

**Publication series of the
Communist Party of Germany (KPD)**

(refounded in January 1990 in the German Democratic Republic)

Studies on the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism

The secret of war
German imperialism and
the war in Ukraine

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Series of publications of the KPD, issue no. 235
ISSN 1433-6375

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Introduction

The war in Ukraine has surprised critical, democratic to revolutionary people and organisations in this country and prompted initial attempts at explanations, which on closer inspection prove to be helpless.

The explanation occasionally heard remains all too basic: after the complete victory of the counter-revolution in the Soviet Union over its state remnants, escalating internal contradictions are driving Russia into a war of aggression, a war against the outside world, in order to be able to continue and better exploit its own working class. The general point is always correct: the history of all society to date is the history of class struggles. But it should at least be analysed: How exacerbated is the class situation in Russia at the beginning of 2022 really? How strongly are the workers rebelling? This war harbours great risks for the Russian ruling class. In view of the damage to the Russian population, inflation, shortages of goods, tens of thousands of dead Russian soldiers, the war could threaten class rule more than it secures it; the disadvantages for the ruling class would be greater than the advantages.

Another explanation is that the USA has threatened Russia and driven it into war. If Russia is bled dry militarily and isolated internationally, it is all the easier for the USA to seize Russia's energy wealth in oil and gas. The massive military threat to Russia from the USA has of course been correctly recog-

nised. However, the reality stands in the way of explaining the war in terms of short-term economic advantages: the USA has been making massive use of fracking technology for a good ten years and has thus become the largest exporter of these fossil fuels. Why should the most powerful imperialist therefore seek a high-risk military solution right now?

The focus continues on China: the rising superpower China, which US imperialism regards as its main opponent, is focussing on the Pacific region. Russia must be smashed, or at least made submissive, in order to prevent a powerful counter-bloc, a co-operation between Russia and China. The contradictions with other imperialists, especially with the main European competitor, German imperialism, are negligible in view of the size of the opponents. Berlin is simply Washington's junior ally. There is much that is concrete and real in this statement - and a logical mistake. If China, which has become a great power, is the actual target of American aggression, whether economic or military, then the FRG and the EU must stand firmly on the US side. US imperialism must disrupt and destroy any rapprochement, let alone an alliance between the German-led EU and Russia and even further with China. Isn't that exactly what the war in Ukraine is doing? This war reveals just how essential Europe's strategic orientation is for the overall US strategy. The "China Declaration" confirms what it attempts to refute.

Whichever way you look at it: To ignore the actions of German imperialism, to remove one's own main enemy, one of the leading imperialists, from the front line, leads nolens volens to the protection of one's own main enemy and harbours the danger of defending the fatherland: angry, indignant accusation of the USA as the cause of all wars, abysmal contempt for the Russian leadership as the destroyer of the Soviet Union, defence of the "peace-loving, harmless" understanding between the FRG and Russia. For all our indignation about the crimes of American imperialism's wars, we must not deceive ourselves about our own main enemy:

"Peaceful alliances prepare wars and in turn grow out of wars, are mutually dependent, generate a change in the forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on one and the same ground of imperialist connections and interrelationships of the world economy and world politics." Therefore, "today's peaceful [...] alliance of all powers [...] is inseparable from tomorrow's non-

peaceful conflict, which in turn prepares a 'peaceful' general alliance [...] the day after tomorrow, etc. and so on."¹

In the redivision of the world, the imperialists are guided by strategies and analogous tactics which, as Lenin emphasised, are mutually dependent in their *"forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle"*. Whether the political personnel know the strategic line, consciously follow it, speak it out or write it down can make our analysis easier or more difficult, but it cannot take it away from us. As long as the peoples do not see through and thwart this, imperialist strategies can remain successful, guaranteeing the continued existence of the rotten imperialist system, the exploitation and oppression of people and peoples, the destruction of our livelihoods. Until then, our task remains unsolved: *"this time, before the war, defeat the warmongers"*²

Have we still learnt nothing from 1914? Back then, the German workers' healthy class hatred of the tsarist oppression of their class brothers in Russia was perverted into a truce. Similarly, today the hatred of US imperialism with all its wars and atrocities turns into a trivialisation and protection of our own main enemy. No, our main enemy is in our own country. Karl Liebknecht's courageous words did not only apply in 1914, they always apply and they apply with relentless severity especially to us who live in one of the most powerful imperialist centres, in Germany, which has already twice plunged the world into war. It applies not only because we live and work here and can fight most effectively here. It is true because what one comrade reminded us is coming true: *"This is the reality: Germany will play in the top league of imperialism in the future - which of course multiplies the danger of war."*³

Germany's imperialist expansion to the east, with Europe as its hinterland and with and against Russia, was a major factor in the war in Ukraine. The Berlin-Moscow axis to the east, which was already too far advanced, forced the USA, still the strongest imperialist, to intervene and escalate the proxy war in

¹ Lenin. Imperialismus, p. 301

² From an anti-war song by the "Roten Wecker"

³ Frank Flegel, in: offen-siv 6-2009, p. 65

Ukraine, *"for imperialism, the competition of some great powers in their striving for hegemony, i.e. for the conquest of countries, is not so much directly for itself as for weakening the opponent and undermining its hegemony"*.⁴

It is often and quickly objected that German imperialism is too politically and economically dependent and too closely intertwined with US imperialism to take strategic action against it, that it would not want to bite the hand that feeds it. This view turns the German hyena into a pet dog. Since when do we so carelessly dispense with basic knowledge? If one follows this argument, there should have been neither the First World War nor the Second World War. Imperialism means domination and expansion, and with the world already divided up, this is only possible in competition with and at war with the same imperialists with whom we do business before, during and after the war. The dependency argument is misguided because it singles out one particular contradiction but ignores the entire depth of the intra-imperialist contradictions.

This study aims to show that and how German imperialism succeeds in developing precisely the potencies from political and economic dependencies on the old war opponent that enable it to advance once again to the leading position among the imperialists. And this has not only been the case since the transition to imperialism, since the 20th century, but already at the time of the formation of the German nation state against the great powers of the time.

The German-Russian rapprochement of the 1970s developed into German-Russian cooperation in the 1990s and, since the 1990s, into a German-Russian axis with deep mutual dependencies. An axis to realise an economic area from Bordeaux to Odessa, as called for by the industrial magnate Carl Duisburg in 1931, or from Lisbon to Vladivostok, as Angela Merkel called for in Davos in 2015 - such an axis thwarts Washington's plans for alliances and expansion. However, the role of US imperialism is seriously threatened as soon as the rapprochement between the two hegemonic areas of the Berlin-Moscow axis, the European Union and the Eurasian Union, and a stronger China becomes resilient. Only the sharpness of these contradictions

⁴ Lenin. Imperialismus, p. 273

explains why US imperialism is launching a war in Europe that harbours the danger of a third world war. For the first time since 1945, there is a confrontation between the FRG and the USA, in which both imperialists are on different sides of the war front - albeit publicly concealed. The hegemonic basis of German imperialism, its European Union, is also seriously threatened by this war: by the war-related rise in energy prices for gas, oil and electricity and by the accelerated end of low interest rates. The disadvantages that German imperialism is suffering from this war day by day reveal the depth of its contradictions with US imperialism. These contradictions are the real causes of this war.

In short, there is no reason to believe that the German great power strategy of subjugating the European Union while at the same time cooperating with Russia in order to attack the main power, the USA, is an unheard-of idea and incomprehensible.

The main aim of the work is to show that Germany is still pursuing the goal of world domination, as it has done twice in the past, and is therefore necessarily turning against the USA as its main opponent, but that the strategy has changed significantly: instead of a warlike subjugation and unification of Western and Eastern Europe in a two-front war, the new strategy is characterised by a peaceful subjugation of Western Europe and long-term cooperation with a stabilised Russia, which brings its neighbours together in a Eurasian Union: Subjugation and unification in both blocs. Germany's central geographical position within the European continent enabled it then, as now, to pursue an overall West-East strategy - whether warlike or peaceful. This distinguishes the German imperialists from the island of Great Britain and western France. Today, in this "opportunity-rich" geographical situation, it has no other option for expansion than to peacefully unite Western and Eastern Europe and orientate itself towards the next higher goal of global expansion.

