

Current Concerns

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The sovereign state is indispensable – especially in a globalised economy

by *Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich*

“The freedom of citizens and their prosperity are increasing at an above-average rate with decentralisation and with small states. This is as historically proven and experienced a fact as competition from a wide variety of national solutions has brought progress. The union of ‘ever closer union’ in Europe as a supposed expression of the old spin [EU as a peace project] is an abuse. It also eliminates competition between solutions, that is progress.” (*Beat Kappeler*)

Some contemporaries find the term “nation state” difficult to use: Adherence to one’s own state in a “globalised”, unbounded world is nowadays sometimes associated with narrow-mindedness, isolation towards the outside world and even rejection of other nations and cultures. However, such a negative definition of the term does no justice whatsoever to the real meaning of the nation state. We can also call it a “sovereign state”, by the way, then the aversion of certain circles becomes clearer. A small state like Switzerland, for example, whose population holds on to sovereignty, the greatest possible independence in foreign policy and the optimal freedom of its citizens with strong

direct-democratic instruments makes it difficult for major powers like the USA and the EU to impose their power policies or the interest policies of their corporations. It becomes embarrassing when Swiss politicians, law professors, diplomats and think tanks declare the sovereignty of their own country obsolete in a “globalised world”, i.e. want to cut off the branch on which they also sit comfortably.

It is therefore all the more pleasing to hear other voices that attach particular importance to the sovereign nation state, especially in this day and age, as the Swiss social scientist and publicist *Beat Kappeler*

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A bond with your own country

mw. The sovereign state – especially in direct democracy – lives through the active participation of us citizens. It is up to us adults, parents and teachers to guide our youth to this responsible and beautiful task.

In this way, an inner bond to the pillars of sovereign Switzerland can develop and grow: direct democracy, federalism, permanent armed neutrality, the freedom and independence of Switzerland as a whole and its citizens. On this foundation, we can also pass on to our young people the openness to the world which has always been true to the Swiss simply because of their location in the middle of Europe: the willingness to live in peace and cultural and economic exchange with our neighbours and with

all people and peoples of the world, the obligation of neutral Switzerland to contribute and provide help in a world full of need. This does not include the participation of the Swiss army in NATO manoeuvres and EU military missions, which must be ended as soon as possible! This would release further funds for the worldwide work of the ICRC, for calling for compliance with the *Geneva Conventions*, for development aid such as that provided by the SDC: on the ground together with the people. Of course, this also includes granting the right of asylum to people who are under political persecution. And last but not least, a consistent policy of neutrality would make Switzerland once again more credible for its offer of good services.

Editorial

Freedom constitutes the dignity of man. And conversely, freedom is only dignified, if it is granted to the other one, too – to all people.

That this has only happened here and there in history to this day does not change the fact that this yearning has moved people at all times and in all cultures. The story of Wilhelm Tell, whatever people may think of it in detail, is essentially nothing but an expression of this originally human sentiment: man does not want to be oppressed, not be enslaved, but also not be patronised, not be directed, not be controlled, manipulated, and not be taken for a fool. Therefore, like many other legends of freedom of other nations, it has been carried on for centuries. It is nothing else that has appealed to people about Friedrich Schiller’s play for many decades. The simple core of the historical events and history, which the not-for-nothing so-called poet of freedom expresses in his play with the consciousness of the historian and with the talents of a great poet, is that a few “simple” people would not allow to be deprived of their dignity and took responsibility for it. And they fought for their freedom. This fact cannot be changed, not at all, by the epic debates about whether certain events took place sooner or later and possibly at another location, whether there existed a man named Tell and whether the apple shot was added later from other legends.

People wanted and want to be free. It’s all about this. It is a great good fortune that in the 13th and 14th century the people of the original Switzerland managed to gain this freedom as far as possible and to maintain it.

Time and again, and also after the horrors of two world wars, humanity has paused, has reflected on what the human being actually is. Has reflected, on what basis everything we do or don’t do, our living together on this planet must actually emanate from: namely that “the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the

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er and Harvard professor of economics *Dani Rodrik* said in the *Schweizer Monat* of March 2018, whose results are very similar from very different points of view.

"Freedom and progress depend on the order of the nation state"

Beat Kappeler defines the state as "a population bound by rules through history and will, on confined territory"¹. This corresponds to the three classical elements of state people, state territory and state authority as prerequisites of the state: a population that lives on a territory with fixed borders and is – in the case of Switzerland at least – "by history and will" (or a "social contract", as *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* called it) subject to a state authority whose supreme control in the democratic state is exercised by the people themselves, the sovereign.

Kappeler explains the necessity of the nation state as follows: "The nation state is the guarantor of fundamental rights, enforcement before courts, legislation and pensions, the organisation of the territory, social policy, education, infrastructures and their supply and disposal."

The most urgent task of the state is therefore to protect the legal and social security of its population – and not the interests of foreign powers and corporations. The sovereign constitutional state then decides for itself which treaties it wants to conclude with other states: "It (the nation State) does what no supranational organisation can do. Supranational regulations are only necessary if one sovereign state acts on other nations."

Why the small state of Switzerland is superior to a large entity like the EU

"The freedom of citizens and their prosperity are increasing at an above-average rate with decentralisation and with small states. This is as historically proven and experienced a fact as competition from a wide variety of national solutions has brought progress. The union of 'ever closer union' in Europe as a supposed expres-

sion of the old spin [EU as a peace project] is an abuse. It also eliminates competition between solutions, that is, progress." According to Kappeler, a prosperous coexistence also includes the "solidarity" of the citizens, which should not mean "all-round welfare state care", but that "everyone has to contribute according to his or her strengths, and not that some only receive, others only pay".

The principle of solidarity understood in this way also functions far more fairly and controlled in the small-scale community, especially in the communes, than when distributing with the large trowel of billion-euro funds in Brussels. But in Switzerland too, for example, entitlement to social benefits such as invalidity pensions or unemployment benefits must be increasingly strictly controlled in order to prevent abuses at the expense of taxpayers and insurance premium payers as far as possible. This is hardly possible in a large centralist state or a bureaucratic colossus like the EU.

The economic, social and political progress is closely linked with the nation state

The clear statement by Dani Rodrik in the same issue of *Schweizer Monat*² is particularly gratifying - not a matter of course for an economics professor at Harvard University and the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is convinced that the nation state is indispensable in a global capitalist economic world. It is true that "within the intelligentsia [...] the majority dismissed it as unsuitable – morally irrelevant, even reactionary – to meet the challenges of a globalised world". This is a fatal mistake for Dani Rodrik: "A well-founded defence of the nation state would begin with the assumption that markets need rules. Everything that goes beyond a simple exchange between neighbours needs investment in transport, communication and logistics, needs enforcement of contracts, provision of information and precautions against fraud, a stable and reliable means of ex-

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conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people." As stated in the preamble of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948*.

That the willingness to achieve freedom of the inhabitants of the Waldstätte in the 13th century resulted in a covenant that was upheld through all turmoils and temptations, conflicts and threats for several centuries, and that finally the Swiss federal state emerged, that this federal state, committed to its liberal origin, is federally structured and that today with direct democracy we have a measure of civil liberty and creative possibilities which many envy us – all this is not our merit. It is our happiness – and at the same time our task. Because freedom is not preserved by itself. It has to be lived in the view of today's problems.

Already in 1230, the citizens of Uri had obtained their letter of freedom by the emperor. With deliberate diplomacy, but above all with determination and the will rather to tighten the belt, even much closer than to give up freedom. They literally had to stint themselves for the amount of the compensation for the pledge of their country – once ten times of the levies, that is what we would call taxes today. But they realised that their self-imposed sacrifice would eventually pay off because they wanted to avert oppression and exploitation in the future.

Do we not face similar questions? We live in prosperity, at least many in this country – and especially compared to other world regions. For example, how do we want to regulate our power supply? Further liberalisation and eventually perhaps complete dependence on deliveries from abroad? Our agriculture? Free trade, import of "biological" products from the other side of the globe or self-determination about what we get on our plates? And our education system? Should our children become consumption-dependent, functional cogs in the power unit of the globalised economy, or do we want to educate them to self-determined personalities and citizens with an awareness of connections and historical experiences? Our healthcare? What does it suffer from really? There are many more questions that arise. To have the freedom of having a say in all these questions, having influence on and contributing to their solutions – this is a great achievement. On the 1st of August we could reflect on this.

Erika Vögeli

"A lack of appreciation of the nation state leads to a dead end. We scale markets beyond a size that can still be controlled; we establish global rules that mock the real diversity of needs and preferences; we weaken the nation states without taking their place. The deeper cause of the neglected injustices of globalisation and the health problems of our democracies lies in the misunderstanding that nation states are the foundation of the capitalist order". (*Dani Rodrik*)

"The sovereign state is ..."

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change, arrangements for a social distribution of income and much more". According to Rodrik, markets also need institutions that "fulfil critical functions with regard to regulation, redistribution, monetary and fiscal stability and conflict resolution. So far, these tasks have mainly been carried out by nation states". If these requirements are not met or cannot

Equal sovereign states as a basis for a peaceful world

mw. The greatest, indeed vital task of the sovereign states for humankind is their contribution to peace in the world. Every state is obligated by the UN Charter to maintain its order against the outside world, to defend itself against infringements by other states, to refrain from attacks against them, and not to interfere in their internal affairs without being asked.

