

# Current Concerns

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## Cultural Diplomacy in a World of Conflict

by Professor Dr phil Dr h.c. Dr h.c. Hans Köchler

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.” This is how *UNESCO*, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, defines its mission in the first sentence of its Constitution, adopted shortly after the end of the Second World War; and this is how the role of culture must be seen in the context of worldwide tension and conflict today. In our era of global interconnectedness and interdependence, issues of culture and cultural identity have indeed become of crucial importance for peace – irrespective of whether we subscribe to *Samuel Huntington’s* earlier diagnosis or not.<sup>1</sup> In order to understand and properly evaluate the meaning of “cultural” diplomacy, we shall briefly reflect on the nature of culture in the context of politics, and in particular of international relations.<sup>2</sup>

### Culture can be resilient vis-à-vis political power

As the most comprehensive framework of reference for a community’s self-realization in its unique *Lebenswelt* (“life-

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world,” to borrow from *Edmund Husserl’s* phenomenology),<sup>3</sup> culture, through all of history, has proven its resilience vis-à-vis political power, even in the form of military force. The ancient Greek worldview – expressed in philosophy, science and arts – shaped cultural identity in the powerful Roman Empire that conquered the Greek city states; Arab-Islamic culture – to give just one other example – was able to survive under the Mongol Empire where each of the successor states adopt-

ed the dominant local religion (a point particularly stressed by *Amy Chua* in her far-reaching analysis of the importance of cultural inclusiveness and tolerance for the building of empires).<sup>4</sup> Culture rooted in religion has proven particularly resilient vis-à-vis political power as has been evident in the eventual fate of Marxism-Leninism in the former Soviet Empire (including in occupied Afghanistan), of Western-in-

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Hans Köchler  
(picture hanskoechler.com)

From 1990 until 2008 *Hans Köchler* served as Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Innsbruck (Austria). At his University, Professor Köchler also served as *Chairman of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wissenschaft und Politik* (Working Group for Sciences and Politics) from 1971 until 2014. Following his election as Life Fellow in 2006, he was elected as *Co-President of the International Academy for Philosophy* in 2010. Professor Köchler is the *Founder and President* (since 1972) of the *International Progress Organization* (I.P.O.), an international non-governmental organization (NGO) in consultative status with the United Nations.

At this point we are only able to emphasize a few aspects of his very rich work. Köchler’s research focuses are among others Legal Philosophy and Po-

litical Philosophy, Philosophical Anthropology, in which his research findings in many points do correspond with the views of the Polish Cardinal *Karol Wojtyła*, the late Pope *John Paul II*. Since the early seventies *Hans Köchler* has been issuing numerous publications, undertaking journeys, delivering speeches and contributions to various international organizations; this way he has been committed to the dialogue of civilizations, especially to a dialogue between the Western and the Islamic World. With Irish Nobel Laureate *Seán MacBride* Professor Köchler initiated the „Appeal by Lawyers against Nuclear War“, which set in motion an international campaign that eventually led to a UN General Assembly resolution and the issuing of an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice who later declared a potential use of nuclear weapons would be a breach of international law. Time and again *Hans Köchler* commented on the reform of the United Nations and called for its democratization. He especially commented on the question how international

law could be implemented and took a firm stand against the instrumentalization of international law standards by playing power politics.

In April 2000, Secretary-General *Kofi Annan* appointed Professor Köchler as international observer at the Scottish Court in the Netherlands (Lockerbie Trial). *Hans Köchler’s* critical report was published in 2003 as a book entitled „Global Justice or Global Revenge? International Justice at the Crossroads“. His impression was, that the Lockerbie Trial was influenced by political guidelines. He therefore called for a strict separation of powers and complete independence of international criminal jurisdiction.

The paper reproduced here is his keynote speech “Cultural Diplomacy in a World of Conflict” given at the *International Conference on Cultural Diplomacy* on 20 December 2017 in Berlin organized by the *Academy for Cultural Diplomacy* (ICD) under the general theme “Promoting Global Collaboration, Unity and Peace through Cultural Diplomacy.”

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spired modernism under the Shah of Iran, or of a dogmatic version of secularism in the Turkish Republic.

**Culture has a shaping force**

In world history, culture has indeed shaped politics; in the other direction, the influence was often much less successful, and certainly less sustainable. Even as regards the history of colonialism, the verdict is still out. Where the conqueror did not, or was not able to, eliminate the native population, the invader's culture was often simply superimposed over indigenous traditions that, in turn, redefined and reshaped the dominant culture. This is also evident in the practice of the Christian faith under African or South American traditions. The relationship between culture and empire<sup>5</sup> is certainly more complex than the advocates of cultural supremacy have been willing to admit through the centuries; it is definitely not unidirectional.<sup>6</sup>

**But culture is also used in the service of power**

Unlike culture (or, as its most general expression, civilization), politics is not necessarily a *comprehensive* phenomenon, driven by the human desire to understand, and interpret, the world as such and defining man's position in it. In the real – not to be confused with the ideal – world, relations between political entities have always been a competition for power, motivated by the pursuit of the "national interest."<sup>7</sup> It is a historical reality that those interests – always oriented towards the "good life" of the nation – have all too often been asserted in the course of war. In all such situations, issues of culture and cultural identity have been subordinated to political considerations. Culture has often been instrumentalized for the purposes of legitimation. As is again the case in our time, in the era of a "global war on terror," the international use of force (in the service of national interests) is justified as defense of "civilization" against its enemies.<sup>8</sup>

**The "dual use" aspect of culture**

However, if war is the "continuation of politics by other means," as von Clausewitz famously said,<sup>9</sup> one may ask the question whether cultural diplomacy (that belongs to the realm of politics) can help to prevent, or curb, conflict – or at least contribute to a negotiated settlement? In the political context, and even more so in international relations, we must be aware of the "dual use" aspect of culture (if I may borrow, for a moment, from arms control terminology). Especially in situations of

armed confrontation, culture can be an element of *indoctrination* as well as of *education*. While the former means the instrumentalization of cultural identity in the service of war *propaganda*, the latter relates to *information* that may help to expose stereotypes and overcome prejudice.

**Notions are instrumentalized for power policy purposes**

Regrettably, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the former aspect appears to have become the dominant one. Many of the looming confrontations and ongoing conflicts are portrayed in the framework of a "*clash of civilizations*," namely a vicious cycle of cultural stereotyping and use of force.<sup>10</sup> This has been particularly the case with so-called humanitarian interventions that have become a typical feature of post-Cold War power politics, and have been part of a wider strategic agenda of "régime change" – with devastating consequences for peace and stability far beyond the affected regions. The instrumentalization of notions such as "democracy," "human rights," "rule of law" for essentially political purposes has not only discredited those values and ideals, but has become a major obstacle to a stable and peaceful world order. Cultural *exclusivism* – the insistence on one's own world-view and value system as being the *universal* one – has provoked perpetual resistance and produced counter-narratives from other cultural communities. How can, in such a confrontational scenario, issues of culture and cultural identity play again a constructive role?

**The essence of cultural diplomacy**

What is needed is a *grand design of cultural diplomacy* that must be shaped by the recognition of *mutuality* (i.e. an understanding that cultural cooperation is essentially a *two-way project*), and that is aware of the *integral* aspect of culture, which may be described by our notion of the "dialectics of cultural self-comprehension."<sup>11</sup> Culture can never flourish in an insular, abstract realm; accordingly, it must be propagated in a *dialogical* manner. Thus, cultural foreign policy as such is not compatible with an imperialist<sup>12</sup> agenda – not to speak of an agenda of war. *Culture is not a mere corollary of politics, but a defining element of it.* Only if politicians realize that there is no supremacy of politics over culture is there space for meaningful, and effective, cultural diplomacy. It is here where the role of UNESCO must be acknowledged.

**Culture as a joint project of mankind**

At the present juncture of world affairs, the crucial question for cultural diplomacy will be whether it will evade the trap of the "*clash of civilizations*."<sup>13</sup> If there is

to be a real chance for cultural diplomacy to have an impact on international developments under the adverse circumstances of today's many conflicts, it must be more than a mere *decorum* of regular diplomatic business. The goal of cultural diplomacy, as part of a state's conduct of foreign affairs, must be an honest and integral *sharing* of a nation's (people's) life-world with other nations (comprising its distinct value system with all forms of art and lifestyle) – not only bilaterally, but also multilaterally. Only this is in accordance with UNESCO's philosophical vision of overcoming "ignorance of each other's ways and lives" that, in the words of its Constitution, throughout history has nurtured "suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war."<sup>14</sup> Thus, the approach must be *inclusive* and based not only on national self-assertion and pride, but on "cultural curiosity" at the same time.<sup>15</sup> Ideally, the pursuit of cultural diplomacy in the global context should be an element of what the United Nations Organization, following the proposal of President *Mohamad Khatami* of Iran, has propagated as "dialogue of civilizations."<sup>16</sup> Instead of fueling aggressive attitudes that may lead to war (as has so often been the case in history), culture must be asserted, and thus developed, in a context of cooperation and mutual exploration of reality by *all* nations. In its true, namely *inclusive*, sense, culture is always a joint project of mankind, namely a realization of our *common* life-world that is based on the very universality of the mind.<sup>17</sup>

**Cultural policy must be honest and without „second thoughts“**

However, if we follow this philosophical ideal, serious credibility issues arise for cultural diplomacy under conditions of *realpolitik*. To stress it yet again: As a matter of principle, culture must not exclusively be used as a political tool or an instrument of power politics, as tempting as this may be for countries with global ambitions and responsibilities. The integrity of cultural diplomacy depends on the honesty of the message that is not to be tainted by "second thoughts." An instrumental, or functionalist, approach is not only incompatible with culture as such, but also politically counterproductive. In this regard, the understanding of culture as an element of "soft power" (*Joseph Nye*)<sup>18</sup> may have to be reconsidered. To give just one, admittedly drastic, example: If culture is brought on the bayonets of an invader, this will not only discredit the invader's self-proclaimed mission, but do more harm than good even according

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to that country's strategic calculations. In such cases, the reassertion of identity on the part of the subjugated will be much stronger and the long-term prospects of stability in the concerned region will be much dimmer. The events in the wider Middle East since the beginning of the new century – and the chain reaction of cultural alienation and destabilization in other parts of the world triggered by those events – are a case in point.

