

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility,
and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

“De Gaulle was right with his ‘Europe des Patries’”

ro. Frédéric Walthard was “On the way for Switzerland” from 1944 to 1971 as a lawyer and diplomat. This is the title of the second volume of his memoirs, which he published in three volumes at publishing house *Zeit-Fragen*. Volume 2 contains a plethora of clues, how European politics developed in the period mentioned. Walthard was more of a silent worker, who has always helped to shape the path of Switzerland in the background but in a persistent and consistent manner. His commitment was immense, and it served “to safeguard the Independence of Swiss democracy against the nascent anti-democratic supranational power bloc of the European Union”, as he himself writes. The following excerpts from the “memoirs” of Walthard shall illuminate the founding history of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Federal Councilor Hans Schaffner is rightly called the “father of the EFTA”, but it was Walthard together with others who made that work at all possible. This work must be acknowledged as well and it is to be hoped that today diplomats of this kind with this conviction and commitment will continue on the way for Switzerland and the EFTA and ensure that a free Europe of fatherlands will become reality.

After the Second World War European states founded a large free trade zone to secure peace and freedom: the “Organisation for European Economic Cooperation” (OEEC). According to Walthard this would have been an “ideal solution”.

“The ideal solution”

“Actually, almost all of the OEEC were thrilled by the *Maudling negotiations* for a large free trade zone: It was considered the ideal possibility to tackle the European economic integration from the very beginning, and later perhaps a further unification of Europe, on a larger scale and on a basis of completely equal rights of the small and large member states. Of course, it was much more difficult to achieve such an agreement, but in principle it did not rule out any majority decisions, as long as those were also taken on the basis of equality of votes of all member states. In contrast to the proposal of *Maudling*, however, the track of supra-nationalism was propagated by the representatives of the community of the Six, which we

Beat Kappeler

Establish EFTA as an alternative to the EU

EFTA should be established as an alternative of freedom and free trade to the EU. This would constitute a creative and proactive task for Switzerland and Norway. The peoples of Europe are fed up with national politicians handing over more and more competences to Brussels, in order to break resistance more easily. The costs of bureaucracy amounting to one thousand billion Swiss francs a year are eating up the common market’s benefits for the economy, the “Economist” estimates.

(www.beatkappeler.info)

called among ourselves, “La Bande à Six”. The solution, especially cooked up by *Monnet/Schumann* and defended by *Spaak*, of successive transfers of sovereignty to a superior body up to the time at which the main substance of the sovereignty of individual member states would be absorbed by the supranational body.

This idea contained a fundamental error. It started out from the idea of divisibility of sovereignty representing the supreme formation of political objectives and decision-making of a country. All constitutional and international lawyers today also agree that the highest formation of will and decision-making are indivisible. If it were not so, you would not have today, after over 50 years of efforts, the problems, the European Constitution is facing today once hatched up by *Giscard d’Estaing*. With all its feints and tricks like the complicated system of subsidiarity and the weighting of votes in the highest decision-making, the highest formation of political will remain concentrated in a few states in the end. To be able to realize the unification of Europe successively by two different types of rhythms will either remain an illusion or finally create nothing but an unitary state out of the European Union: an undemocratic, top-down structured entity dominated by one of the member states, or by a group of them or by a completely new power grouping, independent from the member states and to some extent standing above them. (Frédéric Walthard, “*Memories 1944 to 1971 Volume 2 – On the way for Switzerland*”, pp. 131f)

The establishment of the EFTA

Starting in 1960, Frédéric Walthard took office in Geneva, where he helped to lay the foundation for this organization as a

deputy head of delegation in the *European Free Trade Association* (EFTA). Why was there an urgent need? Parallel to the OEEC the Frenchman Robert Schumann – and Jean Monnet, while keeping more in the background – had – with US support – given the impetus for the founding of the *European Coal and Steel Community* (ECSC) as a cornerstone of today’s *European Union* (EU). From his various positions Walthard supported official Switzerland in its statements opposing this supra-national solution. Together with other countries Switzerland strived – starting from the OEEC – rather for a large free trade zone. Such would have been built on the independence and sovereignty of nation-states equipped with equal rights. Although they came up with good solutions with the OEEC, the aggressive supra-national policy of the “gang-of-six” increasingly dominated. But the supporters of a free trade zone with sovereign member countries did not give up. Almost simultaneously with the next step of the “gang-of-six”, the founding of the *European Economic Community* (EEC), the above-mentioned EFTA was created.

On his work within the Permanent Council of the EFTA Walthard writes:

“Our main job was to represent Switzerland at the weekly meetings of the Permanent Council of the EFTA and the Council of the Deputy heads of delegations. These sessions had to be prepared. For that we received the necessary directives from Bern. Eventually, our questions in Geneva together with those issues and problems raised by the General Secretariat were increasingly answered. These ques-

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The EFTA – a vital alternative to the European Union

by Ewald Wetekamp

If a daily paper in South Germany dedicates a series of articles to the EU, as has been the case in these days in which the ESM is judged “without any alternative”, and if this is happening just in the week in which the ESM is voted on by the federal parliament in Berlin – this newspaper has definitely taken service with political-strategic propaganda.

“Without any alternative” is undemocratic

If somebody labels something “without any alternative” in the political area and if he does not allow further discussion, he puts himself outside of a true democratic process and testifies, what sort of man he is. “TINA” (*There Is No Alternative*) was the favorite “argument” of the “iron lady” in England. With the help of “Tina” a redistribution and pauperization process were set in motion, leaving their deep marks in the country until today. Brussels incapacitates the nations and its citizens with a centrally planned economy with outrageous patronizing, regulations and fastidious controls of self-appointed inspectors. And there is no alternative to that?

By the creation of the ESM a financial institution is implanted in the euro-area, which is equipped with omnipotent fiscal powers, which can put the screws of fiscal policy on sovereign nation states, not being under any enforceable right – thus being extra-legal. It is not democratically elected and thus not only a supranational construct, but towering above the nations. This is happening before our very eyes. And there is no alternative to all that?

Deregulated financial markets, extrajurisdictional – i.e. extra-legal – tax havens as battleground of the high finance, rescue packages amounting to billions and trillions – actually for whom? – are promoted “without any alternative” at the expense of prosperity, welfare and social welfare systems of all citizens of the member states

affecting many future generations! Is that supposed to mean, there were no better alternative to this declaration of bankruptcy?

After war and misery a new start

After the end of the disastrous and devastating world war, which left mankind with open wounds and distorted faces, there were considerations and approaches for a new start in Europe. “No more war!” was the honest commitment of the states of Europe. Whoever had a heart and felt committed to the people set to work. We find these personalities on all social levels. After helplessness, hunger and deprivations of all kinds people longed for peace. The citizens of all countries undertook an impressive strenuous effort for economic reconstruction. This effort was flanked by the allocation of a 13-billion-dollar program. Seventeen Western European states joined as early as 1948 as sovereign participants in the OEEC (*Organisation for European Economic Cooperation*). It was their mission to use these billions as reconstruction aid to support common good for the benefit of all equal members. It was their professed goal to re-establish the payment transactions, to make capital traffic possible again and the exchange of goods between the states, facilitating it in particular by dismantling trade barriers. The member states did not work in the sense of a centralized planned economy yet, even if in the background already simulation games were played, casting their shadows already. The reconstruction-billions could be used beneficially, because of those countries’ sovereign, liberal and equal co-operation. The economic performance of the countries doubled, the exports tripled and, as we know, the German economic miracle became famous.

Who is “playing” along?

Already during the Second World War the US-American administration talked

about no longer granting the European states their decentralized “scattered national regionalism”. But “decentralism is a substantial part of the European spirit”, as *Wilhelm Röpke*, Ordo liberal of the Freiburg School, wrote in his book “Beyond the market” in 1958. He envisaged the attempts to forge Europe into a sound block, which should be subjected to a centralistic planned economic bureaucracy. It was *Jean Monnet*, who set the plan of a centralistic Europe in motion. As early as in the late forties he created as Undersecretary of the French Secretary of Foreign Affairs Schuman the so-called *Schuman plan*, which planned a military and a political coalition of the European states. At that time the nation states still rejected such a plan because of the loss of freedom and sovereignty. A change of method was the strategic answer: *la Methode Monnet*: Not to show the full picture to the people in one go, but only gradually, step by step, using undefined nebulous terms. The first supranational high authority was brought into being with the establishment of the *Coal and Steel Community* or *ECSC* (*European Community for Coal and Steel*). *Jean Monnet* became its boss.

Supranational – an attack on the constitutional state

A supranational authority is an absurdity with regard to the history of democracy and constitution, just as the term of the “supranational sovereignty”. Both phrases are nothing but attacks against democracy, constitutional state and common weal. Sovereignty is bound to the national democratic constitutional state, and draws its legitimacy from the carrier of the sovereignty, the people of the national state. Sovereignty is the inalienable basis of the democratic state of law and cannot be relinquished.

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tions and answers were really about all it took to get a functioning free trade zone going, that meant reducing trade barriers of any kind, including custom duties and charges. The system of certificates of origin was the essential issue.

Unlike a customs union in which goods and services can circulate freely within the common border and customs wall be-

tween the Member States, in a free trade zone certificates of origin are necessary for this free circulation, in order to pass through the borders and customs barriers retained between the Member States. In the initial phase this caused an immense work. It was about the creation of individual regulations, enforcement regulations, interpretations, correction of identified deficiencies, the agreement of exceptions and the arbitration of disputes, etc.” (Vol. 2, pp. 178f.)

Thus foundations were created in persistent efforts that were important for the development of the EFTA. This achievement for a free and independent Europe must be raised back to awareness. Geneva as the seat of the EFTA Council must once more in its history become the starting point of education and humanitarian work and lay the foundation for the realization of a “large European Free Trade Zone” in the 21st Century. •

EFTA and Council of Europe cover all needs – the EU is dispensable!

The Council of Europe – the assembly of sovereign nation states in Europe

Only a part of the European states is associated in the EU and considering the current development the question whether Europe might possess some other organisations which respect the sovereignty of member nation states and therefore enable us to successfully co-operate for everybody's benefit poses itself with ever more urgency. The Council of Europe is such an institution which definitely deserves attention.

thk. Having lasted for almost 4 years now, the financial and economic crisis has revealed beyond any doubt what experts have predicted decades ago: A European integration which restricts the sovereignty of nation states in almost all aspects of political life and which completely denies democratic control to their people cannot succeed in the long run (see *Current Concerns* of 2 April). Transferring crucial competencies to the central

headquarters in Brussels would sooner or later lead into a dead end. The current development proves them right. Countries like Greece, Italy, Spain, Ireland, France a.s.o. speak a clear language. But instead of analyzing the core mistakes and faulty developments and actually drawing consequences political elites in the EU keep trying to hold the power construction EU together by ever more oversized “rescue umbrellas” and drive the highly indebted countries deeper and deeper into dependence.

Whining about the end of the EU in the case of an euro default is meant to keep the citizens on the EU track. A scary image of Europe descending into chaos without the EU, with the fight for supremacy flaring up once again on the continent, is being painted all too often and misportrays reality: Europe consists of 48 states and Russia, the largest European country, is not a member of the

EU. Another 19 European countries are no EU members, either. What kind of arrogance is that to use “Europe” and “EU” as synonyms and to ignore and marginalize all the other peoples and their states?

Europe is characterized by her historically grown multiplicity which created today's vivid cultural and political life. All the people with their different histories, different confessions and different cultures have the apparent will to co-operate. These are necessary preconditions in order to tackle existing problems and solve them together, but with sovereignty.

Assembly of European nation states

Historical retrospection shows that after both the First and Second World War there have been efforts to enable the people on our continent to live together in

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“The EFTA – a vital ...”

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The EFTA – necessary alternative to the EEC

When in 1955 the EEC was founded at the *Conference of Messina* and in 1957 with the *Roman Contracts* and six states stepped out from the OEEC, in order to gradually take a centralistic path, seven other states considered a liberal alternative, respecting the sovereignty of its members.

On 4 January 1960, these seven states (Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, Ireland and Portugal) signed the *Stockholm Convention* and thus created the *EFTA (European Free Trade Association)*. What was the difference in the self-conception of the EFTA and the mission of the EEC founders? First of and above all the EFTA-States rejected any form of supranationality. They restricted themselves to the negotiation of free trade agreements, which were written down only in mutual agreement after long counterbalancing of all circumstances which could be considered and which were then submitted to the national parliaments for ratification. Cultural and his-

torical characteristics of the member states were always considered. Their resolutions are best practice in terms of internationally approving to the most complicated facts unanimously. Outvoting is not possible, there is no place for a hegemon; integrity and sovereignty of each member are ensured and enjoy highest protection, in the knowledge that an autonomous partner is sincere only, when his word means what was been negotiated and who is therefore reliable. What a difference to the EEC, EC, European Union and today's political “culture”.

Since the sovereignty is unconditionally valid in the EFTA, also the autonomy and independence of partners are not endangered. The self-subsistence of a state is one of its indispensable components. It is in the interest of each state to preserve and extend it. Therefore agricultural products or the domestic market are excluded from negotiations. Yet, trade agreements on par are always possible, except in case of conflict with other interests. This happened, when the seven EFTA-states wanted to establish a pan-European free trade zone with the six EEC states. The Swiss delegate for trade agreements on the 9th of September 1960:

“At the beginning of the year the Americans inserted their veto against a union of the six (EEC) and the seven (EFTA) in a European Free Trade Zone.” The USA and in particular Monnet thwarted the project of the pan-European free trade zone, although and after all governments of the European countries had already agreed. That was then!

The EFTA remains

Despite this strong opposition and the loss of the membership of some states the EFTA held ground as a liberal alternative to the European Union. Today the EFTA has free trade agreements with 30 states of the world community, with 10 states there are negotiations ongoing and with 10 further states a Memorandum of Understanding about a co-operation and/or a dialogue about closer trade- and investment relations exists. These states can be certain to face honest and sincere official contacts, which give priority to the dialogue and abhor any form of compulsion. In the meantime also the BRICS alliance shows on world level that thriving development is possible only if the sovereignty of the countries involved is being respected. •

"EFTA and Council of Europe ..."