The mission of the UN is to initiate and accompany all necessary and possible steps to maintain peace. To this end, however, the treaty of all sovereign states as equal members of the world community, as laid down in the Charter, would be indispensable. Today, the fundamental mistake in the United Nations system stands in the way: the special status of the five veto states.

The Great Powers China, France, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States can use this instrument on the one hand to approve wars of aggression contrary to international law and, on the other, to prevent the condemnation of affiliated aggressor states because the UN system does not impose any obligation on them to abstain from the vote.

Only a fundamental revision of the UN system can remedy this scandalous unequal treatment of states. To promote peace and thus for the benefit of all peoples, a more just world order must be considered and discussed everywhere.

be enforced by the individual sovereign states, we know that this can have terrible consequences for the population, and local companies cannot survive because it is not possible to operate without a minimum degree of legal certainty.

"Where nation states fail, economic collapses and civil wars are the result"

If we continue to spin Rodrik's idea, it means the other way round: great powers that deliberately cover well-functioning states with wars and chaos do not aim at prospering international trade from one to the same, but pursue other interests (arms and drug trafficking, access to sought-after resources, land grabbing, etc.). On the territory of states whose governments, parliaments and courts are weakened by paramilitary gangs and warlords and cannot enforce their rights, there is much room for foreign powers and corporations to use themselves in contravention of national and international law and in violation of the most basic human rights. By contrast, economic companies that want to trade honestly from country to country and from continent to continent depend on strong constitutional states.

Advantages of discordant world community

Professor Dani Rodrik points out that the individual nation states have different approaches not only to the regulation of financial markets and trade, but also to the creation of important social compromises: "The world does not agree on how to balance equality and opportunities, public health and environmental risks against technological innovation, stability against dynamism, profits against social and cultural values. A divided world community "enables experiments and competition between different institutional concepts as well as mutual learning". Here the reader involuntarily thinks of the fundamental differences between Switzerland, a small, direct-dem-

ocratic, federalist state, and the centrally regulated and authoritarian EU. In the competition of institutional concepts, Switzerland scores better in practically every area, for example in terms of national debt or unemployment rates and especially in terms of the population's satisfaction due to its strong co-decision rights.

Lack of appreciation of the nation state leads to a dead end

Finally, Rodrik criticises the circles that dismiss criticism of international trade agreements by saying that critics are not open-minded enough to enter into an open discussion: "To hide behind cosmopolitanism is only a weak substitute for winning political debates at the factual level. His conclusion: "A lack of appreciation of the nation state leads to a dead end. We scale markets beyond a size that can still be controlled; we establish global rules that mock the real diversity of needs and preferences; we weaken the nation states without taking their place. The deeper cause of the neglected injustices of globalisation and the health problems of our democracies lies in the misunderstanding that nation states are the foundation of the capitalist order".

¹ Kappeler, Beat. Das Recht auf alles verdirbt das Recht. (The right to everything spoils the right). In: *Schweizer Monat* 1054 of March 2018; Beat Kappeler is lic. sc. pol. Hautes Etudes Internationales, studies at the University of Geneva and in West-Berlin, Dr h.c. of the University of Basel, long-time secretary of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions SGB, today freelance publicist and author.

² Rodrik, Dani. Der unterschätzte Nationalstaat. (The underestimated nation state). In: *Schweizer Monat* 1054 of March 2018. *Dani Rodrik* is an economics professor at Harvard University and a visiting professor at the London School of Economics and political science. He deals with questions of globalisation, political economy, economic growth and development. The topic discussed here has been published: *The Globalization Paradox. Democracy and the future of the world economy.* German Edition Munich 2011. ISBN 978 3 406 61351 7

Safeguarding and expanding rights – securing prosperity

rt. We hardly want to admit it, but we are living very well. No hunger plagues us, no war robs us of friends and relatives, no one destroys our homes and our land. We can have an unprecedented say at all political levels: in the Comune, in the canton and in the Confederation. We cannot only elect political representatives, but also have a direct say in all matters. This is unique in Europe and worldwide.

We are living well

Our prosperity is great: Most of us can go on holiday once a year, and we can “afford” something every now and then. An extensive social and health care system supports us in emergencies.

None of this has fallen into our laps, even if it seems to many. Especially for young people who have never got to know anything else, our life, as it is today, seems to be “normal” – just natural.

Hard-won rights and prosperity

But our rights and prosperity have been hard-won by our ancestors – even bloody in certain circumstances. A look across the borders of our country or into the history books shows how different it can be: A recent report from Donetsk, Baghdad or Sanaa or a historical eyewitness account of the famine of 1816 or the invasion of the French army in 1798 give an idea that peace, freedom, justice and prosperity were not and will not be granted freely.

It was no coincidence that our country survived the First and Second World Wars relatively unscathed. Brave people have been able to keep the country out of the wars in extremely difficult negotiations, others have tried to secure our food supply, and yet others have built up the necessary military protection. Previously, generations of diplomats and politicians had sought the neutral position of the country.

Claiming a share in decisions

The expansion of our diverse democratic rights in the 19th century was also a decade of struggle with a complacent authority that was reluctant to listen to the voices of their “subjects”. Often, the sight of pitchforks and threshing beaters had to give the necessary emphasis to the desire to have a share in decisions. Laws that govern the lives of all must also be determined by all.

“The fact that we can free ourselves again from a corset that is too tightly lashed has been demonstrated in ‘big’ politics for some time.”

Achievements “washed away”?

But how easily are these achievements washed away? How many regulations resulting from EU provisions or UN conventions – which none of us would have allowed to go through in a vote – are now beginning to regulate our lives?

Do not the international economic organisation OECD and the various UN conventions now determine the content and structure of our schools? And have not our schools been on an increasingly steep descent since *PISA*? SMEs have been complaining about unfit school leavers for some time. Developments in Sweden are warning us.

Regulations from the EU, NATO and UN are taken over undoubtedly

Our electricity supply is to be adapted to EU requirements and “liberalised”. It is no longer intended to serve the common good, but to generate dividends, although this has already been rejected several times. Who would take responsibility for a “black out” that has become more and more likely?

In recent months, one could not avoid to get the impression that some Federal Councillors would prefer to hand over our rights to Brussels if one only would let them?

Do you not get the impression that the link between our army and NATO via the NATO organisation PfP has become somewhat too tight and that the status of a neutral state must once again become clearer?

Many are now shaking their heads over our media landscape: an unhealthy press concentration with increasing political correctness. Any deviation is stigmatised. Even “controversial” debates seem selected, set up and predetermined. These are bad conditions for forming citizens’ opinions, however, this is indispensable for any democracy.

Arising tasks

The expansion and safeguarding of democratic rights at all levels as well as an intact public service and a credible nation-

al defence are only some of the tasks we face today. Schools must also be freed from their OECD-led bureaucratic control apparatus.

Contracts can be cancelled

And: If the “voluntary” adoption of EU, NATO or UN directives in our legislation via the bureaucratic route by countless regulations is not stopped in our country, a suspension could be a first step to get some air. A second could be renegotiation.

The fact that we can free ourselves again from a corset that is too tightly lashed has been demonstrated in “big” politics for some time. •

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US domestic policy sabotages détente with Russia

by Hannes Hofbauer*



Hannes Hofbauer
(picture ma)

Weakling, liar, traitor. The US press quoted a plethora of figures from the Washington establishment whose reaction to the meeting of the Presidents *Donald Trump* and *Vladimir Putin* in Helsinki was excessively filled with hatred. Once again Vietnam veteran *John McCain* took the bun. For him, the joint press conference of the two personalities was “one of the most shameful performances of an American president in living memory”. McCain continued, that “never before had a US president humiliated himself before a tyrant in this way”.

Here a traitor, there a tyrant – this is how one of the most eloquent warmongers characterises those two men who have their index fingers poised over the nuclear buttons.

Even in the Helsinki run-up, extensive reports on the danger that Trump might not be able to withstand Putin were spread right up to the opinion-forming media on the other side of the Atlantic, i.e. in our latitudes. Would he perhaps act on his announcement and end the illegal US adventure in Syria; or worse, would he face reality and give his blessing to the incorporation of the Crimea into the Russian Federation?

We do not know what the two presidents discussed in over two hours. It is to be hoped that was about suchlike important questions concerning world peace.

Politics and media in the Western world were bothered by other things. They focused exclusively on a side show, on US domestic policy. There it has for the past 20 months all been about whether or how Russian authorities have influenced the US presidential election campaign of 2016.

The Trump-Putin meeting provided a welcome opportunity to rekindle the already lax interest in this show. So, from *CNN* and the “New York Times” down



The Helsinki summit – A step towards mutual understanding (picture keystone)

everybody leapt at the topic run by Special Investigator *Robert Mueller*.

