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Considerations on replacing NATO with a collective security system to democratise international relationships

Global issues – global threats – international balance of power

As early as in the 1950s, the British scientist John D. Bernal pointed to universal threats to mankind in his book *World Without War*. Bernal didn't use the term <global problems>, but he argued that all issues possibly posing a threat to the world must be examined as a whole. Nevertheless, it would be essential to take «into account...the wide disparities ...between one country and another. This growing unevenness...not only creates tensions but is responsible for the threat of war».¹ At the end of his analysis of mankind's problems, Bernal came to the following conclusion: «If we fail to change the global economy, a very large part of mankind will die prematurely ... If we go on like this, using up the available natural resources of our planet, doom is near in the form of soil erosion, fuel scarcity and general impoverishment, but most directly in the form of famines and diseases... We are facing the alternative of war or peace... War has always been immoral, but today it has lost every sense... A war would mean suicide out of madness.»² If you think Bernal's last sentence through properly, it means: Among all problems, be they of an economic, ecological, social or any other nature, preventing war and securing peace is the global problem number one. But does NATO really serve this aim?

¹ John D. Bernal: *World Without War*. German title: *Welt ohne Krieg*. Berlin (DDR) 1960, p. 48.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 439 and 472.

I decided to quote Bernal in the beginning to demonstrate that a lot of time has already passed without any of the mentioned problems having been disarmed yet – although the governments of the great powers knew how explosive these open questions were. The Soviet proposal of 1946 to ban nuclear weapons ban in 1946 as well as several proposals from the RDA regarding nuclear-free zones in Europe, and the *Global 2000 Report*³, commissioned by the former U.S. President Carter and published in 1980, account for this. The latter contained U.S. strategies on the development of the world population, on air and climate pollution, hunger, and resources scarcity, to name but a few. However, the military confrontation between East and West, between the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, made it impossible that the international community addressed the interests of mankind as a whole. In an interview following his inauguration in 1977, President Carter said the abolition of all nuclear weapons would be the aim of his politics.⁴ It came to nothing, however. The current President of the United States, Barack Obama, has committed himself to the same objective. Let us hope that he'll be more successful.

³ *The Global 2000 Report to the President* was commissioned by President Carter in 1977 and published in 1980. The term 'global problems' has been used regularly since then.

⁴ Interview with AP on January 24, 1977. Carter pointed to a three-step programme aimed toward that end: 1. A new SALT agreement between SU-USA; 2. The United States and the Soviet Union would reduce their own stockpiles of atomic weapons; 3. The U.S. would seek the reduction of atomic weapons, including all nations.

Two decades have passed since the end of the Cold War in 1990. The nations of Europe then hoped that, first and foremost, the governments of the great powers would tackle the global issues mankind is concerned with: energy, water, environment; mitigation of misery, poverty, and hunger; overcoming illiteracy, child mortality, and the origins of unemployment. In the past few years, the hardships of people in poor Third World countries have brought about veritable mass emigrations, leading to political and social crises of global dimension that always hold the threat of war. But instead of fulfilling the people's hopes at last, governments lead new wars out of sheer madness and for the sake of geopolitical interests. It is a vicious circle: If people are no longer able to feed themselves and their children, they are likely to resort to violence – which in turn prompts those who are in power to use force. Given that the number of wars and conflicts has been increasing since 1990 – whose interests did NATO serve?

The U.S. dominates international politics with the aim of shifting the international balance of power to its advantage. Economic and financial giants operating on a global level pursue their own external strategies with the aim of controlling global markets and establishing a world economic system that works in their favour. The military alliance NATO, allegedly created to prevent Soviet expansion in 1949, is dominated by the U.S. After the end of the military confrontation between East and West, it became an instrument which served NATO great powers to push their economic and political aims. There had been no «hot» war in Europe since 1945: it returned in 1995, with NATO bombs on Bosnia. Instead of abolishing war in Europe, NATO members remade it a legitimate means to achieve political aims, by violating international law in Yugoslavia. Among the 60 000 NATO soldiers and 400 aircrafts were also 14 German Tornados. Today, NATO members are involved in wars in the Caucasus, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in the Persian Gulf and dozens of other trouble spots all over the world. And Germany is devotedly in on it – allegedly for the benefit of our nation's security. German economic and financial circles claim a stronger position in both global politics and economics.

The Federal Armed Forces (*Bundeswehr*) publishes a «magazine on security policy». In this year's September issue, the editor-in-chief wrote in his leading article about «extremely complex challenges to Germany's security and stability... The global consequences of the world economic crisis will force politicians to define the country's interests clearly and precisely at last and to prepare the citizens for tough competition on the Federal Republic's future place in the new world order.» In plain language, this means:

The military leadership of the U.S. is called into question due to the Afghanistan debacle, and the economic and political capability of the U.S. is called into question, because the credit crunch sparked off in the U.S. And again, German capital wants to «force politicians» to serve *its* interests. The article finishes with a list of seven «risks and threats to Germany's security»: 2. Deployment of nuclear weapons, 3. Proliferation of NBC weapons, 4. Destabilisation of entire regions, 5. Islamist terror, 6. Disruption of energy supply, 7. Drug trafficking. The list is headed by «Conventional military threats: Russian cravings for 'revision' in its strategic 'frontyard' (i.e. the Baltic states and Ukraine); Iranian missile and nuclear programmes (What defence options does Europe have?)».⁵

Anti-Sovietism from the era of the Cold War is combined with modern Russophobia and deliberately spread to inspire mis-interpretations of the international situation. If Russia were indeed a danger to Germany and Europe, integrating Russia into a collective European security system – as it was in the CSCE – would be more sensible than pushing NATO's eastward enlargement until Russia's borders. Since 1949 NATO representatives have been claiming that this military alliance would defend the peace and security of Europe's civilisation *against* unpredictable aggressors. Maybe it is worth recalling that the U.S.S.R., in its memoranda, dated March 31 and July 19, 1949, opposed the creation of the Atlantic Alliance – but if it really was a peace alliance, as it was claimed, then the U.S.S.R. would like to join the NATO. The NATO members, however, dismissed this membership application. The proposal made by the U.S.S.R. during the fourth UN General Assembly on September 23, 1949 may be even more thought-provoking, from a contemporary point of view: The five permanent members of the World Security Council, who are primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security in terms of the UN Charter, should unite their efforts to secure that aim and conclude a pact among them to consolidate peace.⁶ Such an alliance however was not in the interests of the NATO founding members. The balance of power at that time being in their favour, they could

⁵ Marco Seliger: Der Schatten der Krise. (The shadow of the crisis.) In: «loyal Magazin für die Bundeswehr», No. 9/2009, p. 6 and pp. 8/9.

⁶ The Soviet proposal was submitted to the 4th UN General Assembly as a draft resolution on Sept. 9, 1949. It condemned the preparation of a new war and suggested to conclude a five-power pact to consolidate peace. Besides it suggested prohibiting the presence of military alliances and bases on foreign territory, as well as a ban on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destructions. Those proposals were rejected. In: Handbuch der Verträge 1871-1964, Berlin (GDR) 1968, p. 491.

prevent this proposal being adopted by the United Nations.

Since the beginning of the new century, there have been massive shifts in the international balance of power. Nevertheless, some changes are still under way and not yet completed. Besides Russia, the Popular Republic of China and India have emerged as great powers in world politics. Latin American countries are organising themselves, refusing to be considered as the «backyard» of the U.S. any longer. The African states begin to define themselves as a continent that has its own vested interests. This has prevented the U.S. from setting up the headquarters of the U.S. Army supreme command in a particular African country. The transatlantic relations are somewhat disturbed by the U.S. leadership claim within NATO. U.S. American and Western European priorities in terms of security policy do not necessarily coincide. In a similar way, this applies to the interests of the U.S. and the European NATO members, with regard to the Caucasus, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, the Persian Gulf, as well as China and East Asia.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also impact the international balance of power, such as Attac⁷, Amnesty International with nearly 2 million members in 150 countries, or Greenpeace with approximately 3 million members in 40 countries. A new force emerged with the World Social Forum, which took place in Porto Alegre in Brazil in January 2001 for the first time. As an independent and non-partisan organisation, the WSF pursues its goal simply with civil means: independent on political parties or governments, formulating its objective simply with civic means: «Another world is possible!» The different attitudes of European states on war in Iraq and the involvement of NATO in the war against Afghanistan are further examples of the disagreement within the Atlantic alliance. This foreshadows that the Atlantic Alliance will barely have a future.