What this work does not do: It does not analyse the contradictions in Russia, i.e. the extent to which the working class there may be remembering its great past and putting the ruling class in difficulties. Furthermore: the examination of the other European imperialists and the precise analysis of US imperialism. How do the US anti-imperialists view German imperialism? Presumably it is

particularly difficult there to "honour" other imperialists in view of their own aggressive and powerful main enemy. We see this work as an invitation to correct it where necessary, to take up the central theme, to continue working on the weak points and to fill in the gaps. The task is too big, the topic too complex without collective work.

Let us take seriously what Lenin wrote to his comrades on the question of the struggle against war: *"Let us answer the war with a strike or with revolution' is what all the respected leaders of the reformists usually say to the working class. And very often the pseudo-radicalism of these answers satisfies and reassures the workers, co-operators and peasants. [...] The real situation must be explained to the people: how great is the mystery in which war is born, and how helpless the ordinary organisation of the workers, even if it calls itself a revolutionary organisation, is in the face of a war that is actually brewing. [...] One must explain in particular the importance of the fact that the 'defence of the fatherland' is becoming an unavoidable question, which the vast majority of the working people will inevitably decide in favour of their bourgeoisie. [...] It is desirable [...] to show in a particularly concrete way that the theoretical recognition that war is a crime, that war is inadmissible for a socialist, etc., proves to be empty talk, because there is nothing concrete in such a question. We do not give the masses any really vivid idea of how war can and will break out. [...] I believe that this question must be clarified in unusual detail, and in two ways: Firstly, by describing and analysing what happened during the previous war and explaining to all those present that they do not know it, or that they pretend to know it, while in reality they close their eyes to what is at the heart of the question, without knowledge of which there can be no question of fighting against war. [...] Secondly, we must take current conflicts, even the most minor ones, as examples and use them to show how war can break out every day ..."*⁵

⁵ Lenin. Aufgaben unserer Delegation, pp. 434-437

...explain the real situation: how big is the secret in which the war is born

From the foundation of the Reich to the end of the Second World War

The big question at the beginning of the 19th century in Germany was: How can a country consisting of 39 small states become what industrial development is pushing for everywhere in Europe, a nation state?

In the "German Confederation", formed in 1815 from loose small states, the emergence of the nation state was hindered economically from two sides. From within, by the industrial backwardness of the empire, i.e. by a weakly developed bourgeoisie and a weakly developed proletariat in the face of a strong feudal aristocracy clinging to its possessions rooted in petty statehood. And from the outside, industrial competition from France and England threatened to nip industrial development in Germany in the bud by means of exports. In addition to these economic hurdles, the formation of the German nation state was threatened politically and militarily by four great powers pursuing different interests: Austria and Russia, who, as feudal prisons of nations, persecuted every democratic-revolutionary movement abroad in their own interests in order to defend their eroding aristocratic power on the continent, France and England, who protected their own industrial production by trying to preserve Germany's dependence on imports and therefore intervened politically against the unification of the German Reich.

Only a victorious bourgeois revolution, which also matured in Germany in 1848, could actually cut through this complicated knot. After expelling the princes and kings, it could have liberated the occupied parts of Poland, released 30 million subjects of other nationalities from Habsburg captivity in Austria and united all German-speaking territories. A large, democratic, outwardly defensive republic with 54 million citizens would have emerged in-

stead of - as happened after the suppression of the revolution - a "small German solution" shrunk to 40 million, which from the outset carried the urge for a Greater German Reich as well as the folkish fairy tale *"of the role of the Prussians - or the Germans - as a people chosen by history, who were called to 'redeem', i.e. rule, all other peoples."*⁶ Out of fear of its own working class, the bourgeoisie betrayed its own revolution and sided with the old ruling class. With the suppression of the revolution, the German knot of economic backwardness and external threat remained untouched, the contradictions pressing for a different solution.

So what characterises this Prussia in order to accomplish this task and go down in history as a glorious unifier of the empire "from above", which then goes down all the more ingloriously? Prussia is the small German state that most successfully makes "war the father of all things" (Heraclitus). As early as the 18th century, the Prussian kings recognised the advantages of industrial production for tax revenues and thus for the war chest and the ability to wage war against an impoverished, insolvent peasantry. Very early on, they invested in cloth and wool manufactories as investors and, together with the military, were the main buyers of uniforms. With supply and demand centralised in one hand, the Prussian state developed an entire branch of production, from the raw material to the finished product, until it was ready for export. Shortly before the middle of the 19th century, Prussian militarism discovers the value of the railway network for transporting troops and supplies. Once again, direct state investment now established nationwide railway construction and operation⁷ established a form of state capitalism unknown in other industrialised countries. Other small states such as Saxony, Thuringia, Württemberg, Baden and Bavaria also set up state railways. As a result, German railway construction soon overtakes that of France and - the goal of the local bourgeoisie - approaches that of England. With railway construction as the driving force, min-

⁶ Varga. Wurzeln, p. 16 f.

⁷ Mottek. Wirtschaftsgeschichte, p. 160.

In Mottek's case, there was also the contradiction between the state's interest in a comprehensive railway network and the bourgeoisie's limited ability to invest in individual urban connections. Militarism also needed railway connections in areas that appeared unprofitable to individual capitalists. The bourgeoisie as a whole, on the other hand, benefited from state railway construction in that it was financed not by taxes but by government loans on borrowed capital. S. 161

ing, the steel industry and mechanical engineering develop. To protect itself from foreign competition, Prussia establishes an ingenious protective customs system that has not yet been invented anywhere else in the world.

Prussia is thus precisely the particular state which - hated by all other sections of the people - is met with the sympathy of the big bourgeoisie. The class compromise between feudal nobility and bourgeoisie roughly summarised: Renunciation of feudal petty statehood and many of the possessions inherited from it on the one hand,⁸ renunciation of the bourgeois republic as a form of state on the other. In return, the state united as a monarchy offers industrialisation under state protection and forms of state capitalism, and the bourgeoisie offers loyalty to the state and renunciation of political power. And both together take action against the organisation of the proletariat. All this is called "revolution from above". Of course, the bourgeoisie continues to struggle with the state for private ownership of the new productive forces and the profits from them. But never again after 1848 did the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie in Prussia face each other as antagonistic classes, and so here too a complicated web of compromises emerged and the feudal class grew into the bourgeois class. This relationship between two leading classes, one economic, the other political, was personified in the East Elbe Junker Bismarck from 1862 onwards.

But it was not only industrialisation that received its first impetus from the war interests of Prussian militarism, but also democracy. As I said: in Prussia, war is the father of all things. Bourgeois democracy in Germany emerged from three sources. The first and weakest came with the emergence of manufacturing from the tentative development of the productive forces, with craftsmen and petty bourgeois as the centre. The second, somewhat stronger, came from the external influence of the French Revolution of 1789 and the great enthusiasm for it among the bourgeoisie, with students and professors at its centre (Wartburg Festival, 1817). The revolutionary influence later turned into a means of French hegemony over the German central and southern states and over Prussia. The strongest source with lasting practical consequences was the Prussian military and progressive statesmen. They learnt the lessons from the

⁸ With the exception of the renunciation of large estates, of course.

Prussian defeats, most recently against Napoleon Bonaparte in 1806: Without limited democratic reforms in the army, agriculture and industry, no more wars could be won in the future. Without *"civic renewal in all areas of life"*⁹, Napoleon's foreign rule, under which Prussia suffered particularly until 1813, could not be ended. And this lure finally overcame even the most reactionary aristocratic opponents after some tough battles. Gradually, agrarian and military reforms were implemented, restoring the ability to wage war without overly favouring democracy. However, the state-sponsored development of the productive forces in turn led to the revolutionisation of large sections of the population, especially the labour movement, which could not be stopped by Prussian reforms or armed state power.

Everything that the Prussian state produced that was progressive obeyed the requirements of war. The Soviet historian F. A. Rotstein writes: *"In fact, Prussia remained from beginning to end the most predatory, warlike and militaristic state not only in Germany, but in all of Europe. Everything for war! Everything for the expansion of power at the expense of other states! Everything in favour of plundering foreign countries and peoples! That was the most important principle of the Prussian state."*¹⁰ Ultimately, the unified German nation state turned out to be not only a requirement of industrialisation, but also a means of waging further wars of expansion against the great powers standing in the way. And so the unification of the Reich "from above" became the programme of the Prussian state leadership and the big bourgeoisie in the German particular states.