Three days before the Helsinki Summit, Mueller had charged twelve Russian citizens with interference in the presidential election campaign, thus trying to force Trump’s hand.

The fact that those accused of spying cannot be arrested in the US makes the process risk-free for Mueller. Without arrests, no statements, without statements, no scrutinising of the quite substanceless allegations.

After Trump had said in Helsinki, in front of the assembled world press, that Putin’s disclaimer concerning Russian interference had been “strong and powerful,” and had added in a manner typical of him that he trusted both sides – the US intelligence agencies and Putin – the Establishment ran amuck and called him weakling, liar, traitor.

The perfidy of media reactions to Trump’s behaviour in Helsinki are a hard act to follow. The US president was elected according to the rules, but is accused by his own elites in his own country of winning the presidential campaign against *Hillary Clinton* almost two years ago only with Russian help. Now this US president met with the Russian president, who had been elected according to the rules of his own country. Trump’s “own” ranks accuse him of adhering to his election having been legitimate.

What else should he have done? Should he have joined the chorus of those who interpret Clinton’s electoral defeat not as her weakness but as Russian manipulation? In this way, Trump would have

1. disavowed his electoral victory and delegitimised himself as president of the US;
2. conceded that the Kremlin had so much influence in the world that it could at will pull political strings beyond the borders of Russia, and even in the strongest military power in the world, the US; and
3. made out that the US electorate was stupid because it would have voted according to Russian standards and not at its own discretion.

The truth is that in the eyes of the representatives of the US Deep State, which is showing its ugly face ever more visibly, a mistake happened at the elections of 8 November 2016. The wrong candidate won.

Although it had just been possible to checkmate the popular *Bernie Sanders* in favour of *Hillary Clinton*, the establishment failed in preventing Trump’s success. Now, in their opinion, a clueless real estate shark reigns in the White House, who is not a died-in-the-wool representative of the military-industrial complex and does not know the customs in Washington. And what makes matters worse, even after two years in office, he accepts these customs only with difficulties – and usually only in the follow-up.

So it was again this time. Back in the US, Trump backpedalled in his own way. When Putin said it was not Russia (interfering in the US election campaign), he (Trump) had made a slip of the tongue in

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Words from Helsinki that the world has been waiting for

by Willy Wimmer



Willy Wimmer
(picture uk)

Sometimes it is quite in order to come straight to the point. Such an occasion was provided in the press conference given by the two Presidents *Vladimir Putin* and *Donald Trump* after hours of talks on 16 July. It was simply the mention of the “security of Israel.” Perhaps in the foreseeable future, the world will find that something that has brought the world to the brink of an abyss can be seen in connection with both personalities. In their statements, both presidents emphasised the sit-

uation in the Near and Middle East and the resulting dangers for the entire globe. However, it was palpable that the world is given a special chance precisely in the persons of the Presidents Trump and Putin.

It was striking in the weeks and months before this memorable event taking place in Helsinki, that it was not only two personalities from that Armageddon region, who had come and gone in Moscow: President *Abbas* of Palestine as well as Israeli Prime Minister *Benjamin Netanyahu* were almost constantly present there. High-ranking consultants from Tehran followed quite hot on their heels. With the Russian Federation stepping in on the side of the legitimate Syrian government – in full compliance with the rules of international law – in the externally initiated con-

flict in Syria, the Russian Federation and its President Mr Putin are, according to the circumstances in the Middle East, in a unique position with regard to an actual pacification of this region. Since the First World War, the fate of almost the entire world has been determined by this region and its challenges.

With regard to this question, the Russian President Putin has found an almost congenial partner in his American counterpart. Everything that has ever been heard or read on the question of how there came to be a candidate Trump and then even a President Trump in the US was and is linked to this question. President Trump has made that clear, right

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his answer. “I see no reason why it should not have been Russia,” Trump tweeted 24 hours after saying the opposite at the Helsinki press conference: “I see no reason why it should have been Russia.” The truth is extremely flexible, also – and even especially – in grand politics.

One final word on the obvious underlying cause of US domestic politics:

An experienced observer will permit himself to ask whether anyone in Washington really believes that Trump was elected by the Russian Kremlin rather than by the American voters.

The fact that foreign intelligence services operate abroad from their base corresponds to their job description. That is a fact which should have got about in the US especially, where senior security coordinator *James Clapper* admitted to a Senate hearing in early 2017 that according to his records, since World War II the US had intervened in foreign elections once a year on average.

Deskbound warriors greed for confrontation

“The two most powerful men in the world meet, talk privately about some of the most pressing issues of the present, agree on many points and may even herald a dew phase in the new Cold War. You would actually think that the comments are at least modestly positive. However, a review of the responses to the Helsinki summit of 16 July shows how naive the idea of constructive, perhaps even objective, journalists is today. The editorials on 17 July criticise the summit with a massive, almost unbelievable aggression. The deskbound warriors greed for confrontation and reject dialogue. The state of the media is just disgraceful. [...] Please try to get a neutral impression of what Presidents *Putin* and *Trump* discussed the day before at their summit meeting in Helsinki

via the large news portals. You will fail, just as I failed in my research on this article. Instead, you will come across comments with strong opinions, which at best differ gradually in their concentrated arrogance and ignorance. Anyone who has problems calling our large media ‘forced into line’ should probably first flee into internal emigration for a few days – because after reading the ‘summit reports’ this point of view can hardly be maintained [...]”

Source: *Jens Wernicke: Die “bizarre Putin-Trump Horrorshow” (The “bizarre Putin-Trump horror show”) – the Helsinki summit shows in what disgraceful state our media are in, www.nachdenkenseiten.de from 17 July 2018; Jens Wernicke regularly writes for www.nachdenkenseiten.de and is part of its editorial team.*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The agitation about others acting in the same way can only be explained against the background that the (supposed) Russian intervention had actually hit a tender spot of the ruling interests.

However, excited the Washington establishment, to which Trump still does not seem to be admitted, was in its response to alleged election manipulations, Putin stayed calm. Asked by the moderator of *Fox News* for his opinion about the charges against the twelve Russian spies, the Kremlin head responded:

“That doesn’t interest me at all. These are internal US political games. Don’t take the relationship between Russia and the US hostage for internal political quarrels. [...] It is not something American democracy can be proud of; using legal prosecution for political rivalry is unacceptable.”

A response of this kind would have become the political and media representatives of Washington well.

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(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Hysterical attacks on the very prospect of detente

The entire “liberal” media and political establishment of the Western world reveals its militarist, authoritarian soul today with the screaming and hysterical attacks on the very prospect of detente with Russia. Peace apparently is a terrible thing; a renewed arms race, with quite literally trillions of dollars pumped into the military industrial complex and hundreds of thousands dying in proxy wars, is apparently the “liberal” stance. [...] The war-hawks who were devastated by the loss of champion kill-

er *Hillary* now see the prospect of their very worst fear coming true. Their very worst fear is the outbreak of peace and international treaties of arms control. Hence the media and political establishment today has reached peaks of hysteria never before seen. Pursuing peace is “treason” and the faux left now stand starkly exposed.

Source: *www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2018/07/detente-bad-cold-war-good/; Craig Murray was British Ambassador to Uzbekistan from 2002 to 2004.*

The West's fury and bitterness about Russia's successes

Following on from the modest movement towards détente achieved at the Putin-Trump meeting, what next?

by Brian Cloughley*



Brian Cloughley
(picture ma)

US media outlets, followed by those of the UK and some other western countries, have gone berserk with fury, and the war-supporters in Washington have been shrill to the point of hysteria. Their paranoia concerning Russia,

never far from the surface, has burst through with a vengeance. Another predictable result has been escalation of the West's anti-Russia propaganda campaign which has been gathering momentum for years.

Remember the Sochi Winter Olympics? They took place in 2014 and as noted by the *International Olympic Committee* President *Thomas Bach*, “were a great success” because “the Russians provided seamless organisation. Sochi promised excellent sports venues, outstanding Olympic Villages and impeccable organisation. It delivered all that it promised. The athletes themselves praised every aspect. It is clear that Sochi provided many lasting legacies.”

* *Brian Cloughley*, is British and Australian armies' veteran. He was former deputy head of the UN military mission in Kashmir and Australian defense attaché in Pakistan.

“Unfortunately, the only legacy in the West is irritation that the Sochi Olympics were so well organised and successful. And there is resentment and even rage that such success was repeated when Russia hosted the 2018 football World Cup Competition so efficiently.”

Unfortunately, the only legacy in the West is irritation that the Sochi Olympics were so well organised and successful. And there is resentment and even rage that such success was repeated when Russia hosted the 2018 football World Cup Competition so efficiently.

Foolish media reports after successful sporting events

The West finds it infuriating that the competition went so well. I am no football fan, but I watched a bit of the *BBC*'s coverage following the final game, when a reporter interviewed English football fans and tried to guide them into saying something critical about Russia. But they were all extremely supportive of Russia and said they had enjoyed their stay and that everything had been perfect. How annoying.

