

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد
بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Joachim Schuster

29.03.2023

What's the Best Way Out from the War in Ukraine?

In view of the recent geopolitical upheavals, and particularly the war in Ukraine, it does not make sense (and does not promise much success) to build a new global security architecture based on the logic of a bipolar confrontation for several reasons...

Firstly, a principal prerequisite for success of a confrontational "conflict strategy"—a far-reaching identity of interests with politically aligned conceptions—is not given in the Western, democratic camp.

As long as the USA is deeply divided, it is difficult for the European partners to fully rely on it. And despite the rapid joint reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression, the cohesion of the EU is by no means assured.

Differing levels of concern and different opinions as to what action to take with regard to economic consequences of the war—as well as the large-scale energy crisis in Europe illustrate the potential for conflict rather than agreement within Europe.

Secondly, a lasting "conflict strategy" is inherently dangerous because of its potential for military escalation. Even the use of nuclear weapons has become a real risk as a result of Putin's threats and increasing American involvement in the conflict.

And finally, coping with climate change (which will pose an existential threat to many people) and significantly reducing global poverty (which will increase in the coming years as a result of climate change and war) are much more difficult problems to solve in a confrontational bipolar environment.

Cornerstones of a Modern Policy of Détente

Instead of global confrontation (now often said to be underway between the world's democracies and authoritarian regimes), it is important to develop an alternative international policy that, on the one hand, counters the new military threats, and on the

other hand, enables a new quality of global cooperation to combat climate change, global poverty and the expected large-scale famines.

The détente policy of Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr is by no means outdated in this context. On the contrary, it offers important lessons learned for the new policy of global cooperation that needs to be developed.

The policy of détente which overcame a system of confrontation was never based on a naïve belief—such as those embedded in Democratic Peace Theory—that mutual benefits of economic cooperation would create interdependencies that would make it pointless for the states involved to wage wars against one another.

The policy of detente was not based on a belief in the peaceful nature of the Soviet Union. Rather, détente required a realistic picture of the interests of the states involved.

At the same time, it was anchored in an age of nuclear weapons, and the assessment, because of that, that a war between the Communist and Democratic systems could have no winner and must be prevented at all costs.

This was linked to efforts to enshrine the maintenance of the territorial integrity of all states in international law. The strength of the law would replace the ancient view that, as Thucydides wrote, "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."

International organizations such as the UN or the OSCE were given central importance. Militarily, the policy of détente was based on sufficient deterrence capabilities and the need for mutual arms control and disarmament agreement to be binding.

This was based on the realization that security can only be guaranteed in the long term if we work with rather than against each-other, as Bahr noted in the Palme Report 1982: 'Doctrine of Common Security.'

Economic cooperation between the two blocs, which intensified over time, served to strengthen the mutual benefits of working together. The policy of détente did not develop its effectiveness overnight, but was able to assert itself in a lengthy diplomatic process.

Incidentally, the starting point was the Cuban Missile Crisis, which was the result of a previous phase of confrontational politics between the USA and the Soviet Union, and which led the world to the nuclear abyss. These elements were joined in the 1980s by the concept of comprehensive security. This was based on the simple realization that lasting peace can only be achieved if important causes of conflict such as environmental damage and hunger are fought at the same time.

Certainly, in today's multipolar world, it will be more difficult to conceive a modern policy of detente in detail. In addition, there are no undisputed hegemonic powers in their

respective camps today; on the contrary, there is a dispute over global hegemony between the USA and China.

But solving these conflicts requires taking into account the changes of the international community in the last few decades, even if these are not yet underpinned by adequate political implementation strategies.

With the adoption of the Paris climate agreement, the international community recognized that climate change can only be stopped if all states give climate protection a top priority. And the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, which are repeatedly emphasized, also show that development must benefit everyone.

Current Fields of Action

In relation to the current situation, this results in the following fields of action from my point of view:

Certainly, military, political and economic support for Ukraine will have to continue. However, it must be ensured that neither the EU states nor NATO become a war party. That sets limits on arms deliveries.

It is also important that parallel diplomatic initiatives are repeatedly taken in order to avoid devastating escalations of the war, to make humanitarian aid possible and to achieve a ceasefire as a starting point for peace negotiations. The negotiations on grain exports and the efforts to ensure the safety of the nuclear power plant in Zaporizhia show that diplomacy can be successful.

And at the last UN General Assembly in December, important countries in the world community such as China and India spoke out in favor of diplomatic initiatives to end the war.

The decision to significantly improve the defense capabilities of the European nations is another step in the right direction.

However, this must not be the beginning of a permanent spiral of military rearmament. Abstract stipulations that the defense budget of the NATO countries should permanently be two percent of GDP are nonsense, especially since the European NATO countries already spend three times as much money on armaments as Russia.

Attempts that the European states should also engage militarily in the Indo-Pacific region should also be rejected.

And efforts must be stepped up today to reach international agreements on disarmament and arms control both in Europe and globally.

All steps in this context should be taken in close consultation within the EU.

It is self-evident that Germany, as the largest and economically strongest EU member state, is of particular importance. Above all, however, this means that Germany must take the initiative.

However, this should not be confused with a German leadership role that some people are calling for. In the EU, for the foreseeable future there cannot and will not be leading countries on the one hand and being-led countries on the other.

The EU must not limit its engagement to the European continent. As a major civil and economic power, the EU is destined to play a prominent role in creating a multilateral order of justice that should focus on combating climate change and combating poverty and famine worldwide.

In light of the serious destabilization caused by the Russian war of aggression, such a modern policy of detente cannot in the short term lead to a new, stable peace order, neither in Europe nor globally.

Detente requires a systematic step-by-step, while possible setbacks will have to be coped with by efforts to de-escalate and solve the conflict even if there are no blueprints for steps to be taken. However, these steps should apply the lessons learned from détente rather than pursuing a policy of confrontation that may look simpler but would ultimately be devastating.

Author Bio: This article is distributed by [Globetrotter](#) in partnership with the [American Committee for U.S.-Russia Accord](#) (ACURA). Joachim Schuster is a member of the European Parliament from Germany and member of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

Source: Globetrotter

Tags: War, Politics, History, North America/United States of America, Europe/Ukraine, Europe/Russia, Opinion, Time-Sensitive