Nevertheless, in their respective manifestos to the Bundestag elections in 2009, the parties CDU/CSU, SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and FDP all adhered to NATO. The CDU, CSU and FDP still did in their coalition agreement. Only the leftist party DIE LINKE proposed in its manifesto to replace NATO with «...a collective security system involving Russia». This concept accounts for the political and economic reality at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. The other parties of the Bundestag, however, view it

⁷ Attac = Association Pour Une Taxation Des Transactions Financières Pour L'Aide Aux Citoyens (Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions to Aid Citizens), with approx. 90 000 organisations and individual members in 50 countries.

as a token of leadership inadequacy regarding foreign policy. It is kind of macabre indeed, if a party is only considered capable with regard to foreign policy leadership, if it espouses NATO and armament, supports the militarisation of the EU and sends troops «out of area» all over the world. The left-wing party is generally opposed to any sort of aggressive military alliance.

We can thus retain: The international environment has changed; civil forces are piping up whose efforts are directed at a world of peace and social progress, where nations want to solve global problems together and without the force of arms. So, which side do we take as Germans?

The foundation of NATO – in the German Understanding of history

In order to understand NATO's role in international relations after 1949 it is necessary to take a look at the first half of the 20th century. The year 2009 has seen a number of official jubilees, starting with NATO's 60th anniversary, followed by the Federal Republic of Germany's 60th anniversary and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall – celebrations to add lustre to the FRG's 60th birthday. Goethe's 260th birthday (August 28, 1749) and Friedrich Schiller's 250th birthday (November 10, 1759)⁸ however, were often overlooked. Nevertheless, especially Schiller's ideas are still very relevant today for the analysis of historic facts. In his inaugural lecture as Professor of History in Jena «What is, and to what end do we study, universal history?» on May 26, 1789 – i.e. 220 years ago, a date truly worth remembering – Schiller distinguished two kinds of historians – and this may also be applied to political scientists: The first is the «bread scholar», who is frightened of any innovation «because it shatters the old school form which he so laboriously adopted»⁹; the second is the «philosophical mind», whose «efforts are directed toward the perfection of his knowledge», who is delighted by «new discoveries in the sphere of his activities ... [who] has always loved the truth more than his system, and gladly ... he himself will be the first to tear it apart, discontented, to re-establish it more perfected...»

There must indeed be many «bread scholars» in contemporary Germany. They look back at the 20th century and refuse to see that politics and history were strongly influenced by the Russian October Revolution in 1917. In the *Propyläen-Geschichte Eu-*

⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe died on March 22, 1832; Friedrich von Schiller died on May 9, 1805.

⁹ Source of the quotations: Friedrich Schiller: Was und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte? In: Schillers Werke Nationalausgabe. Weimar 1970, vol. 17 Historische Schriften, pp.359 – 376,

ropas (the standard reference for history in German language, issued by Propyläen publishing house), the volume on the period from 1917 until today carries the title «The crisis of Europe». However, what had got into a crisis, was not Europe, but the capitalist system, when at the end of the 19th century some great powers crossed their national borders with the ambition of redrawing the map of the world. After World War I had broken out, in October 1914, Albert Einstein, Wilhelm Foerster and others warned in their «Appeal to the Europeans» that scientific and technological innovations be exclusively used for peaceful means. This appeal is even more topical today than it was then.¹⁰

In the third year of the war, the October Revolution in Russia rocked Europe's brittle capitalist system. Fearing that Soviet Russia and Lenin's «Decree on Peace» might take hold of Europe, the German Emperor's troops invaded revolutionary Russia. From March 1918, the German government in Brest-Litovsk tried to chase Soviet Russia out of history by imposing humiliating terms for peace.¹¹ United in their anti-Bolshevik attitude, British troops invaded Murmansk on March 9, 1918, the Japanese marched into Vladivostok on April 5, 1918, and German troops invaded Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic states. Tsarist generals reunited forces in the Caucasus. Altogether 14 capitalist countries led three bloody campaigns against Soviet Russia. In January 1922, the last Soviet occupants in the Far East were displaced. Winston Churchill wrote «The Civil War in Russia ended in the absolute victory of the Bolshevik Revolution...Germany and Italy nearly succumbed to Communist propaganda and designs, and Hungary fell for a while under the control of the Communist dictator Béla Kun. Although Marshal Foch¹² wisely observed that 'Bolshevism had never crossed the frontiers of victory', the foundations of European civilisation

¹⁰ An extract from «Aufruf an die Europäer»: «While technology and transport obviously urge us to virtually acknowledge international relations and thus a general world culture, no war has disrupted the spirit of community in the coexistence of cultures as intensely as the present war ... The world has become smaller through technology ... Therefore, it seems not only useful, but absolutely necessary that educated men of all states use their influence to ... use the conditions of peace ... to make Europe an organic unity. The technological and intellectual prerequisites already exist ...» Source of quotation in German: Zeitschrift GEP Geschichte, Erziehung, Politik, issue 8/1997, p. 361.

¹¹ However, by negotiating a peace treatment with the Soviet government, Germany was the only country that recognised Soviet Russia in terms of international law; that was a positive aspect.

¹² The French Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929) was commander-in-chief of the Western Allies in 1918.

trembled in the early post-war years.»¹³ The October Revolution furthered the creation of Communist parties in many countries.¹⁴ Socialist and Communist ideas raised hopes everywhere. Ignoring these facts, a professor of History at Berlin's Humboldt University wrote 90 years after the October Revolution that the Bolsheviks «stood for a programme hardly anyone could make sense of».¹⁵

The fall of Russian tsarism and the conquest of political power by the Bolshevik party in October 1917 also provoked revolutionary social uprisings. For historians, the 20th century is – and will be – the century of the first major confrontation between Socialism and Capitalism, beginning with the shots from the cruiser Aurora in Petrograd and ending in 1991, at least on the European continent, in a defeat for Socialism with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its European allies, after it had got entangled – partly by its own fault, partly by external influence – into a political crisis.

Some promising attempts were made in the aftermath of World War I to secure peace¹⁶, failing how-

¹³ Winston Churchill: The Second World War. German title: Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Frankfurt/M. 2007, pp. 23/24, quotation from the chapter: The Follies of the Victors. (Die Torheiten der Sieger.)

¹⁴ Some examples: Communist Party of Hungary November 1918, CP Poland December 1918, CP Netherlands April 1919, CP Yugoslavia April 1919, CP America und CP Mexico September 1919, CP Spain April 1920, CP Indonesia May 1920, CP Iran June 1920, CP Great Britain August 1920, CP Turkey and CP Uruguay September 1920, CP Australia October 1920, CP Luxemburg January 1921 etc. The Second World Congress of the Communist International in Petrograd in July/August 1920 was attended by approx. 200 representatives of more than 37 Communist parties from all over the world.

¹⁵ Jörg Barberowski: Was war die Oktoberrevolution? (What was the October Revolution?) In: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ), Thema Oktoberrevolution. Beilage zur Wochenzeitung Das Parlament, No. 44-45/2007, pp. 7-13. An extract from the article: «In the atmosphere of hatred the Bolsheviks acted as advocates of unrestrained violence ... War was the Bolsheviks' way of life ... For the Civil war was a war of destruction that could only be won if the enemy was truly annihilated ... that would leave scorched earth, material and emotional devastation ... The Bolsheviks lacerated the thin layer of civilisation that had spread over the old Russia during the past century, they destroyed the European Russia, its elites and its values, and replaced it with barbaric, self-indulgent tyranny.» The other 5 articles are in a similar style.

¹⁶ The foundation of the League of Nations in 1919, the Conference of Genoa and the Rapallo Treaty of 1922, as well as the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which prohibited the use of gases and bacteriological methods of warfare, strengthened the peace movement. The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 condemned «...war as an instrument to settle international conflicts ... and ... as an instrument of national policy...» Source of quotations: Handbuch der Verträge 1871 – 1964. Berlin (GDR) 1968, p. 254.

ever in the end to prevent the murderous Second World War. In his book «The Second World War», Churchill wrote in 1948 on retrospect of the possibilities to prevent the world war in 1939: «Never before a war could have been prevented more easily than this one, which has destroyed everything that was left of the world after the previous battle.»¹⁷ Hindsight is easier than foresight.