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peace. Corresponding to what the UN were aiming for at an international level, the Council of Europe was supposed to achieve in Europe. This body was founded in 1949 and is regarded as the assembly of European nation states, which does not question their sovereignty, to this day. This does not exclude close co-operation, but it allows every state to keep a leeway

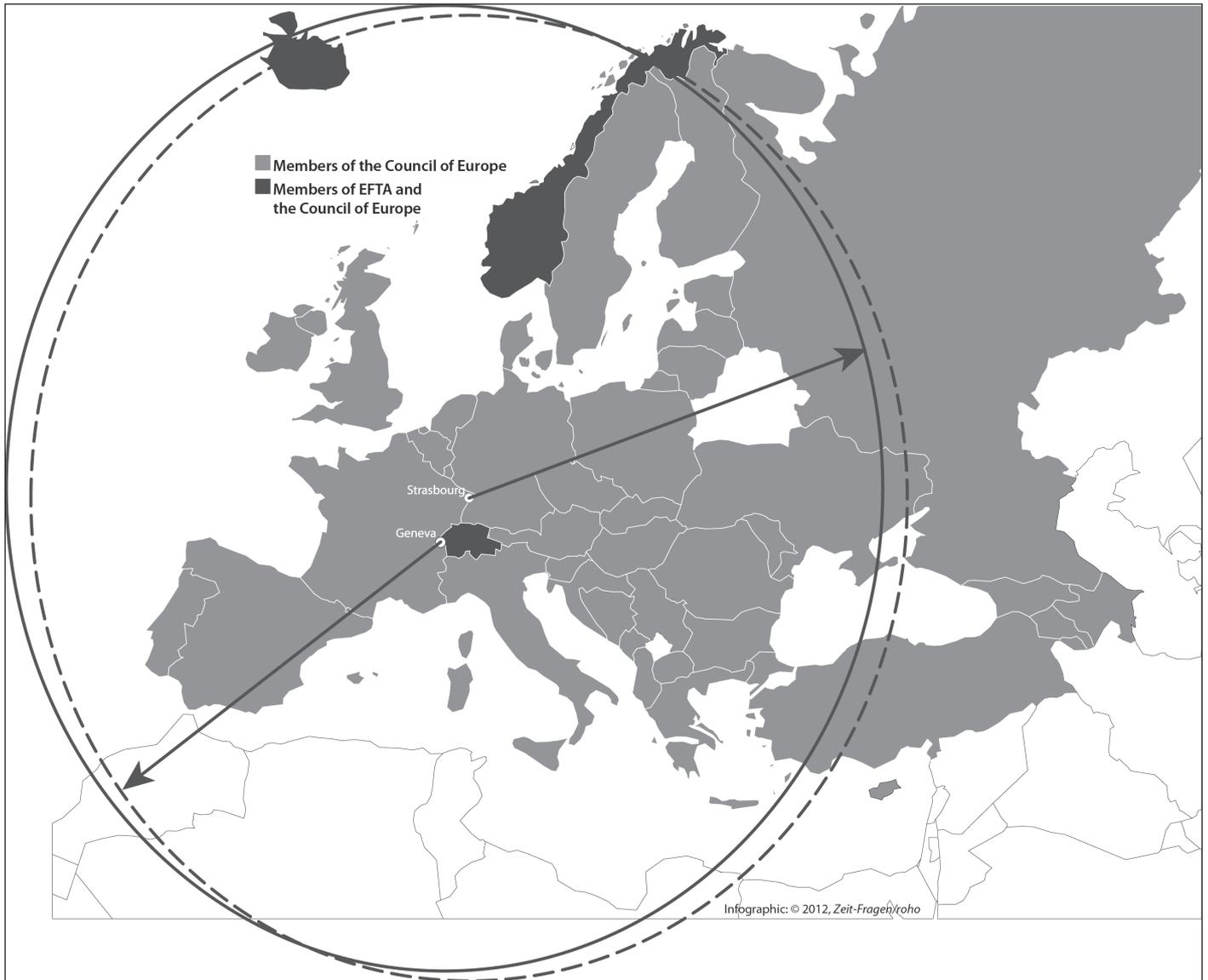
- to encourage and develop the awareness of a common European cultural identity
- to develop common responses to political, social, cultural and legal challenges in its member states (discrimination against minorities, drugs, AIDS, human cloning, environmental pollution, racism, organized crime a.s.o.)

After the opening of the "Iron Curtain", the Council of Europe put special focus on the stabilization of the independent states

- the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
- the European Social Charta.

The *European Convention on Human Rights* (ECHR) is binding for all member states of the Council of Europe, and the *European Court of Human Rights* watches over their compliance.

The Council of Europe also responds to recent developments, including those sparked by changes in the EU, with con-



which does not exist any more in a supranational construction such as the EU.

The tasks of the Council of Europe are comprehensive and apart from Belarus, which is excluded for not banning capital punishment, all European countries are represented in the Council of Europe. The main aims of the organisation are:

- to reinforce democracy, human rights and the rule of law

in the East and support was offered for the development of democratic structures, the council also advocated constitutional reforms.

Switzerland has been a member of the *Council of Europe* since 1960 and has contributed especially to supporting the democracies in Eastern Europe.

Important impulses have emanated from the Council of Europe:

- the European Convention on Human Rights,

ventions:

- fight against human trafficking,
- fight against internet crime,
- fight against terrorism.

Especially in their approach to fighting terrorism the USA exhibit an unacceptable handling of human rights. That was the reason for the deployment of Swiss lawyer and former councilor of state and state prosecutor *Dick Marty* by the Council of

EFTA respects the sovereignty of the states

Interview with Dr Martin Zbinden, Head of Free Trade Agreements/EFTA in the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

Current Concerns: The bigger the difficulties in the euro zone become, the louder the reflection about possible alternatives is perceived in the whole of Europe. The "civilian coalition" in Germany decidedly pleads for the "Europe of nations" to be worked for. Thus sovereign countries could and would have to take up their own responsibilities again and regulate their concerns on a free basis. For this, the EFTA would be the appropriate context, and this is what was imagined for a co-operation in Europe after the Second World War.

Mr Zbinden, should there not be more talk about the EFTA and information about its way of working?

Martin Zbinden: The EFTA itself has three main areas of activity which firstly include the EFTA Convention, which provides the free trade relations between the EFTA States. Secondly EFTA membership implies observer status in the EEA, which is useful because it permanently provides us with so-to-speak first-hand information, especially on the further development of EU law and EEA law. For Switzerland, the most important aspect certainly is the EFTA as a platform for joint negotiations of free trade agreements, and in this respect the EFTA is, as you say, very successful. Cooperation between the EFTA states is generally very good. Of course there are some differences. It is clear that Norway and Switzerland do not have the same economic structure, for example, there is Norway's huge oil and gas sector, since we have nothing comparable, and fish exports are very important for Norway and Iceland, too,

which, so to speak, is less important for Switzerland. We have strengths in other areas, such as the chemical industry, pharmaceutical and engineering industries and in services, including financial services. So there are differences between the EFTA states, but when it comes to trade policy, we are very much alike in our focus on free trade, and therefore the co-operation on the whole is very good.

Another similarity is certainly agricultural policy. All four EFTA members are net importers in the field of agriculture, yet for all four EFTA states border protection in agriculture is very important. Therefore we also work together in terms of agricultural policies in the WTO, in the group of the G-10 countries.

So together with the other three EFTA states?

Exactly. The group of G-10 countries consists of nine members, including all four EFTA members.

If I am correctly informed, agricultural policies were one of the reasons why Federal Councillor Wahlen pushed the idea of EFTA very vigorously at that time, in order to stay independent in this area. For states with different interests, the EFTA seems to provide the opportunity to cooperate in those areas where they want to, instead of having to lump everything together.

Yes, one can certainly say that. When the EFTA was founded, it was actually a counter-project to the European Economic Community. It was not a customs union, and in this sense the sovereignty in trade

policy was respected, while trade policy within the EEC was communalised as a customs union. Switzerland regarded this as incompatible with neutrality. We are talking about the time of the late fifties, early sixties. At that time the EFTA really was a sort of a counter-project to the European Economic Community, with the idea that you only cooperated in selected areas and did not create supranational institutions, but simply cooperated in what areas you wanted on the basis of a free trade area, but retained sovereignty in all other economically or politically relevant areas.

Looking at the development of the EFTA, it must be said that it has been a success story in many ways. Do you agree with that?

Here we must distinguish. Regarding the number of members it was, of course, vastly reduced. Finland left the EFTA for the EU, just as Sweden, and also Austria left and has gone over to the EU. Thus you have to say it has become a very small organisation. It was successful with free trade relations. Since the early nineties, the EFTA has been able to build up a relatively large network of free trade agreements, and it has certainly done that very successfully. At first, always more in alignment with the EU – that is, so to speak, a step behind the EU with the countries with which the EU had concluded agreements. The first time that the EFTA started such negotiations without the EU in mind was in 1999 with Canada.

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"EFTA and Council of Europe ..."

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Europe to investigate the "illegal activities of the US intelligence service CIA in Europe". He was able to uncover the existence of torture prisons in Romania and Poland, both EU member states, and denounced the criminal behavior of the USA. The Council of Europe also endorsed Dick Marty's report about organ trafficking in the Kosovo, which incriminated especially the Kosovar prime minister Hashim Taci. The Council of Europe fulfilled its obligation here as a safeguard of human rights. Not a lot was heard about this issue from the EU, which is actually present in the Kosovo. It would have been up to them to secure the incriminating material and prosecute those responsible.

The USA had other plans regarding the Council of Europe

Had everything gone according to US plans, the Council of Europe should have developed into a supranational construct working towards successive erosion of nation states just like the EU with more and more aspects of sovereignty being transferred to the central headquarters. When it became apparent, that this wasn't going to work, because a majority of member states were not willing to sacrifice their sovereignty, Jean Monnet started the parallel development of the EU with the USA's support (see *Current Concerns* of 2 April), the fate of which was more or less sealed with the treaty of Rome in 1957. Their further development and the current problems the political union has to face right now, are well known.

With the Council of Europe the European states have created an instrument, with which all imminent political problems may be tackled together in equality and dignity with respect of state sovereignty. It wouldn't have been maintained for such a long time, doing such a constructive work in various working groups and committees for the improvement of the people living together were it not for the decisive will of the European countries to secure peaceful co-operation. Apart from the Council of Europe for solving political problems, there is also the *European Free Trade Association* (EFTA) for economic co-operation of associated countries as sovereign nation states for the benefit of the people of Europe. Who does actually need the EU, and to what end? •

"EFTA respects the sovereignty ..."

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da. Since then it has considerably extended this policy.

So in principle, the EFTA is an organisation that independently initiates and concludes negotiations wherever it appears interesting and worthwhile for its member states as sovereign countries?

Absolutely. In its specificity it was sometimes a step behind the EU, but conversely, the EFTA was far ahead in Korea for example. The EU has only just concluded a treaty, which came into effect on July 1st, while that of the EFTA states has been in force for five years. And we signed the agreement before the EU had even spoken about taking up negotiations. So, there are both: with Mexico and Chile, we were behind the EU, with Korea and Singapore we were ahead. We have now concluded a treaty with the Ukraine – the EU is still in negotiations. With the Gulf Cooperation Council, the EU started negotiations ahead of us, but we were finished much earlier. It varies – depending on the partner.

Where do you see the difference in the negotiating positions?

In most cases, the EU negotiates not only free trade agreements but also association agreements, which cover much wider policy areas including a policy dialogue, seeking some harmonisation in certain fields of the law. That's not what the EFTA does. We limit ourselves to traditional comprehensive free trade agreements, i.e. liberalisation in the trade in goods, liberalisation

and legal certainty in trade and services. Investment is partly covered, intellectual property is covered, public procurement and certain competition rules are contained in the agreement, with the latest agreement including certain regulations on trade and sustainable development. But a political dialogue or comprehensive cooperations, for example, in energy or transportation policy, which the EU often has in its agreements, are things that the EFTA does not have.

The possibility of free economic cooperation, while respecting sovereignty obviously corresponds to a need in many countries.

As I said, the EFTA as an organisation is very small. But the free trade agreements we conclude – they are very attractive for many states. It is not only the way how the EFTA negotiates free trade agreements. I think the free trade agreement instrument in itself is something that is currently very successful. That is, of course, partly also connected to the difficulties the WTO has.

Despite your emphasis on the smallness of the EFTA, it shows that for a free economic co-operation it is not necessary to establish a centralised superpower organisation that stifles the freedom and responsibility of the participating countries.

Yes. I think the instrument of free trade agreements is an economically and commercially attractive instrument. One must not, however, set this in opposition to the WTO. The WTO provides so to speak the basic rules governing the world trading

system and free trade agreements build on it.

To another point: A very impressive aspect of of the EFTA is the lean administration – only 90 staff, which is nowadays proof of an excellent performance.

Yes, that's certainly an advantage of the EFTA. Of course we are only a few member states, only four, we have only one working language, the official language is English. In comparison with the Commission, which has a lot more responsibilities and which works in I do not know how many languages and for 27 countries and has, to some extent, also regulatory functions. This is, of course, not comparable to the EFTA Secretariat. This is effectively a secretariat, which means that the main work is done by the member states ...

... as part of their foreign policy ...

Yes, the free trade agreements are trade policy. The negotiations for free trade agreements are always conducted by the member states. The EFTA Secretariat serves to assist member states by preparing texts, ensuring that texts are exchanged with the negotiating partners – these are the things that are organised by the EFTA Secretariat. But the real work, wording the texts in terms of contents, is done by the Member States. Therefore, the EFTA Secretariat is a genuine secretariat, which guides and supports the process, but the process itself remains in the hands of the member states.

Thank you for your time.

(Translation Current Concerns)

"In my view the EFTA is an interesting alternative to the EU»

Excerpts from an interview with Prof Dr Rolf Weder, University of Basel

If a country is not a member of the EU, it can act on its own in other organisations, such as the WTO or the EFTA, and directly introduce its concerns there. This is an opportunity that Switzerland should use even more in the future, I believe. [...]

The EEA, however, contains aspects that include parts of the political integration. Actually it is a vehicle that will ultimately take over EU law and partly also future EU law. This is exactly the point where Switzerland I think is sceptical, with good reason. EFTA is an alternative form of integration, it is rather a

vehicle for cooperation among countries in Europe. Thus, this organisation actually contains a form of integration that goes less far. [...]