**Is the concept of a "multicultural society" still credible?**

As a result of these developments, a credibility (or consistency) issue has also evolved in terms of the crisis of today's "multicultural society." International conflicts, often followed by civil wars such as those in the Middle East, have further exacerbated tensions between cultural and religious communities in other parts of the world. In the era of globalization, the challenges have become almost insurmountable especially as relations between Islam and the non-Muslim world are concerned. How can countries where bias against another culture or religion has entered the social mainstream – and has begun to shape those countries' domestic and international policies – credibly assert their national (i.e. "traditional") identity vis-à-vis the rest of the world? Or, to say it more bluntly: How can cultural diplomacy be practiced in an atmosphere of hatred and prejudice where the exploitation of stereotypes has become part of the political game (i.e. of party politics)? The credibility problem exists on *all* sides of the cultural divide. How can countries successfully "market" their culture (including their language, poetry, arts and sports) in a constellation where mutual incriminations (in reference to cultural, in particular religious, issues) characterize the day-to-day interaction between those countries? In more general terms: How can a country be credible internationally as a "messenger

"Will the philosophical ideal of culture as common denominator of the *conditio humana* stand the test of reality? Cultural diplomacy is indeed most effective when it is *embedded* in a wider policy of peace. At the same time, it *reinforces* such policy. If it is used as a tool of ideological confrontation, indeed a corollary of war, culture is not only losing its creative force, but becoming devoid of any content; it is made sterile and "useless" in terms of the advancement of humanity."

of culture" that domestically antagonizes or oppresses other cultures? It is important here to stress that the notion of "leading culture" (or "guiding culture," *Leitkultur*), often referred to in domestic debates in Germany, must not be interpreted in the sense of a dogmatic value statement because this would exclude dialogue or co-existence between cultures at the *international level*.

**Culture appeals to the universal nature of the human being**

In conclusion: Against all these challenges in today's conflict-ridden global environment, cultural diplomacy may play a constructive, even crucial, role – *when* and if the protagonists avoid the Machiavellian temptation to use culture, and issues of cultural identity, as a political *tool*. In situations of tension and conflict, violent measures – except in cases of self-defense – are not necessarily the most efficient ones, not to speak of their illegality under modern international law. What is important in such circumstances is a creative, non-dogmatic approach – which is the quintessence of diplomacy. This is exactly the advantage of *culture* because it appeals to the *universal* nature of the human being – unlike politics that is, unavoidably, the management of group egoism (conventionally described as the "national interest").

**Cultural diplomacy: dialogical relations on the basis of equality**

If understood in the *integrative* and *comprehensive* sense we have described here,

cultural diplomacy may serve a constructive role in the building of an order of peaceful coexistence among nations.<sup>19</sup> In order to be *credible* and *efficient* at the same time, it should embrace the idea of *dialogical* relations between cultures and civilizations on the basis of equality. Sovereign equality of nations, a basic principle of the United Nations Charter, must include sovereign equality of cultures. Only this will allow the conduct of diplomatic relations on the basis of mutuality.

**Culture as „icebreaker“ and ground for confidence-building measures**

Against this background, initiatives of cultural diplomacy may help to create a climate that is conducive to the settlement of conflicts and disputes through negotiations. In certain situations, culture in the widest sense (including sports) may indeed be the "icebreaker" and pave the ground for further confidence-building measures. The "ping-pong diplomacy" of April 1971 that preceded, or initiated, the thaw, indeed the establishment of diplomatic relations, between the United States and Communist China, culminating in the historical visit of President *Nixon* in Beijing in 1972, is one of the most colorful examples. Other examples where culture played a constructive role in a conflictual environment are the joint hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2002 by former enemies Japan and South Korea or the series of concerts, in September 2010, of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including musicians from Armenia and Azerbaijan, in the two countries' capitals. In a constellation where both South Caucasian countries were still technically at war over the unresolved Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the ensemble took a direct flight from Baku to Yerevan with the former Culture Ministers of both countries on board. This *multilateral* initiative, though not followed up by bilateral measures or negotiations, is a particularly creative example how culture can build bridges, or brake political taboos, in otherwise intractable situations.<sup>20</sup>

"Many of the looming confrontations and ongoing conflicts are portrayed in the framework of a "*clash of civilizations*," namely a vicious cycle of cultural stereotyping and use of force.<sup>10</sup> This has been particularly the case with so-called humanitarian interventions that have become a typical feature of post-Cold War power politics, and have been part of a wider strategic agenda of 'régime change' – with devastating consequences for peace and stability far beyond the affected regions. The instrumentalization of notions such as 'democracy,' 'human rights,' 'rule of law' for essentially political purposes has not only discredited those values and ideals, but has become a major obstacle to a stable and peaceful world order."

# Iran is not top terror sponsor

## Memorandum for the US President Donald Trump

by Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, VIPS

A group of U.S. intelligence veterans urges President Trump to stop his administration's false claims about Iran being the leading state sponsor of terrorism when U.S. allies, such as Saudi Arabia, are clearly much guiltier.

### Executive summary/background

We are concerned by recent strident and stark public statements from key members of your Administration that paint Iran in very alarmist terms. The average American, without the benefit of history, could easily be persuaded that Iran poses an imminent threat and that there is no alternative for us but military conflict.

We find this uncomfortably familiar territory. Ten years ago former President George W. Bush was contemplating a war with Iran when, in November of 2007, intelligence analysts issued a formal *Nation-*

*al Intelligence Estimate* (NIE) debunking the prevailing conventional wisdom; namely, that Iran was on the verge of getting a nuclear weapon. The NIE concluded that Iran had stopped working on a nuclear weapon in 2003.

Recalling this moment in his memoir, Decision Points, President Bush noted that the NIE's "eye-popping" intelligence findings stayed his hand. He added this rhetorical question: "How could I possibly explain using the military to destroy the nuclear facilities of a country the intelligence community said had no active nuclear weapons program?"

We believe that you are facing a similar situation today. But instead of an inaccurate claim that Iran has nuclear weapons, the new canard to justify war with Iran is the claim that Iran remains the "world's leading state sponsor of terrorism." This is incorrect, as we explain below.

\* \* \*

One of the recurring big bipartisan lies being pushed on the public with the enthusiastic help of a largely pliant media is that Iran is the prime sponsor of terrorism in the world today. In the recent presentation of your administration's *National Security Strategy* for 2018, the point is made that: "Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, has taken advantage of instability to expand its influence through partners and proxies, weapon proliferation, and funding. [...] Iran continues to perpetuate the cycle of violence in the region, causing grievous harm to civilian populations."

Those sentiments are echoed by several other countries of the Middle East. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, *Adel al-Jubeir*, for example, declared in October 2015 that: Iran "is the biggest sponsor of ter-

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### Cultural diplomacy: most effective when it is embedded in a policy of peace

Will the philosophical ideal of culture as common denominator of the *conditio humana* stand the test of reality? Cultural diplomacy is indeed most effective when it is *embedded* in a wider policy of peace. At the same time, it *reinforces* such policy. If it is used as a tool of ideological confrontation, indeed a corollary of war, culture is not only losing its creative force, but becoming devoid of any content; it is made sterile and "useless" in terms of the advancement of humanity. While the *instrumentalization* of culture for interventionist policies can make the thesis of the "clash of civilizations" a self-fulfilling prophecy, the *honest* pursuit of cultural diplomacy means the renunciation of any form of cultural exceptionalism. It paves the ground for a global dialogue of civilizations as foundation of peace – a peace that eventually will be more durable than an order of inter-state relations that is the result of an always fragile – and constantly fluctuating – balance of power. •

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49.

<sup>2</sup> In its inaugural conference in 1974, the *International Progress Organization*, has made an effort – in cooperation with the United Nations Organization and UNESCO – to define the international role of culture, particularly in view of peaceful co-existence among states: Hans Köchler, *Cultural Self-*

*comprehension of Nations. Studies in International [Cultural] Relations*, Vol. I. Tübingen/Basel: Erdmann, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband: Texte aus dem Nachlass, 1934-1937*. Husserliana, Vol. 29. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> *Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance – and Why They Fail*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> See also Hans Köchler, "Culture and Empire: The Imperial Claim to Cultural Supremacy versus the Dialectics of Cultural Identity," in: Hans Köchler, *Force or Dialogue: Conflicting Paradigms of World Order*. Ed. David Armstrong. New Delhi: Manak, 2015, pp. 263-273.

<sup>6</sup> The importance of culture in power relations is not to be underestimated. In the process of empire building, cultural policy was not necessarily a one-way road. It was not always, and not necessarily so, about implanting the conqueror's culture into the subjugated civilization, but often also – for reasons that nowadays would be labeled "realpolitik" – about "adopting" the culture of the militarily and politically subjugated into the empire. The culture of the subjugated and militarily weaker party (especially when it is more elaborate or refined) may not only enrich, but also eventually transform, the culture of the invader/conqueror (as was the case in the Roman Empire).

<sup>7</sup> See esp. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Knopf, 1960.

<sup>8</sup> For details see Hans Köchler, "The Global War on Terror and the Metaphysical Enemy," in: Hans Köchler (ed.), *The "Global War on Terror" and the Question of World Order*. Studies in International Relations, Vol. XXX. Vienna: International Progress Organization, 2008, pp. 13-35.

<sup>9</sup> "Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln." Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege* (1812), Book I, Chapter 1, Paragraph 24.

<sup>10</sup> There exists a relationship of interdependence. Stereotypes (whether in regard to religion or culture and race in a more general sense) are used to legitimize the use of force, and the latter reinforces those stereotypes on both sides of the divide.

<sup>11</sup> Hans Köchler, *Cultural-philosophical Aspects of International Cooperation*. Studies in International

[Cultural] Relations, Vol. II. Vienna: International Progress Organization, 1978.

