the

Black Sea are important steps in that direction. These projects have the support of many governments and involve major European energy companies. Once the pipelines start operating at full capacity, Europe will have a reliable and flexible gas-supply system that does not depend on the political whims of any nation. This will strengthen the continent's energy security not only in form but in substance. This is particularly relevant in the light of the decision of some European states to reduce or renounce nuclear energy.

The Third Energy Package, backed by the European Commission and aimed at squeezing out integrated Russian companies, is frankly not conducive to stronger relations between Russia and the EU. Considering the growing instability of energy suppliers that could act as an alternative to Russia, the package aggravates the systemic risks to the European energy sector and scares away potential investors in new infrastructure projects. Many European politicians have been critical of the package in their talks with me. We should summon the courage to remove this obstacle to mutually beneficial cooperation.

I believe that genuine partnership between Russia and the European Union is impossible as long as there are barriers that impede human and economic contacts, first and foremost visa requirements. The abolition of visas would give powerful impetus to real integration between Russia and the EU, and would help expand cultural and business ties, especially between medium-sized and small businesses. The threat to Europeans from Russian economic migrants is largely imagined. Our people have opportunities to put their abilities and skills to use in their own country, and these opportunities are becoming ever more numerous.

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"Nor is mutual understanding strengthened by regular U.S. attempts to engage in 'political engineering,' including in regions that are traditionally important to us and during Russian elections."

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In December 2011 we agreed with the EU on "joint steps" toward a visa-free regime. They can and should be taken without delay. We should continue to actively pursue this goal.

### **Russian-American affairs**

In recent years a good deal has been done to develop Russian-American relations. Even so, we have not managed to fundamentally change the matrix of our relations, which continue to ebb and flow. The

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instability of the partnership with America is due in part to the tenacity of some well-known stereotypes and phobias, particularly the perception of Russia on Capitol Hill. But the main problem is that bilateral political dialogue and cooperation do not rest on a solid economic foundation. The current level of bilateral trade falls far short of the potential of our economies. The same is true of mutual investments. We have yet to create a safety net that would protect our relations against ups and downs. We should work on this.

Nor is mutual understanding strengthened by regular U.S. attempts to engage in "political engineering," including in regions that are traditionally important to us and during Russian elections.

As I've said before, U.S. plans to create a missile defense system in Europe give rise to legitimate fears in Russia. Why does that system worry us more than others? Because it affects the strategic nuclear deterrence forces that only Russia possesses in that theatre, and upsets the military-political balance established over decades.

The inseparable link between missile defense and strategic offensive weapons is reflected in the New START treaty signed in 2010. The treaty has come into effect and is working fairly well. It is a major foreign policy achievement. We are ready to consider various options for our joint agenda with the Americans in the field of arms control in the coming period. In this effort we must seek to balance our interests and renounce any attempts to gain one-sided advantages through negotiations.

In 2007, during a meeting with president *Bush* in Kennebunkport, I proposed a solution to the missile defense problem, which, if adopted, would have changed the customary character of Russian-American relations and opened up a positive path forward. Moreover, if we had managed to achieve a breakthrough on missile defense, this would have opened the floodgates for building a qualitatively new model of cooperation, similar to an alliance, in many other sensitive areas.

It was not to be. Perhaps it would be useful to look back at the transcripts of the talks in Kennebunkport. In recent years the Russian leadership has come forward with other proposals to resolve the dispute over missile defense. These proposals still stand.

I am loath to dismiss the possibility of reaching a compromise on missile defense. One would not like to see the deployment of the American system on a scale that would demand the implementation of our declared countermeasures.

I recently had a talk with *Henry Kissinger*. I meet with him regularly. I fully share this consummate professional's thesis that close and trusting interactions between Moscow and Washington are particularly important in periods of international turbulence.

In general, we are prepared to make great strides in our relations with the U.S., to achieve a qualitative breakthrough, but on the condition that the Americans are guided by the principles of equal and mutually respectful partnership.