I think the EFTA is an interesting alternative to the EU. Because the EFTA cares about maintaining the economic integration, and it could even be more deepened. This means that at the moment the goods trade among EFTA members is free. Switzerland could once again breathe some more life into this organisation. I can imagine that it might admit new members from Europe. About half

of the countries of Europe are not members of the EU, for example Russia, Turkey. Why not try to include these countries in the EFTA? That would be an example. Another one would be that you also slightly expand the EFTA. You could decide whether to extend the EFTA on the trade in services. Here, you have an organisation that one could increasingly use for further economic integration, I believe.

Source: DRS 4, 20.3.2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

Europe at the crossroads: More personal responsibility and free cooperation between sovereign nations

Undesirable developments have to be rolled back

by Dr rer. publ. Werner Wüthrich

Since the 1990s free trade agreements have gained importance in the global economy. The failure of the *Doha Round* of WTO has further intensified this trend. Since the last few years the EFTA states have begun to expand their free trade policy on partners outside Europe. Today the EFTA operates on a network of a variety of customised free trade agreements around the world. An agreement with China has recently been completed, one is imminent with India.

Contract negotiations of EFTA – negotiations between sovereign states

At first the EFTA partners focus their interests in preliminary discussions. One member state takes over the role of the speaker, whereby the others also participate actively in the negotiation process. Once completed, each member will ratify the agreement by its own constitutional rules. In the field of agriculture, the partners negotiate separately, because the EFTA states take account of the diversity of their agricultural system and are not forced to follow a common agricultural policy. EFTA's approach is successful – as confirmed by the failure of the *Doha Round*. This is in contrast to the WTO, that for ten years has unsuccessfully been trying to tie up the agricultural policies of its 151 member countries into a unified “corset”.

Do we still need supranational institutions?

Why does the EFTA work so well? There is no need for supranational institutions and powerful bureaucracies that control, implement and if necessary impose something by force, because its members communicate with each other at eye level.

Without having to summon the help of supranational institutions with their sprawling bureaucracies intergovernmental relations and contacts can be regulated much better for the benefit of all. Sovereignty and personal responsibility are good prerequisites for contracts to be honored. Of course every country wants to be taken seriously as a responsible contractor. A country that gives up its sovereignty loses its responsibility.

It is true that the EFTA has no power base and may proceed less vigorously, when it comes to achieving and enforcing uniform rules. In return it is more flexible than the lumbering colossus EU. Therefore the EFTA has succeeded in recent years – even before the EU – to conclude customised free trade agreements with a variety of countries around the globe. Such contracts are hardly possible in the colossus EU because the interests of a variety of countries must be measured inevitably by the same yardstick:

And there is another aspect: In a clumsy entity like the EU, the national structures of the member countries have to be adjust-

ed in order to centrally direct and coordinate their policy. Keywords of these policies are “overcoming of confined spaces” and “cross-border regionalisation”. Such “structural adjustments” are supposed to bring about large zones that are manageable and may be led centrally and more easily than is the case with areas at small-scale, obscure and federal structures. But it happens to be the case that within these structures democracy is most vibrant, because it is directly shaped and supported by community members. As the policy of the EFTA has shown for many years it is this type of structures and grown characteristics of individual countries in general that can be taken into account more easily by customised contracts. Their policy helps to preserve something valuable and is a gain for democracy. The abandonment of sovereignty has even more consequences: the EU member states have given up a substantial part of their sovereignty to the operational headquarters. That may have helped to unify and to harmonize cross-border policies. A negative effect is that national governments have reduced their individual accountability, too, and are perceived as incapacitated – in the sense of: “Ultimately there are others who decide, so I am no longer responsible.” In the euro-debt crisis this attitude of some countries has proven disastrous. It is questionable if this lacking of accountability may be compensated by greater control and paternalism (as prescribed in the Fiscal Pact and in the ESM). Such a policy prevents a living together in freedom and dignity and is anything but beneficial for democracy. •

Letter to the Editor

I would like to live in de Gaulle's Europe

The article by *Rita Muller-Hill* went straight to the heart of a German citizen. I would like to live in a Europe devised by *de Gaulle*, an independent “Europe of peoples and states”, that would be built on the acceptance of the peoples. I would certainly like to live in a Europe that would be a mediating force between the blocks and serve peace. I would like to live in a Europe whose peoples would not give away their sovereignty but would live in friendship and mutual respect. In a Europe that would be subject to any non-European hegemon – in such a Europe, I would like to live.

As a young man I can not classify the “unconventional” ways which *de Gaulle's* France has followed in those days dealing with the United States of America and the NATO dominated by the USA. Today

I observe with concern the emergence of a “central government” structure, a “*Europe of restrictive supervision*” (from 22.2.2012 online world). It reminds me of the former USSR. On his first foreign trip to Poland our newly elected President demands: “*In response to the crisis more Europe is necessary, not less.*” (www.europeonline-magazine.eu)

I think that the philosopher *Hermann Lübbe* is right. His contribution in the “*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*” of 4.11.2011 is headed: “*United States of Europe? The euro is not the culmination of the unification process. It has failed as a motor. But German politicians want to enforce the project more than ever now. They will fail.*”

Dr Rudolf Hänsel, Lindau/Lake Constance
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

EFTA as an Alternative – against marching in step towards supranationality

Candidates for a free EFTA-Europe capable to act, besides Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, could be the British, the Czechs, the Polish, the Dansk, the level-headed southern Germans, sometime perhaps the Italians and the Austrians, as well. Once the initial EU-payments for economic race to catch up will be declining, Eastern Europe will lack almost any reason for marching in step towards supranationality. The EFTA leaves agriculture to their members, something that interests Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark, some day may interest Poland.

(www.beatkappeler.info)

“When I realized that I could no longer look students in the eyes...”

Goldman Sachs is losing its allure

by Kevin Roose

Wall Street, once a magnet for the best and brightest in the United States, is facing a recruiting problem.

The industry’s loss of cachet, which started during the financial disaster, has been deepened by the lingering economic slowdown and a series of highly visible industry scandals that have drawn critical attention to the big banks.

The most recent public relations crisis came from a resignation letter this week in The New York Times Op-Ed section, written by *Greg Smith*, a former *Goldman Sachs* executive director. Mr. Smith, who took the bank to task over what he described as its “toxic and destructive” culture, said his moment of ultimate realization had come while extolling the benefits of a Goldman career to college students.

“I knew it was time to leave when I realized I could no longer look students in the eye and tell them what a great place this was to work,” he wrote.

Conventional wisdom holds – and Goldman’s public relations team surely fears – that the people paying closest attention to the controversies are skittish clients and down-in-the-mouth employees. But Goldman and other financial firms should also worry about scaring off college and business school students, some of whom are looking askance at once-prestigious jobs in finance.

Cory Finley, a recent Yale graduate, applied to work at *Bridgewater Associates*, a large hedge fund, during his senior year of college. Mr. Finley, 23, said there was “definitely something tempting” about the structure and prestige of a high-paying finance job. But he ultimately decided to follow his dream of becoming a playwright instead.

“It’s something that fulfills me in a deep way,” said Mr. Finley, who has written a play called “The Private Sector” that is set at a hedge fund corporate retreat. “I don’t judge people who do go into finance, but it’s not for me personally.”

College students who were once attracted to prestigious banks like moths to

bonfires are increasingly turning to other industries in search of success. Insiders say that pained testimonials of industry life can scare off would-be financiers from even applying for jobs at the most selective firms.

“This is a significant problem for Goldman,” said *Adam Zoia*, the chief executive of the placement firm *Glocap Search*, whose clients include many aspiring big-bank employees and hedge fund workers. “Their perch of being the investment bank to go to is definitely at risk.”

One former Goldman analyst recently decided to leave the firm after the rewards of a finance job no longer seemed to outweigh the costs. The former employee is now working at a small technology start-up for less money.

“Perhaps Smith is a catalyst,” said the employee, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because many of his friends still worked at the bank.

“There have always been unhappy people” in finance, he added, but “this is the year people are realizing things are structurally different.”

The smaller paychecks are only making the decision easier for some students, who no longer view Wall Street as a fast track to seven-figure salaries. Last year, flagging profits at many Wall Street firms reduced some bankers’ compensation from stratospheric to merely generous. At *Morgan Stanley*, cash bonuses were capped at \$125,000; some Goldman employees had their annual cash payouts cut in half.

Adding to the chorus of dissent, students now face criticism on their own campuses. Groups of protestors at *Yale* and *Harvard* stood outside bank recruiting sessions last fall, shouting slogans and holding signs with messages like “Take a chance, don’t go into finance.” At *Princeton*, a group affiliated with the *Occupy Wall Street* movement interrupted sessions by *JPMorgan Chase* and *Goldman Sachs*, urging their fellow students to rebel against “the campus culture that

whitewashes the crooked dealings of Wall Street as a prestigious career path.”

Karen Ho, an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Minnesota who has studied the culture of Wall Street, said, “Everything from Occupy Wall Street to larger critical discourses of ‘fat cats,’ all of that has had some trickle-down effect.”

The decline in the finance industry’s allure has been accelerated by the explosion of the technology industry, which is making a play for some of the top-flight graduates who once walked nearly unquestioningly into New York cubicles. A 2011 survey of 6,700 young professionals by the consulting firm *Universum* ranked *Google*, *Apple* and *Facebook* as the most-coveted workplaces; *JPMorgan Chase*, the highest-ranking bank on the survey, was ranked 41st.

At this year’s SXSW Interactive conference, a panel called “Keeping Kids off the Street: Wall St. vs. Startups” was convened to address questions including whether the finance industry was to blame for what organizers called a “failure to nurture a culture of innovation.” *Chris Wiggins*, an associate professor of applied math at *Columbia University* who sat on the panel, said he was seeing students shy away from Wall Street and veer toward industries where they could work and profit without bringing their morality under the microscope.

“The claim of investment banking that it serves a social purpose by ‘lubricating capitalism’ has eroded,” Mr. Wiggins said. “It’s simply very difficult for young people to believe that they’re serving any social purpose now.”

At top colleges and business schools, which once saw Wall Street as hallowed ground, the focus is shifting. In 2008, the last recruiting year before the financial crisis, 28 percent of the employed seniors in Harvard’s graduating class went into finance. Last year, that fell to 17 percent. •

Source: *International Herald Tribune*.

© IHT, 16 March 2012

Drugs, guns and nukes: Iran as the new “Dope, Incorporated”?

by Tom Burghardt

How many memes does it take to stitch-up a war?

As Israel, the United States and their NATO allies set their sights on the “prize,” Iran’s vast petrochemical wealth, multiple themes have been floated by corporate media to make the case for war.

Since the 1980s, nuclear proliferation, terrorism and now, according to the Treasury Department, Iran’s alleged [links](#) to global narco-trafficking networks have all been evoked as clarion calls for “regime change.”¹ It would serve us well however, to explore the recent history of the secret state’s reliance upon the illicit trade and how such dalliances advance America’s wider geopolitical goals.

Shadow Warriors of CIA

In the 1980s, it was the Sandinistas and “Castro-Communism” who did nicely for the Reagan administration. As money and weapons flowed to “our boys,” the Contras, they repaid the favor by massacring Nicaraguans by the tens of thousands for Uncle Sam while generously providing cocaine *by the ton*, to party-happy Americans during that “go-go” decade.

Indeed, when Colombian drug lords *Jorge Ochoa* and *Pablo Escobar* began their profitable partnership, they did so alongside dope-dealing Bolivian fascists and Argentine neo-Nazi generals with long-standing ties to the CIA. As *Consortium News* revealed: “The putsch, which became known as the Cocaine Coup, installed [*Luis*] García Meza and other drug-connected military officers who promptly turned Bolivia into South America’s first modern narco-state. The secure supply of Bolivian cocaine was important to the development of the Medellín cartel in the early 1980s.”²

In fact, it was Bolivian drug lord *Roberto Suárez Gómez* who financed the coup. With close ties to *Pinochet*’s regime in Chile and Argentina’s death squad generals, Suárez was a fixture amongst far-right international circles who generously distributed funds to South American affiliates of the Nazi-tainted *World Anti-Communist League* (WACL).

CIA created sham companies linked to drug traffic

When WACL was founded in 1966 in Taipei as the *Asian People’s Anti-Communist League* (APACL), it first functioned as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the governments of Taiwan under dictator *Chiang Kai-shek*’s Nationalist narcocracy and the Republic of Korea, then under the iron rule of American ally, *Park Chung Hee*.

Amongst other notable members who founded WACL were *Yoshio Kodama* and *Ryiochi Sasakawa*, Class-A Japanese war criminals and fascists who were top leaders of post-war *yakuza* crime syndicates. Both men were billionaires who’s wealth derived from control over Asian drug, gambling and prostitution rackets. Imprisoned in 1945 for war crimes Sasakawa, along with Kodama and future Japanese Prime Minister *Nobusuke Kishi*, was saved from the gallows and released from prison in 1948, a result of his OSS-CIA connections. He once proudly stated: “I am the world’s richest fascist.” Both Kodama and Sasakawa operated alongside old “China hands” such as *Paul Helliwell*, who created CIA front companies linked to the drug traffic, Bangkok-based *Sea Supply Corporation* and the Taiwanese airline *Civil Air Transport*.

Indeed, it was none other than Sasakawa, the power behind the throne of *Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party*, who provided major funding for Reverend *Sun Myung Moon*’s intelligence-connected Unification Church, and WACL, key actors in Bolivia’s Cocaine Coup, facts you’re not likely to read in the Moon-owned *Washington Times*.³

Drug trafficking for the Kuomintang

As analyst *Peter Dale Scott* wrote for *Vari-ant* magazine, “In the post-war years, when the drug-financed China Lobby was strong in Washington, and the U.S. shipped arms and Chinese Nationalist troops into eastern Burma, opium production in that remote region increased almost five-fold in fifteen years, from less than 80 to 300-400 tons a year. Production doubled again in the 1960s, the heyday of the Kuomintang-CIA alliance in Southeast Asia.”⁴

In his most recent book, Scott noted:

“The members of Helliwell’s small OSS detachment in Kunming (Helliwell, [E. Howard] Hunt, Ray Cline, Lucien Conein, and Mitchell WerBell) cast a long shadow over both postwar intelligence-drug triarchies and the WACL’s history. In addition to Helliwell’s support for KMT drug traffickers in Burma and Hunt’s contribution in Mexico, APACL’s formation is said to have owed a large debt to Ray Cline. In the late 1970s *John Singlaub*, another veteran of Kunming, took over the WACL. Lucien Conein became a case officer of the Vietnamese officials overseeing anticommunist drug networks, first *Ngo Dinh Nhu* and later police chief *Nguyen Ngoc Loan*. Mitchell WerBell, who went on to develop small arms

for intelligence services like the [Mexican] DFS, was also involved with WACL death squad patrons ... and was eventually indicted himself on drug charges. (Peter Dale Scott, *American War Machine*, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, pp. 52-53)

“A repugnant cabal of war criminals and Nazi collaborators”

Shortly after WACL’s formation, the organization was joined by representatives of the *Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations*, an unsavory cabal of war criminals and Nazi collaborators led by *Yaroslav Stetsko*. When German armies invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Stetsko, then the leader of the collaborationist Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists proclaimed the founding of a Ukrainian *quisling* state allied with the Third Reich. In the “Act of Proclamation of Ukrainian Statehood,” Stetsko declared that Ukraine “will closely cooperate with the National-Socialist Greater Germany, under the leadership of its leader *Adolf Hitler* which is forming a new order in Europe and the world.” After the war, Stetsko and his cohorts fled Europe along the Vatican’s infamous “ratlines” and took up the anticommunist cudgel for the United States while working alongside European and Latin American fascists connected to global drug networks.