<sup>12</sup> This term must not be confused with the adjective "imperial."

<sup>13</sup> On the notion see Hans Köchler, "Clash of civilizations," in: Bryan S. Turner, Kyung-Sup Chang, Cynthia F. Epstein, Peter Kivisto, J. Michael Ryan, William Outhwaite (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, Vol. I. Chichester, West Sussex (UK): Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO, *Constitution*, 16 November 1945, Pre-amble.

<sup>15</sup> See also Hans Köchler, "The Philosophy and Politics of Dialogue," *Centre for Dialogue Working Paper Series*, No. 2010/1. La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> On the basis of *Khatami's* initiative, the United Nations proclaimed (before the events of September 11) the year 2001 as the United Nations' *Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations*.

<sup>17</sup> For details see Hans Köchler, *Religious Identity and Universality of the Mind: Reflections on Co-existence in a Globalized World*. Keynote Lecture, "All Faiths and None" – Inter-Faith Forum, organized by Trinity College Theological Society and TCD Equality Fund, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, 19 February 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books, 1990.

<sup>19</sup> See also Hans Köchler, "Unity in Diversity: The Integrative Approach to Intercultural Relations," in: *UN Chronicle*, Vol. XLIX, No. 3 (2012), pp. 7-10.

<sup>20</sup> In terms of sports, one might also mention here the famous "Christmas Truce" of 1914, along the Western Front of World War I, when British and German soldiers, on Christmas Day, played football in the no man's land between the frontlines (for details see Mike Dash, *The Story of the WWI Christmas Truce*. 23 December 2011, at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-story-of-the-wwi-christmas-truce-11972213>), or the participation of the North Korean team in the 1966 FIFA World Cup in the United Kingdom. For details see Hans Köchler, *The Dialogue of Civilizations: Philosophical Basis, Political Dimensions and the Impact of International Sporting Events*. Occasional Papers Series, No. 5. Vienna: International Progress Organization, 2002.

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rorism in the world, and it is working on destabilizing the region."

The Saudi foreign minister conveniently declined to mention that 15 of the 19 terrorists who hijacked planes and attacked America on 11 September 2001 were Saudis, not Iranians. And, while Iran was an active promoter of terrorism two decades ago, it is no longer in the forefront of global terrorism. Ironically, that dubious distinction now goes to Iran's accusers – first and foremost, Saudi Arabia.

The depiction of Iran as "the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism" is not supported by the facts. While Iran is guilty of having used terrorism as a national policy tool, the Iran of 2017 is not the Iran of 1981. In the early days of the Islamic Republic, Iranian operatives routinely carried out car bombings, kidnappings and assassinations of dissidents and of American citizens. That has not been the case for many years. Despite frequent claims by U.S. officials that Iran is engaged in terrorism, we simply note that the incidents recorded annually in the U.S. Department of State's Patterns of Global Terrorism rarely identifies a terrorist incident as an act by or on behalf of Iran.

Iran's relationship with Hezbollah also has evolved radically. In the early years of the Islamic Republic, Hezbollah was often a proxy and sub-contractor for Iran. But during the last 20 years Hezbollah has become an entity and political force in its own right. It fought Israel to a standstill in 2006 in southern Lebanon, which was a watershed moment in establishing Hezbollah's transformation into a conventional army. In the intervening years, Hezbollah, which is now part of the Lebanese government, also has turned away from the radical, religious driven violence that is the hallmark of the Sunni extremists, like ISIS.

**Iran's asymmetrical response**

After Iran fell under the rule of the Ayatollah in 1979 terrorism, its role in high profile terrorist attacks, such as the taking of U.S. hostages and the bombings of the U.S. Embassy and the Marine barracks in Lebanon, fed understandable U.S. animosity towards Iran. But Iran's actions were not driven primarily by blind hatred or radical religious views. For Iran terrorism was a way to punch back against more powerful foes, principally the United States, which was providing military and intelligence support to Iran's neighbor and enemy, Iraq.

The Iranians were also pragmatic and had direct dealings with Israel. During the early days of the Iranian revolution the Mullahs, despite publicly denouncing Israel, happily accepted secret military sup-

port from the Israelis. Israel was equally pragmatic. The Israeli leaders ignored the Mullahs and gave the support as a means of helping counter the threat posed by Iraqi President *Saddam Hussein*. A classic case of the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

The public image of Iran as a hotbed of fanatical terrorists has been usurped since the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in east Africa by Al Qaeda and other radical Sunni entities. The U.S. Government's own list of terrorist attacks since 2001 shows a dramatic drop in the violence carried out by Iran and an accompanying surge in horrific acts by radical Sunni Muslims who are not aligned with Iran. The latest edition of the *Global Terrorism Index*, a project of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, shows that four groups accounted for 74 per cent of all fatalities from terrorism in 2015 — Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and ISIS.

Thirteen of the 14 Muslim Groups identified by the U.S. intelligence community as actively hostile to the US are Sunni, not Shia, and are not supported by Iran:

- ISIS (Sunni)
- The Al-Nusra Front (Sunni)
- Al-Qa'ida Central (Sunni)
- Al-Qa'ida in Magrheb (Sunni)
- Al-Qa'ida in Arabian Peninsula (Sunni)
- Boku Haram (Sunni)
- Al-Shabbab (Sunni)
- Khorassan Group (Sunni)
- Society of the Muslim Brothers (Sunni)
- Sayyaf Group in the Philippines (Sunni)
- Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Sunni)
- Lashgar i Taiba (Sunni)
- Jemaa Islamiya (Sunni)
- Houthis (Shia)

The last major terrorist attack causing casualties that is linked to Iran was the July 2012 bombing of a bus with Israeli tourists in Bulgaria. That departure from Iran's more recent policy on terrorism was retaliation for what Iran perceived to be Israel's role in assassinating five Iranian scientists involved with Iran's Nuclear program, between January 2010 and January 2012 (the dates and names of those attacked are appended).

One can easily imagine the outrage and lust for revenge that would sweep the U.S., if Americans believed a foreign country sent operatives into the United States who in turn murdered engineers and scientists working on sensitive U.S. defense projects.

**Special operations**

There have been other terrorist attacks inside Iran bearing the handprint of sup-

port from the United States. Author *Sean Naylor*, *Relentless Strike*, which details the history of operations carried out by U.S. *Joint Special Operations Command* (JSOC) over the past 30 years, sheds light on this uncomfortable truth:

"JSOC personnel also worked with the Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK), a militant Iranian exile group that had based itself in Iraq after falling afoul of the ayatollahs' regime in Tehran. The State Department had placed the MEK on its list of designated terrorist organizations, but that didn't stop JSOC from taking an attitude of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" toward the group. "They were a group of folks that could transit the border, and they were willing to help us out on what we wanted to do with Iran," said a special operations officer."

The MEK were classified as a terrorist group, until the United States decided that as long as the MEK would help kill Iranians rather than Americans, that they were no longer terrorists. The MEK's history of terrorism is quite clear. Among more than a dozen examples over the last four decades these four are illustrative:

- During the 1970s, the MEK killed U.S. military personnel and U.S. civilians working on defense projects in Tehran and supported the takeover in 1979 of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.
- In 1981, the MEK detonated bombs in the head office of the Islamic Republic Party and the Premier's office, killing some 70 high-ranking Iranian officials, including Iran's President, Premier, and Chief Justice.
- In April 1992, the MEK conducted near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies and installations in 13 countries, demonstrating the group's ability to mount large-scale operations overseas.
- In April 1999, the MEK targeted key military officers and assassinated the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff.

Despite this history, a bipartisan parade of prominent U.S. political and military leaders has lobbied on behalf of MEK and has been well compensated in return.

**Benighted policy so far**

In the ultimate ironic turn, the U.S.-led 2003 war in Iraq played a critical role in Iran's resurgence as a regional power. Saddam Hussein was replaced by Shia Muslims who had received sanctuary in Iran for many years and Baathist institutions, including the Army, were taken over by Iraqis sympathetic to Tehran.

Iran has come out ahead in Iraq and, with the 2015 nuclear agreement in place, Iran's commercial and other ties have im-

## Close Camp Bondsteel!

Rising tensions in the global relations and hot beds of old and new crisis call for unity and efforts of all peace forces for closing foreign military bases, particularly US and NATO foreign military bases, around the globe. The peace forces are obligated to send clear message that US and NATO foreign military bases represent the tools of hegemonism, aggression, occupation, and that as such must be closed.

Peace and inclusive development, elimination of hunger and misery require redistribution of spending for maintenance of military bases in favor of development needs, education and health services. After the end of the Cold War the whole humanity expected stability, peace and justice in the world of equal states and nations. Such expectations, however, turned to be futile beliefs.

In the last two decades, instead of closing US and NATO military bases in Europe, the continent has been interneted by whole chain new US military bases in Bulgaria, Rumania, Poland, Baltic states. As a consequence there are today more US military bases in Europe than at the pick of the Cold War. Peace and security have become more fragile and quality of life jeopardized.

This dangerous development was triggered in 1999 by NATO-US led aggression against Serbia (FR Yugoslavia). At the end of the aggression US established military base in the occupied part of the Serbian territory Kosovo and Metohija, called Bondsteel, which is one of the



Camp Bondsteel (picture ma)

most expensive and the largest USA military bases, established after the Vietnam War. It was not only an illegal, but brutal act of disrespect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and other basic principles of international law. Now, there is even plan to expand the base Bondsteel transforming it into a permanent location of American troops and a hub of US military presence in South East Europe for geostrategic purposes and confrontations.

We demand that the Bondsteel military base be closed as well as all other US mil-

itary bases in Europe and in the World. Preparations for furthering confrontation and new wars are senseless waste of money, energy and development opportunities.

The Belgrade forum as an integral part of the world peace movement, stands firmly by the initiative to close all military bases in the world and redirect resources to rising development needs and people yearnings for better life.

*The Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals  
Belgrade, January 12, 2018*

### "Iran is not top terror ..."

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proved with key NATO allies and the other major world players – Russia and China in particular.