After Hitler's Germany had been defeated in 1945, the conditions in Europe, Asia and Central America were favourable for social and political change – the people of Europe were tired of war and genocide in 1945. The end of war and the foundation of the United Nations were the most important – and from a historical and political perspective – most promising events of the mid-twentieth century. The United Nations Organization (or simply United Nations, UN) states its aims in Article 1 of its Charter: «To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.»¹⁸ The United Nations is the most democratic organisation existing; all 192 Member States have equal rights.¹⁹

But things took a different turn. The foundation of NATO on April 4, 1949 marked the first peak of the Cold War. Even today, it is still being reasoned that the creation of NATO was necessary to curtail the

Soviet threat, that Stalin had planned to conquer Western Europe; for example, in the book «Das atlantische Bündnis - Tatsachen und Dokumente» (The Atlantic Alliance – Facts and Documents), published in 1990: «The defeat of the two great military and industrial powers Germany and Japan had resulted in an enormous vacuum both in the east and in the west of the Soviet Union. Capitalising on these exceptionally opportune conditions, the Soviet Union fully brought to bear the strength of the Red Army, conducting expansionist policies that soon became a threat to peace and collective security.»²⁰ Historical facts are being distorted and lies are being sustained against better judgement.

Those who knew which devastation the war had caused in the Soviet Union and which state the Red Army was in 1945/1946, also knew that the Soviet Union simply lacked the prerequisites to lead a military campaign against Western Europe.²¹ To claim that Stalin or his successors had the intention to lead a war against former allies is simply absurd. Stalin's strategic aim was a de-militarised, politically neutral Germany that would only be able to play a peaceful part in its future relationships.

In 1945, the Western Allies came up against a newborn confidence of the peoples everywhere in Europe that had been forged in the course of anti-fascist struggle for liberation. The peoples were defying the old powers. The struggle for liberation of the peoples of the Soviet Union, the triumph of the Red Army, Stalin's political renown and the anti-fascist resistance against Nazi occupants everywhere in Europe had contributed to this confidence. In the first French post-war parliament, the Communists were the strongest parliamentary party; Italy, Greece and some other states saw similar developments. However, certain Western elites regarded pro-Soviet and pro-Communist political movements as a threat to their freedom. Churchill brought it to the point when he described this unexpected trend from the view of his political partisans: «The struggles in Russia exceeded by far the extent of all operations that I had to report on so far... The scope of these victories [of the Red Army against the Wehrmacht] raised questions of enormous importance... Communism raised its head behind the thundering Russian battle-front.

¹⁷ Winston Churchill, see above, p. 13. On British stalling tactics, also see: Das Archiv Dirksen (1937-1939) - Dokumente und Materialien aus der Vorgeschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges, 2 volumes, Moskau 1949.

¹⁸ Source: Die Konferenz von San Francisco 1945. (The Conference of San Francisco in 1945.) Series: Die Sowjetunion auf internationalen Konferenzen während des Großen Vaterländischen Krieges 1941 – 1945. Vol. 5, Moskau/Berlin (GDR) 1988, p. 470.

¹⁹ The official structure of the SC: 5 permanent Members with veto right (i.e. the nuclear powers Russia, China, USA, France, Great Britain) and ten non-permanent Members elected for a period of two years: 3 from Africa, 2 from Asia, 2 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 from Eastern Europe, 2 from Western Europe, North America and others. Given the disproportionate representation of Europe in this composition, it is questionable why Germany is so eager to become a permanent Member of the Security Council. Those who call for a reform of the SC, should however not start with the five great powers right to veto, but rather check whether all continents are equally represented in the Council to defend their interest. Three of the permanent Members and two of the current non-permanent Members (i.e. Italy and Belgium) are NATO members; this means that Western Europe and the U.S. have five representatives in the Security Council.

²⁰ Das Atlantische Bündnis – Tatsachen und Dokumente. 7th ed. 1990. Eine Allianz für die neunziger Jahre, p. 17.

²¹ If the Soviet Union had really had expansionist ambitions, it certainly wouldn't have withdrawn its troops from Northern Norway in September 1945, from Czechoslovakia in November 1945, from the island Bornholm in April 1946, from Manchuria and Northern Iran in May 1946, from Bulgaria in December 1947 and from North Korea in December 1948. This all happened before the foundation of NATO.

Russia was the Deliverer, and Communism the gospel she brought.»²²

This gospel comported a *social* threat indeed – it threatened forms and objectives of imperialist rule. Many people had failed to identify the Nazi's war aims as crimes that violated international law.²³ After the war, they remembered that especially Communists, Social Democrats and Unionist had given warning of fascism at an early stage. The upper-classes had gambled away the entitlement to lead the German nation by supporting Hitler's fascism. Many now relied on the workers' parties and their spokesmen who had returned out of concentration camps, jails or emigration. This is reflected by most party programmes that were established between 1945 and 1947. Hard to believe as it may be today, the «Cologne Principles» (Kölner Leitsätze) of Adenauer's CDU in 1945 stated in point 16: «The aim of the economy is to satisfy the needs of the people...The hegemony of big business, private monopolies and corporations shall be abolished...»²⁴

After their liberation, German members of the resistance strived for the establishment of a unified Socialist workers' party. The Soviet occupying power supported the merging of KPD and SPD into SED, the Western occupying authorities on their part supported the opponents in their respective zones, fearing Communist infiltration. A unified workers' party wasn't in line with the bourgeois concept of democracy. NATO became the military arm of the ruling elites of the capitalist world against the U.S.S.R. and its allies. The old Federal Republic of Germany saw dozens of lawsuits against Socialists and Communists who had been fighting against the division of Germany, re-fascisation and re-militarisation.²⁵ The great

powers within NATO pushed armament research, which brought corporations nearly unlimited profits.

The U.S.S.R. and other parties to the Warsaw Treaty²⁶ initiated the "Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe" (CSCE), which took place in Helsinki from July 3, 1973 until July 21, 1975. It was organised with the support of European countries that were not bound by a pact and against the sustained resistance of the FRG and other NATO members. 35 European states, both Eastern and Western, as well the U.S. and Canada signed the Helsinki Final Act on August 1, 1975. As the participating states forbore from submitting the Final Act to the national parliaments for ratification, the agreements that had been reached in difficult negotiations escaped being dismembered at national level, and could thus be implemented immediately. Though it could not be ruled out that there might be different interpretations of the content of the Final Act, nobody would be able to ignore it. Willy Brandt's new *Ostpolitik* and other international factors benefited the policy of détente and the CSCE process. The Helsinki Final Act was a framework agreement between 35 signatory states on questions relating to military and political détente and peace-keeping (basket 1), co-operation in the field of economics (basket 2) and cultural understanding between nations (basket 3). The participating states declared to «continue...the multilateral process initiated»²⁷. The Final Act didn't lose its importance when a new round of arms race was heralded in 1979/80 at the instigation of the U.S. Another important CSCE document is the «Charter of Paris for a New Europe», signed on November 21, 1990, which aimed at turning the ideas of Europe as a «peaceful home» into reality.

In 1994/1995 the CSCE was renamed «Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe» (OSCE). Ever since, it has slackened into a mere instrument for reconstruction in states where NATO had destroyed socio-economic infrastructures and forms of governmental organisation through war and acted as an occupying power, e.g. in Yugoslavia. Another aim of the OSCE is to arbitrate ethnical conflicts and help assert middle-class and parliamentary concepts of democracy, occidental values and occident-inspired concepts regarding human rights. With the creation of the OSCE, the CSCE principles of

²² Winston Churchill: Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Frankfurt/Main 207, pp. 944 and 988.

²³ In 1942, Goebbels had announced in the weekly newspaper «Das Reich»: «For us, this is the sense of the war: We are not fighting for ideals; we are fighting for Ukrainian cornfields, for Caucasian oil, for the wealth of the world. And we want to make a packet on it.» Source of quotation: Aufruf der KPD vom 11. Juni 1945, in: Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Series III, vol. 1, Berlin (GDR) 1959, p. 14.

²⁴ Point 17 reads, inter alia: «...Ownership structures will be established according to the principle of social justice and the requirements of the common good ... Postal and railway services, coal mining and energy production are categorically responsibilities of the public sector. The banking and insurance sector is subject to government control.» Source of quotation: Helmut Kistler: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Vorgeschichte und Geschichte 1945 – 1983. Bonn 1985, unaltered reprint 1991, p. 68.

²⁵ See e.g.: Diether Posser: Anwalt im Kalten Krieg. Ein Stück deutscher Geschichte in politischen Prozessen 1951 – 1968. Munich 1991. Heinrich Hannover: Die Republik vor

Gericht 1954 – 1974. Erinnerungen eines unbequemen Rechtsanwalts. Berlin 1998.

²⁶ After the FRG had become a NATO member, the Socialist states of Europe concluded the «Warsaw Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance» in 1955.

²⁷ Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe of August 1, 1975. Source of quotation: Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Dokumente 1972 – 1975, p. 590

new international relationships between nations with equal rights were de facto abolished.