As the corrupt *García Meza* regime consolidated power, they butchered leftists, peasants and union organizers and were assisted by Argentine “dirty war” specialists, CIA asset and escaped Nazi war criminal, *Klaus Barbie* and a motley crew of far-right terrorists. It was a thoroughly international affair. Fresh from fomenting bloodshed in Italy, *Stefano Delle Chiaie*, the architect of the 1980 Bologna railway station bombing which killed 85, a hard core Nazi with operational links to both the CIA and NATO’s *Gladio* network, put his unique “skills” to use building up the global drug trade and exporting terror into Central America. As left-wing researcher *Stuart Christie* documented:

One of the *Delle Chiaie* organisers in Latin America, West German *Joachim Fiebelkorn* (born 1947), a Paladin and *Kampf-bund Deutscher Soldaten* veteran, as well as a Frankfurt pimp, who had worked with *Delle Chiaie* in Bolivia, stated later to the West German police that *Delle Chiaie* was the number one international middleman between the Sicilian Mafia and the Latin American cocaine producers. Based in a

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police barracks next to the West German Embassy in the capital, La Paz, the Delle Chiaie men, Los Novios de la Muerte – 'The Fiancés of Death' – as they called themselves, were contracted as security guards and enforcers for the multinational drug empire of Roberto Suárez, described as the 'King of Coca,' overseeing the production, transportation, distribution and marketing of cocaine.⁵

"Medellín Cartel helped defeat communism in Latin America"

Investigative journalists *Marta Gurchich* and *Robert Parry* reported that "many of the Argentine intelligence officers who assisted in the Cocaine Coup followed up their victory in Bolivia by moving northward into Central America to train a ragtag force of Nicaraguan contras." By "1981," Gurchich and Parry wrote, "President Reagan formally authorized the CIA to collaborate with the Argentine intelligence services in building up the contra army."

Under the stewardship of CIA Director *William Casey*, the Company did more than just watch from the sidelines. With a wink-and-a-nod from the Reagan White House, they concluded that the Medellín Cartel, as they had earlier with Asian drug mafias, could be used to help defeat communism in Latin America. Together with the far-larger Cali Cartel, run by the enterprising *Rodríguez Orejuela* brothers, they did just that. It was estimated at the time that the CIA's underworld "friends" made up to \$60 million per month; chump change by today's standards, but with the Sandinistas out of power by 1990, relations with Pablo Escobar soured.

In fact, as the *National Security Archive* revealed in previously classified documents, when Escobar was run to ground "key evidence" linked "the U.S.-Colombia task force charged with tracking down [the] fugitive ... to one of Colombia's most notorious paramilitary chiefs." According to the *Archive*, "The affair sparked a special CIA investigation into whether US intelligence was shared with Colombian terrorists and narcotraffickers every bit as dangerous as Escobar himself." They had; a pattern that persists today as can readily be seen in the US "war" against Mexico's powerful Cartels.⁶

As we now know, this great drug war "victory" in practice favored one corrupt Colombian faction over another with no discernible effects on the ground. Indeed, as *Narco News*⁷ reported, a leaked classified document written by Department of Justice attorney *Thomas M. Kent* "claims that federal agents with the *Drug Enforcement Administration's* office in Bogotá,

AAF on smuggling missions

Massively supported by NATO (which means by the German taxpayers as well) and the U.S. government, the fleet of the "Afghan Air Force" (AAF) is supposed to encompass nearly 150 aircraft by 2016. The United States already provide the necessary fuel for flight operations, perform all maintenance and repair work and take care of the basic and ongoing training of the Afghan pilots. But now there is reasonable suspicion that this air force, which has received more than two billion (!) US dollars, is in fact one of the world's largest organizations for smuggling weapons, money and drugs!

After the first "no-contract" use of an aircraft had come under suspicion, the U.S. administration appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the suspicious facts as well as the normal behavior of the AAF. But this was not done because the seven senior American officers were brutally murdered soon after their arrival at the airport. The Taliban promptly took on the responsibility for this act and the alleged perpetrator was also found dead soon after. According to the official version he had committed suicide. Not only in U.S. circles there is the suspicion that an inconvenient witness was "eliminated".

According to American estimates, meanwhile more than 90% of the world's distributed opium comes from Afghanistan. For a too long time, especially the U.S. forces gave the local rebel leaders free rein when a transport of opium was pending. What they bought this way was their "cooperation" in fighting the Taliban. But in the meantime the transports with the use of AAF machines have become independent. Ever more frequently few helicopters "disappeared" for hours, only to reappear again. Critical questions from the "U.S. guardians" have regularly remained unanswered. Instead, there have been ominous "closures" of some Kabul airport sectors.

Meanwhile, in Washington it is believed that a significant proportion of the Afghan opium and heroin stocks are taken out of the country in night-time flights of the AAF. And on the way back, money and weapons are carried which a little later are collected by Taliban tribal leaders. Every year this "air traffic" is supported with hundreds of millions of dollars!

Source:
Vertrauliche Mitteilungen,
No 3972 dated 27.3.2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

Colombia, are the corrupt players in the war on drugs."⁸

"DEA agents on drug traffickers' payrolls"

"Kent's memorandum," journalist *Bill Conroy* disclosed, "contains some of the most serious allegations ever raised against U.S. antinarcotics officers: that DEA agents on the front lines of the drug war in Colombia are on drug traffickers' payrolls, complicit in the murders of informants who knew too much, and, most startlingly, directly involved in helping Colombia's infamous rightwing paramilitary death squads to launder drug money."

"The memo further claims that, rather than being simply a few 'bad apples' who need to be reported to their superiors, these allegedly dirty agents are being protected by an ongoing cover-up orchestrated by 'watchdog' agencies within the Justice Department," Conroy wrote.

This was hardly an aberration but rather, emblematic of the corrupt nature of official U.S. policies going back decades. As we learned in the late 1990s, largely as a result of public outrage generated by the late *Gary Webb's Dark Alliance* series, a secret Memorandum of Understanding

between Reagan's Justice Department and the Agency came to light. That 1982 memo legally freed the CIA from reporting drug smuggling and other crimes committed by their assets; a point to keep in mind when we explore U.S. allegations of corruption by top Iranian officials below.⁹

Same approach after the Cold War

Were these Cold War anomalies? Hardly.

When the "Great Triangulator" *Bill Clinton* took the helm in 1993, it was *Slobodan Milošević* who reprised the role of the century as Europe's "new Hitler." With the Cold War over, the Soviet "menace" a fleeting image in the rearview mirror, and with neoliberal economic "reforms" all the rage, America began its eastward expansion of NATO into the former Eastern Bloc. Yugoslavia, deemed an historical anachronism had to go, and so it did.

Never mind that before occupying the Oval Office, when he was governor of Arkansas Clinton deep-sixed investigations into illicit operations by legendary CIA drug pilot and DEA snitch *Barry Seal*.¹⁰ Indeed, Seal and his cohorts, as well-documented, flew vast quantities of

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Instead of pursuing peace policy, German politicians assist in war preparations – it reeks of war

by Professor Dr Eberhard Hamer

The Americans concentrated the largest contingent of troops around Iran they have ever done after the Second World War. Israel has already positioned the nuclear submarines supplied by Germany and have examined and prepared the atomic first strike maneuver.

In order to avoid a two-front war, *Mossad* and CIA first destabilized Egypt, and then checkmated *Gaddafi*. In relation to this “good CIA job”, the American president deplored the bad work of the Mossad in Syria, where things did not get ahead. The western press suggested that there had been a people’s rebellion in Syria. However, Mossad and CIA have incited the supposed people’s rebellion using foreign mercenaries from Algeria, Syria, Turkey and the Taliban (!) and also have provided its financing, ammunition supply and strategy. Only after completing this alleged “liberation work” in Syria would Israel be able to cut loose against Iran, which is probably due to happen only between April and June, as the American Secretary of War *Panetta* communicated. The quicker president *Assad* would be neutralized and the country destabilized, the quicker the war against Iran would start.

In this sense the politicians of the European satellite countries work as auxiliary troop for the Israeli-American inciters in Iran, whom *Westerwelle* only recently assured full support and “humanitarian supplies” (probably relief supplies for the fight). The embargo against Syria is also meant to destabilize the country and to make it ready for foreign occupation.

Parallel to that, an international press campaign against President Assad is going on, accusing him of “murder of the own population” (instead against the insurgents Israel and the USA). Just like *Saddam Hussein* before, he is stigmatized as international terrorist and as an international threat. Parallel to that, Chinese and Russians are scolded, because they impeded in the UN Security Council that, instead of the unofficial foreign combat units, Israeli, American and NATO satellite troops officially intervene in the fight in Syria in order to precipitate the desired success.

If, according to official explanations, it can be assumed that only after the successful destabilization of Syria the north flank of Israel is secured and then its fight against Iran will be permitted, all peace politicians actually will have to be interested in postponing the collapse of the Syrian government as long as possible or even to not want it at all. That

way, the precondition for the Israeli attack on Iran will not be delivered. The perfidious silence of the German politicians – in particular of the Green and Red peace friends who earlier shouted clamorously on the occasion of each international combat – suggests deliberate complicity with the subversive and future open war in the Near East. Why does nobody warn our friends in the USA and in Israel not to play with fire and not to blow on the blaze which would inevitably also involve us in the Third World War as friends of Israel and satellites of the USA (via NATO).

And why do we allow the US-Israeli world press to report day by day that Iran is constructing an atomic bomb, although nobody has been able to prove this so far? Even the UN stated that Iran still needed “at least another 10 years” (two years ago). The old pattern used with Iraq has been obviously reproduced:

First, wild slogans about a country jeopardizing mankind are spread, making this country a danger for all,

- then these lies are made a certainty by constant confirmation by the interested political circles,
- then the economic and world organizations controlled by the Americans are mobilized to activate a boycott against the country which is to be attacked,
- then international UN organizations are sent to the neuralgic points of the country in order to examine the supposed production of “weapons of mass destruction” and/or “atomic bombs”, but in reality they want to specify the intended targets.

Parallel to that, the country chosen for attack will be controlled by US drones, then mapped and the strategic goals located. In the country itself, Israel lets the nuclear scientists be murdered, the computer centers be exploded by short wave attacks and the plants be bombarded.

Thereto, the American President announces that he would answer each defense of the already running attacks with the entire American military power “in the interest of the world peace”.

This is the same pattern of war preparation as with Iraq. The same lies, the same actions – hopefully not the same continuation.

If we do not act as peace demanders and if we do not warn the war-propagators we might face war in the Near East even this year.

The main warmonger is Israeli President *Netanjahu*, not the Syrian president

Assad. Why does *Merkel* not warn him of war, but support him instead? She even asserts him by stating that it has always been the intention of German policy to back Israel unconditionally – thus also in the case of war?

What if the German Federal Government warned *Netanjahu* not to provide him with any more material help in the case of war? What if Germany did not defend again “Europe at the Hindu Kush”, or if it did not accept to be dragged again in a foreign war adventure via NATO? Why are the peace lovers of the 70’s and 80’s suddenly so silent, although they envisage a much larger threat of war?

If *Netanjahu* strikes first with nuclear weapons against Iran, which is an ally to Russia, China and Pakistan, and if the Americans are involved in this war according to their agreements, this will become the Third World War. NATO was originally intended as defense organization, but meanwhile it is also serving American interests of attack worldwide. Via our NATO membership we would automatically be involved in this world war on the financial and military levels, if we did not resist. Above all, however, this world war would double or treble the oil price immediately and would raise the price of the remaining raw materials of the world, so that the prosperity of the whole world could end with this war.

All those who accused our parents’ generation of not having stopped *Hitler* with his hawkishness in time will have to be silent in future, if they stay silent in this case and do not warn. Where have all the peace lovers and their peace marches gone against the war, which might ruin all of us?

The author has repeatedly warned and he did it in time. He knows that this is politically not correct, even dangerous. Under *Hitler* it was the same. His father was arrested, because as a minister he admonished publicly of *Hitler*’s war. Who does not warn and offer resistance, however, is just as guilty as our dominant political clique. Owing to their friendship with Israel they think that they are not allowed to contradict or warn their friend. Friendship however does not mean to be a servile follower; it also requires objection in case of errors and imminent risk. •

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drugs into Mena Airport for the Medellín Cartel in "protected" drug operations that helped fund the Nicaraguan Contras, as investigative journalist *Daniel Hopsicker* reported for *The Washington Weekly* back in 1997.¹¹

Recapitulating a modus operandi which the secret state has relied upon since the end of World War Two, first in Asia and then globally, far-right political and religious extremists and drug trafficking organizations with ties to Western intelligence began working their magic in the Balkans.

CIA knew: KLA ran highly-profitable heroin and prostitution rackets across Europe

Across the Atlantic, while the media obsessed over stains on *Monica Lewinsky's* infamous blue dress, the dismemberment of Yugoslavia was in full-swing. America and Germany's close allies, the secessionist Bosnian government under *Alija Izetbegovic*, a darling of Western "humanitarian interventionists," an Islamist fraudster who had expressed sympathies for the 13th Waffen SS Handschar Division during the war, which earned him a stint in a Yugoslav prison, provided thousands of veteran Afghan-Arab fighters passports and guns to help "liberate" Bosnia. As with NATO's current "regime change" ops in Libya and Syria, Salafist jihadis aligned with a CIA shadow army which morphed into Al Qaeda, the "database," poured into the region.