Official pronouncements on critical national security matters need to be based on facts. Hyperbole in describing Iran's terrorist activities can be counterproductive. For this reason, we call attention to Ambassador *Nikki Haley's* recent statement that it is hard to find a "terrorist group in the Middle East that does not have Iran's fingerprints all over it." The truth is quite different. The majority of terrorist groups in the region are neither creatures nor puppets of Iran. ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Al-Nusra are three of the more prominent that come to mind.

You have presented yourself as someone willing to speak hard truths in the face of establishment pressure and not to accept the status quo. You spoke out during the campaign against the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq as a historic mistake of epic proportions. You also correctly captured the mood of many Americans fatigued from constant war in far away lands. Yet the tor-

rent of warnings from Washington about the dangers supposedly posed by Iran and the need to confront them are being widely perceived as steps toward reversing your pledge not to get embroiled in new wars.

We encourage you to reflect on the warning we raised with President George W. Bush almost 15 years ago, at a similar historic juncture:

"After watching Secretary *Powell* today, we are convinced that you would be well served if you widened the discussion [...] beyond the circle of those advisers clearly bent on a war for which we see no compelling reason and from which we believe the unintended consequences are likely to be catastrophic."

#### List of Iranian scientists assassinated in Iran

- 12 January 2010: *Masoud Alimohammadi*, Iranian Physicist: Killed by a car bomb. The perpetrator reportedly confessed to having been recruited by Israeli intelligence to carry out the assassination.
- 29 November 2010: *Majid Shahriari*, Iranian nuclear scientist: Killed

by a car bomb. According to German media, Israel was the sponsor.

- 29 November 2010: Assassination attempt on *Fereydoon Abbasi* Iranian nuclear scientist: Wounded by a car bomb.
- 23 July 2011: *Darioush Rezaeinejad*, Iranian electrical engineer, nuclear scientist: Killed by unknown gunmen on motorcycle. Specialist on high-voltage switches – a key component of nuclear warheads. Assassinated by Israeli intelligence, according to the German press.
- 11 January 2012: *Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan*, Iranian nuclear scientist: Killed at Natanz uranium enrichment facility by a magnetic bomb of the same kind used in earlier assassinations of Iranian scientists.

#### Signed:

*Richard Beske, CIA, Operations Officer  
(ret.)*

*William Binney, former NSA Technical Director for World Geopolitical & Military*

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## 2018 – There are good reasons to fight and to hope

by Natacha Polony, France



Natacha Polony  
(picture ma)

*France is still confident that everything is possible. Some say it is enough to silence Cassandra in order to prevent the Trojan War. Some turn away. Still others try to prevent shipwreck by controlling their own*

*ship as well as possible.*

There is a strange uncertainty in the cold air at the end of this December regarding the balance of the year which is about to end. One would have to be surprisingly uncritical for both statements, that the first months of the presidency of *Emmanuel Macron* were either wonderful or catastrophic.

Of course, it is possible to ignore all tensions and hate, political petty wars and dwarf battles that have occurred. One might forget the fact that the myth of the “fifth largest economic power in the world” has just officially been buried, and that the recent international investigations carried out on both adults and children describe a country whose abilities are in free fall.

However, France is still confident that everything is possible. Some believe that a president castigating the whistleblowers, the revealers, will change the situation for the better and that it will be enough to si-

lence Cassandra in order to prevent the Trojan War. Some turn away. Still others try to prevent shipwreck by controlling their own ship as well as possible. And those are the ones who deserve respect – all those Frenchmen who keep France alive. All those ordinary people who simply and unwaveringly fulfill their duties.

It is true that a large part of the French industry has been destroyed. Textile industry, industry of leather, stationery, china and steel ... are erased by free trade and the resulting unfair competition. But in each of these production sectors, heroes are struggling to continue producing in France or to build something new, driven by the will to resist low-cost logic. More and more French people are realising that by choosing “Made in France” quality products, they have a chance to combat mass unemployment. Because only through an industrial reconstruction – which causes the long-standing unrealistic fantasies of the elites about “service society” and “companies without factories” to disappear – we can still be saved. Entrepreneurs are fighting, tradespeople are training apprentices, many of whom are full of responsibility, professional pride and pursuit of excellence.

It is true, the number of farmers has dropped to 320,000 and many of them are greatly suffering from the difficult economic situation. But many of them have begun to develop new local and regional sales opportunities, to turn away from wholesale and to invent new ways of upgrading their products. Importantly, one

particular law is still in force: The Agroecology Act, which is one of the few rays of hope in the alarming result of the past five-year presidency. This law helps farmers to work with methods combining ecology and profitability and providing them the only good opportunity to do without glyphosate, which is claimed by the *National Association of Farmers’ Unions* (FNSEA) to be irreplaceable.

It is true that the *Estates-General for Food* are mere window-dressing, the conclusions of which have even been rejected by Environment Minister *Nicolas Hulot*, since they only consist of clichés and decoys. But the mere fact that there are *Estates-General for Food* proves that consciousness has been awakened. From that point on, no politician can pretend that he does not know that the French people’s health is affected by the food they consume – at a time in which diabetes and obesity are exploding worldwide caused by American eating habits. Each politician must also know that the survival of the farmers, the quality of the soil and the continuance of nature is in danger – a nature from which 80% of the insects have already disappeared.

It is true that French schools fail to teach children—even those from a privileged environment—to read and to understand simple texts. They have renounced to expect excellent achievements in mathematics sufficient to train their children’s thinking skills for the education of the fu-

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### “Iran is not top terror ...”

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*Karen Kwiatkowski, former Lt. Col., US Air Force (ret.), at Office of Secretary of Defense watching the manufacture of lies on Iraq, 2001-2003*

*Edward Loomis, NSA, Cryptologic Computer Scientist (ret.)*

*David MacMichael, National Intelligence Council (ret.)*

*Ray McGovern, former US Army infantry/intelligence officer & CIA analyst (ret.)*

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*Robert Wing – former Foreign Service Officer (associate VIPS)*

*Ann Wright, Col., US Army (ret.); Foreign Service Officer (who resigned in opposition to the war on Iraq)*

Source: <https://consortiumnews.com/2017/12/21/intel-vets-tell-trump-iran-is-not-top-terror-sponsor/>

# Swiss model versus EU bureaucracy

## EU Weapons Directive is in contradiction to the freedom of citizens

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

In the spring session 2017 and later in the autumn session, the National Council and than the Council of States dealt with the EU weapons directive, which was tightened under the motto "Fight against terrorism". (cf. "Swiss traditions must not be overgrown by EU law", *Current Concerns* No. 24 from 3 October 2017). The consultation process lasted from 29 September 2017 to 5 January 2018, while the cantons and political parties, associations and other interested citizens were able to comment on the intended implementation of the EU Weapons Directive into Swiss law (so-called further development of the Schengen acquis).<sup>1</sup>

The study of the planned amendments to the gun control law reveals even to people not familiar with the topic, that the Swiss understanding of law and freedom and the relationship of trust between citizens and the state does not digest foreign law easily, which incidentally does not fit to the culture of many other European countries and therefore has met with resistance. Subsequently, the EU Commission stepped back a little, but far from enough. Accordingly, the responses on the consultation of the Swiss associations particularly affected are strongly opposed to this new legislation.

Switzerland is now given time until 31 May 2019 to adapt its gun control law to the EU weapons legislation. We still have the parliamentary and direct-democratic process of issuing legislation. Let us re-

member this at every other "autonomous adoption of the law": with an institutional framework agreement, the entire Swiss legislative process, together with the optional referendum and thus the debate among citizens everywhere in the country would cease to exist. Rather the "further development of EU law" would apply directly to Switzerland and that would be the end of direct democratic Switzerland.

Restrictions of traditional marksmen associations, hunting and the general freedom of citizens is not really wanted by most politicians, apart from those who would prefer to join the EU. Nevertheless, some politicians and the media are once again queuing up in front of the Brussels headquarters like rabbits caught in the headlights.

### Restrictions of freedom against the will of the people and a lot of bureaucracy for the cantonal administrations

The EU directive would entail an enormous complication of the laws and administrative procedures applied in Switzerland ... Long lists of "weapons, weapon components and accessories", the purchase, sale, import and possession of which would be banned in Switzerland in the future (Gun Control Law Art.5)<sup>2</sup>. After all, the activities of shooting clubs and "shooting for hunting" are basically permitted. The following are long lists of possible exemptions for marksmen, weapon collectors, museums (Art.

28b-e), which the cantons "may approve" (Art. 5 (6)). Estimable reasons for granting an exemption also apply, among other things, to the "requirements of national defence"(Art. 28c, para 2 d.) – A very friendly gesture from the EU leaders! In particular, what is meant is that the Swiss soldiers can continue to take their personal weapon home and, under certain conditions, keep it even after they leave the army, as is customary in our militia army. This was clearly confirmed by the sovereign on 13 February 2011: 56.3 per cent of voters and 20 out of 26 cantons said no to the "Protection against armed violence" initiative.

### Is exclusion from Schengen, really a catastrophe?

According to National Council member *Ida Glanzmann*, CVP (Neue Zürcher Zeitung of 5 January 2018), the Schengen Information System is crucial for our security agencies in the fight against terrorism, and exclusion would be a ca-

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ture engineers and mathematicians for whom they used to be known.

But for the first time in thirty years, the new Minister of Education [*Jean-Michel Blanquer*] has challenged the fortress located at Rue de Grenelle [seat of the Ministry], which has been built by charlatans, convinced of their right to use children as their guinea pigs.

From there the renewal is about to come. There the strong forces are hidden, that make this country what it is – despite decades of moral crisis and mistakes of the elites, who are obsessed with the elimination of the old remnants of French idiosyncrasies and the adaptation to the neoliberal model. Those who decide not to be carried away by the fantastic announcements of the PR army of

power are anything but weaklings or pessimists. It does not mean wallowing in joyless passions if you bluntly reject the stupid talk of the "start-up nation", if you manage to turn failures into fabulous victories, such as the renegotiations of the guidelines concerning posted workers, glyphosate, and the fight against tax havens in the EU. This "No" is affirmative.