Intriguingly, there is no *BBC* internet link to this particular piece of reporting, but I didn't dream it. Nor did I dream that *BBC* television ignored the closing cer-

emony, although the UK's “*Sun*” newspaper told the world that “those who did see the closing ceremony were left unimpressed as it was described as ‘boring’ by fans.” But of course. How could it possibly be anything else? It took place in Russia, after all.

The only piece of juicy nastiness that could be seized upon by the Western media before the World Cup Competition ended so successfully was a minor incident at the final match. This was blown up out of all proportion, with, for example, the *US CBS* television network reporting that “a posse of pitch invaders interrupted the match before quickly being accosted and dragged – not so nicely – off the pitch. The real question is, how in the world do this many people even get on the pitch?” (At a football match in London in March this year “hundreds of fans charged along the concourse” and the owners of one of

continued on page 8

“Words from Helsinki ...”

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down to his own family and by means of universally highly controversial decisions affecting the US presence in Israel.

It was surely no coincidence that the name *George Soros* was mentioned at this press conference, quasi as an antipode for rational state action by both powers. But this is describing not so much a coincidence as a challenge. It is possible that, in the event of their success, the world will owe the two presidents more than an invitation to Oslo.

An emergence of businesslikeness in the relations between the two states made itself felt, and it was almost more than that. Given the media history and the profound conflicts in the United States itself, it was a very special message to the world, when Russian President *Putin*, at the end of his meticulous opening statement, spoke in a very affable and friendly

manner of “*Donald*” when he addressed President *Trump*.

Europe was shown and set a high standard. The Crimea, Ukraine and generally the European energy supply served this purpose. President *Trump* has his own idea about the Crimea, and Russia has a different one and so considers the matter to be over. In certain circumstances, even Ukraine might no longer be exposed to any substantial concerns over natural gas and oil transit, even though it may be more than ever constrained to take the Minsk process seriously. Yes, both countries are competitors for the market of natural gas and oil in Western Europe, and the American president makes that clear, even if he points out Russia's market proximity.

This eliminates the over-exaggeration of this question, which has been ongoing for decades among the NATO varlets. Business is business, and you can imagine the very hard bandages used in this context.

There will be other meetings and thus all those will be globally marginalised who did not understand President *Trump*'s doctrine: diplomacy is everything, ignorance is nothing. Concerning President *Trump*, one is under the reasonable impression that here once again we meet an American head of state who is in the process of honestly earning the name of “president” and of not just making himself be seen as a puppet pushed to and fro by neocons. Being a model of German diplomacy, *Heiko Maas* will complain about Helsinki – as well as Mr *Soros*, presumably – as constituting the swan song of a “Western community of values” which only he still detects. It is said that the members of the American government regularly seek refuge in their panic rooms when confronted with his assessments of the world.

Helsinki was a humdinger. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"The West's fury and bitterness ..."

continued from page 7

the football teams that were playing "had to leave the directors' box for their own safety as the London Stadium descended into chaos." That's how people get on the pitch in England.)

Facts often confuse the Western mainstream media, and the "posse" invading the pitch consisted of only four people who were swiftly removed. But not before the intellectual Mr *Jason Burt*, Chief Football Correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph informed the world that "security guards ran onto the grass immediately to tackle the pitch invaders and grab them all very quickly. And it's off to the Gulag for them. Well done lads, you'll enjoy your lifetime in a Russian prison."

The US-Gulag Archipelago

It is this sort of outrageous and totally imbecilic comment that illustrates the attitude of much of the West to Russia. And it is clever and attractive in a propaganda sense, being pithy and quick and nerve-striking, because so many westerners think they know all about gulags.

As noted by the commentator *Garret Epps* in *The Atlantic* in March 2018, "In 1973, the great Russian writer *Alexander Solzhenitsyn* coined the term 'Gulag Archipelago' to denote the Soviet system of political prisons and labour camps. In the last 25 years, the United States has, without fanfare, brought into being a kind of *Enforcement and Removal Operations' Archipelago* – secretive, loosely supervised, and, in human and constitutional rights terms, deeply problematic. And the 'system' will, if the current administration carries forward its enforcement plans, grow significantly larger year by year." The US gulag archipelago is firmly in place.

But in the minds of so many of the Western world, that have been ever-so-gently brainwashed over the years of the New Cold War, 'gulags' are forever Rus-

sian, and they are ready to pitch invaders.

The Second Cold War is flourishing

Cold War Two is thriving, having been initiated and fostered by West and especially by the Pentagon and much of Congress, whose members benefit enormously from cash donations by weapons' manufacturers whose generosity so far this election cycle has totalled \$19,332,442 in traceable hand-outs. The Pentagon is reported as having calculated that "overseas weapons sales by US firms rose \$8.3 billion from 2016 to 2017, with American arms makers moving a total of \$41.9 billion in advanced weaponry to foreign militaries last year." There is profit in supporting confrontation.

Development of the new Cold War was described succinctly in February 2018 by *Stephen F. Cohen*, professor emeritus of Russian Studies and Politics at NYU and Princeton, in that "[President] *Clinton* pursued winner-take-all policies consistent with viewing Russia as a defeated power, presiding over a massive intrusive crusade to shape that former rival into 'the Russia we want'; beginning the expansion of NATO, now on Russia's borders; and bombing Moscow's traditional Slav ally Serbia in 1999, despite *Yeltsin's* protests. Indeed, the extreme vilification of *Putin* by former members of the Clinton administration, including *Hillary Clinton*, who equated him with *Hitler*, are not unrelated to their unwise Russia policies of the 1990s – loudly applauded, it should be added, by media journalists now also in the forefront of demonizing the current Kremlin leader."

Who's the warmonger?

The Western media and what is now called the 'deep state' – the power clique, somewhat akin or even complementary to the military-industrial complex spotlighted by President *Eisenhower* almost sixty years ago – are intent on portraying Russia as a warmongering expansionist state, but they never mention the fact that, as recorded in the 2018 World Report of the

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute "In 2017 the USA spent more on its military [\$610 billion] than the next seven highest-spending countries combined. ... at \$66.3 billion, Russia's military spending in 2017 was 20 per cent lower than in 2016."

Trump wants to talk to Russia

The "New York Times" summed up the Washington Establishment's attitude to the *Putin-Trump* 16 July talks with the headline "Trump Opens His Arms to Russia. His Administration Closes Its Fist." Entirely coincidentally, three days before the meeting, Washington's best and brightest announced that twelve Russians had been indicted for allegedly interfering with the US elections in 2016. The word "allegedly" was rarely used by the West's mainstream media, and the fact that no evidence of any sort has been presented to backup up the allegations has been completely ignored. The automatic verdict is that Russia is guilty of whatever charges might be levelled, just as in Britain the blame for an incident of poisoning has been laid squarely at Russia's door without a shred of proof that Russia was involved.

Make no mistake: the man Trump is the worst president the US has ever had. He is, in the well-chosen words of the commentator *Robert Reich*, a "selfish, thin-skinned, petulant, lying, narcissistic, boastful megalomaniac." But – he wants to talk and negotiate with Russia, rather than indulging in ceaseless confrontation.

Trump has long expressed interest in improving ties with Russia, and the recent summit was his first real opportunity for doing so. Yet it will be difficult for this progress to have any permanence with so many in the Establishment united to undermine it. The Deep State's fury and bitterness will not die down, and its propaganda campaigns will continue to fuel the Second Cold War. •

Source: <https://www.strategic-culture.org>
from 19 July 2018

French major enterprises have to abandon their commercial activities in Iran

by Hayat Gazzane, *Le Figaro, Paris*



Hayat Gazzane
(picture
www.lefigaro.fr)

cc. Under threat of penalties by the US sanction regime several French major enterprises have announced their intention to leave Iran or to put their plans on ice. Who does not comply with those sanctions has to expect severe penalties under American law. No financial institute and no enterprise of the world can dare to carry on commerce with a country which is hit by US sanctions. The reason: All financial transactions with US dollars have to pass by a clearing house, even if the trading partners have nothing to do with the USA. As far as all dollar-tradings are concerned the central banks are reliant on the US clearing house Fedwire run and controlled by the US central bank FED. That way the USA have a powerful lever at their command. If a financial institute or an enterprise uses dollars for trading – ignoring the renewal of the sanctions against Iran – the USA can stop this trading.

The first wave will strike Iran on 6 August. That day the United States will bring back into use the economic sanctions against Tehran as direct consequence of their decision to cancel the nuclear agreement last May. These sanctions concern the civilian aviation and the automobile sector. A second wave will follow, this time in the sectors of energy, oil, gas, petrol chemistry and finances.

Donald Trump made his point several times: All enterprises who decide to continue their activities in the country after these dates will incur wrath of the US independent of their nationality. Freezing of assets, an entry in the black list of the SDN (*Specially Designated Nationals*) which forbids the access to the US market, financial penalties... The threats are too serious to be ignored by the enterprises. In France several of them, present in this promising market, therefore have decided to suspend their activities or even to draw back. An overall perspective:

Total

The petrol company belongs to the first that expressed their intention to cease their activities in Iran. Total has lost its hope to get an exception permit by the US authorities to continue with its activities in the gas field *South Pars II* (SP

11), which is considered to be the largest oil field of the world. In the year 2017 the French group as the first of the big oil conglomerations signed a contract in Iran after the signing of the nuclear agreement in 2015. Total will retreat now before the 4 November and will have to leave control over the project to its Chinese partner, the CNPC-group. This decision was quickly made because the United States strongly participate in Total. American banks are involved in nearly all of its financial operations, their American shareholders represent more than 30% of the interests and the US assets represent more than 10 billion dollar of the capital deployed by the group. "Without access to the American financial world you cannot operate an international enterprise in 130 countries. Therefore American law is applied and we have to leave Iran", concluded the head of Total, *Patrick Pouyanne*, recently.