While *Osama Bin Laden's* minions wrecked havoc in Bosnia, merrily butchering Jews, Roma and Serbs whilst establishing Saudi-financed Wahhabist "charities," later in the decade they gained *entrée* into Kosovo where they joined NATO's newest "best friends forever," the Kosovo Liberation Army. Ruled with iron fists by gangsters *Hashim Thaçi*, *Agim Çeku* and *Ramush Haradinaj*, the KLA, aligned with Italian Mafiosi and Turkish crime bosses and ran highly-profitable heroin and prostitution rackets across Europe.

In 1999, *The Montreal Gazette* published an exposé reporting that "Kosovar Albanian rebels were linked to drugs by narcotics experts in Europe as early as 1994, while U.S. authorities warned in 1996 that Kosovars were smuggling large amounts of weapons and drugs. Police in various Western nations also noted the rising proportion of heroin being shipped to their countries through the Balkans, and the rise in crime and overdose deaths that accompanied the drug."¹²

Michael Levine, a 25-year DEA veteran and whistleblower who currently co-hosts *The Expert Witness Radio Show*,¹³ told the *Gazette* there was "no question"

that American secret state agencies knew about the KLA's drug ties.

"As long as the CIA is protecting the KLA, you've got major drug pipelines protected from any police investigation"

"They (the CIA) protected them (the KLA) in every way they could," Levine said. "As long as the CIA is protecting the KLA, you've got major drug pipelines protected from any police investigation."

Writing for the *Covert Action Quarterly*, analyst *Michel Chossudovsky* reported that "While KLA leaders were shaking hands with US Secretary of State *Madeleine Albright* at Rambouillet, *Europol* (the European Police Organization based in The Hague) was 'preparing a report for European interior and justice ministers on a connection between the KLA and Albanian drug gangs'."¹⁴

"In order to thrive," Chossudovsky averred, "the criminal syndicates involved in the Balkans narcotics trade need friends in high places. Smuggling rings with alleged links to the Turkish State are said to control the trafficking of heroin through the Balkans 'cooperating closely with other groups with which they have political or religious ties' including criminal groups in Albanian and Kosovo. In this new global financial environment, powerful undercover political lobbies connected to organized crime cultivate links to prominent political figures and officials of the military and intelligence establishment."

"KLA had their narco-state and the Pentagon have Camp Bondsteel"

Following NATO's 78-day bombing campaign, a template for today's State Department-fomented "humanitarian interventions," the former socialist Yugoslavia lay in ruins, the KLA had their narco-state and the Pentagon had *Camp Bondsteel*. By 2000, Thaçi's "boys" had pushed aside Turkish and Italian mobsters and took control of the lucrative *Balkan heroin pipeline*¹⁵ and harvested human organs for sale on the international black market.¹⁶

It was a victory all around.

We should keep Chossudovsky's point in mind today, as "undercover political lobbies" such as the terrorist *Mojahedin e-Khalq (MEK)* and their various fronts such as the *National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)* "cultivate links to prominent political figures and officials of the military and intelligence establishment," showering U.S. politicians and military elites with millions of dollars in "speaking fees" from unknown sources as *The Christian Science Monitor* exposed.

The New "Heroin Connection"?

If the prospect of a "nuclear-armed" Iran isn't enough to send red-blooded, God fea-

rin' Americans into a tizzy, then consider this zinger from *RFE/RL*: "U.S. Says Iranian General Instrumental In Afghan Drug Traffic."¹⁷

That's right, the CIA's former propaganda mouthpiece *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, smelling blood in the water and itching for a fight, informed us last week that the *Obama* administration "has named a general in Iran's elite *Al-Quds* force as a key figure in trafficking heroin from Afghanistan."

"Afghan opium and heroin production skyrocketed since US-led invasion"

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, "General General *Gholamreza Baghbani*, who runs the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force office in Zahedan," has been designated a "narcotics kingpin."

We're told that Baghbani has been accused "of aiding Afghan drug runners in moving opiates into and through Iran, as well helping send weapons to the Taliban."

Guns in, drugs out; while it has a familiar ring to it, are we talking about Iran or NATO's Central Asian outpost, Afghanistan?

According to a 1998 timeline inserted into the Congressional Record during the mark-up for the 1999 Intelligence Authorization Act we read the following:

Soviet-backed coup in Afghanistan sets stage for explosive growth in Southwest Asian heroin trade. New Marxist regime undertakes vigorous anti-narcotics campaign aimed at suppressing poppy production, triggering a revolt by semi-autonomous tribal groups that traditionally raised opium for export. The CIA-supported rebel Mujahedeen begins expanding production to finance their insurgency. Between 1982 and 1989, during which time the CIA ships billions of dollars in weapons and other aid to guerrilla forces, annual opium production in Afghanistan increases to about 800 tons from 250 tons. By 1986, the State Department admits that Afghanistan is 'probably the world's largest producer of opium for export' and 'the poppy source for a majority of the Southwest Asian heroin found in the United States.' U.S. officials, however, fail to take action to curb production. Their silence not only serves to maintain public support for the Mujahedeen, it also smooths relations with Pakistan, whose leaders, deeply implicated in the heroin trade, help channel CIA support to the Afghan rebels.¹⁸

Since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion that pattern has been repeated. Afghan opium and heroin production has skyrocketed, primarily because NATO forces have aligned themselves, and propped up, those responsible for the dramatic rise in poppy cultivation: *Hamid Karzai's* warlord-infested nar-

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co-state. But rather than pointing a finger at the source of what amount to *protected* drug rackets--the CIA and NATO--RFE/RL and their media accomplices are stitching-up the Islamic Republic for a fall. One more reason then, for launching a preemptive war.

US and Nato troops: directly involved in drug trafficking?

But Iranian officials have charged that opium and heroin production in Afghanistan have had a severe impact inside Iran and, like Russia, have accused the U.S. of turning a blind eye when it comes to fighting opium production. Indeed, *Sergei Blagov* reported for *ISN Security Watch* that "Russia's top officials have described the situation as 'narco-aggression' against Russia and a new 'opium war'."

"The Russian press," Blagov wrote, "has been even less diplomatic, claiming that US and NATO forces were directly involved in the drug trade. Russian media outlets allege that the bulk of the drugs produced in Afghanistan's southern and western provinces are shipped abroad on US planes."¹⁹

Commenting on the "creative destruction" wrought by NATO, former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, *Craig Murray*, wrote in *The Daily Mail* that the West's "economic achievement in Afghanistan goes well beyond the simple production of raw opium. In fact Afghanistan no longer exports much raw opium at all. It has succeeded in what our international aid efforts urge every developing country to do. Afghanistan has gone into manufacturing and 'value-added' operations."²⁰

According to Murray, facts clearly established by multiple law enforcement agencies, Afghanistan "now exports not opium, but heroin. Opium is converted into heroin on an industrial scale, not in kitchens but in factories. Millions of gallons of the chemicals needed for this process are shipped into Afghanistan by tanker. The tankers and bulk opium lorries on the way to the factories share the roads, improved by American aid, with Nato troops."

"How can this have happened, and on this scale?" Murray wonders. "The answer is simple. The four largest players in the heroin business are all senior members of the Afghan government--the government that our soldiers are fighting and dying to protect."

But let's not let anything as inconvenient as facts get in the way of stopping Qom's "new Hitlers"!

Iran seizes an estimated 20-40 percent of trafficked volumes

Far from being complicit in the drug trade, as *Reuters* reported, while Iran "is a main transit route for bringing heroin

and opium to Western markets from Asia ... the United Nations' top anti-drugs official in Tehran praised the country for its efforts in stopping traffickers and seizing narcotics."

"Definitely drug control is one of the positive stories (from Iran)," said *Roberto Arbitrio*, representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)."

"This is the first country in the world in terms of opiate seizures," he told the news agency in an interview, referring to opium, morphine and heroin. "Last year it was 300 tons."

If ubiquitous facts on the ground speak volumes then, as *Reuters* disclosed, "Iran's campaign was showing results with the country seizing an estimated 20-40 percent of trafficked volumes, as compared to 5-10 percent in the United States and Europe;" a telling statistic not likely to be repeated by war-hungry media in the West.²¹

Indeed, UNODC reported last November that Iran, along with Afghanistan and Pakistan have entered into an agreement "designed to strengthen drug control among the three countries most seriously affected by Afghan opium. The initiative promotes information exchange and intelligence-led operations targeting the major transnational networks."²²

"All three parties," UNODC's Executive Director *Yury Fedotov* averred, have launched a "Triangular Initiative" that has already boosted "their cross-border counter-narcotics capacities." Tellingly, a "joint planning cell has been established in *Tehran* to enhance analytical and operational capacity and to launch joint operations." (emphasis added)

According to Fedotov, the planning and operational cell "has notched up successes. Since 2009, 12 drug control operations coordinated by the joint planning cell have resulted in the seizures of several tons of illicit drugs and the arrest of many drug traffickers."

This is certainly not the message that war planners in Washington care to hear. But what can we learn closer to home where the Obama administration has the media's ear and can exert influence over own America's benighted "War on Drugs"?

US authorities: pact with drug cartels until today

When two planes filled with nearly *ten tons* of coke were seized in Mexico, in commercial jets tricked-out to resemble those flown by the *Department of Homeland Security* (see *Daniel Hopsicker's* eye-opening archive²³ on the story) or when the fourth largest U.S. bank, *Wachovia*, pled guilty to laundering \$378.4 billion in drug money for Mexican drug cartels²⁴ and got off with a slap on the wrist, or when the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco

and Firearms let guns "walk" across the border, right into the hands of the CIA's favorite narco-trafficking gang, the Sinaloa Cartel as Bill Conroy over at *Narco News* exposed²⁵, corporate media responded with a collective yawn.

In fact, *Narco News* revealed in December that in an upcoming trial in Chicago of one of the Sinaloa cartel's top leaders, *Jesus Vicente Zambada Niebla*, federal prosecutors are seeking to bar defense evidence that U.S. government agencies, including the CIA and the DEA, had "entered into a pact with the leadership of the Mexican Sinaloa narco-trafficking organization that supposedly provide its chief narcos with immunity in exchange for them providing US authorities with information that could be used to target other narco-trafficking organizations."²⁶

Conroy disclosed that "US prosecutors do confirm in court filings that another high-level Sinaloa 'Cartel' member, Mexican attorney *Loya Castro*, has worked as a DEA cooperating source for some 10 years (and as recently as this year) while also working for the Sinaloa organization."

"*Loya Castro*, *Narco News* revealed, "acted as the intermediary representing the Sinaloa organization in its quid pro quo arrangement with the US government, *Zambada Niebla's* court pleadings allege." Indeed, to protect their dirty deals with Mexico's largest drug gang, a multi-billion dollar enterprise whose tentacles stretch across the Americas, the "US government, in court pleadings filed in September, lodged a motion in the case seeking to invoke the Classified Information Procedures Act, or CIPA, a measure designed to assure national security information does not become public during court proceedings."²⁷

CIA and drug flights

What might threaten America's "national security," pray tell?

As Daniel Hopsicker disclosed last summer, when "embattled" acting ATF director *Kenneth Melson* testified before Congress he refused "to go down for a program [Fast and Furious] which he had little or nothing to do with originating."²⁸

Pointing a finger at U.S. Attorney General *Eric Holder*, Melson told congressional grifters that "the evidence we have gathered raises the disturbing possibility that the Justice Department not only allowed criminals to smuggle weapons but that taxpayer dollars from other agencies may have financed those engaging in such activities."

As Hopsicker pointed out, those "shadowy other government agencies" is "the very definition of the CIA."

Hopsicker asked: "If the CIA is arming Mexican drug cartels, might they not also

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have been behind the otherwise-puzzling effort to supply these same drug lords with top-quality American-registered airplanes and jets?"

"Were the two now-infamous American-registered planes busted in Mexico's Yucatan carrying almost ten tons of cocaine part of this same so-far unnamed Operation behind the ATF's Operation Gunwalker?"

As we now know, at least one of the drug planes, "a Gulfstream business jet (N987SA)"²⁹ Hopsicker revealed, were part of a fleet of *fifty planes* purchased through money laundered by Wachovia Bank as both *Bloomberg Markets Magazine* and *The Observer* reported,³⁰ at least one of which were used to transport kidnapped "terrorist" suspects on CIA "ghost flights."

Who is still believing the accusations against Iran?

But that's all the past, we should "look forward, not backward." Why bother with "ancient history" when there's a new war to gin-up?

According to the Treasury Department press release, "The U.S. Department of the Treasury today designated Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force (IRGC-QF) General *Gholamreza Baghbani* as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). This is the first use of the Kingpin Act against an Iranian official."³¹

"Today's action exposes IRGC-QF involvement in trafficking narcotics, made doubly reprehensible here because it is done as part of a broader scheme to support terrorism. Treasury will continue exposing narcotics traffickers and terrorist supporters wherever they operate," said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence *David S. Cohen*.

If Treasury Department allegations can be believed, and given Cohen's role as Obama's point-man for enforcing Iran sanctions the charges reek to high-heaven. "General Baghbani," we're told, "allowed Afghan narcotics traffickers to smuggle opiates through Iran in return for assistance. For example, Afghan narcotics traffickers moved weapons to the Taliban on behalf of Baghbani. In return, General Baghbani has helped facilitate the smuggling of heroin precursor chemicals through the Iranian border. He also helped facilitate shipments of opium into Iran."

Media warriors

Jumping feet first into the fray, the right-wing *Long War Journal*, charge that "Al Qaeda is also known to facilitate travel for its operatives moving into Afghani-

stan from Mashad. Al Qaeda additionally uses the eastern [Iranian] cities of Tayyebat and Zahedan to funnel its operatives into Afghanistan."³²

We're told that "several [unnamed] Taliban commanders based in western Afghanistan have stated that they have received weapons, cash, and training from Iranian forces. Taliban commanders and units train inside Iran to conduct attacks against NATO and Afghan forces. In addition, al Qaeda operatives are also known to receive support from the Ansar Corps; Mashad is a transit point for al Qaeda operatives en route to Afghanistan."

LWJ's "proof"? Why none other than a 2010 statement from disgraced ISAF commander General *Stanley McCrystal*, who said that "Iran is training Taliban fighters and providing them with weapons"! Case closed, right?