One of the GDR's leading historians, Joachim Streisand, writes: *"There is no blind automatism according to which the further fate of a phenomenon would be unalterable by the circumstances of its origin. In this respect, too, people make their own history. There is, however, the effect of tradition. By linking the foundation of the empire with war and expansion, the Prussian Junkers and the German big bourgeoisie created such a tradition for the politics of the ruling classes of this empire."*¹¹

⁹ Streisand. Deutsche Geschichte, p. 137

¹⁰ Rotstein. Geschichte, p. 16

¹¹ Streisand, Deutsche Geschichte, p. 211

Bismarck's unification of the empire first requires a military victory over Austria. First, however, Prussia and Austria jointly invade the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which are under the control of the Danish king, and divide them up between them (1864). Two years later, Prussian troops occupied the Austrian share of the Holstein spoils and immediately marched on Vienna, turning all the powers of Europe against Prussia. This war is only possible because France remains neutral in expectation of Prussian compensation. Prussia wins the war (1866) and expels Austria from the German Confederation. Prussia's co-operation with Russia proved to be particularly important for the unification of the empire. The Tsar and the King both detest any bourgeois democratic movement among the people. Bismarck convinces the Tsar that any Russian interference against German unification from above would lead to a new version of the revolution of 1848, i.e. a revolutionary unification from below with the consequences described above and the spread of the revolution to all feudal states, including Russia. Together, Russian and Prussian troops put down a two-year uprising in the Russian-occupied part of Poland (1863/64) and even agreed that their troops would cross the border into their neighbour's territory. With Prussian-Russian co-operation lasting almost thirty years, for the first time something like an axis was created between the two states that was directed against third parties.

After the elimination of the number one in the German Confederation, Austria, the unification of the German Empire demands the elimination of the opposing number one on the continent: France. Bismarck uses an intrigue to persuade Napoleon III to declare war on Prussia, which nobody wants except Bismarck himself (1870).¹² To secure this coup, Berlin and Moscow conclude a secret neutrality agreement against France. Russia could now see from

¹² The threat of a French veto was less of an obstacle to German unification than the particularism of the small German states, especially Bavaria and Württemberg. In order to overcome this particularism, Bismarck organised a "patriotic war" against a French threat from outside that had long since ceased to exist in a coup d'état that became legendary (Emser Depesche). (see Franz Mehring, *Zur Deutschen Geschichte* Band III. Berlin. p. 240)

France how Prussia used to pay its neutrality debts¹³ : After the defeat of 1871, France received as Prussian thanks for its neutrality in the war against Austria the secession of Alsace-Lorraine and a horrendous compulsory levy of 5 billion Reichsmarks to the German victors. This humiliation did not prevent Napoleon from asking for Bismarck's support in suppressing the revolutionary Paris Commune, which, under the leadership of the proletariat, tried to hold out against both armies for 72 days. The French people, defeated by the superior forces, paid for the brief Bonaparte-Bismarck alliance with around 30,000 Paris Communards who were killed, executed or deported.¹⁴

However, with the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, the newly created German Reich sets the course for a coming war, which the world will later call a world war, and even later than the first. But at the time, no-one, apart from the Communists, had any inkling of its dimensions. Friedrich Engels announced it to the German working class in 1887 with the following words:

"And finally, no other war is possible for Prussia-Germany than a world war, a world war of a hitherto unimagined extent and intensity. Eight to ten million soldiers will choke each other and devour the whole of Europe as never before as a swarm of locusts. The devastation of the Thirty Years' War will be compressed into three or four years and spread over the whole continent; famine, epidemics, general savagery of the armies and the masses caused by acute need; hopeless confusion of our artificial trade, industry and credit, ending in general bankruptcy; the collapse of the old states and their traditional state wisdom, so that the crowns roll over the pavement by the dozens and no one can be found to pick them up; absolute impossibility of foreseeing how it will all end and who will emerge victorious from the struggle; only one

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At that time, territories and national children were shifted and traded as the main productive forces, just as the productive force of the factory is today. National consciousness is everywhere, except in France, still in opposition to the respective government. In Germany, more than in other states, the fraud of trading political neutrality for economic compensation is part of the tools of nation-building. A system of fraud that can only be secured with a subsequent war against the deceived party. This reason for war is the forerunner of the later dominant reason for war before the First World War: the equalisation of the contradiction between the economic power of the German Reich and its political impotence vis-à-vis England and France.

¹⁴ Villain. 72 Tage, p. 328

outcome absolutely certain: The general exhaustion and the establishment of the conditions of the eventual victory of the working class."¹⁵

When the empire is finally unified, it succeeds within 40 years in doing what no other state manages to do in such a short time: building up a monopolised industry - again with state aid - which lifts it into the ranks of the largest imperialists after the turn of the century. This astonishing development, like the beginning of German industrialisation, is not only explained by the economic race to catch up with the competition in the West, but at least as much by military aggression. All imperialist visions of turning the unification of Germany into a war of European unification boil down to this. No sooner had the economic race to catch up been successful than in 1914 exactly what Engels described so precisely happened. Germany waged war against Russia, against France, intended as a mere stopover in a blitzkrieg, and finally against the power that ranked number one because of its industrial, naval and colonial power: Great Britain. In this world war, the former Tsarist Empire - we remember Russia's neutrality in the Prussian wars of unification - was to suffer the same fate as France before it. With the Peace of Brest-Litovsk in 1917, the new Russia under the labour power of the Soviets lost 26% of its European territory and a third of its total population.

The outcome of the First World War is well known. Subsequently, Germany once again succeeded in isolating France and, with the help of the USA and Great Britain¹⁶, gradually defusing the Treaty of Versailles. The commissions under Dawes (1924) and Young (1929) revised the amount and timing of payments and the Locarno Treaty (1925) fixed the western borders of the Reich, but not the eastern borders. Germany's imperialist competitors opened the way to the East against the socialist Soviet Union. With huge "foreign loans totalling around 25 billion marks, with the help of which German monopoly capital carried out the reconstruction of the economy", it "overtook France

¹⁵ Engels. Borkheims Broschüre, p. 350 f.

¹⁶ On German-English relations until 1939, see: https://www.ifz-muenchen.de/heftarchiv/1966_4_2_metz-macher.pdf

and England in 1929, eleven years after the defeat, despite the separation of important economic areas ... just as it had before the war."¹⁷

The Second World War followed, this time triggered by Germany alone, with Italy and Japan in tow. As was to be expected, after the annexation of Austria and - initiated by the "Munich Agreement" - the annexation of Czechoslovakia, Germany did not stop at attacking Poland in 1939 and France in 1940. With the "Battle of Britain" from 13 August 1940 and the declaration of war on the USA on 11 December 1941, Germany once again attacked the major powers in the front line that had previously helped it on its way to the top. Only the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, following a gross miscalculation of the potential of a socialist economy led by a Soviet state power, broke the back of the German robbers - in this generation.

Every defeat in a world war ends for the German imperialists with a loss of territory, the next one greater than the previous one. But from the beginning until today, the German big bourgeoisie knows how to transform small German solutions into big German empires. And every new attempt is accompanied by the illusion among the people that this time it will go well. The one and a half centuries described above show this: The community of a nation, which is sealed by the bourgeois revolution as in France and Great Britain, grows differently in Germany, namely out of war and annexation. We certainly have nothing against the princely petty states being eliminated by a larger royal petty state by way of annexation. But what kind of national bond does this create? The revolution is the internal war in the alliance of all oppressed classes against the common class opponent. This national cohesion is based on class cohesion against the authorities. The war on the outside is the exact opposite: it is the war in alliance with the class opponent against one's own class brothers in other countries.¹⁸ This national cohesion is based on class betrayal, on the "national community" with the class opponent. This explains why the fascist states of the 20th century were the ones that did not end the bourgeois revolution victoriously in the 19th century. If persistent class betrayal both characterises the history of a nation's origins and continues to pre-

¹⁷ Varga. Wurzeln, p. 26

¹⁸ See the suppression of the Paris Commune by the French with the support of the German army.

vail in the centuries that follow, what kind of nation is it? Brecht called it in a poem in 1920: *"Germany ... the carrion hole of Europe."*¹⁹

War remains the father of all things

The Second World War is over. Part of the former German territories are placed under Polish administration, and the motto of the first FRG Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, is: *"Better half of Germany whole than half of Germany whole."* To achieve this, the country had to be split in two in order to curb the influence of the leading power in the defeat of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union. Kleindeutsch the third.