PSA

In June the automaker announced that it had initiated "the process of suspending activities" of its enterprises in Iran. With good reason: It is one of the French enterprises which is most heavily exposed to sanctions in this market. PSA, historically very present in Iran, in 2016 incorporated two joint-ventures with Iranian partners in the amount of several hundred million euro. In the year 2017 the group from Sochaux sold nearly 450,000 vehicles in this market, 12% of their worldwide turnover. But PSA whose associated company Faurecia generates 20% of its volume in the USA didn't want to take any risk.

Engie

The company French energy giant has announced that it will cease its engineering-activities in Iran until 4 November. The group doesn't own any infrastructure on-site but makes their teams work for Iranian clients. For Engie it is impossible to go on. "We have 180 days time to terminate our contracts which leads us to the next November, and certainly this will happen", said Engie CEO *Isabelle Kocher* at the group's general assembly in May.

CMA-CGM

The third biggest Container shipping company of the world has decided to cancel the commercial relations with Iran. "Our Chinese competitors are somewhat hesitant but they may have different relations to the Trump administration. But

we adopt the guidelines" said *Rudolphe Saadé*, CEO of the group. In 2016 the CMA-CGM signed a memorandum of understanding with the Islamic Republic of Iran shipping lines for exchange or leasing of shipping space, for the operation of common shipping lines and for a cooperation in use of sea terminals. But the ship-owner has a strong presence in the USA. Therefore this decision. Yet it should be pointed out that the number 1 of the branch, the Danish Moller-Maersk decided as well to cancel its activities in Iran. Just like the number 2, the Italian-Swiss MSC.

Alstom

The railway technology concern had great ambitions in Iran. 2016 it signed a memorandum of understanding with the IRDO (Iranian Industrial Development and Renewal Organisation) for the development of an "industrial cooperation" in the sector of city- and long-distance traffic. Concretely the French group should participate in a joint-venture with IRDO and the Iranian Rail Industries for the manufacture of tube carriages and local trains. Alstom should hold 60% of the project. But the renewal of the American sanctions forces it to put all on ice. "Today we have not made a decision to invest. We wait for a clarification of the position of the signatories of the nuclear agreement", a media spokesman committed to "Le Figaro" and added: "Alstom will respect international law in every case."

Enterprises that (for the moment) continue their operations: Renault

The automaker is present in Iran since 2017 with a joint-venture. "We will not give up. Even if we have to strike our colours to a big extent we will still be present. We are convinced that [...] this market will be opened again sometime. Then the fact that we have remained in Iran will surely be an advantage for us" said the CEO of Renault, *Carlos Ghosn*, in mid-June during the general assembly of the group. A position he had already formulated in "Le Figaro" on another occasion: "We from Renault want to keep up our long-term relations to Iran", he declared.

Danone

The enterprise is represented with its four main activities in Iran: dairy products, water, baby nutrition and medical milk. "For dairy products we own a produc-

Is “Antifa” the German mainstream?

This is no way for the country to come to rest

by Karl Müller

Why the new western “Anti-Fascism” has little to do with fighting against Fascism and National Socialism.

An article on the German Chancellor’s “summer press conference” which appeared in the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” of 21 July reported that *Angela Merkel* was worried about the political culture in Germany. She intended to “use the remaining time of her term of office to take a stand for other, gentler manners”. Social networks had “sustainably changed the political culture”; a “process of neglect” was under way which could only be stopped “by setting a good example”.

At first sight there is the impulse to agree with the German Chancellor. But then one starts to think: What exactly does the Chancellor intend? What did the Chancellor’s politics contribute to the development she is now criticising? And what is her way of dealing with critics of her politics?

“Abolish nation states!”

To this day the German Chancellor and forces inside and outside the country supporting her are surrounding the German government politics with an aura of “there is no alternative”. This has fatal consequences for democracy. Diverging analyses and opinions are no longer considered as alternatives but a priori as wrong and by no means on an equal footing. To label politics as “without alternative” is killing the democratic debate and reminds of a song of the former SED [the East German Socialist Unity Party of Germany]: “The party, the party is always right...” The dissolution of sovereign European nation states and the “deepening and enlargement of the European Union” is one

“French major enterprises ...”

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tion facility. We work with the brand Danette. We also have a joint-venture for baby nutrition and water and we import medical nutrition” said a media spokesman towards “Le Figaro”. According to that Danone at the moment “reassesses its activities”, but is hardly worried, because the “agricultural and nutrition sector will not especially be hit by the American sanctions”.

Source: © “Le Figaro” from 23 July 2018, www.premium.lefigaro.fr/societes/2018/07/23/20005-20180723ARTFIG00050-ces-poids-lourds-francaisqui-s-eloignent-de-l-iran.php

(Translation Current Concerns)

of the policies considered “without alternative” to a particular extent. Thus on 7 July even the Swiss “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” dedicated a very benevolent article and a full page to the project of proclaiming a “Republic of Europe”, titling it with a quote from the protagonists: “Abolish nation states!”

People have become distrustful

The success and the reach of so-called “alternative media” are also related to the fact that less and less people feel understood and represented by the so-called “mainstream media”. There are numerous examples that these “mainstream media” are reporting and commenting as if they had been brought into line – disregarding the citizens. This has made more and more people distrustful and induced them to look for alternatives.

The sharpest weapon against alternatives

The sharpest weapon in the fight against alternatives is the resort to the clichés of “Anti-Fascism”. This is not really a new thing. Back in 1994 the political scientist *Hans-Helmuth Knütter* published the book “The Fascism mace. The German Left’s last resort.” But the German Left’s last resort has meanwhile reached the mainstream of the government benches. There are many hints and proofs for this. The official governmental “Fight against the Right” even includes financial support of tax money for extremist Antifa groups. The government’s politics is downright paradox – or is it constructed so by design? On the one hand there are subsidies for the Antifa, on the other hand in its annual reports the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* [Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution] to this day points out the dangers of “Anti-Fascism”.

Thus the latest report on the reporting year 2017, published in July 2018, reads under the headline “Anti-Fascism”:

“From a left-wing extremist viewpoint ‘Fascism’ is rooted in ‘Capitalism’. Thus the fight against right-wing extremism is only considered as sufficient and expedient if it also focusses on and attacks the supposed preconditions in society. Hence ‘Anti-Fascism’ always included fighting against the ‘capitalist system’ and its supporters and thus more than merely fighting against right-wing extremism.

This attitude becomes apparent in a call for a demonstration against ‘Nazis’: ‘The fight against Fascism is also the fight of those suppressed by the ruling class. Its destruction can only be accomplished

through the victory over the capitalist system.’ (Homepage ‘Antifaschistische Aktion Karlsruhe’, 2 March 2017)”.

Antifa: Violent fight against civil democracy

Further down we read: “Left-wing extremists are mainly seeking direct confrontation with ‘Fascists’ in the streets; they do not shy away from violent attacks.” Then there is a citation: “Militant Antifascism remains necessary and cannot be exercised too often.” (Internet platform ‘linksunten.indymedia’, 16 January 2017)”

In other words: The violent fight of the Antifa against “Fascism” is a violent fight against civil values and civil democracy, a fight against the free and democratic rule of law.

Even Madeleine Albright is now warning from Fascism

The “fight against right” is now also led by *Madeleine Albright*, the former US Secretary of State from the party of *Clinton* and *Obama*. Her latest book, published in April 2018 and available, highly advertised, in German translation since July is titled “Fascism: A Warning”. On 20 July the “St. Galler Tagblatt” published a long interview with Ms Albright in which she presented her considerations. Ms Albright sees the danger of Fascism not only in some political factions – which do exist – but in the politics of governments she finds disagreeable. There is no scientifically appropriate systematic and historical analysis on Fascism. The book mainly politicises. It is about *Donald Trump*, *Vladimir Putin* and North Korea. Against European governments demanding more national sovereignty. Against criticism of the mainstream media and against criticism of the migration politics of the German Chancellor (and the political powers backing it). Not all of this was Fascism, Albright says, but the road was leading there. This is why she had to warn.

Madeleine Albright, Joseph Fischer and Angela Merkel

Madeleine Albright shares her views with Angela Merkel. And with *Joseph Fischer*, the former Green politician and German Foreign Minister. Like many other US politicians of the war faction she is full of praise for Germany: “I think that Germany has played a leading role in the positive sense for the development of post-war Europe.” Then: “I would like

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"Is 'Antifa' the German ..."