But as with last year's discredited Iranian "Qods Force" plot to assassinate Saudi ambassador *Adel al-Jubeir* in an upscale Washington restaurant, evidence has since emerged that a key figure named in the conspiracy by failed Texas used-car salesman, *Manssor Arbabsiar*, alleged Iranian Revolutionary Guard officer *Gholam Shakuri*, has been fingered by Iranian officials and Interpol as a member of the Mojahedin e-Khalq (MEK), according to *Tehran Times*.³³

Mehr News Agency reported that "Interpol has found new evidence showing that the number two suspect in connection with the alleged Iranian government's involvement in a plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to Washington is a key member of the terrorist Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO)."³⁴

Dubious story of Iranian plot to assassinate Saudi ambassador

According to *Mehr*, "Gholam Shakuri was last seen in Washington and Camp Ashraf in Iraq where MKO members are based."

Citing an Interpol report, the news agency alleged that "the person in question has been travelling to different countries under the names of Ali Shakuri/Gholam Shakuri/Gholam-Hosseini Shakuri by using fake passports including forged Iranian passports. One passport used by the person was issued on 30/11/2006 in Washington. The passport number was K10295631."

As with the now-discredited plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador, allegedly to be carried out in cahoots with a member of Mexico's violence-prone Zetas Cartel, who turned out to be a DEA informant, Treasury Department charges against General Gholamreza Baghbani should be taken with a grain of salt.

As journalist *Gareth Porter* noted in his investigation of the Arbabsiar plot,

"the allegations that the Iranian-American used car salesman wanted to 'attack' the Saudi embassy and other targets rest entirely upon the testimony of the DEA informant with whom he was meeting. The informant is a drug dealer who had been indicted for a narcotics violation in a US state but had the charges dropped 'in exchange for cooperation in various drug investigations,' according to the FBI account. The informant is not an independent source of information, but someone paid to help pursue FBI objectives."³⁵

Coming just days before the *Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT)*, bowing to U.S. pressure, cut off 30 Iranian financial institutions, including its Central Bank, from its network in a bid to cripple Iran economically, the allegations against Baghbani should be viewed as another psychological component of America's shadow war.

352 billion dollar drug profits sufficient for a lot of omertà

With lurid tales of Iranian involvement with the Taliban and the drug trade front and center, expect a new round of alarmist reports from Western media while the same punditocracy do their best to bury evidence of U.S. secret state complicity in the global drug scourge.

And why not? As *Antonio Maria Costa*, the head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime told *The Observer* in 2009, "he has seen evidence that the proceeds of organised crime were 'the only liquid investment capital' available to some banks on the brink of collapse last year. He said that a majority of the \$352bn (£216bn) of drugs profits was absorbed into the economic system as a result."

After all, \$352 billion buys a lot of omertà. •

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Source: *Global Research*, 18 March 2012
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In Switzerland there is no way around the people

Successful resistance of the Franches-Montagnes District against pressure for a merger

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich, Zurich

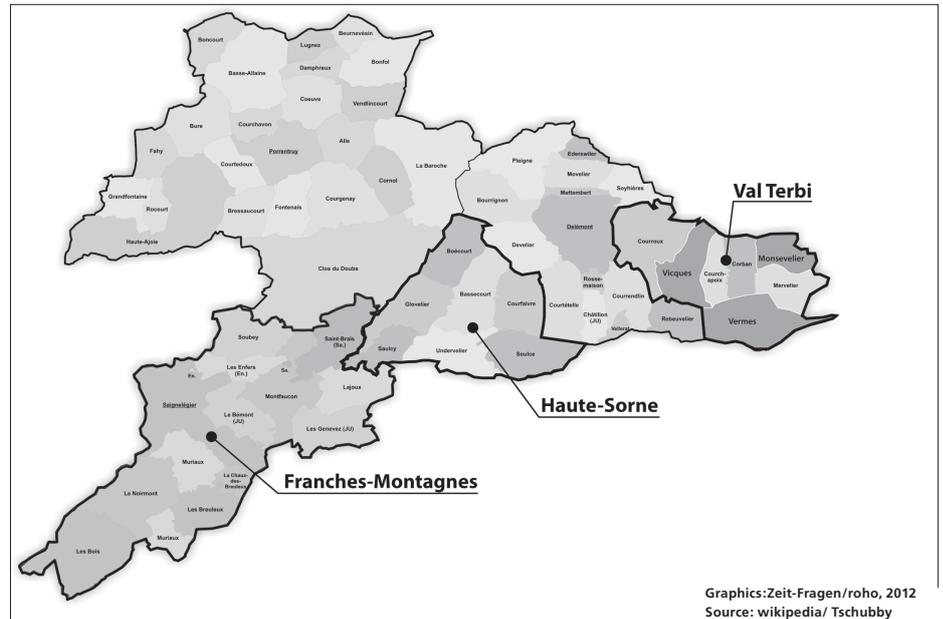
On 25 March 2012 the population of eleven communes of the Franches-Montagnes district in the canton Jura voted with a mostly powerful no at the ballot box against the merger to a unified commune. Only two communes were in favour. This is all the more remarkable as since 2005 the Jura government had included the aim of a massive reduction of the number of communes in the canton in their legislative programme. Its strong pressure on the municipal authorities had the effect that only 64 instead of 83 communes have existed in the canton since 2009. On 1 January 2013 there will only be 58 communes left. The next big project of merger on the agenda of the Jura government is the incorporation of all surrounding communes by the capital Delémont. Originally the government wanted to reduce the number of communes to six this however will fail because of direct democracy.

Informed contemporaries do not have to rack their brains who “from further up” has talked the cantonal authorities untruthfully into believing that the economically not very strong location Jura could improve its situation with more centralism and tight control (see box below).

Now the people of Franches-Montagnes have shown us quite plainly that in our county nothing goes if the sovereign does not want. And they belied all those who have taunted the Swiss people with lack of political interest. Showing impressive unity, the Franches-Montagniers went to the ballots. Voter turnout was between 66.39 % and 94.9% (!). The authorities of communes and cantons are well advised to take the people’s bluntly expressed will seriously. For the population of Delémont and its neighbouring communes the clear rejection of the united municipality in the Franches-Montagnes will set an encouraging sign. Do not believe everything that comes from circles who want to convert our proven federal state-structure for a mess of pottage into an EU-compatible centrally controlled system.

Spatial policy of the DETEC¹ at the expense of the alpine cantons

It is very understandable that the alpine canton Jura whose economic performance lies in the lower range compared to the other cantons wants to improve its economic situation. Therefore the Jura government gratefully took the treat the Federal Office for Spatial Planning (ARE) offered. ARE which took up the cause of



an EU-compatible reconstruction of Switzerland even beyond the borders, graciously included the capital Delémont and its surroundings in its list of agglomerations. In an agreement between the Confederation and the canton of 2007 the DETEC under Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard promised almost six million Swiss francs mainly for the urgently needed expansion of the transport links, however connected with an immense number of prerequisites for both the canton and the communes to fulfil. Main prerequisite is the “urbanization” of Delémont and the surrounding communes.²

In reality the provision of sufficient railway links to all regions of Switzerland is a task of the Confederation constitutionally embodied in article 87. This is a part of the service public. It applies also to the so called “peripheral areas” – an unspeakable newspeak term which has been imported from abroad in recent times. In Switzerland indeed “peripheral areas” do not exist, but 26 equal and equitable cantons. Mrs Leuthard and her ARE therefore are not allowed to impose conditions on the canton Jura so that it finally gets the transportation lines urgently needed for its business location and its population.

Exuberant mergerism by the Jura government

The spatial policy of the Confederation focussing on the agglomerations causes some cantonal governments to try to adapt to the centralistic efforts of the DETEC to benefit from federal funds. Since 2005 the Jura government tries to bring the communes in the whole canton to most comprehensive mergers. On 28 September 2011 it made the

Swiss Parliament change the cantonal legislation accordingly: the government shall “promote” the formation of inter-communal merger commissions.³ These commissions are obliged to plan the merger of their communes.⁴ The cantonal parliament can force communes resisting a merger if they lack financial resources or elected officials or if they are too much dependent on the cooperation with their neighbouring communes (sic!). Before the parliament forces a municipality to a merger it shall “consult” the municipal council⁵ – this is indeed very courteous.

Small communities are most favorable in every respect

Such regulations fit for the delicate and direct-democratic federal system in Switzerland in any case as chalk and cheese. In addition, it has been known for a long time that there is no profit in the merger of independent and well-organized communes – except high costs. Small communes are most favorable in every respect – in human, social and financial respect. The much touted synergy effects of mergers are swallowed by increased bureaucracy and a more expensive administration. And the many militiamen who work in their village for little or no pay because they feel connected to the village community, will not do the same work for a large merged commune.

Doubs Nature Park – next attack on the communal autonomy

The planned Doubs Nature Park is neither a nature nor an economic develop-

"In Switzerland there is ..."

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ment project – and certainly not an effort to foster the French-Swiss neighborhood, as the population is made to believe. All these meaningful goals can be achieved much better without any Nature Park. Those who in the canton of Jura developed legitimate distrust of the beneficent promises on the part of the communal merger committees would do well to extend this skepticism to the planned nature park. The nature parks, which cover the entire EU country, are in fact – just like the metropolitan regions – centralized power instruments of the bankrupt EU, intended to break up the existing federal units and the nation states and replacing them by a "Europe of regions". Yes, the bureaucrats in Brussels do not even spare the countries' borders: Cross-border parks like the Doubs or in Schaffhausen (Switzerland) are particularly suitable for this purpose. It is an interesting question why some federal councilors and federal agencies in Bern absolutely

want to participate. (For details see "Nature Park Doubs, the winding paths of its development" in Current Concerns No. 4/2012 and "Nature parks, wolf, lynx: the gradual expropriation of territory and food supply" in: *Current Concerns*, N°25 Nov/2011)

Those who hope for business promotion with the help of federal funds and park labels will soon bury their hopes; federal funding is not available for the local economy, but for the colleges that produce the feasibility studies and management plans; it is also available for the park's management office and a lot of bureaucracy. Labels will not result in more consumers if they stick on the Swiss cheese and the taverns selling homemade products like in all other Swiss parks. By the way, the local businesses have to pay a lot for the label.

What gets under the skin of the Swiss system of direct democracy is the fact that communes submit a substantial part of their local autonomy to the park's management and the board with their membership in the park association, and they do so for ten long years! Thus, the politi-

cal rights of citizens are severely limited – no one tells us exactly in how far the economic activity and private property of the population would be limited by the park regime. The only certainty is that the communes' population could no longer determine its own lot.

The voters of the Franches-Montagnes District have thwarted the nature park strategists' plans a lot by rejecting the big merger. A single commune would soon have been included in the park – many autonomous communes, which individually vote on the accession are more difficult to subjugate.

We wish the Franches-Montagnards that their local autonomy, which they saved on the 25 March, will not be sacrificed to the Doubs Nature Park. •

¹ Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Swiss: UVEK

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⁵ Loi sur les communes, article 69b, alinéa 3

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Active citizens – the crucial factor of direct democracy

mw. The groups of citizens in the Canton Jura that organize to oppose their factual arguments against community mergers obtruded from above and thus contribute to a manifold opinion among the population are a vivid example of how direct democracy works in Switzerland. The citizens countered the unbalanced propaganda of the canton administration and unfortunately also of most media with writing letters to the editors and forming citizen groups like the *Comité de l'Association de bourgeoisies jurassiennes* which opposed the merger of 7 communes to a large unified commune with the artificially created name "Haute-Sorne". In the Val Terbi, too, there were citizens that above all repudiated the fact that the merger was obtruded on the communes at express train's pace which didn't allow thorough reconsideration, as

one reader stated in his letter to the editor "Val Terbi – Trop vite et trop imprécis". The concerns were shared by a large part of the population; so two of the seven communes voted against the unified commune "Haute-Sorne". In the Val Terbi only three out of seven communes voted in favor of the merger.

Particularly impressive is the proceeding of the citizen's movement "Franches-Montagnes, je m'engage". They joined forces at an early stage and on 10 January 2012 they published a resolution with a detailed list of well founded arguments against the merger of their communes. Thus there was enough time for a profound debate and opinion-formation until the vote took place on 25 March 2012. The citizen group put special attention on the voting campaign to be led on an objective level without any quarreling among the

opponents. Moreover one can assume that the critical commentaries on the mergers of 5 February had also been read by many families in the Franches-Montagnes. This way the profound opinion-forming gradually bears fruit on the basis of argument and counterargument. Each individual's contribution is precious and adds to the whole issue.

The large merger in the Franches-Montagnes was plainly rejected on 25 March 2012 in 11 of 13 communes. An encouraging example for all the people and their citizens' movements: don't we shy away from putting ourselves in the headwind – we owe it to our country and to the preservation of our unique direct-democratic and federal state structure. And at the same time it will strengthen our personality and well-being. Who engages in the common weal will grow with the challenge. •

Franches-Montagnes, je m'engage Freiberge, I take a stand for you

(Resolution, 10 January 2012)

The citizens' movement "Franches-Montagnes, je m'engage" had assembled on 10 January 2012 in Noirmont in order to start a campaign against incorporation and it is

- condemning actions of Copil and the government, who try to force the population of Franches-Montagnes into a community incorporation against their will,
- protesting against the decree on community incorporation, forced by centralistic laws,
- disapproving attempts to destroy the communities and to rush the project,
- confirming the diversity of the mountain communities. The solidarity of the Franches-Montagnes people with

in their village and their homeland is the basis for their creative power, their mercantilism and their public spirit. All this empowers democracy in our district.

- Regretting, that public funds, established by our ancestors are being wasted for this project. This project will slow down attempts for rapprochement and cooperation even in certain cases of (desired) community incorporation,
- encouraging local councils to catalogue possible synergies within and outside the district,
- supporting every action and means of solidarity, which allow strengthening the cooperation within the district in its present form.
- Regretting the missing clarity and gaps in the survey, concerning the finance plan in the merger agreement.

- Standing against the sell off and dumping of communal properties, which is planned in case of community incorporation.
- Refusing to trust fake prophets, who want to sacrifice a 300-year-old history, with 300 years of solidarity, cooperation and civilian engagement; prophets who stand for political doctrine, corporatism, ruthless ambition, greediness and political arrangements.
- Pointing out to the Franches-Montagnes people, that breaking down the borders for community incorporation will be irreversible. It would be a fake Eldorado.
- Asking everybody to vote against a community incorporation by participating in great number in the national referendum on 25 March.