This political inertia of governments at the end of the 20th century was criticised by the «Club of Rome»²⁸ in its 1991 report «The global Revolution»: «Governments seldom generate innovation. They react to pressure for change...However, in reacting to demands for new approaches, the natural conservatism of administrations...is often able to put the brakes on change. Like other institutions they are not given to self-criticism and when subjected to external pressures react defensively. They think their methods...are ideal and the only reasonable means to solve problems...»²⁹

And here our considerations on the German approach to history in general and NATO's history in particular come full circle. There's a common aspect to Goethe's and Schiller's thoughts and the ideas of the authors of the Club of Rome Reports: a connection of revolutionary thought and political action of citizens/citoyens. The humanist requirements of the French Revolution – Liberty, Equality, Fraternity – celebrated their 220th anniversary in 2009: a jubilee of world historical relevance. 120 years ago, i.e. in 1889 – another jubilee – two eminently significant books were published. While Alfred Nobel had hoped the destructive force of his invention dynamite would make wars impossible, Bertha von Suttner wrote «Das Maschinenzeitalter» (The Machine Age) and «Die Waffen nieder» (Lay Down Your Arms). Her bottom line was: «Man has created danger. It is man's duty to avert it.»³⁰

Forty years ago, on July 21, 1969, the American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin were the first human beings who contemplated our planet Earth from the moon. Since Juri Gagarin, first man in space, all cosmonauts and astronauts have praised the beauty of our blue planet and called on all people to protect the earth and space against militant poten-

tates. Gagarin's first flight to the stars on April 12, 1961 and the landing on the moon of American astronauts in 1969 will remain highlights in terms of policy of peace of the 20th century – in spite of military aspects that accompanied them. Maybe only later generations will be able to appreciate the truly peace-promoting interdependencies of political events of the whole 20th century, when in Eastern and Western Europe, due to a different assessment of the experience of the wars in 1918 and 1945, two different economic trends emerged, which at political level resulted in two different forms of government. What we need to reflect on after all is whether military alliances such as NATO still make sense.

NATO's political role after the end of the East-West conflict in 1990

In 1990, the perspectives for the future relations between European States seemed to be promising, as the Heads of State and Government of the 35 CSCE States declared in the first paragraph of their «Charter of Paris for a New Europe», signed on November 21, 1990, «...that henceforth our relations will be founded on respect and co-operation. ...The courage of men and women, the strength of the will of the peoples and the power of the ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe.»³¹

Two days earlier, on November 19, 1990, the members of both NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation had stated in a joint declaration «...that in the beginning new era of European relations they would no longer regard each other as adversaries, but wished to build new partnerships and reach out to each other in friendship. ... In this context, they affirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, as well as from the attempt to alter existing borders through the threat or use of force, and furthermore from all actions that are in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes of these documents. They shall not use any of their weapons, unless in self-defence or in another manner that is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.»³²

These documents were also signed by the Heads of State and Government of NATO countries. After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in summer 1991 many European citizens expected that NATO would equally cease to exist. The alleged adversaries, who had

²⁸ The Club of Rome was founded in 1968 by Aurelio Peccei, manager at FIAT, and Alexander King, a Scottish OECD director, as a voluntary association of future-oriented entrepreneurs, scientists and politicians. Today it has some 100 members. The Club's objective is «a shared concern and responsibility for the future of mankind». The first Report to the Club of Rome entitled «The Limits to Growth», which warned against the destructive activities of human beings, was published in 1972 and caused a great stir at international level. Altogether 33 Reports to the Club of Rome have been published so far.

²⁹ Alexander King, Bertrand Schneider: *The First Global Revolution – A Report by the Council of the Club of Rome*. German title: *Die Globale Revolution – Ein Bericht des Rates an den Club of Rome*, 1991. Source of Quotation: *Spiegel Spezial*, No. 2/1991, p. 105.

³⁰ Bertha von Suttner: *Die Waffen nieder*. Berlin 1990, p. 413.

³¹ Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Declaration of the CSCE meeting of Heads of State and Government on November 21, 1990. Source of quotation: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik (Blätter...)* Heft 1/1991, p. 105.

³² Joint declaration of twenty-two states (NATO and Warsaw Treaty Organisation) of November 19, 1990. *Ibid.*, p.115.

served as pretext for NATO's foundation in 1949, no longer existed. Social changes in Eastern and Central European countries that had so far been allies of the U.S.S.R. were qualified as «popular revolutions» by Western politicians. Other governments of former Socialist states – who now prefer to refer to themselves as 'democratic' – aspired to NATO membership for various reasons and, viewed objectively, thus contributed to the preservation of this military alliance. Nevertheless, it was a fact of life that NATO's very existence had come into question.

Until 1990, NATO had viewed itself as a transatlantic link and Euro-Atlantic security organisation with the mission to counter the expansionism of the Eastern Bloc states. In 1990, NATO declared itself the only remaining intact military alliance and announced new paths to preserving peace, while no longer excluding to conduct military operations outside NATO area. On the NATO's Council of Ministers on December 17 and 18, 1990 the NATO Secretary General, Manfred Wörner, spoke about the future tasks of the alliance in the «reorganisation of Europe» – according to NATO's ideas – that should rest «on four pillars»: 1. NATO as guarantor of stability and security; 2. The European Community as the driving force of European integration; 3. Institutionalisation of the CSCE; 4. The European Council as moral guardian of the existing social system.³³ On the NATO summit in Rome in November 1991, these catchwords served as the basis for the establishment of a new strategy and a NATO council for co-operation. On December 9 and 10, 1991 the Member States of the European Community set the course for the European Union. The Federal Chancellor Kohl said on December 13: «This treaty ...is setting the course for the future of Europe... We have thus put a core objective of German European policy into practice... achieved...a sustainable result that protects our fundamental interests...»³⁴ He didn't specify what this «core objective of German European policy» exactly was, but it undoubtedly encompassed economic expansion toward Eastern and Central European States.

Meanwhile, military and economic experts in Bonn under Defence Minister Stoltenberg were elaborating new guidelines on future tasks of the Federal Armed Forces – within the scope of NATO operations, of course. Stoltenberg's successor, Volker Rühle, gave a speech he held at the 33rd Commanders' Conference in Leipzig on May 14, 1992 the delicate title «The Bundeswehr is a core element of Germany's com-

mitment to the Alliance and of Germany's political capacity to act». Here are some particularly meaty phrases from that speech: «Our country is in a uniquely fortunate situation; for never before were there better opportunities to build a peaceful and free Europe. As a country at the heart of Europe, we have every chance to determine peace and freedom...But we are also facing new responsibilities...Germany is now sovereign...We are free to decide. ...at the same time we must make security provisions for entirely different conditions. ... It is a challenging mission to shape peace in a diffuse, confusing security environment, to identify crisis-prone developments in time and to do the right things in advance.... Politics is not the concern of the military; but politics needs military advice. Moreover, it needs to be clarified where our journey goes...»³⁵

Some of the terms Rühle used merit closer attention: The Bundeswehr as a core element of the political capacity to act, Germany can determine peace and freedom, has new responsibilities, is sovereign, free to decide. What exactly does he mean by security provisions for different conditions? The destination of our journey is not specified – nor who the travellers will be. Those sweet words are meant to obscure the fact that war will again be used as a political instrument – regardless of what has been agreed in the aforementioned declarations.

While the U.S. waged the First Gulf War in 1990/1991, the Europeans busied themselves with the new system of political weighting that had become necessary after the reunification of Germany. The European market had to be enlarged, the process of European integration had to be pushed on – and all that had to be sold as a means of peace preservation. In 1991, the *Leviathan* magazine published an article which pondered that Germany must "after its continuous advancement toward a top position in the global economy...henceforth play a more important role, especially in the context of military preservation of international stability". But the more "interdependent States are developing into a community of survival", the "less significant the military factor is becoming. When civil challenges increase, the importance of societies' civil potential increases as well... [the] Western industrial nations have by now left the phase that was dominated by 'war(s) between powers' behind. It has been replaced by the 'competition between economies' ...It is only against the backdrop of the appreciation of economic, but also of ecological interdependencies and vulnerabili-

³³ Source of quotation: Lothar Schröter: Die NATO im Kalten Krieg (NATO in the Cold War), vol. 1 from 1949-1975, vol. 2 from 1976-1991. Eine Chronik. Edition Militärgeschichte vol. 7, Kai Homilus Verlag Berlin 2009, vol. 2, p. 1062.

³⁴ Source: Das Parlament. No. 52-53 of December 20/27, 1991, p. 3.