It is not only the imperialists who are down, but also the German working class after twelve years of fascism. The "Stalin Note" of 1952, which in reality consisted of four notes from the government of the USSR to the three other victorious powers,²⁰ was directed against Adenauer's policy of division. With the proposal of joint free elections to form an all-German government and negotiations on a peace treaty with Germany on the basis of the Potsdam Agreement, it forms a programme with which the working class could rebuild itself and a popular front programme for the entire German people to prevent the division into two German states. This tactic is the continuation of the anti-fascist unity and popular front tactic as set out by Georgi Dimitroff before the Congress of the Communist International in 1935, the transformation of the anti-fascist struggle into the anti-imperialist struggle. All those involved in this tactic in the GDR, the FRG and the USSR realise that Stalin's proposals only have a chance if they are taken up by the German people themselves and lead to an all-German popular front movement against the split. In contrast, Adenauer and Truman turned the controversy into a systemic struggle between capitalism and socialism, knowing that this was not what the Soviet Union was aiming for and that the German working class was not prepared for

¹⁹ Brecht. Werke 8, p. 68 f.

²⁰ Dokumentensammlung Beziehungen DDR-UdSSR 1949 bis 1955. Berlin, 1975.

The main aim of these notes, however, is the immediate termination of the exchange of notes and the return of the four victorious powers to direct negotiations. While these notes are exchanged back and forth, the Western powers negotiate directly with the FRG and conclude a separate treaty ("General Treaty") on 26 May, which seals the division of Germany.

such a trial of strength after twelve years of fascism and would therefore be defeated.²¹ Their calculation worked out. The German people did not lead the defensive struggle on the basis of the Potsdam Agreement and the "Stalin Note". Immediately after the successful division of Germany, the West German reaction set itself the goal of German "reunification" and the return of the lost eastern territories. This revanchist plan accepts another world war, and so Bertolt Brecht describes this decade in 1954 with the words:

*"The capitalists don't want war,
You have to want it.
The German capitalists have two options in a war:
They betrayed Germany and handed it over to the USA (Pétain).
They cheat the USA and put themselves at the top."*²²

Already in this prophecy by Brecht from 1954, when German imperialism is hardly viable without the support of the other imperialists, we see confirmation of what we have worked out in the short century before and after the founding of the Reich: An imperialist Germany in the second or third rank will always rise up to take on the leading great power and fight for world domination. Intended to expose the war aims of German capital, this short Brecht text ultimately summarises the entire (West) German post-war history. It divides the entire period up to the present day almost exactly into two sections of 40 years each: point one covers the period from 1943, the first secret negotiations between German negotiators in the USA about a separate peace, to 1983, the stationing of US medium-range missiles in West Germany. Point two covers the period from the billion-euro loan to the GDR arranged by Franz Joseph Strauß, also in 1983, to the present day. This loan marked the beginning of the peaceful annexation of the GDR, which enabled German im-

²¹ What Stalin pursued from the outset was thwarted by Khrushchev and drew the entire GDR leadership into the imperialist trap of the systemic struggle. Certainly, the GDR itself can be seen as the embodiment of the failure of the German labour movement in the post-war period, not just the building of the Wall. But firstly, this failure was due to the West German workers and their trade union leadership. With their refusal to fight for recognition of the GDR and the Oder-Neisse border, they made failure permanent. And secondly, the merit of the citizens of the GDR in preventing German imperialism from expanding militarily into the East for two generations with an anti-fascist democratic state and thus delaying the Third World War is an immortal merit in the history of mankind.

²² Brecht. Werke 20, p. 324

perialism to abolish the status quo of the post-war order and position itself as the main player in the redivision of the world.

Streisand writes: *"By the end of the 1950s, the FRG had become the second strongest economic power in the capitalist world. [...] The contradiction between its considerable economic potential and its limited political power and international influence became more acute. As the ruling circles of the FRG attempted (once again, d.V.) to compensate for this contradiction by expanding their sphere of influence to the east, the situation became increasingly tense during these years and never since the end of the Second World War had peace in Europe been so endangered as in the summer of 1961. In a declaration by the federal executive of the CDU on 11 July 1961, it was stated as an explicit goal to annex the GDR and to create 'a reunified Germany [...] that is integrated into the European community'. Landsmannschaften organised large-scale events in the Federal Republic and in West Berlin, and General Heusinger provocatively announced that seven divisions of the Bundeswehr were ready to 'immediately carry out any mission'. Franz Joseph Strauß, then Minister of War, declared in July 1961 on a trip to the USA (!) that the Federal Republic was determined to 'escalate the crisis to the last consequence'."*²³

And from the editor of "Streitbarer Materialismus", Stefan Eggerdinger, we read: *"In the summer of 1961, the Research Advisory Council for Questions of Reunification presented a detailed plan (Grey Plan) for the reorganisation of economic and social conditions in the GDR. In the Bonner Rundschau, one can read: 'All means of war must be used, the war of nerves and the shooting war. Strauß declared: 'We must prepare for a civil war. Bundeswehr manoeuvres for the autumn 'on the zone border' are announced."*²⁴ But then comes the abrupt and unexpected response of the other imperialists to the German war plans: No! No! No! *"And German imperialism realises that the other imperialists are not prepared to march with it through the Brandenburg Gate 'to the sound of music'. So 13 August 1961 (the day the Wall was built in the GDR, editor's note) became a turning point in the history of the FRG."*²⁵ This

²³ Streisand. Geschichte, page 445

²⁴ Eggerdinger. Krokodil, p. 22

²⁵ Op. cit. p. 23

bitter defeat made the German capitalists realise how much their imperialism was still stuck in the third estate. And this 13 August also sends out another signal: there will be no war in Europe without a command from Washington. And if the FRG were to start a war on its own initiative, the USA would emerge even stronger than before from two world wars. The military castration of German imperialism continues to this day. This is the reason for its re-orientation towards tactics of peaceful alliances, which would soon turn out to be partial annexations.

Thanks to the renewed support of the imperialist superpowers, the FRG is consolidating itself as an equal superpower that has fought its way back into the second rank to such an extent that it can bring about the return of the GDR on its own and force the other imperialists to agree. The fact that revisionism had run down the economies of the socialist states of Eastern Europe and the GDR since the 1960s to such an extent that even the rudiments of socialist state power are now ready to be abdicated is extremely helpful.

Twelve years after the annexation of the GDR, Mikhail Gorbachev reveals in a letter to the German author A. v. Plato why, as Soviet head of state in 1990, he had so unconditionally agreed to the dissolution of the German state that had prevented the eastward expansion of German imperialism for 45 years. Gorbachev wrote that his concern at the time was that *"the new relations between our two nations and states should become the peace-loving axis of the entire European process and carry great weight in world affairs"*.²⁶ Gorbachev himself could only follow as a spectator how the German side resolved the contradiction between "peace-loving" and "axis" over the following 30 years: as long as Russia could not be taken militarily, it was to serve as an axis partner of the new Greater Germany against the main opponent in the imperialist camp, the USA, which, as the strongest, conducted business worldwide according to its own rules. From the outset, Gorbachev's "peace-loving axis" conceived the Berlin annexation republic as an intrigue against the global supremacy of the USA. Under the banner of the "multipolar world order", which pretends to be more just than the monopolistic USA, everything inside or outside Europe that is prepared to rebel against this supremacy can be gathered together.

²⁶ Quoted from: Plato. Vereinigung Deutschlands, p. 406

Just as German imperial unification in 1871 depended on Prussian-Russian co-operation against other powers, the relationship was repeated in 1989 with the renewed "solution of the German question". Gorbachev described it on 10 February 1990 in that legendary conversation with Helmut Kohl in Moscow: *"Among the capitalist countries, the FRG comes first for the USSR. So the Germans are the most important partners for us. And that means we have strong interests in common."*²⁷ And 14 days earlier, in an internal circle of his advisors, he said: *"All of West Germany is interested in not losing the connection to us. They need us and we need them."*²⁸ Gorbachev's line was to solve "the German question" in the interests of the West German revanchists from the outset in order to secure the best starting position for an Axis alliance in the period thereafter.