It is a huge "Yes", addressed to all those Frenchmen who humbly contribute to the persistence of industry, agriculture, craftsmanship, expertise, to all those teachers who come forward with effective teaching methods, to all the young people growing up to develop as personal human beings. They all are the modest army of fighters for France. •

Source: © Natacha Polony, "Le Figaro" from 29.12.2017

(Translation *Zeit-Fragen* [*Current Concerns*])

## Current Concerns

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## "Fight against terror" with stricter weapon law

(Excerpts from consultation responses of important associations)

*Swiss Shooting Association SSV, 13.12.2017:*

"Both the EU Weapons Directive and the Federal Council's bill miss the original target. The EU Weapons Directive was drafted after the terrorist attacks in Brussels, Paris and elsewhere with the intention of preventing such attacks in the future. The bill cannot achieve this goal. There is a fake solution on the table, which mainly punishes the legal gun owner, but for example, does not contain any measures against the dangerous trade in illegal weapons. [...] We already have a precise and well-installed weapons law against the misuse of firearms. A further tightening is simply disproportionate and takes place exclusively at the behest of the EU."

*Swiss Officer's Association SOG, 21.12.2017:*

"The Federal Council's proposal on how to implement the EU Weapons Directive into Swiss law hits the legal owner of guns, not the dangerous trade in illegal weapons. The SOG advocates a liberal weapon law. In their opinion, it is therefore appropriate for the Federal Council to accept the EU Weapons Directive but at the same time stress that the existing Swiss laws are sufficient."

*Swiss Noncommissioned Officer's Association SUOV, 29.12.2017:*

"The goal of combating terrorism is far missed here, but more and unnecessary

bureaucratic hurdles are being created for the legitimate gun owner. [...] Righteous citizens and former militia soldiers (who usually became owners of weapons without reserve and unconditionally) should now be fundamentally mistrusted, arbitrarily and unfounded. Only when the citizen has proven the opposite, he or she receives a temporary license with conditions. The paradigm shift would hit Switzerland hard because completely unfounded, the government is changing from a culture of confidence to a culture of mistrust, which Switzerland has never done in its history."

*Pro Tell Society for a Liberal Weapon Law, 21.12.2017:*

"Without contributing to the improvement of public safety, the provisions of the Directive (EU 2017/853 Development of the Schengen acquis) treat hundreds of thousands of honest and law-abiding citizens and legal rights holders as potential criminals; Pro Tell is fundamentally opposed to the proposed revision of the Weapons Act and therefore asks the Federal Council to notify the EU of the rejection of Directive (EU) 2017/853 by the Swiss Confederation. There is no doubt that the existing Swiss law has long provided provisions that ensure public safety without at the same time violating centuries-old rights and unnecessarily restricting traditional freedoms [...]".

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"Swiss model versus EU ..."

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is doubtful whether the EU leaders would exclude Switzerland from the agreement, as our country is contributing to the protection of external borders. And if they did, let us not forget how short-lived the excitement in Swiss universities was when the EU excluded us from the Erasmus+ student exchange programme against international law. After the first shock, it became apparent that expulsion did not harm either the students nor the Federal Treasury – on the contrary.<sup>3</sup> Today it is the Federal Council that postpones Switzerland's renewed association with Erasmus+. Would Schengen perhaps be similar?

Whether the tightening of the EU Weapons Directive, which is under discussion, will have any effect at all on the fight against terrorism, is clearly put into question in the answers of important associations to the consultation. Moreover, governments that want to protect their populations against terrorist attacks could also seriously consider whether they should stop participating in illegal wars against peoples who haven't done any harm to them. •

<sup>1</sup> Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP). Consultation on the preliminary draft of the Federal Decree on the approval and implementation of the exchange of diplomatic notes between Switzerland and the EC concerning the adoption of Directive (EU) 2017/853 amending Directive 91/477/EEC (further development of the Schengen acquis).

<sup>2</sup> Draft of the Federal Council amending the Federal Act on Weapons, Accessories and Ammunition (Gun Control Law) from 20 June 1997.

<sup>3</sup> see "Check your contractors first!" *Current Concerns* No. 1 from 14/1/2015

tastrophe. In reality, Switzerland has always had agreements with its neighbours on police cooperation. Before being integrated into the Schengen Agreement, we

were also allowed to monitor our national borders (which various EU member states have been doing since the migration wave of 2014 despite Schengen...). It

## Christian Democratic Party (CVP) and Social Democratic Party (SP) for rapid implementation of the framework agreement

*mw.* Forward with the institutional framework agreement! SP president *Christian Levrat* and CVP Foreign Affairs committee president *Elisabeth Schneider-Schneiter* announce the timetable desired by their party leaders: The referendum on a package of *Bilateral III* with framework agreement should take place before the Federal elections (in October 2019). This means debates and final votes in the National Council and Council of States by the end of 2018, followed by 100 days referendum period, then the referendum (the referendum is certain to be taken) in May 2019. FDP (Free Dem-

ocratic Party) president *Petra Gössi*, however, does not want to be put under time pressure from the EU and warns against package solutions (after the extensive corporate taxes III bills and the revision of pension act at the ballot box have failed), and the SVP (Swiss People's Party) will fight according to party president *Albert Rösti* in any case against the agreement – no matter when, but certainly with particular momentum before the elections! ("*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*" from 6.1.2018)

If there is already talk of a timetable, it would actually be appropriate in the

direct democratic Switzerland, that the population is gradually told the plain truth as it should happen concretely, such as the automatic adoption of EU law and the dispute settlement or the announcement by the ECJ, "which way it goes".

Using current examples, such as the implementation of the EU Weapons Directive, we can get a more and more accurate picture, despite the unpublished draft framework agreement: In reality, it is about being, or not being part of the Swiss model.

Letter to  the Editor

## It is official: Switzerland no longer has national defence!

On 5 January 2018, Corps Commander *Schellenberg* swore his staff to the task of the new *Operations Command*. “The Command plans and leads all operations of the armed forces”, including “planning, leading and evaluating all operations at home and abroad” (source: DDPS).

Now it’s officially confirmed: Switzerland no longer has an army to fight a war for the country. It should only be able to perform “operations”. By definition, operations are military actions that are limited in terms of the means used, their geographical extent and duration. They’re not a war for the country, not even a big battle. (Don’t come back with the fairy tale, the future war is only about cyberattacks and a few specialists [“green males”]). The numerous tanks and other heavy means of all militarily important powers, including Russia’s 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army, which has been ready for operation again since 2 years, were not built for an open-air museum for the deniers of the reality of a future war. Here are two definitions from lexica for the term “operation”: *Meyer’s Great Pocket Encyclopaedia*: “A chronologically and militarily coherent action by armed forces of a warring faction to carry out a military mission”. <https://de.wiktionary.org/wiki/operation>: “Operation: Completed action to carry out a mission.”

With only 6 combat battalions and 4 artillery divisions, the further eliminated army can actually only carry out single operations. However, this will only be the case if Switzerland has a credible air force and air defence forces until then. Operations are conceivable if, for example, individual units of an attacker from the east in the Rhine Valley should accidentally cross the national border or if a regiment of a US airborne division

lands in the Great Moss. More is not possible. In both cases, the 6 combat battalions have to be on the scene quickly and the artillery not far away, and an air force and air defence should be able to prevent the destruction from the air of the few Swiss battalions/departments to a large extent. According to Federal Council’s documents, the 17 infantry battalions, which are still part of the army, are said to have *limited defence capabilities*. They have no anti-tank, anti-aircraft and heavy fire equipment and are not even suitable for operations. Their soldiers are cannon fodder.

Within the framework of creeping accession to *NATO*, Swiss troops will also be deployed abroad. For this reason, Switzerland was led by the Federal Council into the PfP (Partnership for Peace) and *NATO*’s interoperability platform. (The “Global Times”, daily newspaper of the KP, Beijing, 26.2.2013 on the PfP: “In order to expand its operational area, *NATO* has created new mechanisms such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP)[...]. *NATO* as an instrument of US global politics will play a significant role for many years to come[...].” The interoperability platform serves to practise joint actions, although the Federal Council said that it was only a matter for discussions. In its communiqué to the meeting of 5 September 2014 on the establishment of the interoperability platform in which Switzerland participated, *NATO* said, among other things: “Now we will concentrate on preparing and practicing together. We have therefore adopted a comprehensive Partnership Interoperability Initiative to enhance our ability to address security challenges together with our partners. Here in Wales, our defence ministers have created the

interoperability platform, at a meeting with 24 partners [including Switzerland, the author] who have demonstrated their commitment to strengthen their capacity for joint action with *NATO*.” A further meeting took place on 22 June 2016. The communiqué states: “Interoperability is the ability to act together using harmonised standards, doctrines, procedures and equipment. It is crucial to the work of an alliance of different countries with national defence forces, and it is equally important to work with partners who want to help *NATO* achieve its tactical, operational and strategic objectives. Much of *NATO*’s day-to-day collaboration, including that with partners, is focused on this consistent ability.”

The fact that, at the invitation of Switzerland, a large *NATO* conference with 100 senior officers from the *NATO* Command, all member states and sub-organisations (PfP, etc.) was held in Zurich on 16/17 February 2016 completes the picture and shows the widespread manipulation of opinion in our country. It also fits that the DDPS only informed at the beginning of the conference on which the major Swiss media (“*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” and others) did not report, probably at the DDPS’ request. Switzerland has thus practically joined the camp led by the USA, which has intervened in numerous other countries by all means, including war since the Second World War. In return, the national defence accorded by the Constitution was abolished.