³⁵ Volker Rühle: Betr.: Bundeswehr. Sicherheitspolitik und Streitkräfte im Wandel. Berlin Bonn Herford 1993, p. 11 et seq.

ties that we can reassess a change in status and rank.»³⁶

Did the author really not realise how contradictory his thoughts were? Why should the reunited Germany play a more important role in military matters, if the military factor was to become less significant in international politics and if civil challenges were to increase? Whose interests is this author serving? When asked about Europe's future, renowned intellectuals argued in favour of civil approaches. On the other hand, government politicians, as well as like-minded militaries, and financial and industrial tycoons preferred to bank on NATO as their own «security system».

In this context, the German Minister for Defence, Volker Rühle, issued the «defence policy guidelines for the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Defence» (VPR = Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien für den Geschäftsbereich des Bundesministers der Verteidigung). Two among the five VPR guidelines are particularly revealing: «4. The reconstruction in the Eastern parts of our country is a key priority which must be addressed by Germany as a whole... The VPR define core areas and priorities to avoid conflicts of goals in this area of conflict. 5. The VPR provide an authoritative basis ... for the external representation of Germany's military interests.» This means that allowances were made for both internal and external deployment of the Bundeswehr, particularly with regard to the reconstruction of Eastern Germany, with the aim of avoiding «conflicts of goals in this area of conflict». What area of conflict does he refer to? The dismantlement of nationally-owned enterprise, the dismantlement of rights that had been established in the GDR, such as women's and young people's rights, the right to work, the right to education etc.? Regarding foreign affairs, Rühle admitted that the implementation of German interests might «...not in each individual case be congruent with the interest of our allies and other partners.» And some of the ten «vital security interests» that are attributed to the Bundeswehr portfolio and thus imply the use of military force are rather alarming:

«(7) To promote democratisation, as well as economic and social progress in Europe and throughout the world;

(8) To sustain free global trade and unobstructed access to markets and commodities everywhere in the world, within a fair global economic order;

(10) To influence international institutions and processes in accordance with our interests and based

³⁶ Klaus Dieter Wolf: Das neue Deutschland – eine «Weltmacht»? (The new Germany – a «world power»?.) In: Leviathan, Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft, Heft 2/1991, pp. 253/254.

on our economic strength, our military contribution and first and foremost our credibility as a stable, capable democracy.»³⁷

Free global trade, a fair global economic order, and influencing international processes by means of military instruments – what kind of justice and freedom is that supposed to be?

Those VPRs of 1992 made it obvious «where the journey should be going». In the same year, NATO started debating on NATO missions «out of area», i.e. outside NATO territory. Such missions were to be authorised by the UN Security Council or the CSCE (from 1995: OSCE). The real global problems, however, such as climate, environmental, and energy issues, the dreadful state of education, hunger in Third World countries etc. were relegated to a back seat.

Whatever peace mission NATO has conducted in Europe or elsewhere in the world since 1990, allegedly to spread democracy or to enforce the human rights – none of these much heralded goals has been achieved. On the contrary: with NATO's war against Yugoslavia and the bombing of Belgrade streets on March 10, 1999, war has returned to Europe. For the first time since 1939, the Federal Armed Forces of reunited Germany took part in a military aggression. German troops had been marching through the Balkans before – that was in 1941. But this time, they would come as NATO members and bring the Yugoslavian peoples freedom, democracy and peace, with military means of course. In reality, NATO only wreaked havoc and destroyed historical social structures. In Yugoslavia and elsewhere, NATO soldiers have fought to defend the geostrategic interests of the U.S. and the political and capitalist interests of imperialist superpowers.

An analysis of international developments since 1990 demonstrates that none of the conflicts that were referred to as critical to Europe's security and global peace has been resolved with military means, neither by the U.S. alone, nor in association with other NATO States. On the contrary: National and social conflicts in former **Yugoslavia** have grown more acute through outside interference. The war caused destruction and allowed corporations from the aggressing states to take possession of the occupied country's commodities.

The U.S. war against **Iraq** was based on insolent lies of the American secret services. The real objective was to return foreign oil production companies

³⁷ Defence Policy Guideline of November 26, 1992. Source of quotation: Blätter..., Heft 9/1993, pp. 1138/1139. For detailed information, see: Ingomar Klein/Wolfgang Triebel: «Helm ab zum Gebet!» Militarismus und Militarisierung – ein deutsches Schicksal? Trafo Verlag Berlin 1999, pp. 27 – 37.

that had been nationalised by Hussein to British and American oil tycoons.

The U.S. invaded **Afghanistan** – allegedly with the aim of punishing the Taliban, Islamist al-Qaeda terrorists and their leader Bin Laden for destroying the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001. In reality, it's all about oil, gas and geopolitical interests. When German ministers claim the Bundeswehr is not waging war in Afghanistan, but building schools, hospitals and roads, this is as ridiculous and rings as hollow as Minister Struck's statement that «Germany's security is defended in the Hindu Kush». This U.S. war has been raging for nine years now, with the participation of NATO and other «willing» allies – however, an end of the war is not in sight. This war can't be won, even if still more military were involved. It should therefore be ended by political means, in order to find ways to remedy the destructions in towns and villages – together with representatives of the Afghan people.

NATO also counts pressure, threats and bribery among its «weapons». Governments are being put under the control of foreign «protection forces» and are being obliged to accept that their countries adopt neoliberal measures such as privatisation and deregulation, as well as welfare cuts, and political dependency. This pressure has even been exacerbated in 2008/2009 by the global credit crunch which devours billions of dollars and in which all leading industrial nations are involved. By «aiding» poorer countries, they pass on the crisis, which generates them additional profits. Although they knew what had caused the crisis, the G8 members on their summit in L'Aquila (Italy) in July 2009, failed to reach an agreement that went beyond the lowest common denominator. The «breadcrumbs» they make available to Third World countries are just petty cash for the big banks, just a pittance: they will neither relieve hunger nor misery.

All this causes growing insecurity in our world, along with armies and their material armament. The Lisbon Treaty even obliges the EU member states to build up their arms – even though, it is defined down to the improvement of «military capabilities». In order to achieve this aim, all member states shall be advised by an armaments agency, which is ingeniously referred to as «Permanent Structured Cooperation» or as «Defence Agency» that shall contribute to «implementing any useful measure for strengthening the industrial and technological base of the defence sector and for improving the effectiveness of military expenditure».³⁸ Military and arma-

ment are the eternal sources and elements of insecurity and always bear the potential to generate new social and political conflicts. Uninhibited greed of gain and reckless striving for power over others – these are the main characteristics of the capitalist system. They are the breeding ground for the destruction of our planet. Among the 6.7 billion people on the globe (figure from July 2007), about five billion are primarily governed by the elites of this socio-political system. In its pursuit of profit, imperialism compromises people's living conditions as well as their opportunities for development and increasingly drives the rapidly growing world population into misery.

The greed of the U.S. for unlimited world supremacy has been described by Zbigniew Brzezinski in his book «The Grand Chessboard – American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives»³⁹. The implementation of the goals of American foreign policy is characterised by unhampered competition of capital and integrated into NATO. The primacy of the U.S. is well-established in the Atlantic Alliance and serves to regulate the other partners. Conflicts between NATO powers cannot be excluded, as their vested interests may diverge; this makes wars possible and results in an ever-increasing armament mania. Nobody can argue that the dangers that threaten our world are indeterminable. And none of the global «threats» that the NATO Secretary-General mentioned on October 1, 2009 can actually be contained with military force.⁴⁰ On the contrary: the military alliance NATO is part of these calamitous developments. The citizens of all nations must join their efforts to curb these developments and stop the degeneration of democracy at its roots.

The party DIE LINKE has proposed to disentangle the net of global problems in international relations with civil means and methods, rather than to exacerbate them through the use of force and military; this

politische Bildung, Bonn 2008. Art. 42 – 46, here Art. 42 (3) and 45 (1) c).

³⁹ The book bears the following dedication: «For my students – to help them shape tomorrow's world.» First published in 1997. German title: Die einzige Weltmacht – Amerikas Strategie der Vorherrschaft.

⁴⁰ On October 1, 2009 NATO and Lloyd's of London, the world's leading insurance company, held a conference on NATO's new strategy in London. The NATO Secretary-General, Rasmussen, mentioned a number of future *casus belli* that would require NATO intervention: piracy, cyber security and defence, climate change, extreme weather events, rise of sea levels, mass migrations, water shortage, draughts, food shortage, new resources under melting polar icecaps, global warming, CO2 emissions, securing factories, power plants and ports against storms and flooding, securing energy supply, humanitarian and environmental catastrophes, energy saving, reduction of dependence on foreign energy sources. See NATO, October 1, 2009.