The USA tried the same thing, which is still kept hidden today, but a little earlier. At the beginning of 1989, there was a growing number of voices in the CDU asking whether the Union should not *"not only remove the issue of reunification from its vocabulary, but also pursue a policy that would lead to political recognition of the GDR"*²⁹. On 31 May 1989 - the first wave of emigration from the GDR was still two months away - there was almost a scandal when US President George Bush announced the exact opposite during his visit to Germany in the Rheingold Hall in Mainz: *"We are striving for self-determination for all of Germany and all the countries of Eastern Europe. ... Berlin must be the next stop."* And this without consultation with the German government and at a NATO anniversary of all times. Six months later, the catchy tune threatening the world was still an affront to Bonn in May. In his 1997 book, Philipp Zelikow, the author of the US pivot on the issue of Germany in the National Security Council (NSC), explains this pivot in a passage

²⁷ Galkin/ Tschernjajew. Gorbatschow. Dokument Nr. 72: Gespräch Gorbačëvs mit Bundeskanzler Kohl am 10. Februar 1990 [Auszug] Aus dem Vieraugengespräch M. S. Gorbačëvs mit H. Kohl 10. Februar 1990

²⁸ A.a.O. Dokument Nr. 66. Diskussion der deutschen Frage im Beraterstab von Generalsekretär Gorbačëv am 26. Januar 1990 - Erörterung der deutschen Frage im kleinen Kreis im Arbeitszimmer des Generalsekretärs des ZK der KPdSU - 26. Januar 1990

²⁹ Horst Teltschik on 27 September 2000 in an interview with A. von Plato. Reprinted in: Plato. Vereinigung Deutschlands, p. 25, where Teltschik added: "Only those were individuals, and they had no chance with Helmut Kohl." These "individuals", whose importance Teltschik plays down here, were after all Chancellery Minister Schäuble (Plato. p. 23), Teltschik himself (Plato. p. 24) and CDU General Secretary Geißler, who even prepared a party conference motion to remove reunification from the party programme, which Kohl prevented at the last minute.

that Plato summarises as follows: *"Unofficially, the interest behind it was to reduce Soviet influence, especially in Europe, and to strengthen that of the USA."*³⁰ And after analysing all sources, Plato confirms Bush's reason for single-handedly putting German reunification on the agenda at the beginning of 1989. *"Behind this was probably the concern that Gorbachev's policy could push the USA out of Europe or at least reduce its strength."*³¹ An embarrassment of historic proportions that would later result for the German government: With the Bush initiative a good five months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Bonn lost its role as the initiator of German reunification. The US President's speech immediately disappeared from the files of the Federal Chancellery and nothing more emerged in diplomatic records.³²

By agreeing to the annexation of the GDR, Gorbachev and Bush were pursuing the same goal in competition with each other: to win or maintain the loyalty of West Germany. As early as 2 May 1989, the New York Times painted a picture of what the loss of US influence in Europe could trigger: *"It is this fear: West Germany, already the dominant economic power in Western Europe, wants to use Gorbachev's policy of opening up to become the dominant economic power in Eastern and Central Europe. Huge contributions of West German money and technology will flow to the Soviet Union and its allies, leading to an economic and political alliance between West Germany and the Soviet Union. The fear of a Soviet-German alliance was one of the reasons for the creation of the Western alliance."*³³ Hence, the US President's speech in Mainz on the occasion of NATO's 40th anniversary. The German-Russian axis, which arises from Germany's central position between Eastern and Western Europe and which dominates the policies of all others as a threat to world peace, has appeared again and again in all its facets over the centuries.

The main opponent of the revision of European borders, who knows from its own experience that every German territorial gain would be the springboard for the next one, is England. The Thatcher government, however, is immedi-

³⁰ Op. cit. p. 20 f.

³¹ Op. cit. p. 27.

³² Op. cit. S. 22

³³ Op. cit. S. 51

ately signalled by its Washington spiritus rector that its isolated position has no chance of an effective veto.

The role of France is revealing, as it is also initially opposed to its rival's territorial expansion without taking as clear a public stance as London. Through talks in London and Moscow, Mitterrand vehemently tried to ensure that the fight against the Kohl/Genscher duo was led from there, so that Paris could take on its old role: wait and see and, if Germany could not be stopped, profit from its expansion alongside it. Mitterrand's ideal solution seemed to be to make German "reunification" dependent on European unification. He was gradually "convinced" by Kohl/Genscher: first German, then European unification. Next, Mitterrand's plan was trimmed down to an economic and monetary union. Although the treaty was negotiated in Maastricht in 1991, it only came into force in 1999 (euro as bank money) and 2002 (euro as cash). Initially, Bonn is not at all in favour of a rapid unification of Europe, because it is clear that the state costs of annexing the GDR, which ultimately amount to 1.2 trillion euros, would ensure that only France and possibly England would be able to benefit from an early monetary union. This would have turned the annexation of the GDR into a dangerous clog in the wheel instead of a springboard to world domination. Genscher succeeds in timing the entry into force of economic and monetary union in such a way that the French are pacified on the one hand and the German side benefits for the most part on the other. This plan succeeds. Just two years later, Kohl was able to say: *"It would be a failure before history if we were content with German unity."*³⁴ The French illusion that Germany's integration into a "European house" would keep the German urge for expansion and hegemony in check ignored the question of who would then be master of the house. And this illusion has a history.

In 1915, the then Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg noted in his diary: *"Yesterday I sat with the Chancellor for a long time to explain to him my new Europe, i.e. the European conception of our will to power. The Central European Empire of the German Nation. The usual nesting system for shares, the German Reich, a joint stock company with a Prussian majority of shares [...] a confederation of states around the Reich, in which the Reich has the same*

³⁴ Helmut Kohl in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of 16 June 1992, quoted from: Eggerdinger. Großdeutschland, p.114

*majority as Prussia in the Reich - therefore Prussia also has the actual leadership in the confederation [...] Then treat Austria in such a way that it grows into it by itself. It will and must. Then strengthen the European idea in Scandinavia and Holland. There is no need to talk about joining the central power. The European idea, if it thinks its way forward, will lead to such a consequence all by itself."*³⁵

28 years later, in 1943 after the defeat at Stalingrad, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of the Third Reich since 1938 and sentenced to death and executed by the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal in 1946, drafted a treaty text that was to be presented to the European states for signature after the end of the war: *"1. the European Confederation is a community of sovereign states which guarantee each other their freedom and independence. (2) The organisation of their internal relations shall be left to the sovereign decision of the individual States. 3. the nations united in the confederation will jointly safeguard the interests of Europe vis-à-vis the outside world. [5. [...] Customs and other barriers between the individual members of the confederation shall be progressively abolished, while protecting and safeguarding the vital branches of the economy, especially the smaller economic areas. 8. the European states not participating in the foundation of the confederation are invited to join the 'European Confederation'."*³⁶

Ribbentrop's grand design reads like the founding document of the European Union signed 50 years later in Maastricht. What they both have in common is the German realisation of the necessity: the dominant superpower cannot be defeated with a weak backyard. Ribbentrop puts it like this: *"The unification of Europe, which has long been apparent in history, is an inevitable development. [...] Europe has become too small for mutually hostile and mutually isolating sovereignties. A divided Europe is also too weak to assert its own character and strength in the world and to maintain peace. [...] The unification of Europe is being accelerated by the war imposed on Germany by England, the continent's old enemy. Germany's struggle against England is the European unification war. [...] It is natural that the impetus for a new order*

³⁵ Quoted from Eggerdinger, Anschluss, p. 6

³⁶ Quoted from Hass/Schumann. Anatomie Dokumente 47, p. 218 f.

in Europe should come from the Axis powers."³⁷ At that time, the Axis powers were the German Reich and Italy. 50 years later, they reappeared, this time consisting of an enlarged FRG and France. In a strategy paper by Wolfgang Schäuble from 1 September (!) 1994, they are named as the centre of a new core Europe. The French illusion that the unification of Europe would curb German dominance was shattered. The opposite happens. The European Union becomes the foundation of a far greater German expansion. And Gorbachev provides the decisive lever: the German-Russian axis. It is not only in the bourgeois camp that the war-driving character of this peaceful strategy remains unrecognised.