Le Noirmont, 10 January 2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

Patchwork commune in Val Terbi?

Citizen's committee in Montsevelier demands a second referendum

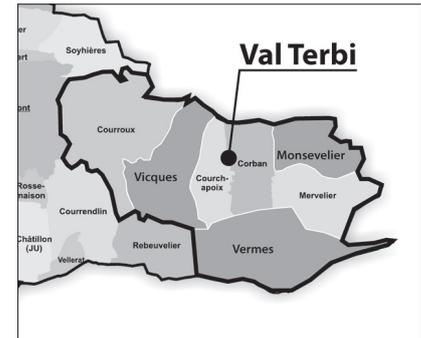
On 5 February 2012, only 3 of 7 communes voted for a merger in Val Terbi. Viewing the three communes Vicques, Vermes and Montsevelier on a map, you may wonder, how these three should build together one commune – because geographically they do not adjoin: Vicques and Vermes only touch each other at one corner, between Montsevelier and the other two villages there are further communes. How are they to form a political entity? This was raised by a group of citizens in Montsevelier, who want to nullify the decision for a merger. This is possible in direct democracy: only one month after the referendum, the citizens of Montsevelier have convinced *Silvia Buser*, a communal councilor, to launch a people's initiative demanding withdrawal from merger. "I have launched this initiative on some villagers' request",

Silvia Buser says and adds: "From a geographical point of view, it is obvious that Montsevelier has become an exclave of Vicques". She adds that no project of these dimensions can be developed and implemented, particularly not because there is no common borderline and no financial basis. (Source: "Quotidien jurassien" of 7 March 2012, "Des citoyens lancent une initiative pour sortir Montsevelier de la commune fusionnée") The citizens launch an initiative to get Montsevelier out of the merged commune). The initiators must collect 50 signatures so as to demand a second referendum – a fairly large number compared with 386 persons entitled to vote. We wish them good success. (Source: "Quotidien jurassien" of 7 March 2012)

By the way legal action is also open to persons entitled to vote in the three communes: according to

article 1 of the Décret sur la fusion de communes (merger agreement for communes – modification of 28.9.2011) merging communes are to be connected geographically which is definitely not the case in the Val Terbi.

Commission de pilotage, the "steering-commission" implemented by the Jura government to implement the merger of communes



Voting results of 25 March 2012

Results of the communes

The project of a unified commune in Franches-Montagnes has been rejected

Only two out of thirteen communes (Saint-Bras and Soubey) accepted the agreement which has thus been rejected. Average voter turnout is 74.39%.

Voting results in the communes:

Le Bémont: 72 yes. 147 no. Voter turnout: 86.9%
 Le Bois: 169 yes. 421 no. Voter turnout: 69.91%
 Les Breuleux: 167 yes. 659 no. Voter turnout: 80.29%
 La Chaux-des-Breuleux: 20 yes. 48 no: Voter turnout: 93.4%
 Les Enfers: 51 yes. 60 no. Voter turnout: 94.9%
 Les Genevez: 62 yes. 251 no. Voter turnout: 80.15%
 Lajoux: 73 yes. 311 no. Voter turnout: 75.1%

Montfaucon: 165 yes. 189 no. Voter turnout: 79.47%
 Muriaux: 32 yes. 267 no. Voter turnout: 81.62%
 Le Noirmont: 191 yes. 724 no. Voter turnout: 74.41%
 Saignelégier: 622 yes. 633 no. Voter turnout: 66.39%
 Saint-Bras: 84 yes. 44 no. Voter turnout: 75%
 Soubey: 47 yes. 46 no. Voter turnout: 80.7%

Source: www.franchesmontagnesavenir.ch

Public interest group "Safe Raiffeisen Bank" established

by *Nina Rudnicki*

BERG. There are about 1.7 million members of the Raiffeisen Bank cooperative. Ten of them – all from the region Steinach-Berg-Freidorf – are particularly committed. In response to the partial acquisition of Bank Wegelin, they founded the public interest group "Safe Raiffeisen Bank".

"No Surprise"

The fact that it is in the quiet village of Berg that opposition is rearing may have surprised Raiffeisen Bank. However, the responses on the part of Raiffeisen Bank are restrained. Berg is a particular case, says spokesman Franz Würth on request. "We have long known", he says, "that in Berg some members of the cooperative have been concerned

about the partial acquisition of Bank Wegelin." Therefore the establishment of the IG (interest group) has actually been no surprise. From other regions, he says, there have only been sporadic concerned reactions.

This makes Irene Varga chuckle. She is co-initiator of the IG "Safe Raiffeisen-bank" and says: "If there have been only sporadic reactions, then the bank should be all the more surprised that there's now an IG even from Berg." To her it sounds like a standard response. The bank does not seem to consider a ten-person group as a real threat. What have the cooperative members from Berg planned for the future – continue to grow? "Growing bigger as IG is not

necessarily our first goal", says Varga. "But we hope to get more and more sympathizers." She adds that there are already many supporters.

An uneasy feeling

The founders of the IG fear a loss of image for Raiffeisen Bank because of the partial purchase of Wegelin. "This causes discomfort to many", says Varga. They want to inform the bank about that. "We hope that we will not simply be put off, but that the bank managers will respond to the concerns of the cooperative's members."

Source: *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 9 March 2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

Raiffeisen Bank – betrayal of the cooperative idea

When the General Assembly of the Raiffeisen Bank Rechter Zurichsee is going to take place on 22 April 2012, the cultural change caused by the purchase of Bank Notenstein (the old name of Wege- lin Bank, CC) and the completely insuff-

icient information of the cooperative's members about it will be criticised – as in other Raiffeisen general assemblies.

Pierin Vincenz has spurned the cooperative idea, which must not be accepted just like that, especially as Vincenz

lives a lifestyle up to favouritism. He has lost his innocence, does not differ any more from the other greedy bankers.

Hans-Jacob Heitz, Männedorf
(Translation Current Concerns)

Nature Park Schaffhausen

Radio Munot, 16 March 2012

cc. About 20 engaged citizens of the Citizens' Talk Schaffhausen assembled on 16 March in Schaffhausen for a discussion about the Nature Park. The funding association for this park had been founded on 10 March. All of these citizens were already aware of the dubiousness of this EU-import facility and debated the issue that evening, how the Nature Park, which is already in the implementation phase, can be stopped. The implementation phase for the park has just begun and should last for four years. Thus one could prevent the park operators flooding the population with their propaganda for four years. Moreover, one could save costs. Everyone agreed that it was reasonable to take action immediately and to inform the voters in the communities, who vote on a financial contribution to the funding association at the budget meetings throughout this year, well in advance. This way as many communities as possible could vote against participating in the park in its initial phase, which means that the park will not materialize. – Martin Bartholdi, an editor at Radio Munot, also attended the discussion. After the discussion he had an interview with Hans-Jörg Kunz, former senior governing councilor.

Martin Bartholdi: Randen [a rather flat mountain near Schaffhausen], Rhine and wine – on these three pillars the Regional Nature Park Schaffhausen is to be built. On the one hand, the park is supposed to protect the environment and nature, but on the other hand it should not constrain the economy. On the contrary: the Na-

ture Park aims to boost agriculture and tourism. So money should enter the region. Sounds good – but according to Hans-Jörg Kunz, former member of the governing council, a nature park is not needed. Hans-Jörg Kunz: The inhabitants of Schaffhausen have always cared about nature, this was never a problem. We have our tourism, we have a thriving agriculture, we grow good wine – we do not need anything. We have economic promotion, we do not need the Nature Park.

Yesterday evening Hans-Jörg Kunz visited the Citizens' Talk Schaffhausen, an independent group which meets regularly to discuss current topics. – Yesterday this topic was the regional Nature Park. The nearly 20 attendees are critical of the Nature Park, and in fact not because it is unnecessary, but because the communities will no longer have a say in it once it is there.

Afterwards the others will tell you, where to build, where the industry is to go, where agriculture may install their fattening units or their barns. Perhaps they will also tell you where you are allowed build a 'Güterstrasse' (large crossroad) and which forest roads will no longer be allowed. The communities will no longer have a say in these things later on...

... instead it is the Nature Park, respectively the park management in form of the sponsoring organization. But in Schaffhausen it hasn't come that far yet. At the moment the sponsoring organization is only preparing the park. The communities will lose their say afterwards, after

they have concluded the contract with the association concerning the park's operation for the next 10 years.

And in the contracts of the hitherto existing natural parks we read that the communities denounce decisions concerning the spatial planning and do what the association tells them to. Basically, all of what democracy means is eliminated, the communities will not have a say in anything any longer.

Moreover, in connection with the founding of the funding association a week ago there was also a legal problem. The communities were not allowed to join the funding association, because the municipal assembly and the electorate have not yet approved of it. Therefore the opponents want to become active later this year.

I see a legal problem, when it comes to the budget of the communities and that (the financial contribution to the park) would be hidden somewhere in one blanket amount – if it were not disclosed. In my opinion, it really has to be disclosed, so that everyone who attends the municipal assembly or municipal council knows exactly how much the park contribution will finally cost.

Then the voters at the municipal assembly can also request to cancel the contribution to the association from the budget and also to withdraw from the funding association for the Nature Park. The opponents want to achieve this goal later this year.

(Translation Current Concerns)

What matters in raising children

Dealing with the children's needs

by Dr Anita Schächter

Which parental concern is greater than the concern for the child to find his way in life?

Parents find fulfilment in watching their child making friends, enjoying school, being able to empathize with others, being helpful, and being able to handle both his feelings and defeat. Briefly – to be emotionally competent.

How can I introduce my child into life so that he fulfils his tasks in life?

Therefore the child must develop a feeling for being meaningful as a fellow human being. He must also learn to empathize with his counterpart. Finally, parents would do well to keep an eye on the big line.

Social nature

Seeing the child means recognizing him or her in his social nature, to realize that he is capable of a feeling of empathy. That his personality will grow, if he experiences a sense of importance for other people.

If cooperation and helpfulness of the child develops from the feeling for his own value, then they are embodied in the child's mind. The child has a feeling for his own importance and knows: "My contribution is important. I am wanted."

"It depends on me!" – Becoming a fellow human being

An example: The 5-year-old, who was asked by his mother to help her in cutting the carrots, is happy to give his mother a hand. He wants to see that his contribution is important for the successful outcome. The genuine appreciation of the mother – not an exuberant one – provides the child with the feeling of being perceived in his actions and being appreciated.

The desire to help is tied to the social nature of human beings. Human beings are related to others due to their senses and the ability to acquire language. Human beings are not capable of surviving alone in their first years of life. Human beings could not survive without the care and selfless help of others. The ability to love is inherent in human nature. It unfolds through the experience of empathy, which is not subject to any conditions.

Selfless pleasure in shared actions unfolds where human beings experience mutual care and concern. Anyone who does something for a fellow human being and experiences a gesture of gratitude knows that it was good to help. He proceeds with his day knowing that "it was right to do

so". Man feels this certainty in small or large inter-personal processes.

Learn to see with your heart – the development of empathy

The second component, which is of importance for developing humanity or a sense of responsibility, is the ability to reflect on another human beings' feelings, to see him as he is and to realize what he needs: What are the needs of my playmate, my mother, my father, my brother and sister, what do the sick, the needy require? Again, discussions with the child are necessary, but also among ourselves, to enable us to understand the situation and the motives of others. Again and again, it is about seeing with the others' eyes, listening with the others' ears and feeling with the other's heart. *Alfred Adler*, the founder of the Individual Psychology, thus expresses it vividly and comprehensibly. It is what he described as empathy, a sense of community. The training of empathy must even be kept alive in adults, so that this ability does not become stunted. On the contrary, it is to take a more mature form in the course of life. Young people gladly turn for advice or assistance to mature personalities with a lot of experience in life.

Love is not enough – How to help

Experiencing love – how fundamental and valuable it may be – is not enough to develop empathy. It needs active guidance to develop empathy and understanding: The point is to identify the child's approaches and to admit them, so that humanity, charity and helpfulness can base on solid ground.

All this increases when parents involve their children in the household work, gardening, cleaning, and tidying up. It is crucial that parents allow the child to make the experience that his contribution is helpful. The child needs no great praise, but a genuine sense of joy or gratitude for its help given. "So good that you have already set the table. Now we can sit down and eat at once." The adult has to recognize the positive nucleus, the right approach. The child is mirrored the importance of help by the adult's inner sympathy. This gives the child the opportunity to see himself as a helpful person and to integrate this capability into his self-concept and strengthen it. Later in life, the child will contribute with this impulse to take part, to endorse, to be responsible.

Transferring responsibility

Parents must also transfer responsibility onto the child, and ask him or her

to behave in such a way that he or she does something good for someone else ("Ask daddy whether he'd like a cup of coffee.")

Diana Baumrind found out that children, who had to take over tasks and duties in the household were friendlier and more sociable than children who did not have to take over any duties. The same was true for children who were responsible for a pet. The more a child contributes help within the family (especially shown by cross-cultural comparative studies), the more caring he developed. Children who had to guard the cattle or to provide for siblings developed more compassion than children who had no chance of growing up having some responsibility. This was the case when the only duty of children was to tidy up their room. Cleaning up his room cannot awaken the feeling of contributing to the welfare of the family. And this is exactly what counts so that the feeling of importance and responsibility can increase.

Dealing with the needs of children

In the current generation of parents we realize a "downturn", a pattern that is detrimental to the interests of the child: Parents place the needs of the child too much in the center of their effort and make it their duty to maneuver the child's mood in the positive range, to seek agreement and to mirror the child's mental state.

It is noticeable that parents are very attentive to the needs, the sensitivities of their children. They declare upon request that it is important for the development and welfare of the children to go into this. It sounds like a firm knowledge that this is a proper educational guidance. With this motif, the parents get caught in a whirl that makes any orientation on supporting educational actions impossible.