*The Federal Council and all politicians who did not prevent this are responsible to our people.*

*Gotthard Frick, Bottmingen*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# Austria: This is what the new government wants

by Klaus Faissner



Klaus Faissner  
(picture ma)

*The government under Sebastian Kurz and Heinz-Christian Strache was sworn in. With the subjects immigrants and border patrols, the government programme delivers what voters were expecting. In other*

*areas such as the EU or direct democracy, many FPÖ voters, in particular, are disappointed. An overview and analysis.*

On the subject of immigration, the coalition largely promises in the government programme what the ÖVP and FPÖ voters were expecting: that “illegal migration into our country must be stopped and qualified immigration must be geared to Austria’s needs”. Those who are really entitled to asylum should receive “protection for the duration of their persecution”, hence asylum for a limited time, as stipulated in the Geneva Refugee Convention. In addition, 2,100 police officers more are promised, as well as “exploring and seizing all possibilities of national border protection measures, so long as the European Border Guard is not secured”.

For the first time, a government denominates the currents which are really dangerous for Austria: “As in recent years, the greatest danger to Austria’s internal security is primarily the Islamist extremism.” Where in the SPÖ-ÖVP government programme of 2013, right-wing extremism was considered the greatest danger, this time around it reads: “Political Islam, potentially leading to radicalisation, anti-Semitism, violence and terrorism has no place in our society.”

## Consistent asylum policy

An entire catalog shows how asylum abuse can be prevented and conditions for rapid asylum procedures can be created. Two points had a great deal of attention:

- Reading out or restoring mobile phone data and other electronic means of communication (for example: social media) when collecting travel itinerary and when identity is unclear,
- Confiscating of cash when applying for asylum to cover the costs for basic care. Denmark is pursuing a similar model and has thus greatly reduced its attractiveness for asylum seekers – in 2017 only around

3,000 came, about 10 times more came to Austria.

In the government programme, the list of planned measures for a reasonable immigration and asylum policy is long as far as the majority of Austrians is concerned. A few important points are

- only contributions for basic care of asylum seekers, no individual housing,
- Reduction of the cash benefit to 365 euro basic benefit as well as 155 euro integration bonus for persons entitled to asylum and to subsidiary protection,
- no measures sustaining a permanent stay until the final conclusion of the asylum procedure,
- shortening the period for appeal in accelerated procedures,
- negative determination of identities where there is no positive determination possible;
- consistent repatriation of rejected asylum seekers,
- the entitlement to demand-oriented guaranteed minimum income in Austria requires having legally lived five years in Austria in the last six years,
- family reunions do not acknowledge child marriages, forced marriages and multiple marriages,
- administrative offense in case of improper recognition of paternity in order to obtain the right of residence,
- The goal of taking sea-rescued people to centres outside of the EU.

## Question of settlement for asylum seekers

Furthermore, Türkis-Blau (Turquoise-colour of ÖVP and blue-colour of FPÖ) announces better control of public money flows to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the field of immigration, to improve integration, to rewrite the entire asylum and aliens laws and to strictly reject Turkey’s accession to the EU. Many Austrians hope that the rethinking of uncontrolled immigration comes just in time to save the country even more crime and to prevent no-go zones and civil war-like conditions altogether. The interior minister, *Herbert Kickl*, is to guarantee this. However, there is a well-hidden point where thousands of asylum seekers could come to Austria via the official path – and to which the magazine *alles roger?* (roger, all?) pointed out already several times: “For particularly vulnerable groups,” i.e. “vulnerables”, the government should “provide for an Austrian resettlement contingent,” it says. Resettlement means settlement of asylum seekers, mostly by plane directly from their home country. In an interview with ORF in 2016, *Sebastian*

*Kurz* named the figure 10,000 to 15,000 per year – which would mean, with family reunification and their own children that hundreds of thousands of foreigners from other cultures would be living in Austria within ten years.

## Criticism of the absence of direct democracy and CETA

On the other hand, there was a lot of criticism, especially from supporters of the FPÖ, about the break of the central election pledge: the introduction of direct democracy based on the model of Switzerland. The government’s programme stipulates that petitions for a referendum will not lead to referendums until 2022, in other words the earliest at the end of the legislative period. 900,000 votes would be necessary. Of all 39 referendums only 3 reached this enormously high hurdle. It is interesting to see that the number of 900,000 not only far exceeds the approximately 260,000 signatures that the FPÖ had planned as a limit in the election programme, but also clearly exceeds the approximately 650,000 signatures of the ÖVP pledge. Issues that contradict EU law may not be voted on by the people once it comes to the new government. The Austrian EU membership is even more taboo. The former editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper “Die Presse” and *alles roger?* columnist *Andreas Unterberger* said in his blog: “The greatest frustration is undoubtedly the first-class funeral for the direct democracy promised by both (!) parties.” The announcement of the coalition to have the citizens vote in 2022 at the earliest was “the barely disguised death of the big project”. It was formulated similarly sharp by the nonpartisan *Initiative Heimat und Umwelt, IHU* (Initiative Home and Environment), which had supported the FPÖ in the National Council election because of the direct democracy. The new government wants Austria “downgrade to a lawless EU colony,” it said here. According to IHU-Chairlady *Inge Rauscher* “from the outset the new government has been held hostage by the plutocratically controlled EU” and “therefore could not serve the Austrian people”. The one-and-a-half-year support for the FPÖ is herewith terminated.

## Van der Bellen is exercising his power

For its approval of the EU-Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CETA), the FPÖ had to take harsh criticism from within its own ranks. So far *Heinz-Christian Strache* and *Robert Hofer* had demanded a referendum over this question because CETA is put-

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**"Austria: This is what the ..."**

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ting the economy and agriculture – dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises – at risk. In addition, while the Federal Government is committing itself to perpetual neutrality it reduces it to a hollow shell by announcing more Bundesheer missions abroad and confirming the already decided participation of Austria in the EU military union (PESCO).

But in EU issues like CETA and in the question of direct democracy it was not only the ÖVP which applied the brakes but also Federal President *Alexander Van der Bellen*.

During the new government's swearing-in ceremony on 18 December he spoke of a "consensus that a careful preparation and implementation of direct democracy is as crucial as a clear prioritisation regarding important future topics like digital transformation and climate protection." In other words: The people is too dumb to decide its own fate in referendums. And according to Van der Bellen they all agreed to this. It is likely that the FPÖ had to choose between renouncing its participation in the government or direct democracy. But in order to remain somewhat credible the new government will have to risk conflicts with Van der Bellen and Brussels particularly in the question of border controls. According to EU law, border controls are permitted only as extraordinary measures.

**Progress regarding Russia, cash money, glyphosate**

Aside from criticism in central issues like direct democracy or neutrality the ÖVP-

FPÖ programme has earned praise from various sides, particularly from economy representatives.

Indeed many aspects seem new and positive:

- Austria is supposed to promote a policy of détente between the West and Russia and particularly mediate in the Ukraine conflict,
- a constitutional right to cash money,
- focussing on strengthening the economic location Austria,
- lowering taxes,
- reducing bureaucracy,
- medical and social counselling before an abortion,
- efforts against religious minorities – particularly Christians all over the world,
- ban of the total plant protection agent glyphosate,
- in family law: goal of a joint custody with introduction of a double residency model so that children can be with both parents after a divorce,
- assessment if new criminal offences are needed (e.g. deception of authorities with fake age, asylum fraud, trafficking in human beings and illegal entry and stay),
- the goals of the gambling law are to be reassessed – renowned experts consider the ban of legal gambling as counter-productive,
- positive reevaluation of the Bundesheer militia,
- critical analysis of the trade in CO<sub>2</sub> certificates,
- a school system putting higher emphasis in performance,
- strengthening care at home through relatives,

- environmental protection as an important topic,
- lift of the already decided bans on tobacco in favour of the freedom of choice and the survival of mainly small gastronomic enterprises,
- a master plan against soil sealing.

**Many topics have been left out**

Obviously many critical issues have not been mentioned in the government programme:

- Enforced blessing with smart meters, the digital intelligent electricity meters,
- the feeding of pigs and cattle with genetically modified forage,
- working, ecological flood protection according to the Austrian natural scientist *Viktor Schaubberger*,
- creation of money out of thin air by banks,
- disastrous deficiencies in the legal system, e.g. through masses of "Besachwallerungen",
- political staffing in administration and justice,
- the right to defend with legal firearms,
- gender madness.

**Policy regarding foreigners is crucial**

So the government programme is giving a mixed impression. It seems like the success or failure of the new government will mainly depend on the success if its policy regarding foreigners.

Source: [https://www.compact-online.de/oes-terreich-das-will-die-neue-regierung/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Newsletter+2018-01-05T18%3A29%3A29%2B01%3A00](https://www.compact-online.de/oes-terreich-das-will-die-neue-regierung/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter+2018-01-05T18%3A29%3A29%2B01%3A00) vom 7.1.2018

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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# Digital transformation in schools – learning from experience

by Felice Pensatore

Once again, I sat down at my desk and worked my way through a stack of interesting newspaper articles. One of them was in English and almost two years old. A big photo from Silicon Valley graced the first page. I was amazed when I read the accompanying text. Parents were raising the question if the futuristic dream of a classroom equipped with iPads, smartphones and screens was really in the next generation's interest. Even more amazing, these parents worked for the local leading high-tech companies. Their decision was based on independent (!) studies and experiences that dealt with the arguments for or against learning with the latest electronic equipment. And they came to the conclusion that they would rather send their children to a *Steiner Waldorf School* and spend a considerable amount of money on this every year. Accordingly, there is now such a school in the middle of America's "digital center", where the employees of *Google, Apple, Yahoo*, etc. send their children.<sup>1</sup>

What I read there was in contrast to a report from the tabloid "20 Minuten", which said that the municipal council of Berne wants to equip all urban schools and kindergartens with WLAN. To this end, they applied to parliament for a loan of 1.576 million francs. The aim was for children to acquire the first basic functions required by the *Curriculum 21*. Therefore, a tablet was to be made available for every four children. Over a million francs would be necessary to comprehensively equip the 88 school and kindergarten buildings; the operation of the wireless infrastructure for five years would require another 500,000 francs. An additional five-year loan of more than two million francs is earmarked by the Berne municipal council for the network accessibility of school facilities.<sup>2</sup> The city of Zurich has also come down handsomely and has, with the introduction of Curriculum 21 in the school year 2018/2019, granted 12.3 millions francs for equipping all fifth graders with a personal tablet (from this level, "Media and Computer Science" is anchored as a subject in the timetable, according to the new cantonal curriculum). At the end of the sixth grade, the mobile devices should then be returned. Here we have it as well – it already sounds like a mandatory boilerplate: "The aim is to provide students with broad media skills beyond the use of mobile devices." The Zurich City Council also intends to upgrade childcare facilities in schools with computer technology, so that the increasing number of children and adolescents participating in these supple-

mentary childcare services will have access to the necessary infrastructure – for example to do their homework or for administrative tasks. Accordingly, the support staff should be prepared for these new tasks in courses on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

Strange, I thought. Everyone here is crying out for digital transformation and lamenting the missed opportunities, while at the place where all this equipment is being developed, parents prefer holistic learning which involves head, heart and hand. Or is it rather about the chances the education industry missed? Do all the producers of computers, software, and other technical achievements, who praise their products as "pedagogically adept" really have the welfare of children and adolescents first and foremost in their mind?