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to state, one of those I respect the most, one of my best friends, is Joschka Fischer. [...] His revolt against what Fascism was and what it meant, his warnings, his credibility with respect to the Balkans when he called for action: We cannot allow for another Auschwitz. He has played a big role at the time." And one sentence later: "Germany's role is important. Chancellor Merkel has an important voice."

Who is Ms Albright?

Just a quick reminder: In 1998 and 1999 Madeleine Albright and Joseph Fischer were the main political actors in the preparation and execution of the NATO aggression contrary to international law against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. They are responsible for more than 2000 direct victims of the war, the destruction of a state in the middle of Europe and uncounted victims of radioactive weapon systems. Albright's and Fischer's "Antifascism" was (and is) murderous.

We also need to recall Ms Albright's response to the question if the years of sanctions against Iraq after 1991 could be justified – in view of half a million of children who had died in consequence of

"Only if the Chancellor was really taking a stand for renewing the democratic discourse in Germany, for the idea that many different political opinions were entitled to respect and equal standing, that factual arguments were important and not polemics, that other people were respected and prized as thinking citizens... then things can get better."

these sanctions. Albright responded the price was worth it.

Ms Merkel is not credible

One thing is sure: As long as alternatives to the past and present politics of the US or the EU and its states are placed under suspicion of Fascism - and particularly by politicians who are advocating and conducting violent politics – Ms Merkel's concern mentioned in her "summer press conference" will sound like derision. "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones..." will justly be the answer. Ms Merkel is not credible.

Only if the Chancellor was really taking a stand for renewing the democratic discourse in Germany, for the idea that many different political opinions were en-

titled to respect and equal standing, that factual arguments were important and not polemics, that other people were respected and prized as thinking citizens... then things can get better.

There is a contemporary German short story about a man who has been fired and nobody in the company – neither the personnel manager nor his boss nor the workers' council – can tell him why and take the responsibility, blaming a computer for firing him. After a few weeks, in his helplessness and despair, the man takes a hammer and smashes the computer to pieces – for sure not a solution. But how are we to assess the behaviour of the personnel manager who remarks to the boss at the end of the story: "It was about time to dismiss him. To be so upset because you are fired!"

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Driving bans for diesel?

A plea for more objectivity

by Rainer Schopf

cc. The author is a trained aircraft mechanic, studied automotive engineering at the Technical University of Berlin and taught for 35 years at the Oberstufenzentrum Kfz-Technik (Occupational Training Centre for Automotive Engineering) in Berlin. His essay takes up the article "VW Dieseldgate" by Ernst Pauli in Current Concerns No 4 of February 2018 and continues it on a technical level.

Postfactual driving bans – without any technical expertise

On 27 February 2018, the German Federal Administrative Court allowed German cities in principal to impose driving bans on diesel engines due to their NO_x emissions. This judgement is absurd, influenced by almost no technical expertise and typical for the postfactual age. Opponents and users of diesel engines are engaged in an ideological struggle. The *Green Party* and environmental associations want to tramp down the diesel engine, regardless of the consequences. After the successfully implemented energy transition in Germany – the shutdown of all nuclear power plants, hard coal and lignite plants are to follow – they now want to force changing to electric cars within a few years with all might. The VW diesel fraud affair served the US as reason for an economic war against German manufacturers. On the other hand, the driving bans are Germany's own doing and without necessity destroy the diesel engine and thus a mature technology in which Germany is leading. As early as April of this year, Hamburg rushed ahead with driving bans for diesel cars on two particular roads on the initiative of Environment Senator *Jens Kerstan* of the Greens. Baden-Württemberg has announced the first driving bans for 2019. In order to make the debate more objective, it is essential to take note of some physical, chemical and technical facts. Only on this basis can traditional drives be seriously compared with alternative drives.

Market share of diesel engines

Diesel-powered vehicles have so far accounted for 53% of new registrations in the 15 largest EU countries. In Germany, the share before the 2017 diesel scandal was at a maximum of 45%, with a strong downward trend to an estimated 25% in 2025, followed by France and Ireland (73% each), Spain and Belgium (69% each) and Italy (57%). There is no threat of driving bans in these countries. Are the diesel engines there cleaner than in Germany? No.

The same emission measurement procedure applies, but the handling is different.

Measuring stations

Before 2010, the rule in Germany was to measure the exhaust immission concentration at a height of 4 m and 4 m away from the centre strip of the road. Exhaust gases have the pleasant property of quickly mixing with the ambient air, which reduces the exposure of the people. Initiated by the Greens, the Federal Immission Control Regulation of 2010 no longer includes the four-metre distance. In Germany today, measurements are carried out as close as possible to the source of the exhaust gases, at busy roads, valleys or tunnel exits, where the exhaust gases cannot dilute quickly. The most notorious measuring point is a location called *Neckartor* in Stuttgart, located in a basin, with frequently highest NO_x values. This is what other European nations do differently. They measure area-averaged in loaded and unloaded roads and thus remain below the permitted limit value. This limit is only exceeded at a few points in Germany, but not reached area-averaged. Not the quantity, but the quality and balance of the measuring points is delivering significant results.

Combustion

In a full combustion of a fuel and air mixture nitrogen (N), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and water (H₂O) is produced. Former exhaust components such as lead and sulphur compounds are no longer contained in the fuel. Incomplete combustion produces carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), hydrocarbons (CH) in gasoline engines and additionally particulate matter (PM) in diesel engines. Whether combustion is complete or incomplete depends on the air/fuel ratio (λ , lambda), which is the quotient of the amount of air supplied to the theoretical air requirement. If $\lambda = 1$, the expert speaks of a stoichiometric mixture, below 1 it is fat (lack of air) and above 1 lean (excess air). Combustion takes place in diesel and petrol engines at different lambda values, so that the exhaust gas compounds are different, creating advantages and disadvantages for both engine types.

Gasoline engine

The gasoline-powered engine formerly had carburettors to create a mixture of fuel and air. It operated with an air/fuel ratio between $0.7 \geq \lambda \geq 1.3$, i.e. also in the lean range. The carburettor was replaced four decades ago by electronically controlled injection systems which have to operate at $\lambda=1$, otherwise the catalytic

converter can't work optimally. Among other things, it converts CO into CO₂. So far, so good. The toxic CO disappeared from the cities. Although the forecasts for the climate catastrophe vary greatly depending on the interests of the experts, the trend of all forecasts is clearly upwards. With 18% CO₂ in the exhaust gases, the petrol engine is the climate killer number 1, and in addition, this engine uses only a maximum of 30% of the energy supplied in the fuel for propulsion. 70% is lost during combustion, in the form of heat and exhaust gas. Up to 2% of these are toxic exhaust gases such as CO, NO_x and CH.

Diesel engine

At its optimum operation condition, the diesel engine uses 45% of the fuel for propulsion, i.e. it is up to 50% more effective than the petrol engine. The diesel engine runs with excess air in almost all load ranges and thus contributes to a significantly higher fuel yield. Today, diesel-fuel is injected almost exclusively with electronically controlled piezo injectors. After its debut in 1995, the *common-rail engine (CR)* has undergone rapid development, replacing all previous injection systems working at that time at an injection pressure of only 120 bar. The pressures in the common rail system (common line) are unimaginably high (2,500 bar), and the switching times are extremely short: These injectors open and close reliably at a engine frequency of 30 cycles per second in each cycle up to seven times for targeted pre-, main and post-injections, i.e. in fractions of milliseconds. An uncontrolled injection would rupture the diesel engine. Pressure and temperature ensure incredibly fine atomisation in the combustion chamber and thus maximum fuel utilisation.

The CR engine – a brilliant engineering achievement

The triumphal march of the CR engine was achieved by the brilliant contributions of hundreds of engineers. The energy balance clearly speaks in favour of the diesel engine and against the petrol engine. The only problem with diesel is its NO_x emissions. At 80 mg/km, this is significantly higher than at 5 mg/km for the petrol engine. However, the NO_x value of diesels has been reduced by 70% since 1990 and should reliably fall below the current limit value by 2020. Furthermore, the toxic effect of NO_x is discussed highly controversially. Fundamental criticism of the ver-

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dict on the driving bans for diesel comes from pulmonary specialists. *Martin Hetzel*, chief physician at the Stuttgart Lung Clinic, believes that from a medical-scientific point of view there is no causal evidence that NO_x concentrations of up to 100 microgrammes per cubic metre of air cause illness. Retrofitting older diesel engines would also require two years of testing before they could be registered and would then become obsolete in 2020. The polemic against diesel technology (allegedly one hundred thousand deaths due to NO_x emissions) is simply irresponsible and a crime against the good faith of uninformed consumers. It undermines the fantastic advances in diesel technology.

Huge progress also in exhaust gas aftertreatment

Gasoline engines today have exclusively controlled three-way catalytic converters to convert CO , NO_x and CH into non-toxic components. The exhaust gas treatment of the diesel engine is much more complex: exhaust gas recirculation, oxidation catalyst, secondary air injection, particle filters, NO_x storage and *selective catalytic reduction (SCR)* catalysts using the so called AdBlue (urea) as a cleaner fluid. Together the systems serve almost exclusively to reduce NO_x and particulate matter. Huge progress has been made in this area. Clouds of black smoke are a thing of the past. In the past, soot output was measured with the *blackening rate (SZ)* of white paper. That is no longer necessary today. One can filter the exhaust with a white handkerchief, it stays white even at full load.