Responding to the child does not mean to meet his needs; it does not mean to serve his current emotional state. Who in our society does create and satisfy needs? Children's needs have long since been controlled by advertizing and consumer pressure via their peer groups.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, professor of political science, is considered to be the mastermind among US American global strategists. He propagates the so-called "American way of life" to be the export product for all mankind: A lifestyle, which has been associated with freedom and prosperity in people's minds. In reality, however, this "way of life" serves the

"What matters in raising children"

continued from page 21

interests of less than 5% of humanity, the richest of the rich, who live at the expense of the majority of the population, exploiting these and keeping them in ignorance. In his book entitled "The Grand Chessboard", Brzezinski outlines a global and one-sided dominance of the United States trying to push through the implementation of American interests in the central Asian region. In his book "Between two ages" he explains how the US American way of life is to be implanted in the minds and hearts of the people: among other things, by drawing on *Kurt Lewin* he argues in favor of the satisfaction of needs, the orientation to needs in education.

Today's parental generation has become one with the idea that parents have to take their children's needs seriously. They have no disagreement on the validity of this guideline. And so they act from a sense of rightness about the fulfillment of desires, but also in terms of responsiveness to children's emotions. In this way we will have no younger generation that is able to empathize with their fellow citizen, i.e. who will not be capable of democracy.

One mother tells that she does not know how she could help her daughter to get rid of her fear. In the course of six months the fear of the six-year-old has expanded so much that she cannot be persuaded to leave the house when the sky is cloudy. The mother ascribes *Jara's* fear to an experience when on a summer trip all of a sudden a thunderstorm was approaching and all had finally found shelter in a car parked in a parking lot. She assumes that this had thrown *Jara* out of balance so deeply that if she now saw a cloud in the sky she would be flooded by anxiety so heavily that she refused to leave the house. She wants her daughter not to be exposed to a supposedly incorrect response. And so she is responsive to all emotions, feelings and needs of *Jara*. The mother is surprised by the idea of having given a false signal to *Jara* by showing her understanding which, however, has just led to increased fears. This idea is very important: parents need to provide the relationship to their child with a certain emphasis and orientation. In dealing with feelings, it is the certainty that a fear has got a starting point as well as an end; we are the ones who learn

to deal with our emotions and to control them. It requires the parents' quasi-ostmotic certainty that life goes on and that they turn to other tasks together with their child.

Where does this mother's idea that feelings and needs of the child must always be given priority originate?

"If a child pays first and foremost attention to his own needs, he or she will easily become the plaything of other forces like the media and the entertainment industry. On the contrary, children need a large portion of critical consciousness in order to be in harmony with themselves and their lives and not be remotely controlled by directed interests but live in a responsible relationship to their neighbors and humankind."

Satisfying the child's needs means to strengthen the guideline in children which seeks for enforcement without consideration. If a child pays first and foremost attention to his own needs, he or she will easily become the plaything of other forces like the media and the entertainment industry. On the contrary, children need a large portion of critical consciousness in order to be in harmony with themselves and their lives and not be remotely controlled by directed interests but live in a responsible relationship to their neighbors and humankind.

In 1995, on the occasion of an invitation to Fairmont, Brzezinski, addressing 500 leading politicians, business leaders and scientists, representatives of media groups from all continents, is said to have paved the way into the next century. Two concepts were discussed here: the "20:80-society" and "tittytainment". The prognosis is that in future only 20 percent of the population will be required in the working process. The remaining 80 percent of the world's population – then unemployed – would be kept in a good mood by a modern form of bread and games. "Tittytainment" means numbing entertainment for the frustrated 80% of the world population, to pacify the people excluded from wealth and labor.

Leaving our children to the media will have the effect that they should be pre-

pared for the passive acquiescence of political grievances.

Parents are in need of their own stance on issues concerning the entire society so that they can protect their children and enable them to enter into a self-reliant life. Otherwise, our youth will run the risk of getting roped into fantasy literature, violent movies, computer games, in the world of sex as a form of egocentric satisfaction of needs and accept them all as their purpose in life. The young generation's disappearing into parallel worlds will be preprogrammed. It is vital to pursue a different path in dealing with children. As soon as a child has become the plaything of his or her own needs, he will become controllable. If children learn to handle their emotions, they will make their way into an independent life. Learning to weight his feelings, the child feels independent and satisfied. The child begins to set goals and pursue them and will thus become the designer of his own life. •

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

Editor: Erika Vögeli

Address: Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 350 65 50

Fax: +41 (0)44 350 65 51

E-Mail: CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch

Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-
for all other countries.

Account: Postcheck-Konto: PC 87-644472-4

The editors reserve the right to shorten letters to the editor. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *Current Concerns*.

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Françoise D. Alsaker: Courageously against bullying in kindergarten and school

eg. Bullying is a problem that seriously affects the welfare of many people nowadays and corrodes the fundamentals of a dignified living together in a democratic society. It gives reason for thought that bullying processes already among preschoolers and school children – often undetected for a long time – are constraining our living together and the spiritual maturation of all individuals involved.

Such a development takes its toll on democratic coexistence and abets non anti-community behavior also in adulthood. *Zeit-Fragen* has already dealt with this issue several times. Among other things, an interview appeared with the Berne psychology professor *Françoise D. Alsaker* (*Zeit-Fragen* of 17 January 2012). She is one of the pioneers of bullying research. Recently she issued a new publication on this current topic. With her new book, the author makes an important contribution how this development can be stopped. In it she includes her already long-standing and successful scientific work, which has contributed fundamental milestones to the solution of the problem. In the book, research and practice meet with each other, as the author points out in the introduc-

tion. With her transnational work she has succeeded in assembling the knowledge about bullying from Swiss and international research projects into a unity as well as the resulting possibilities for action against bullying in kindergartens and schools. Whoever takes up her new book, doesn't put it away so soon. The author addresses the reader in an equivalent dialogue and with her knowledge and her long during experience she places the tools at his disposal how to help to prevent bullying or how to face already existing bullying. This gives hope and awakens the sense of responsibility.

The first part of the book is titled "What we need to know about bullying." The author takes the reader along into the field of scientific research, carefully and well comprehensibly explaining the scientific essentials. In the first chapters the reader can acquire substantiated basic knowledge, and he may develop the sensitivity to perceive typical characteristics and manifestations of bullying, and he learns which factors contribute to the emergence and particularly to the maintenance of bullying. Learning to look is the first step to prevent bullying efficiently and if neces-

sary to be able to intervene against bullying.

The further chapters deal with the various actors in processes of bullying, and it becomes clear how bullying can arise and how it is maintained. Thereby the author is about to illustrate the reader what is important for the early recognition of bullying and for the action against it. Finally, she points out that bullying is always concerning all who are involved, whether the victims, the bullies and also the other children. Again and again the main points are worked out and in summary called to the reader's mind. The author wants, as she writes herself, to show the reader how bullying processes can effectively be burst by early diagnosis and targeted action.

The second part of the book is about the current scientific knowledge on prevention of and intervention against bullying. The author, together with her team, has developed and carefully tested the *Bernese prevention program against bullying (Be-Prox)*. This program is presented in detail and is a direct instruction for the prac-

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Important basis for democracy: distinguishing between bullying and conflicts

The clear imbalance between bully and victim is a central feature of bullying.

It is also one of the criteria that distinguish bullying from conflicts. In conflicts the acting persons are nearly equally strong and at least equal of right. Children tease each other, fight each other – sometimes a lot – and it may also take physical dimensions.

If children are almost equally strong, we speak of conflicts. Conflicts are part of everyday- life and part of social and emotional development.

Children learn to handle conflicts, resolve them, to enforce or to yield. They also realize how far they can go, and they learn to defend themselves. Bullying does not offer any such possibility. The victim of a bullying-attack has no chance against the other ones. He or she usually merely learns to submit.

When children are having a conflict, they compete "for something". They either compete for the same or want to get the same thing or they argue with each other, because they don't agree about what to play, where to go, which game-rules have to be observed etc.

Conflicts usually have a specific content. The same applies to adults. In the

case of bullying there is no conflict-subject. During bullying the bullies demonstrate their need for power by attacking and hurting. In conflicts, both parties contribute to a conflict even if one side started it. Conflicts are rarely associated with aggression (Shantz, 1987). Conflict situations, however, can also degenerate, for example, if no part is willing to compromise, if personal boundaries are not respected, if misunderstandings arise. This can occur especially then, when the parties perceive the situation in a distorted manner. Too frequent conflicts as well as conflicts that often degenerate into conflicts that are characterized by imbalance, because always the same party yields, are not conducive to development. And such conflicts can also become the basis for a bullying situation, if the conditions are set.

There are children and adults who easily get involved in conflict situations, and there are those who can avoid conflicts. Both behaviors can be misused in a bullying situation to the detriment of the victim. Some can be provoked easily and any provocation can trigger a severe conflict.

For outsiders the situation is difficult to discern when bullies first provoke their victim and then cover up their at-

tacks as «normal defense». The extreme avoidance of conflicts in turn causes children to withdraw

quickly. Thus they are perceived as easy targets, who prefer to yield quickly rather than fighting back.

It is very important that you don't call bullying a conflict. In a conflict both parties should contribute to resolving the conflict in order to learn something constructive. In bullying situations you must ensure that bullies and their assistants must change their behavior. Bullying is often covered up as a conflict by the bullies.

It would be of great injustice for the victim, if you would make him or her responsible for the bullying situation or even ask for his readiness to compromise and resilience.

- Bullying is not a conflict.
- Bullying is marked by imbalance and a demonstration of power.
- Conflicts have specific contents – in contrast, the target of bullying is the violation of the victim.
- Conflicts are part of development – bullying impedes development.

Françoise D. Alsaker, Mutig gegen Mobbing in Kinderarten und Schule (Bravely against bullying in kindergarten and school), Bern, 2012, pp. 20/21 (Translation Current Concerns)

Germany was the land of poets and philosophers

Germany was the land of poets and philosophers, and in the modern world, based on the division of labor, our economy can only exist if it asserts itself in the future as a technological and scientific pioneer. This requires motivated and well-trained people. However in Germany those are running out.

For generations an intelligence quotient (IQ) of 100 was considered average in this country. Who wanted to graduate from high school was supposed to have an IQ of at least 115, and for higher education this value was expected to be at 120 on average. Half a century ago not only a high school graduate, but also an intermediate secondary school student, and even most general secondary school students, were expected to be able to read, write and calculate reasonably well.

But that is long past. Meanwhile, virtually all federal states (including Bavaria!) have lowered their graduation requirements, so that – politically correct – the highest possible proportion of an academic year acquires the general university entrance qualification (“Abitur”), today. The universities are now struggling with students, some of whom are barely able to put three or four sentences on paper or to solve relatively simple computing tasks without tools!

The situation is similarly disastrous for the so-called vocational professions. Recently e.g. the *Deutsche Handwerkszeitung* (German trade newspaper) complained that

a quarter of all students leave public schools, without having obtained sufficient skills for vocational training. Large companies, which can afford it, screen the candidates for their training with the result that such the Energy Group Vattenfall, for example, put only 5 out of 150 candidates on the shortlist, on average. Smaller companies and tradesmen can not afford this screening with the result that more and more of them are forced to do without taking on an apprentice. “And if you are lucky with a good trainee, usually he will leave shortly after the end of the training to address further training units. And you can forget about the others”, recently a down-to-earth master electrician summarized the rampant problems of succession not only in his own industrial sector.

Meanwhile, according to the federal government, there live about 7.5 million people in Germany who are not capable of reading and writing anything but their names and who are referred to as “functional illiterates” in scientific circles. Nevertheless, 48% of them have a general secondary school diploma and even 19% an intermediate secondary school/middle school diploma! These amazing “educational successes” may arise from a need for “political correctness” because, according to figures that are also official, 3.1 million of these functional illiterates are people with “migration background”.

At the same time the facilities for gifted children are struggling to fill their class-

es. Here too, one manages by reducing the minimum requirements. Until a few years ago someone, who achieved an IQ of at least 129, was defined as highly gifted. Meanwhile that limit has been tacitly reduced to 124 in most tests. Therefore, someone can be considered as gifted today who, fifty years ago, was regarded as being able to study fairly successfully (but not more!).

Of course, they are still there: intelligent, mentally flexible and highly motivated young people who are going their path also in their profession. But – and this is the tragedy – these are often the very people who talk openly about the idea that they might leave their country for good. “The more successfully young graduates are completing their studies, the stronger they are planning to leave the Federal Republic,” a study found out. We can already observe the possible consequences by taking the example of Argentina. There, after the national bankruptcy in 2002, up to 40% of graduates left the country. They were missing during the subsequent “reconstruction” and Argentina has not recovered from this great loss to this day.

Even in the land of poets and thinkers, “thinking” threatens to become a rare “phenomenon”. The consequences will be dramatic!

Source: *Vertrauliche Mitteilungen* (Confidential communications), No 3972 from 27.3.2012 (Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Françoise D. Alsaker: ...”

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tical implementation. The individual steps are differentially explained and enriched by examples from practice. By stimulating questions, tasks and food for thought at the end of each chapter the reader, as an active and equal partner, is encouraged to consider how he might take action. He is now able to continue to work on his own and to get down to work in his field of action. Concrete examples of teaching practice are interposed and encourage the reader to think about his own experiences with children and young people in families, schools and recreational organizations.

At the end of the book there is an extensive appendix. Here the reader will find various questionnaires, by which children and adolescents at all ages can be addressed and thus in a first but important step the silence of unfortunate, burdensome processes can be broken.

The author succeeds in an impressive way, to strengthen the capacity of acting by teachers and to show, how she says, that “dealing with bullying is not magic art, but that it may take a little portion of courage to rethink, for example, your own ideas, to change patterns of action and to talk to each other about unpleasant subjects.” (p. 12)

We can hope that this book and the previous works of the author as well as the teaching materials developed by the Alsaker Prevention Group against bullying become obligatory reading in teacher training colleges. They give direction to all future teachers and professionals in other professional groups. But also among people in political institutions and authorities at all levels the book must find attentive readers.

Then unworthy interpersonal processes could be stopped by joint and decisive action and the problem of violence could

be withered on the vine from bottom up. Young people are able to do other things then spend their free time on brainless hanging about, and these resources can and must be awakened. Then citizens will grow up who are able to live democracy and to give it the necessary human foundation. The book and the research of Françoise D. Alsaker is an important contribution to that end.

Françoise D. Alsaker. *Mutig gegen Mobbing in Kindergarten und Schule* (Courageously against bullying in kindergarten and school). Verlag Hans Huber, Hogrefe AG, Berne. ISBN 978-3-456-84913-3

A new edition of the media package *Mobbing ist kein Kinderspiel* (Bullying is not child's play) opposite to the book by Françoise Alsaker is planned by the educational publisher and will again be available in a short time.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)