From the annexation of the GDR

But for the time being, all of this remains a dream of the future. For ten years, economic weakness with three critical production slumps³⁸ and the financial burdens from the annexation of the GDR with 1.2 trillion euros slowed down the new Greater Germany. The FRG still feels compelled to fall back on traditional skills, namely to weaken and dissolve other nation states by means of national expansion in its own hegemonic territory: *"Through annexation, through subjugation. Whereby the decisive question is not yet whether it [German imperialism, the author] incorporates another country as a state, nor what the demarcation looks like. The question is: whose political will determines? On whose behalf and at whose command does the state authority act?"*³⁹

After more than 20 years of de facto emancipation, the 2+4 Treaty now also formally releases the FRG from the control of the victorious powers, but imposes shackles on German revanchism: the recognition and finality of its external borders and specifically the confirmation of the Oder-Neisse border with Poland *"in a treaty binding under international law"* (Article 1) and the obligation that *"only peace shall emanate from German soil"* and that any disruption of peaceful coexistence, *"in particular the waging of a war of aggres-*

³⁷ Op. cit. Document 44, p. 203 f.

³⁸ Krüger. Entwicklung, p. 30

³⁹ Eggerdinger, Heute gehört, p. 40

sion (!), is *unconstitutional and punishable by law*" (Article 2).⁴⁰ On 12 September 1990, the six foreign ministers of Great Britain, France, the USA, the USSR, the GDR and the FRG solemnly signed this 2+4 Treaty⁴¹. However, if a treaty that is binding under international law explicitly requires the FRG to conclude a *"treaty that is binding under international law"*, this betrays the experience of the peoples as to what German imperialism intends to do with such treaties. It usually tears them up in the air as soon as they are signed. So it is this time too:

In the 1990s, the FRG leadership launched a general ideological attack on existing state borders with the slogan of a *"Europe of regions"* or *"Europe of ethnic groups"*. In the tradition of organising fifth columns, the FUEN (Federal Union of European Ethnic Groups), financed with state money from half of Europe, made up several dozen German national minorities throughout Europe. *"Whereby German imperialism increasingly sees the role of the 'German minorities' as staying where they are and destabilising the states in which they live."*⁴²

Until 1994, German consulates in Poland issued German passports to around 2 million Polish citizens without the knowledge of the Polish authorities.⁴³ Following a wave of emigration, only 150,000 Polish citizens with German citizenship still live in the country according to a 2011 census.⁴⁴ In the Polish local elections in 2010, 23 mayors and heads of municipalities were elected from the German list. In addition, the German minority holds the majority of seats in the district councils of Groß Strehlitz, Opole and Rosenberg. In the Sejmik of the Voivodeship of Opole, the German list is the second strongest force with six seats.⁴⁵ In the 1990s, the German minority was instrumentalised by organisations such as the "Association for Germans Abroad", which *"sees itself as a living bridge between the German homeland and the approximately*

⁴⁰ quoted from Plato, Vereinigung Deutschlands, p. 402

⁴¹ And all six of them, themselves impressed by the solemnity and grandeur of this historic moment, instinctively and secretly insert the Russian fountain pens with which they have just been allowed to sign the historic document. (op. cit. p. 405)

⁴² Eggerdinger, Maastricht II, p. 47

⁴³ Op. cit. S. 48

⁴⁴ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Minderheit_in_Polen#Volkszählung_2002

⁴⁵ Ibid.

14 million Germans abroad"⁴⁶ and is financed by both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁷ *"Probably the most important imperialist instrument, however, are the Euro-regions"*, four of which are being established in the former German territories. *"These four western regions receive 40 times as much funding from Brussels, Berlin and Warsaw as the regions in the east of the country."*⁴⁸

"In Czechoslovakia, it was the Hanns Seidel Foundation that supported the separatist Meciar in Slovakia." And the Czech regional press, *"as far as Bohemia and Moravia are concerned, is almost completely bought up by reactionary West German, above all Bavarian, publishers like the 'Passauer Neue Presse'."*⁴⁹ In 1993, the Sudeten German Party is founded. And finally, on 15 July 1993, Neues Deutschland reported *"that the Hungarian Prime Minister Antall had written a letter to his colleague Klaus in which he questioned the Benes Decrees as instructed (i.e. from Berlin, the author)."*⁵⁰ The Czech newspaper 'Lidove noviny' immediately declared *that "questioning the Benes decrees (which governed the resettlement of the German minority after 1945, editor's note) 'in principle also affects the entire post-war organisation [...] Questioning them would mean questioning the borders of European states and trigger an avalanche'."* But this is precisely the aim of the Bonn/Berlin clients. It is also known that *"the FRG tried to put pressure on the Prague government via Hungarian diplomats."*⁵¹ These are just a few highlights from a wealth of facts. All this happened immediately after the signing of the 2+4 Treaty.

Germany's Yugoslavia policy from 1991 in particular shows how Article 2, that *"only peace shall emanate from German soil"*, can be turned into its opposite. The German recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, which led to the first

⁴⁶ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verein_für_Deutsche_Kulturbeziehungen_im_Ausland

⁴⁷ Goldendach/ Minow. Deutschtum erwache

⁴⁸ Eggerdinger, Results, p. 81

⁴⁹ Eggerdinger, Großdeutschland, p. 124f.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

war in Europe since 1945, happened single-handedly. Despite Mitterrand's warning against an expansion of the civil war in Yugoslavia, Germany recognised Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992. The ensuing three-year war was fully in line with German policy: Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, which had formed a cordon sanitaire against German expansionism after 1918, were to be liquidated. This is the reason for the German support of all separatists such as Mečiar (Slovakia), Kučan (Slovenia), Tudjman (Croatia), Izetbegović (Bosnia), Taçi (Kosovo) etc. in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and therefore also the military and financial support of the fighting force of the Kosovo separatists, the KLA, from 1996 onwards. *"A West German diplomat reports: 'It was hard; it was the first time that Germany made others do what they didn't want to do. We had a few allies, not very many, plus the Pope. For the first time since 1945, the Bonn state openly and provocatively rebelled against UN resolutions, against the USA, against the majority of European imperialists. This alone shows the importance of the Yugoslavian conflict for German imperialism.'"*⁵²

For different reasons, German and US imperialism took the civil war between Kosovo and Serbia in 1999 as an opportunity to jointly bomb the Yugoslav capital Belgrade for eleven weeks, with the German side supplying the reconnaissance aircraft and the American side the bombers. The lies from Scharping's war ministry about the Serbian horseshoe plan to commit genocide against the Kosovars have now been sufficiently exposed - of course without criminal consequences, which the 2+4 treaty would require. To this day, the war aims of the jointly fighting imperialists USA and FRG remain unnoticed. For the first time since 1945, the Germans are again waging a war of aggression and can thus liquidate the 2+4 Treaty. In addition, they are even allowed to establish a military protectorate on foreign territory, the so-called UNMIK protectorate in Kosovo. The US side's aim is to put German imperialism in its place, to warn it against continuing to question the borders in Europe along ethnic lines. Otherwise, there would certainly be a willingness on the four sides of the 2+4 Treaty to respond with military means. The US bombers are therefore carrying two types of explosive: the material one against Belgrade, the political one against Berlin. As early as June 1993 - six years before the

⁵² Op. cit. p. 114, quoted from: John Newhouse. Der Westen und die Auflösung Jugoslawiens. In: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik. 10/92. S. 1198

Yugoslavian war - the magazine Konkret reported on the position in Clinton's National Security Council, *"that the USA in turn justified its repeated considerations to intervene militarily in the Balkans, among other things, with the need to put a stop to German expansionism in the whole of Eastern Europe."*⁵³

Ethnic tactics take a back seat

The hint with the US imperialist fence post includes: no further expansion to the east. Military hegemony over Europe remains with the USA. It is understood. In the meantime, the consolidation of the FRG economy has made it possible to switch from aggressive national expansion to a different tactic. In his aforementioned 1994 paper *"Reflections on European Policy"*, Wolfgang Schäuble not only formulated a new tactic towards Europe, he also presented an overall strategy for German imperialism:

"The Core Europe Group [...] consists of five to six countries.