**Economic diplomacy**

In December of last year, Russia finally concluded its marathon accession to the WTO, which lasted for many years. I must mention that, in the finishing stretch, the *Obama* administration and the leaders of some major European states made a significant contribution to achieving the final accords.

To be honest, at times during this long and arduous journey we wanted to turn our backs on the talks and slam the door. But we did not succumb to emotion. As a result a compromise was reached that is quite acceptable for our country: we managed to defend the interests of Russian industrial and agricultural producers in the face of growing external competition. Our economic actors have gained substantial additional opportunities to enter world markets and uphold their rights there in a civilized manner. It is this, rather than the symbolism of Russia's accession to the World Trade "club", that I see as the main result of this process.

Russia will comply with WTO norms, as it meets all of its international obligations. Likewise, I hope that our partners will play according to the rules. Let me note in passing that we have already integrated WTO principles in the legal framework of the Common Economic Space of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

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"Nor should we forget that Russia can employ identical response measures against those who resort to dishonest methods of competition."

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Russia is still learning how to systematically and consistently promote its economic interests in the world. We have yet to learn, as many Western partners have, how to lobby for decisions that favor Russian business in foreign international forums. The challenges facing us in this area, given our priority of innovation-driven development, are very serious: to achieve equal standing for Russia in the modern system of global economic ties, and to minimize the risks arising from in-

tegration in the world economy, including Russia's membership in the WTO and its forthcoming accession to the OECD.

**Establishing economic equality**

We are badly in need of broader, non-discriminatory access to foreign markets. So far Russian economic actors have been getting a raw deal abroad. Restrictive trade and political measures are being taken against them, and technical barriers are being erected that put them at a disadvantage compared with their competitors.

The same holds for investments. We are trying to attract foreign capital to the Russian economy. We are opening up the most attractive areas of our economy to foreign investors, granting them access to the "juiciest morsels," in particular, our fuel and energy complex. But our investors are not welcome abroad and are often pointedly brushed aside.

Examples abound. Take the story of Germany's Opel, which Russian investors tried and failed to acquire despite the fact that the deal was approved by the German government and was positively received by German trade unions. Or take the outrageous examples of Russian businesses being denied their rights as investors after investing considerable resources in foreign assets. This is a frequent occurrence in Central and Eastern Europe.

All this leads to the conclusions that Russia must strengthen its political and diplomatic support for Russian entrepreneurs in foreign markets, and to provide more robust assistance to major, landmark business projects. Nor should we forget that Russia can employ identical response measures against those who resort to dishonest methods of competition.

The government and business associations should better coordinate their efforts in the foreign economic sphere, more aggressively promote the interests of Russian business and help it to open up new markets.

**The Russian Federation is the world's largest nation with an unrivaled abundance of natural resources**

I would like to draw attention to another important factor that largely shapes the role and place of Russia in present-day and future political and economic alignments – the vast size of our country. Granted, we no longer occupy one-sixth of the Earth's surface, but the Russian Federation is still the world's largest nation with an unrivaled abundance of natural resources. I am referring not only to oil and gas, but also our forests, agricultural land and clean freshwater resources.

Russia's territory is a source of its potential strength. In the past, our vast land mainly served as a buffer against foreign

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aggression. Now, given a sound economic strategy, they can become a very important foundation for increasing our competitiveness.

I would like to mention, in particular, the growing shortage of fresh water in the world. One can foresee in the near future the start of geopolitical competition for water resources and for the ability to produce water-intensive goods. When this time comes, Russia will have its trump card ready. We understand that we must use our natural wealth prudently and strategically.

### **Support for compatriots and Russian culture abroad**

Respect for one's country is rooted, among other things, in its ability to protect the rights of its citizens abroad. We must never neglect the interests of the millions of Russian nationals who live and travel abroad on vacation or on business. I would like to stress that the Foreign Ministry and all diplomatic and consular agencies must be prepared to provide real support to our citizens around the clock. Diplomats must respond to conflicts between Russian nationals and local authorities, and to incidents and accidents in a prompt manner – before the media announces the news to the world.