## A critic is not a machine-breaker or a die-hard

Then I caught sight of the title of a book in my bookshelf: *High Tech Heretic: Why Computers Don't Belong in the Classroom and Other Reflections by a Computer Contrarian*. The author, Clifford Stoll, had written it around the turn of the millennium, when schools in the US had already had their experiences with digital achievements. As an astronomer and computer specialist, he had been involved in setting up the ARPANET, the forerunner of today's internet, and was thus not an "enemy of technology," no "die-hard" or "machine-breaker," as critical spirits are often called. Yet he does characterise himself as having been and still being skeptical about computers, and he sees himself as being obliged to act against inflated, false promises and excessive exaggeration.<sup>4</sup> With his books, he helped to launch a broad discussion on digital transformation in the education system in the US.<sup>5</sup> It was, of course, a question of arguments that reappear in the same way today. I wonder why? Are we so little able to learn?

## Independent (!) experts are warning

At that time, the *Alliance for Childhood* was also founded in the US. This not-for-profit organisation of educators, health professionals, other researchers and those interested in child development also addressed the issue of the then-booming digital transformation of American schools, and at the turn of the millennium provided a detailed report of their research findings.<sup>6</sup> Among other things they concerned themselves with the serious health risks associated with

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"My skepticism grows from a love for computing, from a wish to make our technological world better suited for people, rather than people better suited for machines"

(Stoll, Clifford. *High Tech Heretic, Why Computers Don't belong in the classroom and Other Reflections of a Computer Contrarian*. p. XIII)

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working on the screen (especially also on laptops). Possible associations were found with the increase of early myopia, excess weight and diabetes 2 as well as with the lack of ability to focus on anything. And also the common arguments used to promote the use of digital devices – improved future prospects, motivation, teamwork and creativity – have been refuted by independent (!) studies. In this research, particular emphasis was laid on the disastrous experience gaps of children who spend most of their time at school and at home in front of electronic devices.<sup>7</sup> Wow! I thought, and we are promoting the increased use of electronic teaching materials in schools, because in this way, the children who spend most of their free time in front of the screen and already show addictive behaviour are supposed to learn handling electronic media sensibly. A strange line of argumentation, I thought. Have we learned nothing?

## Against better knowledge

For example, in the USA around the turn of the millennium, various branches of science were examining the often-heard benefits and future-oriented opportunities of computer learning. The learning process, too, was carefully studied. Independent (!) researchers came to the conclusion that the usual, for the most part visually enhanced multimedia learning programmes do not greatly increase the learning effect: to be sure, computers do give the impression that the children learn and are actively involved. The skilled use of computers may then impress, but it does not yet bear witness to intelligence. The children and adolescents are also fooled about their learning success. It is true that the quick answers and the feedback programmed into the given tasks can trigger a "rewarding" short adrenaline rush. However, the pa-

**"Digitisation in schools ..."**

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tience and the desire to try things out, which is needed for successful learning, are stifled and thus a sustainable learning process is prevented. The result is mental inertia instead of understanding and critical thinking. The goal is wrong, because learning is about inspiring students and not just about entertaining them. The key components of a successful learning process are lacking – perseverance, effort, diligence, a sense of responsibility, clear thinking and cooperation, and all this *integrated into the relationship between teacher and child*. Ultimately, this will result in a deep satisfaction, a personality-strengthening experience as an opportunity for development and rejuvenation for everyone involved.

Unfortunately, up to date the critics have not been given the audience due to them! The view of many has been obscured by their enthusiasm for technical frills. They hope to invent better technology to solve the problems created by precisely that technology. The American educational misery testifies to this, and today the *Alliance for Childhood* is resisting the inordinate testing in American classrooms that inevitably comes with digital transformation.

**The attraction of the big profits**

But the advocates of digital transformation did not sleep at the turn of the century either. It was the time of strategic

"But scholarship is not about browsing the internet – it's about understanding events, appreciating history, and interpreting our world."

(Stoll, Clifford. p 18)

planning. In Vancouver, the first "World Education Market Forum" took place, and at the education meetings of the G-8 countries in Cologne in 1999 and in Okinawa in 2000, technology in education was the main topic. The drafting of the rules for the education market was on the programme for the Millennium Round of the *World Trade Organisation WTO*. At

"Learning isn't about acquiring information, maximizing efficiency, or enjoyment. Learning is about developing human capacity."

(Stoll, Clifford. p 22)

a special European Council meeting in Lisbon in March, EU heads of state and government set guidelines, which were concretised by an action plan in Feira in June. It was about building *e-europe*, which would make Europe the most capable *e-economy* in the course of the next fifteen years. The *Global Alliance for Transnational Education*<sup>8</sup> organised annual conferences for representatives of employers' organisations and transnational corporations (OECD, WTO, *UN-ESCO*, *World Bank*, etc.)<sup>9</sup> Business was enticing! In any case, even at that time the market in education was valued at 27 to 50 trillion francs!

**Déjà vu or experiences which might make us wiser**

Why do we not seize on US experiences? Why do we so little talk about the use of investing huge sums in the digital transformation of schools? Or is the sudden rush part of the enforcement strategy: it is easier to command without discussion?

This is not just about the taxpayers' money being cast before the education corporations. There are those who use

the technology as a back door for completely different goals. They want to transform the schools against the background of a biologicistic concept of man imported from the USA. This paradigm shift means seeing the child as a self-organising and self-optimising control system, and turning schools upside-down using appropriate constructivist teaching concepts and skill-based content. According to the system theory they should be freed from their "stagnation" and become "living organisms". This concept permeates the Curriculum 21. Correspondingly, children should be able to work on the required competencies, as well as have them checked, at the computer and with the aid of computer-generated learning units and exercises, in an open-plan school. Is this the perspective we offer our children and adolescents?

"Want a nation of dolts? Just center the curriculum on technology – teach with videos, computers, and multimedia systems. Aim for highest possible scores on standardized tests. Push aside such less vocationally applicable subjects as music, art, and history. Dolts are what we'll get."<sup>10</sup>

What luck that human nature cannot be simply bent out of shape. Increasingly, parents are refusing to make their children available as guinea pigs for die-hard school pilot projects; and children and adolescents express their wish for exciting lessons, together with their colleagues and with a teacher to instruct them – and no laptops. Are only they really able to learn? •

<sup>1</sup> Tablets out, imagination in: schools that shun technology. In: «The Guardian» of 2 December 2015 [www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/dec/02/schools-that-ban-tablets-traditional-education-silicon-valley-london](http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/dec/02/schools-that-ban-tablets-traditional-education-silicon-valley-london), accessed on 10 December 2017

<sup>2</sup> "Alle Berner Kindergärten mit WLAN" (All kindergartens in Berne with WLAN). In: "20 Minuten" of 7 December 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Zurich buys tablets for schools. The City Council has approved funds for the further expansion of computer sciences in schools. And for that it spends a lot. In: "Tages-Anzeiger" of 20 December 2017. [www.tagesanzeiger.ch](http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch), accessed on 26 December 2017

<sup>4</sup> Stoll, Clifford. *High Tech Heretic: Why Computers Don't belong in the Classroom and Other Reflections by a Computer Contrarian*, Doubleday, 1999

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Cordes Colleen/ Miller Edward. *Fool's Gold: A Critical Look at Computers in Childhood*. Alliance for Childhood (ed.). [www.allianceforchildhood.org](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org).

<sup>7</sup> cf. Felber Ursula / Gautschi, Eliane. *Die Trojanische Maus. Computer in den Schulen – Lernen für die Zukunft* (The Trojan Mouse. Computers in the schools – learning for the future). Zurich 2002, pp. 17

<sup>8</sup> abbreviated GATE, supported by companies such as Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Bertelsmann, Hewlett Packard, Siemens, IBM, Merrill Lynch

<sup>9</sup> cf. Felber/Gautschi loc. cit., pp. 73

<sup>10</sup> Stoll, Clifford, p. 6



"The latest results of the study 'BLIKK Medien 2017' indicate that excessive media consumption affects the health, concentration and language development of children and adolescents. Nevertheless, business associations and IT representatives are calling in unison for digital technology and programming languages to be taught in primary school so that pupils are prepared for the digital future. The educational advantage of digital media in the classroom remains questionable. Ralf Lankaus' thesis: We have to reflect on our pedagogical task and ensure that media become what they were in classroom teaching: didactic aids." (from the book's blurb, ISBN 978-3-407-25761-1)

# People do not want war ... or how wars are made

by Dieter Sprock

*“The masses are never bellicose, as long as they are not poisoned by propaganda.”*

Albert Einstein

The history of humanity is permeated by war and violence. The list of wars since antiquity is endless, and the extent of destruction and human suffering already caused and continuing to be caused by war is unimaginable. The two world wars in the last century alone claimed around 150 million dead and wounded, including many civilian victims: women, children and the elderly. And the number of people who have lost their lives through war and other man-made excesses since World War II might well reach the number of 100 million. – Switzerland has no more than 8 million inhabitants. – We cannot close our eyes to this record of horror.