³⁸ Source: Vertrag von Lissabon. Sonderdruck des Europäischen Parlaments, gedruckt von der Bundeszentrale für

proposal is based on a concrete factual analysis of the situation at the beginning of the 21st century. Demilitarisation of politics as well as disarmament should start with the building of a collective security system which integrates all European States including Russia and which is open to the U.S. and Canada. This proposal for a new approach, a new policy should be assessed critically and then be translated into strategic concepts to solve global problems. NATO, by all means, is a hangover of the Cold War; it is behind the times and should be dissolved – this is a fact of life that can't be glossed over by any form of politico-moral make-up.

Hysterical NATO strategists ignore historical experiences

«Great Carthage fought three wars. It was still powerful after the first, still inhabitable after the second one. It was no longer to be found after the third.» (Bertolt Brecht)⁴¹

No world power has ever survived world supremacy ambitions of its protagonists, no matter what clever weapons they had created. If contemporary nuclear and high-tech weapons were used, this would not merely destroy a world power – humanity as a whole would perish.

Without getting into further details on causes, backgrounds or the larger context – the Russians had to withdraw from Afghanistan after suffering heavy losses. The U.S.S.R. failed to grant the request put forward by the new Afghan government under Babrak Karmal, which had emerged from the people's revolution in April 1978, i.e. to protect the country against foreign interference. The U.S. goaded militant Taliban and other anti-Soviet forces that had been overthrown by the revolution on and equipped them with weapons to give «the U.S.S.R. its Vietnam War»⁴², as

⁴¹ Source: Bertolt Brecht: Offener Brief an die deutschen Künstler und Schriftsteller vom 26. September 1951. (Open Letter to German artists and authors of September 26, 1951.) In: Bertolt Brecht: Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst, Berlin (GDR) 1966, vol. II, p.194. .

⁴² Interview with the French weekly paper «Le Nouvel Observateur» of January 15-21, 2008. To the paper's questions, Brzezinski replied (extracts): «Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention. ...We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would...When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them ... That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap ... The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter: We

Brzezinski had advised U.S. President Carter. The current war of the U.S. and NATO in Afghanistan has been going on for eight years now, without producing any noticeable results. And this nation will not be defeated, even if still more soldiers and modern high-tech weapons are brought into the country. The Taliban may well be accused of oppressing their own proud people, of fighting the occupiers with terrorist means without flinching from putting their own people to death – but they cannot be blamed for defending themselves against the occupying forces, who accuse them of terrorism for doing so. Afghanistan has been a geopolitical bone of contention between the great powers since the 19th century, starting with Russia and Great Britain; today the U.S. wishes to control Russia, China and the other members of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation from Afghanistan. Besides, the U.S. and its allies' particular interest in Afghanistan are gas and oil, or more precisely: gas and oil pipelines. And last but not least: the cultivation of opium poppy has increased significantly since U.S. troops set foot on Afghan soil again; 93 % of all opiates on the world market currently originate in Afghanistan – to the immense delight of the finance mafia on Wall Street.

I will not address the war against Iraq that the U.S. started in 2003 and the pack of lies brought up by its secret services in order to legitimate it. The entire world has been betrayed and deceived.

Centuries of experiences from war and lessons learned from wars of liberation were exemplified again in the 20th century – conclusion: The rebellion of enslaved or assailed people cannot be contained forever, no matter how cleverly you conceal the real causes of wars and conflicts. According to the 2008 world almanac published by Fischer, there were 278 political conflicts throughout the world in 2006. Among them were «six domestic wars, and 29 serious crises with repeated use of force...» The number of conflicts has increased; however, the almanac provides no information regarding their causes. Only the «object of conflict» is identified. Here are some examples of wars:

«Iraq (insurgents) object of conflict: national power, system/ideology; Afghanistan (Taliban) object of conflict: system/Ideology, national power. Israel (Hezbollah) object of conflict: system/ideology.»⁴³

In addition, there were 20 «serious crises». In 2006, the United Nations conducted 18 peace missions in crisis areas, NATO operates in the Kosovo (Serbia) and Afghanistan as international «protection

now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war.»

⁴³ Fischer Weltalmanach 2008, Abschnitt Kriege und Konflikte, pp. 30/31.

force» – who is it actually protecting? The EU has soldiers stationed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is involved in missions in Macedonia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Palestine, Moldavia, Ukraine etc. All these «peacekeeping operations» are almost automatically conferred to the military; on the other hand, civil approaches to conflict resolution are not being sufficiently elaborated. Many conflict-stricken regions are under the control of warlords and private militant gangs who sometimes hold important jobs in public administration and even ministries and who are financed by private third parties abroad who have their own vested interests. The warlords' only interests are: power, force and profit. Besides the warlords, private military companies that act on behalf of governments operate in Iraq, Afghanistan, in the Balkans, in Peru and Columbia in Latin America, and in other crisis regions in Africa. Such companies exist in the U.S. (the Pentagon had planned USD 30 billion for them in its 2003 budget), in Kuwait, in Great Britain and in Germany (Fa. Optronik in Königsborn near Unna, North Rhine-Westphalia).⁴⁴

In 2008, the U.S. had 865 military bases with more than 190 000 soldiers in 46 states and territories all over the world⁴⁵ – an enormous conflict potential. The U.S. Space and Missile Defence Conference, which took place in Huntsville/Alabama from August 17-20, 2009 gave rise to new fears for our world. The magazine «Global Research.ca» reported in August that approx. 2000 participants had gathered at the conference, among them the new NASA director Bolden (a retired general), leading militaries, the major U.S. armament companies, as well as influential industrials and politicians. The main topic of the conference: to push U.S. and NATO plans for a missile shield in Europe. NATO's 1999 defence concept states: «The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States;...the supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States; [...] based in Europe and committed to NATO». Currently, an estimated 350 nuclear bombs are stored at air bases in the NATO countries Germany, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands, where they are guarded by U.S.

⁴⁴ With regard to this aspect, it is interesting to look at no. 85 of the 2003 Defence Policy Guidelines for the Bundeswehr, which says that in order to avoid duplication of capacities, it is possible to «renounce to individual capacities» of the Bundeswehr, «if they can be accomplished and taken on by other armed forces».

⁴⁵ In 2006, altogether 14 485 U.S. Army and Air Force soldiers, with 16 440 family members and 13 588 US civil army employees and family members, lived in Kaiserslautern, the biggest U.S. military colony outside the United States.

military units. «American and NATO missile shield plans for Europe, inextricably connected as they are with a global interceptor missile network and the militarization of space, don't exist in a strategic vacuum.»⁴⁶ The conference's aim is to give impetus to new versions of strategic nuclear weapons. The former U.S. Secretary of State Albright is chairing the corresponding committee. All these missile zealots that got together in Alabama in August 2009 are potential war criminals who want to help the U.S. obtain world supremacy by means of war.

The Bundeswehr's involvement in these crazy plans becomes obvious in the 2003 defence policy guidelines (Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien für die Bundeswehr (VPR)) and in the 2006 white paper on Germany's security policy and the future of the Federal Armed Forces (Weißbuch zur Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr). What you can read there about the causes of wars and crises, and about requirements that must accordingly be met by NATO's security policy, can hardly be conciliated with the real political and social developments in our world. If the aim really is to fight for freedom, progress, democracy, human rights, and against terrorism, piracy etc. – then increased armament efforts, with nuclear submarines, nuclear bombs, missiles, long-distances bombers etc. is definitely the wrong way; such weapons are useless in fighting terrorism.

Political and moral food for thought

Some of the following might provoke opposition. This is the author's intention. Nobody can provide ready-made answers; controversial debate, however, may pave the way for new approaches to problem solutions. It's worth a try. The history of the future has not been written yet and its course of development is not determined in advance. Moreover, historical processes are not immune against sudden twists and turns. There are both older and recent examples of individuals with insight and foresight who got involved to change the fate of their societies when entire peoples or national or social groups had been manipulated like mere objects by those in power for longer periods of time until the situation became unbearable. The most obvious examples of such processes are the purposeful actions of national liberation movements in Third World countries. In the 1940s and 1950s China and Korea broke the yoke of colonialism, the African peoples followed in the 1960s. The people of Vietnam taught the French intruders to fear it in Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 and gave the U.S. invaders a political and military defeat

⁴⁶ Rick Rozoff: Pentagon Plans For Global Military Supremacy. In: Global Research. ca, Centre for Research on Globalization, August 22, 2009.

in the 1970s. More than half a million American soldiers could not stop the Vietnamese struggle for liberation. The Arab world is fighting today against American paternalism and military pressure exerted by the NATO countries. Africa is getting organised, both internally and in its relations with other countries. Decades ago, the Africans pinned their anti-colonial hopes on the United States; now they rely on great powers such as China and India instead.