In both engines, the perfect functioning of the pollutant reduction system is not random, but is permanently electronically controlled. *On-board diagnostics (OBD)* has been mandatory since 2000. It monitors all exhaust gas relevant components. At the slightest fault, the *malfunction indicator lamp (MIL)* reports a fault to the driver. He is then obliged to drive the vehicle immediately to a workshop and have the fault corrected immediately. The driving distance after the warning light lights up is stored in the fault memory and can be read out by the police during a road check. Failure to do so could result in drastic penalties.

Gas engine – a technical challenge

Even the gas engine is still not a real alternative to petrol and diesel, although it has been tested and is proved for decades. Due to the approximately halved carbon content of gas, CO_2 emissions are also approximately halved compared to diesel and gasoline engines. Obstacles are its heavy gas

“We will certainly have to stop burning fossil fuels (oil/natural gas) in the long term. But the diesel engine is far from dead, and many alternatives are still unclear. Scientists and technicians have helped people to expand their mobility and apply their findings to the benefit of human development. This can only be done on the basis of sound analyses and forecasts and not in ideological trench warfare. Political activism has never solved the problems at hand. Instead, we must enter into an open dialogue about the advantages and disadvantages of the various drive concepts.”

tank, the lack of infrastructure (gas filling stations) and the driving bans in multi-store car parks due to the risk of explosion in case of leaks. Gas engines are only increasingly used in cruise ships because the heavy oil driven cruise ships have fallen into disrepute and paying passengers pay attention to environmental awareness. The *Meyer shipyard* in Papenburg is currently building the first cruise ship with a gas engine. The technical challenges are enormous. To liquefy the gas, it must be cooled down to minus 162°C . Each of the three gas tanks is 35 m long and 8 m in diameter with a total capacity of 3500 cubic metres. But in the ports the infrastructure is often still lacking. Container ships thus continue to burn heavy fuel oil and are called swimming polluters. In Hamburg, they are expected to account for more than 40% of NO_x emissions. Prohibited? Obviously not. Beautiful new world: The port is booming and the diesel car drivers are being expropriated.

Electric propulsion

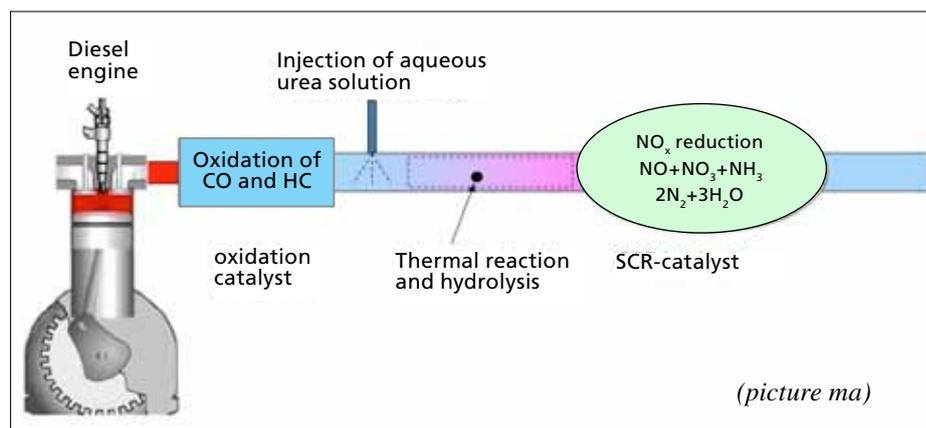
Depending on the design, the electric motor has an efficiency of 80% to 90%. That's a fantastic value as such, but be careful. Looking at the entire energy chain of electricity generated by combustion (coal/oil), the overall efficiency falls below 30% and is therefore even

worse than a petrol engine. Losses occur in the power plant, during power transport, charging, discharging and through the power electronics. The situation is different if the electricity is generated in an environmentally friendly way by wind, solar or water power. In the first half of 2018, 39% of the electricity in Germany was already generated from these alternative energies, and the trend continues to rise. There are a number of problems that stand in the way of this pleasing prospect. The further “asparagation” of the landscape by wind turbines is reaching its limits. At least twenty times more wind turbines would have to be installed. Hydroelectric power plants may be an alternative for mountainous regions, but in Germany they have a shadowy existence.

Electricity transport problem unsolved

And we have as well an unsolved transport problem. Schleswig-Holstein, for example, produces 100% of its energy requirements from renewable energy, mainly from huge offshore facilities in the Northern Sea. Even more electricity could be generated. However, electricity is not lacking in the more agricultural north, but in the industrial west and south of Germany. So power lines have to be built from north to south – with high

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"Driving bans for diesel?"

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voltage transmission poles? The residents, on the other hand, sued successfully, citing electro-smog and the devaluation of their land. Going underground? Not affordable, underground cables cost about three times as much. The necessary line projects do not succeed for years now. If the electric driven car population was to be widely expanded, the structure of the grid system would have to be completely changed. That would only be feasible in decades.

Next problem – Overload of the electricity grid and ethical issues

If you try to have a charging station for your new electric car installed in your underground car park because the public ones are too sparsely sown. Your application is rejected by the property management, the power grid would collapse. And by 2030, up to 30% more electric cars are supposed to be on the roads: Then the lights will go off in Germany. And the last point of criticism: the electric cars themselves. The batteries are still much heavier than a fuel tank, their range is still modest, the acquisition costs extremely high and the raw materials such as lithium and cobalt for the batteries come predominantly from Third World countries, often affected by child labour, inhumane working conditions, corruption and civil war. In February, a major southern German automobile manufacturer and a consortium concluded a price and volume secured supply chain for cobalt from the Congo. Now the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has suddenly increased the price of mining licences, and the corresponding mining law was rewritten overnight. The market size for cobalt has tripled since 2016, Congo holds 60% of the deposits, and the government will cut itself a mighty slice of the raw material cake. Do we then use our progress to finance the government's arms purchasing

"And by 2030, up to 30% more electric cars are supposed to be on the roads: Then the lights will go off in Germany."

for a fight against its own people? What a hideous idea.

Hybrid propulsion

Vehicles with two different types of drive are called hybrid drives. Usually an internal combustion engine is combined with an electric motor to reduce pollutant emissions and fuel consumption. Inner-city, at low speeds, one drives electrically and overland with a petrol or diesel engine. All of these vehicles have a start-stop function for urban traffic jams and regenerative braking, called recuperation. During deceleration, the electric motor becomes a generator, i.e. it converts kinetic energy into electrical energy and feeds it back into the battery. This is a well-known process from the rail technology of trams and electric locomotives. The hybrid drive is an important upcoming technology. Around 90% of all taxis in Zurich are now hybrid vehicles.

Conclusion – Prudence is needed

The emission values for diesel and petrol engines have been issued since 1992 (Euro 1) and have been constantly tightened since then. Of the 15 million diesel vehicles in Germany, only 17.8% meet the latest standard (Euro 6). Driving bans would therefore affect 81.7% of all diesel drivers, i.e. 12 million drivers whose vehicles have also fallen drastically in resale value, are often considered unsaleable and are increasingly being scrapped. This expropriation cannot last. Responsible politicians advise prudence. When *Daimler, BMW, VW, Opel* and others are brought to their knees, many industrial locations in Germany are in a bad position. The legislator would be well advised to examine the ruling in peace and to press for a nationwide solution. This

process will not be completed until 2020 at the earliest.

Questions and perspectives to be clarified

Until then, important questions will have to be clarified, such as a possible retrofit for older diesel vehicles, responsibility for the cost and the introduction of another, now blue sticker. The share of hybrid and electric drives will increase moderately, but the major reversal will not take place in the next 10 to 20 years and the diesel engine will experience a renaissance. In the short and medium term there is no proven alternative to the diesel engine. In the long term we will have to say goodbye to fossil fuels. The resources of oil, which have often been said to be dead, are indeed finite. And the unchecked emission of CO₂ will cause climate change in the long term. The Americans continue to build high-volume gasoline engines with extremely high greenhouse gas emissions: "Big is beautiful," they say, giving notice to the global agreement to reduce CO₂ emissions. America first is their motto, how is that supposed to work out in the long run? European car manufacturers have been working successfully for decades on *downsizing* the displacement of engines: ever more effective smaller engines, with less fuel consumption and less exhaust gases. The conflict is obvious and that is why the American government is attacking German car manufacturers. Despite the diesel scandal, VW is excellently positioned and strives to become the world's largest manufacturer. Other European car manufacturers are also shining with positive sales and profit figures.