No significant foreign and European policy actions without prior German-European dialogue.

French vote [...]

Policy of comprehensive partnership between the Union (i.e. the EU, editor's note) and Russia".

And what, of course, can never be addressed openly in a strategy paper, but only in disguise, is the naming of the strategic opponent: *"since the USA can no longer play its role in the same way after the end of the East-West conflict [...]"*. Schäuble thus reveals himself to be a new great power strategist, who outlines the only possible strategy for the goal of replacing the number one: partial annexations in the West combined with the EU-Russia axis in the East.

With the change in German expansionist tactics, the borders must no longer be dismantled; now they must remain stable and be protected. Now all the Ostlandritter, the whole separatist rabble, must be relegated to the second rank, both internally and externally. The "Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland", renamed the "Verein für Deutsche Kulturbeziehungen im Ausland

⁵³ Op. cit. S. 128

e.V." in 1998, is allowed to bob along for a while and will finally be dissolved in 2019. The German minorities in Eastern Europe are suddenly supposed to become loyal to the state and the Landsmannschaften are supposed to close their ties to the fascist camp. The chaotic ethnic destabilisation of Eastern Europe will cease.

When the Catalan regional parliament in Spain voted in favour of establishing an independent republic of Catalonia in October 2017, the central government in Madrid disempowered the regional parliament, forcibly placed the region under central administration and the separatists - firmly relying on the previous Berlin policy of recognising separatists - suddenly found themselves on trial. All they have left to support them in this country is an ex-Bayern coach. No state recognises Catalonia's independence, and there is no talk of self-determination in Berlin either. Spain's continued membership of the EU after the 2010 euro crisis is too threatened. The exit of one of the four southern euro states harbours too great a risk of an uncontrollable chain reaction and the collapse of the entire fragile construct of German partial annexations.

Now the East is being penetrated in a different way: In bilateral divisions of armed state power, military within NATO, police within the EU, German forces of order act together with those of the eastern partners. This gives the other side the feeling that they can keep things under control. For the German side, this approach provides valuable insights into foreign state structures and reveals weaknesses and strengths: free intelligence information for possible later intervention and occupation.

In 2017, the Bundeswehr moves into Lithuania with a "German Battlegroup" as part of NATO with a complete armoured brigade and 1,600 soldiers. They are given their own barracks in the town of Rukla.

In 2007, a joint German-Polish police centre is set up in the border town of Świecko, initially with 60 officers, which is to form further joint offices. A new German-Polish police agreement from 2015 regulates the deployment of armed police forces on each other's territory. Since 2021, the vehicles have been labelled in two languages with the inscription: "Joint patrol".

In 2006, German and Polish armed forces founded the "Multinational Corps North-East" and the "Weimar Battlegroup" within the framework of the EU.

In a cooperation agreement, it is agreed *"to subordinate a Polish battalion to a German brigade during military exercises and vice versa."*⁵⁴ But the cooperation faltered with Poland's reorientation towards US imperialism. After the PiS election victory in 2015, *"Jarosław Kaczyński, the PiS party leader, said that German troops should not be allowed on Polish soil 'for at least seven generations' in response to attempts by the Polish government to strengthen Nato's presence in Poland."*⁵⁵ This is an early US disruptive fire against Germany's axis policy with Moscow.

A German-Polish agreement is not concluded again until 2021, this time in relation to the joint air war. It allows *"fighter aircraft to fly into the respective airspace as a quick reaction alert and operate there."* It is significant, however, that this agreement is not signed by official government representatives, but by two air force officers.⁵⁶

In a country where *"war is the father of all things"*, foreign policy has domestic policy in tow.⁵⁷ The shift in foreign policy from expansionism by means of bawling ethnic groups and "discriminated" German minorities to the inquisitorial omnipotence of the German Finance Minister Schäuble, who executes not with border posts but with the black zero, is also reflected in domestic policy:

In 2011, the German Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst) busted the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and its links to the NSU terror network, thereby relegating the line of open state organisation of fascists via "V-men" to second place.⁵⁸ The new line is: fascists off the streets

⁵⁴ <https://www.bpb.de/themen/europa/polen-analysen/316827/analyse-die-deutsch-polnische-sicherheits-und-verteidigungszusammenarbeit-gepraegt-von-nicht-ausgeschoepftem-potential-oder-struktureller-fragilitaet/>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/organisation/luftwaffe/aktuelles/deutsch-polnische-zusammenarbeit-im-luftraum-gefestigt-5083332>

⁵⁷ The GDR historian Kurt Pätzold demonstrates the connection between foreign and domestic policy in fascism. The course of the world war forced the escalation of the persecution and liquidation of Jewish citizens, first in the Reich and then throughout Europe.

⁵⁸ From November 2011 to mid-2012, the BND contact Hans Leyendecker, who was regarded as an "investigative journalist" and wrote for the SZ, led the reporting on the NSU murders.

and into the state apparatus, the police and the military, where they are easier to keep under control and their training with weapons no longer attracts public attention. So no improvement in the democratic sense, increasing police and military scandals, brutal police murders of young people and immigrants.⁵⁹

In 2013, the semi-fascist AfD was founded as a counter-reaction to the imperialist change of tactics in opposition to the euro regime and the Merkel government's "new openness" towards refugees. It is becoming the link in the black-brown camp between the CDU/CSU and the socially too isolated NPD. None of the state parties can effectively defend themselves against the AfD's attacks. After all, the people in this country are paying billions in taxpayers' money for the "rescue packages" for bankrupt EU members, while the monopolies in the manufacturing and financial sectors are squeezing many times the sacrifices of the local people out of the other nations. This new rallying movement towards fascism, which has a magnetic effect on disillusioned middle-class citizens, knows how to increase its popularity from crisis to crisis.

The fascist terrorist attacks of the 1980s and the roaring Nazi hordes and pogroms of the 1990s against immigrants are a bad sign for the leading power in Europe. At the same time, however, the Berlin austerity dictates against weaker EU states are increasingly flushing semi-fascist parties into the governments there, because they would supposedly fight better for their state sovereignty than the bourgeois parties. Berlin uses this direct consequence of German European policy to polish Germany's democratic façade to the outside world. The sham-democratic tamer from Germany can also rule politically over the delinquents in Poland, Hungary and Italy. Economic and political heteronomy add fascism as a hidden export to German exports of goods.

At the same time, the principles of bourgeois democracy in this country are being undermined cleanly and in accordance with the rule of law in a thorough restructuring of the state: omnipotence of the secret services over the police and judiciary in joint counter-terrorism centres; subordination of the judiciary to the police and carte blanche for the police over the citizens. The final stages in this process: new police task laws and the criminal law section 114,

⁵⁹ Most recently in Dortmund on 8 August, where 11 police officers first attacked a 16-year-old teenager from Senegal twice with taser attacks and then - because he allegedly refused to put down his knife - executed him with five shots.

which criminalises collective protests, demonstrations and strikes by enforcing minimum sentences of 3 or 6 months in prison for mere physical contact with police officers. The reorganisation of the state also includes the use of the army within the country against its own citizens and, last but not least, a Leitkultur law in which the nationalist state doctrine is given a place to hibernate.

The German partial annexations in the EU

Monetary union

When important elements of state sovereignty are undermined, we speak of partial annexations. The terms annexations and partial annexations refer to a similar development among other imperialists with the seizure of colonies and semi-colonies, i.e. designated possessions outside their own continent, supplemented by annexed hegemonic territories with only formal sovereignty, which are referred to as semi-colonies. It is well known that German imperialism's path to the conquest of colonies and semi-colonies outside its own continent was largely blocked by its delayed capitalist development and that it had to specialise in expansion within its own continent. Annexations became the means to an end in order to compensate for the lack of colonies. Analogous to the semi-colony, weaker states within their own continent were subjugated with only formal independence. The term partial annexation is appropriate here. This chapter describes how far-reaching partial annexations can be.