The knowledge about the power of popular movements on the one hand and about the military rampage of NATO's irresponsible, power-greedy politicians and profit-greedy weapon manufacturers in the U.S. and Europe on the other hand enables us to develop new ideas – on how we might prevent wars with all their mass slaughter and destruction of towns and villages; on how we might save our world from a nuclear inferno; on how we might at long last use all natural and human resources for peaceful purposes alone, instead of continuing to ruthlessly exploit humanity's finite resources in order to sustain the folly of ever-increasing armaments.

The most important thought-provoking impulse and the first step toward peace: raising the awareness of the people.

People are presented with – extremely cleverly elaborated – enemy stereotypes; in reality, their lives are not being threatened by terrorists from the outside, but rather from the inside: by military armament, armaments research, and service in intervention forces. It is cynical to advertise the armed forces as an “employer offering a large variety of job and career opportunities” to young people.⁴⁷ What job and career opportunities could you possibly have in an «army in combat»? For which achievements are engineers and technicians rewarded when they work in a nuclear weapons research lab? What do the workers in weapon factories think about their allegedly «secure» job when they are obliged to produce arms that will be used to kill other human beings? No citizen should sacrifice their natural political morality in favour of immoral politics. There simply is no justification for making men and women build appliances that are used to send men, women and children in other countries to death or to destroy their homes.

What Bertolt Brecht said at the Peoples' Congress for Peace in Vienna in 1952 is still valid today: «The memory of humanity for sufferings borne is astonishingly short. Its gift of imagination for coming sufferings is almost even lesser. The descriptions of the horrors caused by the atomic bomb apparently did not scare the people of New York much. The people of Hamburg are still surrounded by ruins, and yet

⁴⁷ Arbeitgeber Bundeswehr. Bundeswehr Wir sichern Zukunft. Hg. Bundesministerium für Verteidigung. O.J., p. 4.

they hesitate to raise the hand against a new war. The worldwide horrors of the forties seem to be forgotten. Many say: yesterday's rain doesn't wet us. It is this indifference we must fight, as its ultimate degree is death... Let us repeat again and again what has been said a thousand times before to avoid it is said once too few! Let us renew the warning, even though it may feel like ashes in our mouth! For humanity is threatened by wars compared to which those past are like poor attempts, and they will come without any doubt if the hands of those who prepare them in all openness are not broken.»⁴⁸

The peoples of the world do not need armament, nor do they need military alliances – the conversion of armament industry could create useful jobs and purposeful career opportunities.

A second aspect,

resulting from historical experience: War as an instrument of political force to counter whatever kind of crisis is definitely obsolete in the 21st century. If parliaments acquiesce to armaments orders, they indirectly acquiesce in war, thus undermining human livelihoods through a preposterous abuse of resources. What citizen of which nation would actually need or want war? What father or mother would possibly wish their son or daughter «a job» or «a career» aboard a nuclear submarine, or as a bomber pilot flying over foreign countries with nuclear weapons on board? Scientific and technological progress, as well as new technologies for civil use can be developed at much lower cost without the «detour» via the armaments research labs where resources are wasted – out of greed for profit and with the aim of causing destruction.

When Nazi soldiers were marching through Europe in 1941, U.S. President Roosevelt affirmed his determination to prosecute war criminals until the end of the world.⁴⁹ On January 6, 1941 he announced the «four essential human freedoms» and stated: «The forth is freedom from fear – which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act

⁴⁸ Bertolt Brecht: Schriften zur Politik und Gesellschaft Band II, Berlin und Weimar 1968, pp. 219/210.

⁴⁹ Unfortunately, his successors didn't stick to this. In December 1949, 60 war criminals were released prematurely from Landsberg prison; in January 1950, ten out of fifteen death sentences were transformed into prison sentences, 32 other war criminals were released immediately, including the industrial Krupp; his fortune was restored to him at the same time. In the same year, about 400 Nazi war specialists – generals, politicians, solicitors, industrials and defence business leaders – returned from imprisonment in Western countries and returned to Germany where they assumed new offices.

of physical aggression against any neighbour – anywhere in the world.»⁵⁰ Today, there is no more freedom from fear; on the contrary: fear and downright anxiety psychosis are more than ever used by politicians to manipulate the people. On April 11, 1945, one day before his death, Roosevelt wrote in his Jefferson Day Address⁵¹: «We seek peace – enduring peace. More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginning of all wars – yes, an end to this brutal, inhuman and thoroughly impractical method of settling the differences between governments.»⁵² His thoughts influenced the UN Charter.

65 years later, President Barack Obama picked up Roosevelt's ideas in his Prague speech: «As a nuclear power, as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act. We cannot succeed in this endeavour alone, but we can lead it, we can start it. So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. I'm not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly -- perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change. We have to insist, <Yes, we can>.»⁵³

Obama has to grapple with many difficulties. Even representatives of the German peace movement distrust his words and argue he has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize prematurely. Maybe it has been a premature decision. But what is far worse: the much-trumpeted «international community» of NATO members has so far not contributed much constructive feedback on the abolition of all nuclear weapons. When former U.S. Presidents took actions that were contrary to the law of nations, the Allies were always eager to make a statement regarding the breach of international law or the use of force. But it was the Russians – again eyed with suspicion – who immediately offered Obama their support. And what about his NATO «friends»? The resolution for a nuclear-free

⁵⁰ Source of quotation: Präsident Roosevelt: Amerika und Deutschland 1936-1945. (President Roosevelt: America and Germany 1936-1945). Auszüge aus Reden und Dokumenten. Hg. Im Auftrage der Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten. O.J. (1946), p. 38. The other three freedoms are as follows: «The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world. The second is the freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want – which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peace time life – everywhere in the world.» (p. 37)

⁵¹ Thomas Jefferson: (1743 – 1826) 1801 – 1809, President of the United States and human rights pioneer.

⁵² President Roosevelt, see above, p. 102.

⁵³ Prague Speech by Barack Obama on April 5, 2009. <http://www.welt.de/politik/article3507024>.

world that the UN Security Council unanimously adopted on September 24, 2009 has been signed by all NATO countries represented in the UNSC – but any concrete steps toward this aim remain to be seen.

If governments are committed to peace and take unerring action against war, they can finally tackle today's global problems – NATO is redundant in this context.

A third impulse

refers to the existing democracy in international relations. The United Nations Organisation has (UNO) has been existing since 1945. Both the composition and the role of the UN Security Council need to be reassessed and adapted to the contemporary global political context, in order to strengthen its capacity to act in the interest of all states on all continents. On the other hand, NATO, whose leading states are all members of the Security Council – where Germany would like to have a permanent seat as well⁵⁴ – must not be allowed to dismantle the United Nations, or to appoint itself as world police and rule the world. In the United Nations, all States have the same rights and responsibilities – it is this democratic structure which makes the UNO unique. The United Nations is the most important achievement in the history of transnational relations and of international law. With regard to what we have so far heard about the balance of power, the President of the 2008/2009 UN General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann brought a new tone to the international discussion, when he asked in his invitation to all 192 members that after the recent economic crisis the world must «hear the voices of the G-192» when decisions regarding the global economy are taken. «We do not agree that the right to speak up and to decide should be reserved to a group of eight or twenty states only.»⁵⁵ His draft of a final declaration has so far been rejected by the Western democracies – how much longer will we have to wait?

The United Nations and its Charter are a compendium of modern, democratic international law that needs to be defended – without fuss or quibble – against any NATO attempts at dismantling it.

Fourthly,

let us remember, that at its foundation in 1975 the CSCE was characterised by a democratic structure that was inspired by the UN Charter and guaranteed

⁵⁴ In his article «Das Andere Deutschland» («The Other Germany») Bertolt Brecht wrote in 1943: «...One thing is certain... if the rulers of Germany are beaten militarily but left in power economically, a pacification of Europe is unthinkable...» In: Bertolt Brecht, Schriften zur Politik, vol. II, see above, p. 294.

⁵⁵ See Neues Deutschland, June 24, 2009, p. 2.

the sovereign equality of all its member states. Both the 1957 «Helsinki Final Act» and the 1990 «Charter of Paris for a New Europe» are unique documents of international law – with respect, sovereignty, and equality of all participating states being the utmost priority.