Every epoch has its companions, from horse and carriage via steam engine to petrol and diesel engines. We will certainly have to stop burning fossil fuels (oil/natural gas) in the long term. But the diesel engine is far from dead, and many alternatives are still unclear. Scientists and technicians have helped people to expand their mobility and apply their findings to the benefit of human development. This can only be done on the basis of sound analyses and forecasts and not in ideological trench warfare. Political activism has never solved the problems at hand. Instead, we must enter into an open dialogue about the advantages and disadvantages of the various drive concepts. It is to be hoped that objectivity will return to the discussions on individual mobility. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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Why I like to be a Swiss

by Wolfgang van Biezen

There he sat now on our sofa, the man from the State Secretariat for Migration. He made an appointment, he was friendly, and after assuring himself that my wife and I were living together, he wanted to know why I had waited so long to apply for naturalisation, especially since in my case it was an easy naturalisation. I had often asked myself this question for a long time. I hesitated with the answer. While we looked at each other friendly, my thoughts wandered to the book on Switzerland in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71, which I had recently read. Suddenly, in the immediate vicinity of the war, poorly equipped and with insufficient border patrol, Switzerland took up tens of thousands of soldiers at the request of the French Bourbaki army. The state and the population fulfilled their task as neutral neighbours so, just the way it was needed.

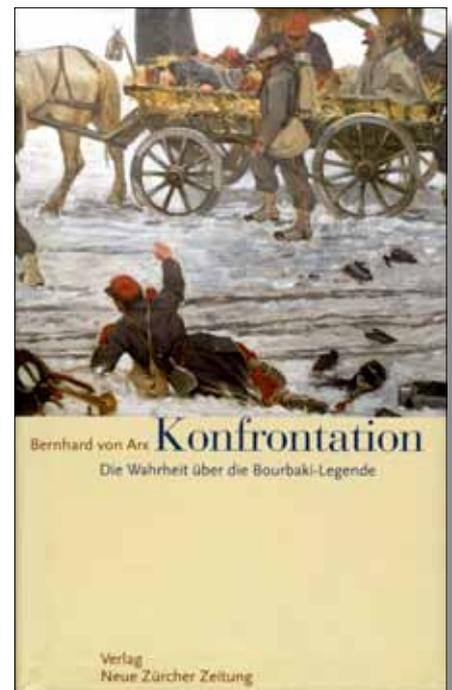
1870/71 – Switzerland is at war, although she does not want a war at all.

- The Swiss army is not ready and poorly equipped,
- Federal Councillor *Welti* behaves like a prince,
- Colonel *Hans Herzog*, popular with the people and competent, is basically forced by *Welti* to become a general,
- *Herzog* is elected by the Federal Assembly,
- the competences between the Federal Government and the General are not clear,
- no support from Federal Councillor *Welti*, intrigues,
- *Herzog* resigns (not sure if that works),
- the war between Prussia and France takes place on the border to the Swiss Confederation,
- parts of the French army are being annihilated,
- the Swiss border protection is only partially fulfilled due to the lousy equipped army,
- deception manoeuvres at the border regarding the strength and commitment of the Swiss army,
- the Prussian general *Manteuffel*, better equipped, surrounds the Bourbaki army in France,
- *Bourbaki's* army is surrounded and to a large part in a desperate condition,
- the war shows its true, ugly face,
- Bourbaki makes a suicide attempt that fails,
- his army, surrounded by the Prussians, asks for admission to Switzerland,
- conditions that are compatible with neutrality are negotiated,
- *Herzog* is reinstated, giving conditions to Federal Councillor *Welti*,



Excerpt from the circular image of the Bourbaki Museum in Lucerne (picture www.bourbakipanorama.ch)

- The Federal Council speaks unaware of the situation of a few thousand French soldiers,
 - in fact, there are about 86,000 French soldiers seeking protection in Switzerland,
 - they come in a completely exhausted state and are initially received by about 2,500 Swiss soldiers at the border,
 - glad that they escape hell,
 - guns are collected,
 - wounded are hospitalised, for some help comes too late,
 - Swiss soldiers are also becoming infected with dysentery and die,
 - Horses are registered, distributed and transferred to farms so they can be cared for,
 - 86,000 French will be distributed to all of Switzerland within a few days,
 - great logistical achievement of General *Herzog*,
 - rural Switzerland, after some initial hesitation, is happy for the helping French hands,
 - here and there, very personal connections develop,
 - the French behave themselves perfectly,
 - the war between Prussia and France has ended,
 - the wounded are healthy and recovered, the hungry well-fed, they are happy to go back to their homeland,
 - the equipment, the weapons (rifles, guns), the horses, etc. are delivered to the new French Government,
 - a bill of the Confederation over the expenses incurred is sent to the French Government and paid immediately,
 - When the French are released after six weeks to their home, it comes sometimes to touching farewell scenes,
 - 86,000 young men are saved, they are well and can return back to their lives.
- ... all this went through my mind when asked why I had waited so long to apply for naturalisation. Well, I told the Gentleman on our sofa that I thought long and



The value of language teaching

For the preservation of the ancient languages

by Thibault Mercuzot, Delphine le Corfec and Patrick Beugnet – France

The desire to weaken the classical languages is not new. It links those who believe in it to recognise the relic of an elitist system with those who preach practice-oriented teaching. To look good, they all present themselves as modern and heirs to the Enlightenment. The rejection of Latin and Greek is a confession: in the school system, classical languages are the only languages taught without hope that students will ever speak them. They in no way allow you to orientate yourself in an unknown city. They remain the relic of a time when learning a language was based on the literature which had been created by it. You learned Greek to read *Plato* and Latin to read *Cicero*, German to read *Goethe*, Italian to read *Dante*, Spanish to read *Cervantès* or English to read *Shakespeare*. Nowadays the demands are different. It is a noble undertaking to give young people access to other cultures by enabling them to learn modern languages. However, it is a betrayal to limit language teaching, including of one's own, to the desire to communicate better. The curricula no longer mention authors: *Racine*, *Molière* and *Victor Hugo* are a thing of the past.

To teach our own language only to offer "access to the labour market" is an absurd idea. The obstinacy with which

one undermines the learning of spelling and grammar certainly does not facilitate the young people's entrance into working life; it causes suffering and exclusion. The young person's development and personal way remains completely hidden to the persons responsible for human resources when they receive his letter of application mutilated due to a lack of language skills ...

The National Ministry of Education wants to format students so that they are prepared to "work in the world", as announced in the French curriculum. Everything must be immediately applicable. Instead of teaching logic, they prefer to teach a programming language that will soon become obsolete and "deader" than Latin. Instead of imparting solid foundations that allow connections to be established between the knowledge learned, one prefers to build on soft interdisciplinarity that raises "necessary questions for the education of the citizen". The esteemed Voltaire did not take lessons in religion, but he sweated over Latin translations from which he drew his irony. Good education must not only distribute tools, but the student must learn to forge them. This is a long and tedious task: it forces the student to recognise his ignorance and the teacher to teach his subject carefully. But let us admit it: It is less tedious for everyone involved to wait passively until the "learners" become "knowledgeable persons" and deign to ask their questions.

In this context, the classical languages are an ideal training. They teach the constant accuracy and precision of the terms that make it possible to think correctly. The mathematician *Laurent Lafforgue*, winner of the Fields Medal in 2002, never fails to emphasise how much he owes to simultaneous training in grammar and Latin. For high school students, Latin will soon be the only remaining way to discover the grammar rules from which one wants to spare them nowadays in order to make the French course more interactive. Thus, Latin and Greek

can remedy the students' shortcomings in their own language.

We are by no means interested in reducing the classical languages to the love of rules. Nor is it a question of demanding, following the example of Claudel's grammarians, "that the new should exactly resemble the old". We believe that literature is an important vehicle of change. The richness of interpretations of the great works will never be exhausted. Being much more complex than "good feelings" or "useful books", literature opens up the possibility of getting to know a world that is not lopsided. Literary texts help to conceive the world in an ingenious and differentiated way. The active reading of the "classics" gives the one who takes the trouble to decipher them the courage to recognise new things and to help traditions come back to life. It also enables us to grasp the radical novelty of certain contemporary works. Unfortunately, "reading" has become an intransitive verb. It is no longer a matter of working on literary works, but of reading a lot, as if understanding depended on the mass of binged information.

Now, however, danger threatens: despite their millennial freshness, the texts of antiquity are very fragile things in the hands of those who no longer read them. *Herodotus* tells the story of a group of soldiers who – worried by an oracle – decided to kill an adjoining king's offspring. They went to the mother, originating in their town; she handed the baby to them because she thought they were coming to admire him. The men had agreed that the first to hold the child in his hands should smash it to the ground. But then something unexpected happened: the child smiled. It was handed from hand to hand until the last barbarian, touched as much as the others by this human trait, gave it back to the mother.

We would like a similar reaction for our language lessons. •

Source: © "*Le Figaro*" from 4 May 2015
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"Why I like to be a Swiss"

continued from page 15

hard about changing my citizenship. But after I realised what that meant for the people, the direct democracy, the perpetual armed neutrality and the good services it contained, for example, and that in fact I have more to say as a citizen of the Confederation, I mean more participation in the political events as in my former home country, well, I have decided to stay in this country and to become Swiss.

The Gentleman continued to look at me kindly, he just said, „Isn't it so?“

Somehow, we understood each other. •
(Translation *Current Concerns*)