## Sigmund Freud at fault“

Why war?” The search for the cause of war and violence may be as old as war itself; it is an expression of the human yearning for peace. It is a recurring theme in the cultural history of humanity and opens up to the question of the moral nature of man, wherever people are in search of the cause of war: is the state of war really the “natural state” of man? Or do not “mutual help” and a sense of “justice and morality” form the basis of our coexistence – and even that of our early ancestors?

In the last century, the discussion of the question “Why war?” was strongly influenced by the assumption of an aggression drive, that *Sigmund Freud* (1856-1939) invented in 1920 under the impact of mass slaughter in the First World War.

When, at the suggestion of the League of Nations, *Albert Einstein* (1879-1955) asked Siegmund Freud 1932 in a letter whether there was a way to liberate people from the doom of war, Freud, who was convinced that an “active instinct for hatred and destruction” was anchored in man as a constant libidinous factor, answered that the effort to abolish “the aggressive inclinations of man” was “doomed to fail”. “Conflicts of interest between man and man were resolved, in principle, by the recourse to violence.” Moreover, “the slaughter of a foe gratifies an instinctive craving”. Towards the end of his answer we read the memorable phrase: “Why do we, you and I and many another, protest so vehemently against war, instead of just accepting it as another of life’s odious importunities? For it seems a natural thing enough, biologically rooted and practically unavoidable.”

Although Freud’s construction of the aggressive drive was controversial from the beginning and has long since been disproven, it has an effect on our present day. It is reflected in thought and word and sets the urgently needed dispute over the question of war and violence on the wrong track.

## The “struggle for existence” comes in the form of “mutual help”

Freud’s assumption of a biological foundation of war was a fatal error. Neither war nor domestic forms of violence meet any biological necessity. They are not anchored in the genes. Human life is not determined by aggression. The struggle for existence takes place in the form of mutual help. It has ensured the survival of man, for only in social companionship was man able to withstand the rigours of nature and to protect himself against his natural enemies.

Looking at the coexistence of people without bias, we may see that it is determined by the pursuit of solidarity and belonging. Man wants to do his job well and trusts that others want the same and will be honest. Even today, when the most blatant individualism – “think of yourself first” – is propagandised, mankind could not exist even for only a dozen years without mutual help and selfless activity for the sake of the common good.

In general, human beings live together peacefully, in spite of all the difficulties of coexistence, and here I am thinking of differences of opinion, misunderstandings, or quarrels, which sometimes degenerate into violence. People go about their work, care for the welfare of their children, for their homes and gardens, they enjoy socialising, they are sometimes happy and sometimes sad; but despite all the differences between people, it does not occur to anyone to pack their musette bag and go to a foreign country to kill the people there, who have done him no violence and of whom he does not even understand the language. Einstein is right when he writes: “The masses are never bellicose as long as they are poisoned by propaganda.”

Even in the exceptional situation of war, besides sadistic cruelty – which would have to be addressed elsewhere – there is also mutual help and compassion, not only towards one’s own comrades but also for the “enemy”. There are countless examples in which soldiers spared the enemy or deliberately missed the set target, even at the risk of their own lives. For this reason, the war industry has developed killer games to reduce the sol-

diers’ killing resistance and increase their murder rate.

There are also reports of soldiers returning from war, who describe how, in the firing breaks, soldiers came out of the trenches and smoked with their “enemy” and exchanged pictures of their families.

## People are dragged into wars with lies

Apart from the tribal feuds of our early ancestors, where rivals for hunting grounds and food personally faced each other, war does not arise from quarrels between people or because some impulse urges them. War – and here of course I am speaking of wars of aggression – and terror, too, is a kind of institutionally required exercise of force. Both are planned in cold blood for strategic considerations: weapons are provided, and ammunition supplies are secured. In war, cooks are needed to prepare rations, and paramedics and doctors are needed for the wounded. And in war as well as for terror there is a need for enemy images that have to be created artificially. Preparation often takes years. The task of war propaganda is to create hatred against the enemy and to portray a politically desired war as necessary and good.

It is now well known that governments hire large international PR companies to promote their war plans and to provide for the support of their own populations and associates.

Public relations professionals, endowed with all the insights of psychology, communications research, and other social sciences, write the script that aims to lure a people into a war, and the media – radio, television, newspapers and magazine publishers, the internet and the film industry – ensure that the “advertising for war and death”<sup>2</sup> reaches the population. They dictate what people should attend to and what they should think about; this is called “enlightenment” or “information.” Unwanted information is concealed or declared hostile propaganda or “fake news” by the “Ministry of Truth”.

Media coverage is largely dominated by only a few major agencies. “80% of all news in the media,” *Becker and Beham* write, “is based on just one single source, and on closer research, this source turns out to be precisely that press office that started the circulation of the message.” They speak of a “colonisation of the media by the PR industry”. In the early nineties, there were more “PR practitioners” than journalists in the US.

### "People do not want war ..."

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Edward Bernays (1891-1995), a nephew of Sigmund Freud, is considered the father of public relations. He not only ensured that Freud's theories were widely used in the USA, but also laid the foundation for modern communication management with his 1928 book "Propaganda".<sup>3</sup> This is still used today as a guide for the manipulation of public opinion by advertisers and governments.

Bernays developed his opinion-influencing campaigns from his uncle's theories. He was convinced that it was possible to "control and steer the masses without their knowledge," if only "the mechanism and motives of group thinking" were understood.

For Bernays, "the conscious and purposeful manipulation of the behaviour and attitudes of the masses" was "an integral part of democratic societies". "Organisations that work in the dark," he writes, "direct the social processes. They are the real government in our country [meaning the US]."

We are governed by people whose names we have never heard of. They influence our opinions, our tastes, and our thoughts." But that is not surprising, he continues: "If many people are to live together as smoothly as possible in a society, control processes of this kind are inevitable." (p. 19)

For Bernays, it goes without saying that "an elite born for that purpose directs society". He boldly praises the "terrific successes of propaganda in the war" [meaning the First World War], which opened the eyes of the "farsighted" to the

possibilities of manipulating mass opinion in all areas of life. In the war, according to Bernays, the American government and various patriotic associations used "a completely new method" for gaining public acceptance by securing the support of "the key people of all social groups, that is of people whose word "counts seriously for hundreds, thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people," he says. Thus, they had automatically gained "the support of entire fraternities, religious communities, trade associations, patriotic societies, as well as social and regional groups", the members of which automatically adopted their leaders' and speakers' opinions.

Moreover, the manipulators of public opinion had provoked "mass reactions to the alleged atrocities, terror and tyranny of the enemy". (p. 33) That is how wars are made!

War propaganda builds on the fact that man is a creature of community and that living together is based on good faith. It abuses the human sense of responsibility and justice in order to make the war against the "barbarians" not only fair, but a sacred duty. And it builds on its belief that the honest citizen cannot even imagine that he is being manipulated and cheated to such an extent.

#### It is about control of power

The reason for war is not embedded in the nature of man. Humans do not want war. When we search for the causes of war, it is necessary to increasingly focus on the uncontrolled power relations and power structures that make decisions possible for individuals who do not act in the public interest. To this day, it has not

been possible to limit the power of those in control, those who pull the strings in the background. The big political issues are often decided by bodies that are not subject to any political control and thus undermine democracy.

Many of those in power are driven by greed and pursue their own power political interests, without concern for the law and the welfare of the people. They do not respect *international law* or the *Charter of the United Nations*, which, with its general prohibition of violence, prohibits any war of aggression.

Our future will largely depend on whether and to what extent we succeed in changing the "regulatory structures" (Arthur Rich)<sup>4</sup> so that the abuse of power can be prevented or at least curtailed, and so that even those who are in power can be required to comply with law and order. This should be the foundation of all our efforts.

<sup>1</sup> Einstein, Albert; Freud, Sigmund. *Warum Krieg? Ein Briefwechsel*, (Why war? An exchange of letters) Zürich 1972 (and in English: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~jmlynch/273/documents/FreudEinstein.pdf>)

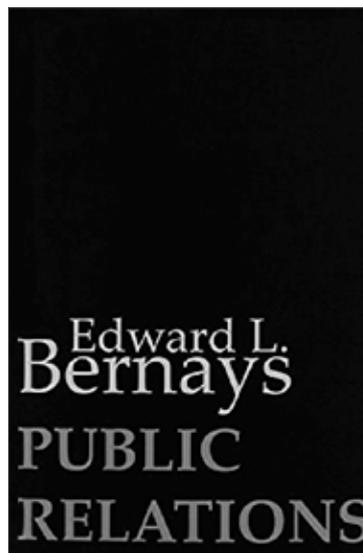
<sup>2</sup> Becker, Jörg and Beham, Mira. *Operation Balkan: Werbung für Krieg und Tod* (Operation Balkan: Advertising for War and Death), Baden-Baden 2006

<sup>3</sup> Bernays, Edward. *Public Relations*, University of Oklahoma Press 1952  
cf. also: Barben, Judith. *Spin doctors im Bundeshaus. Gefährdung der direkten Demokratie durch Manipulation und Propaganda* (Spin doctors in the federal parliament building. Endangering direct democracy by manipulation and propaganda), Baden 2009

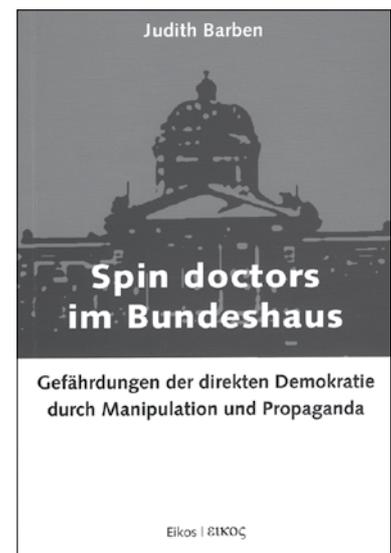
<sup>4</sup> cf. "Über Arbeit, Wirtschaft, Macht und Wirtschaftsethik", in *Zeit-Fragen* No 29/30 of 21 November 2017 ("On work, economy, power and business ethics", in *Current Concerns* No 29/30 of 1 December 2017)



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