However, the effect of these documents was curbed by NATO. The principle of equality of all member states that applied to the CSCE exists neither in NATO nor in the European Union. In the draft process of the «Lisbon Treaty» (in its 2008 version), there was continuous quibble over the text of Chapter 2 «Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy» (Art. 42-46); terms such as «certain», «participating», «concerned» member states were invented, along with individual voting and decision-taking mechanisms with «qualified majority», in order to conceal that bigger and smaller, more powerful and weaker member states do not have the same influence.⁵⁶ Both NATO and the EU wish to perpetuate such mechanisms for their own good and consequently want to avoid that the citizens of all Member States have their say on fundamental questions in European policy. Both the «European Union» (EU with the European Council, the Council of Ministers, the Parliament etc.) and NATO, a pure military organisation, are de facto «super-governments». In this context, the struggle for a collective security system including Russia is also a struggle for more democracy and equality in international relations.

It is a result of history and a political fact of life in contemporary Europe that we are now faced with three different organisational structures of groups of states: NATO, the EU and the CSCE; the latter was however deprived of its main political mission when it became the OSCE. Without wanting to judge these organisations from a political or ideological perspective (and granted that the OSCE is the successor of the CSCE, without necessarily agreeing with that idea) – it cannot be neglected that the CSCE, as the most democratically structured alliance that didn't exclude specific countries, was a functioning collective security system in Europe during the Cold War. Based on the experiences with the CSCE and with the goodwill of the respective governments, it should be possible to forge an alliance of nations in Europe, which includes Russia, the U.S. and Canada, which is inspired by the United Nations' democratic structure, which assumes tasks and responsibilities in the areas of peace policy, economic policy and cultural policy, and which is adopted to the contemporary European context. Then it will be obvious that a military alliance such as NATO is no longer necessary. In a nutshell: What was possible at a time when military

⁵⁶ Lisbon Treaty/Vertrag von Lissabon. Hg. Europäisches Parlament. Bonn 2008, pp. 55 – 59.

blocs were confronting each other, should be even more possible now that the confrontation is over and the international balance of power has changed.

Finally,

we could be inspired by the transformation of military alliances into different associations in other regions. Whereas all UN and CSCE member states have equal rights and their votes have the same weight, in most international organisations this is not at all the case, or only to some extent. Some experiences of the ASEAN States could serve as example for the creation of a collective security system including Russia. This association of ten Southeast Asian countries with a population of 575 million is the successor of the military alliance SEATO that was founded in 1954 and dissolved in 1977. Spurred by the U.S., this alliance was directed against the Soviet Union and its allies, including the People's Republic of China. The SEATO countries established the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Bangkok (Thailand) in August 1967; today, they see themselves as an «economic community». They maintain relations with Australia, the People's Republic of China, the EU, India, Japan, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and the USA as «dialogue partners» and hold consultations with the respective heads of state and government on a regular basis.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)⁵⁷ is another particularly interesting example. Its predecessor was a «treaty on military confidence-building in the border areas» that Russia, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tadjikistan had signed in 1996. In 1997, the same States signed a treaty on mutual reduction of military forces in the border areas. In 2004, they created a «regional anti-terrorism structure» to co-ordinate counter-terrorism activities in Central Asia. Besides fighting terrorism, the organisation wants to promote economic cooperation and cultural exchange. Just like in the example of ASEAN, the SCO has shifted its focus from military activities to other areas.

The African Union (AU) succeeded to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 2001/2002. It currently has 53 member states. The focus of its international activities is on economic aspects and Africa's participation in global trade. There are certainly other international organisations that might serve as counter-examples to the idea militarisation: the Gulf Co-

⁵⁷ Founded in Shanghai in May 2001; the members are: China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan; Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran are observers; Afghanistan, the ASEAN countries, the CIS countries, Sri Lanka, and Byelorussia are dialogue partners; Turkmenistan and Nepal have shown interest in joining this organisation.

operation Council (GCC), for example, founded in May 1981, with Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as its members. Or the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) that was created on May 23, 2008 and has twelve independent states as members. The Union is committed to fighting against «inequality, social exclusion, hunger, poverty, and insecurity». In March 2009, it established a joint defence committee. The governments want to strengthen the co-operation in the military field, in order to counter the intensified presence of U.S. military in this region.

To transform international alliances from military organisations into civil associations with common economic and political aims meets the requirements of our times.

To conclude

let us round out these considerations with some thoughts of Thomas Mann.

Thomas Mann (and this takes us back to the beginning and to Goethe and Schiller), when he wrote his essay on «Goethe and democracy» («Goethe und die Demokratie»), adhered to Goethe's concept of a «European Germany», which «is in the broadest sense of the word a democratic Germany, a country with which one can live, which does not inspire fear but sympathy throughout the world, because it shares in the democratic humanitarian religion that categorically determines the moral life of the Occident and that is meant when we use the word 'Civilisation'». ⁵⁸ Thomas Mann wrote this in 1949. One year later, he wrote an article for the American magazine «Aufbau» (Reconstruction) with the title «J'accuse – Wider die Selbstgerechtigkeit der besseren Welt» («J'accuse – Against the self-righteousness of the better world»). He criticised the «dominating trends in the manipulation of the public opinion..., which is not only not free of power-political purposes...that have since the end of the war been falsifying the problem of ORDER of the world through the *formation of blocks*». ⁵⁹ This essay falls in line with a warning Mann had issued in the forties: «Anti-Bolshevism is the underlying madness of our time» ⁶⁰: «As long as the bourgeois world

has nothing more to oppose the Communist promise than the ideal, which has become untenable, of private business, of profit, of competition...then our prospects look bad for ridding the world of Communism...The unrestrained hysteria into which people fall as they become obsessed with a word like <Communism> has often caused me horror.» ⁶¹

If the goal of a nuclear-free, demilitarised world is not to remain beyond reach forever, then countries that share the desire for peace must join their efforts and co-operate, rather than work against each other. In co-operation however there is no room for anti-Communism, regardless of how many representatives of Communism can be blamed for its fall into disgrace. One thing has become obvious all over the world: none of the present global problems can be solved by military means. NATO is an instrument of destruction and has demonstrated its incapacity for reconstruction. It faces inevitable fiasco in Afghanistan. This benefits nobody and it doesn't serve the interests of the Left either. However, in the current situation, the ideas of left-wing politicians and parties to gradually convert military alliances of all kind into collective security systems represent alternatives that merit consideration.

The participants in such security systems are members with equal rights in an association of sovereign nations who guarantee each other's security in the broad sense of the term, and not only from a military perspective.

By integrating the idea of a gradual establishment of a collective security system which replaces NATO into its manifesto to the Bundestag elections, the German left-wing party DIE LINKE has acted as a pioneer in the field of foreign policy. The left-wing party has thus de facto reverted to Friedrich Engels and his series of essays published in 1893: «Kann Europa abrüsten?» (Can Europe disarm?). Let me conclude by quoting Engels:

«For the past twenty-five years all of Europe is arming itself on an unprecedented scale. Every great power is striving to outpace the others in military power and preparedness to go to war...and yet, in all

⁵⁸ Goethe und die Demokratie. In: Thomas Mann: Über deutsche Literatur. Reclam Leipzig, o. J. (1963), pp. 92/93.

⁵⁹ Thomas Mann: J'accuse – Wider die Selbstgerechtigkeit der besseren Welt. In: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik, Heft 12/1991, p. 1437.

⁶⁰ Abridged version of a quotation from a lecture Thomas Mann gave first in Washington on October 13, 1943 and the in some other towns of the U.S.; accordingly, there are several traditions. His daughter Erika Mann has authorised the following coherent statement of her father: «... ich glaube, ich bin vor dem Verdacht geschützt, ein Vorkämpfer des Kommunismus zu sein. Trotzdem kann ich nicht umhin, in dem Schrecken der bürgerlichen Welt vor dem Wort Kommu-

nismus, diesem Schrecken, von dem der Faschismus so lange gelebt hat, etwas Abergläubisches und Kindisches zu sehen, die Grundtorheit unserer Epoche... I think I am not suspected of being a pioneer of Communism. However, I can't help seeing the bourgeois world's fear of the word Communism, this fear which has nourished fascism for so long, as something superstitious and childish, the underlying madness of our time.» See also: Thomas Mann, Schriftsteller der Gegenwart. Hilfsmaterial für den Literaturunterricht an den Ober- und Fachschulen der DDR, Berlin 1954, p. 120/121, and Junge Welt of June 6, 2005, essay by Dr. Seltsam (Internet: <http://www.drseltsam.net/thomasmann.html>).

⁶¹ Blätter... see above, No. 12/1991, pp. 1444/1445.

countries the popular classes, who almost exclusively provide the major part of soldiers and have to pay the major part of taxes, are calling for disarmament. ... I maintain: Disarmament and hence the guarantee of peace is possible, it is even quite easy to achieve, and Germany, more than any other civilised state, has both the power and the vocation to achieve this.»⁶²

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⁶² Friedrich Engels: Kann Europa abrüsten? In: MEW, see above, vol. 22, p.373.