We are determined to ensure that Latvian and Estonian authorities follow the numerous recommendations of reputable international organizations on observing generally accepted rights of ethnic minorities. We cannot tolerate the shameful status of "non-citizen." How can we accept that, due to their status as non-citizens, one in six Latvian residents and one in thirteen Estonian residents are denied their fundamental political, electoral and socioeconomic rights and the ability to freely use Russian?

The recent referendum in Latvia on the status of the Russian language again demonstrated to the international community how acute this problem is. Over 300,000 non-citizens were once again barred from taking part in a referendum. Even more outrageous is the fact that the Latvian Central Electoral Commission refused to allow a delegation from the Russian Public Chamber to monitor the vote. Meanwhile, international organizations responsible for compliance with

generally accepted democratic norms remain silent.

On the whole, we are dissatisfied with how the issue of human rights is handled globally. First, the United States and other Western states dominate and politicize the human rights agenda, using it as a means to exert pressure. At the same time, they are very sensitive and even intolerant to criticism. Second, the objects of human rights monitoring are chosen regardless of objective criteria but at the discretion of the states that have "privatized" the human rights agenda.

Russia has been the target of biased and aggressive criticism that, at times, exceeds all limits. When we are given constructive criticism, we welcome it and are ready to learn from it. But when we are subjected, again and again, to blanket criticisms in a persistent effort to influence our citizens, their attitudes, and our domestic affairs, it becomes clear that these attacks are not rooted in moral and democratic values.

Nobody should possess complete control over the sphere of human rights. Russia is a young democracy. More often than not, we are too humble and too willing to spare the self-regard of our more experienced partners. Still, we often have something to say, and no country has a perfect record on human rights and basic freedoms. Even the older democracies commit serious violations, and we should not look the other way. Obviously, this work should not be about trading insults. All sides stand to gain from a constructive discussion of human rights issues.

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**"This is not about empire, but rather cultural progress. Exporting education and culture will help promote Russian goods, services and ideas; guns and imposing political regimes will not."**

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In late 2011, the Russian Foreign Ministry published its first report on the observance of human rights in other countries. I believe we should become more active in this area. This will facilitate broader and more equitable cooperation in the effort to solve humanitarian problems and promote fundamental democratic principles and human rights.

Of course, this is just one aspect of our efforts to promote our international and diplomatic activity and to foster an accurate image of Russia abroad. Admittedly, we have not seen great success here. When it comes to media influence, we are often outperformed. This is a separate and complex challenge that we must confront.

### **Cultural progress instead of bombs and artificial regimes**

Russia has a great cultural heritage, recognized both in the West and the East. But we have yet to make a serious investment in our culture and its promotion around the world. The surge in global interest in ideas and culture, sparked by the merger of societies and economies in the global information network, provides new opportunities for Russia, with its proven talent for creating cultural objects.

Russia has a chance not only to preserve its culture but to use it as a powerful force for progress in international markets. The Russian language is spoken in nearly all the former Soviet republics and in a significant part of Eastern Europe. This is not about empire, but rather cultural progress. Exporting education and culture will help promote Russian goods, services and ideas; guns and imposing political regimes will not.

We must work to expand Russia's educational and cultural presence in the world, especially in those countries where a substantial part of the population speaks or understands Russian.

We must discuss how we can derive the maximum benefit for Russia's image from hosting large international events, including the APEC Leaders' Meeting in 2012, the G20 summit in 2013 and the G8 summit in 2014, the Universiade in Kazan in 2013, the Winter Olympic Games in 2014, the IIHF World Championships in 2016, and the FIFA World Cup in 2018.

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Russia intends to continue promoting its security and protecting its national interest by actively and constructively engaging in global politics and in efforts to solve global and regional problems. We are ready for mutually beneficial cooperation and open dialogue with all our foreign partners. We aim to understand and take into account the interests of our partners, and we ask that our own interests be respected. •

Source: *Voltairenet.org* from 29 February 2012