As always in civil law, so also in international law, formally equal but economically very unequal partners conclude contracts. EU treaties between unequal partners also grant the weaker party small short-term advantages, such as participation in rising exports, in exchange for enormous disadvantages that cannot be reversed in the long term, until they fall back from semi-dependence to total dependence. Its own currency is a decisive part of the sovereignty of a formally independent state. The currency regime automati-

cally affects other areas such as the economy (government spending and investment), finance (national budget), domestic policy (labour movement, see 2012-15 Greece) and foreign policy (international treaties). Foreign states can co-determine and intervene in these areas once the national currency has been abandoned. In the case of the 17 non-imperialist states in the eurozone, we therefore speak of partial annexations by the imperialists France and Greater Germany. The FRG, as the stronger imperialist, is the main beneficiary of the overall situation. The strong states insist on compliance with the agreed criteria, while the weaker states are unable to fulfil them. According to the theory, there is no need for external intervention in the case of those that fulfil the criteria. In practice, it turns out that when France and Germany, for example, breach the debt criteria, no one sanctions them. The labour movement expresses this in its song "The International": *"The poor man's empty word is his right, the rich man's empty word is his duty"*.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992/93⁶⁰ provides for the introduction of the common euro currency from 1999 for 11 of the 15 EU states at the time, initially only as book money for the banks and from January 2002 as cash. Today, 19 EU states are subject to the euro regime, 8 EU states are not. With the euro, weaker economies can no longer protect exports and production in their own country by devaluing their currency. The national economy that exports the most, the German economy, wins. Loans at low interest rates initially masked the ruin of the southern EU states. Since the euro crisis in 2010, interest rates have had to be kept artificially low to prevent the national bankruptcy of the dependent states from becoming visible. This low interest rate has lowered the euro exchange rate to such an extent that German exports of goods outside the euro countries have risen to unprecedented heights. If the Deutschmark still existed, its exchange rate would rise, export prices would increase and German exports would be curbed. However, the exchange rate of a common European currency hardly rises at all. This is because only the total exports of the eurozone count for the euro exchange rate - and these lag far behind German exports. The euro is being used to maximise what was initially only an economic advantage within the monetary union. Political subjugation through partial annexations appears to be merely economic expansion, the perfor-

⁶⁰ The years of signature (9 February 1992) and entry into force (1 January 1993) are mentioned here.

mance of the German economy. In reality, the ruin of the South is the basis of the German export world champion.

TARGET 2

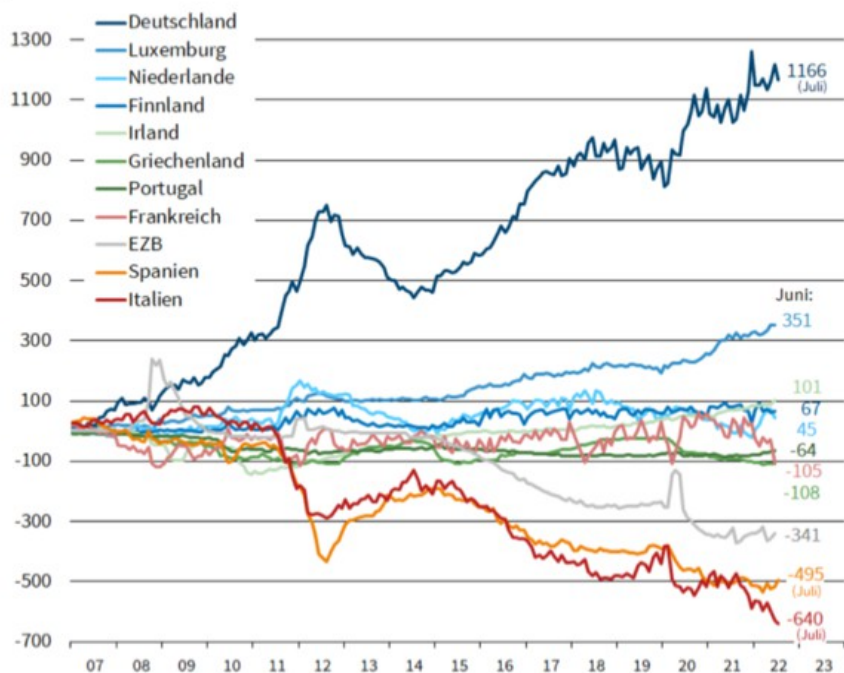
But that's not all. In 2007, the eurozone clearing system TARGET was reformed. The name means **T**rans-European **A**utomated **R**eal-time **G**ross **S**ettlement **E**xpress **T**ransfer System. It enables the settlement of payments between the euro countries, or more precisely: between their national banks and their largest commercial banks. With the TARGET 2 reform, cross-border payments can be made in "real time" and settled immediately. This is initially a huge step forward. But since the 2010 financial crisis, the pitfalls have become apparent: the central banks of the strong economies can accumulate arbitrarily high claims against the central banks of the weaker ones, without any immediate consequences for the business relationships of European companies and their commercial banks. With far-reaching consequences. Normally, German exports to the insolvent South should have decreased or come to a standstill since 2010. But it has not. This is because the financial liability is distributed among the other solvent euro states by means of the regulations of the European Central Bank (ECB) - based in Frankfurt am Main, of course. The German Bundesbank's claims on the ECB will total 1.17 trillion euros by 2022 as a result of German goods exports to and capital flight from the south.⁶¹ TARGET 2 now distributes these claims proportionately among all national banks in the eurozone according to a politically determined formula: Germany itself accounts for only 26.4%! Before the introduction of the euro, the German Bundesbank would have borne 100% of the risks for its claims. France is now burdened with 20.4% of German claims, Italy with 17%, Spain with 12%, the Netherlands with 5.8%, Belgium with 3.6%, Austria with 3%, Finland with 1.8% and the Baltic states with 1.3%.⁶² For the countries bur-

⁶¹ The TARGET balances are subject to relatively low interest rates. For experts: at the applicable marginal interest rate used in the Eurosystem's tender operations for its main refinancing operations." (<https://fragdenstaat.de/anfrage/target2-salden/>)

⁶² This balance of power, which has been hidden behind the diverging Target 2 balances of the euro states since 2011, is easily overlooked if the material power of fictitious capital is underestimated.

dened by German exports, nothing will change for the time being - as long as the monetary union exists.

Target-Salden ausgewählter nationaler Zentralbanken und der EZB, Juli 2022
In Milliarden Euro; Monatsendwerte



Quelle: Sinn/Wollmershäuser "aktualisiert" (2012) »Target Loans, Current Account Balances and Capital Flows: The ECB's Rescue Facility«, International Tax and Public Finance; Europäische Zentralbank; Deutsche Bundesbank; Banca d'Italia; Banco de España; Bank of Greece.

© Hans-Werner Sinn

Legend:

The top curve shows Germany's development. Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland follow with a slight increase, followed by the countries that have remained more or less the same: Ireland and Greece. Portugal and France recorded slight losses. The ECB itself is already showing a sharply falling balance, with Spain and Italy recording heavy losses.

ECB putty and the "black zero" hatchet

Why don't the dependent states simply withdraw from the Maastricht Treaty? Maastricht I and II contain no provisions for withdrawal. The answer is: leaving the EU would be more ruinous than remaining in the debt trap. The South would ruin itself in two and three ways. ECB debt would have to bear interest and be paid, with falling exports, falling production and rising government interest rates.

On the other hand, the dependent states can hope for little support from their tormentor, who must be anxious to maintain the overall system. The relationship between capital and the proletariat is reproduced here at the interstate level: squeeze out what you can without ruining the source. At the state level, interest is to dependent states what wages are to the proletariat. Only the other way round: the lower interest rate corresponds to the higher wage. And just as in the 19th century the system of capitalist exploitation was only revealed with an understanding of the wage system, so the unmasking of the imperialist exploitation system of partial annexations at the beginning of the 21st century depends on an understanding of the interest mechanism.

The level of government interest rates is not primarily determined by the ECB's key interest rate, but by the market on which the government bonds are traded. Government bonds have a limited term with a fixed interest rate. They are then repaid to the buyer. This is called the primary market. However, the majority of government bonds are the subject of lively trading by speculative capital during their term. And this trading on the so-called secondary market changes the current interest rate of the government bond. The higher the price (rate), the more "popular" a government bond is with investors, the lower its interest rate (yield) automatically becomes. Expiring government bonds must be constantly replaced by new government bonds on the government side. The entire financial system of the state is based - in addition to tax revenue - on the ongoing rescheduling of old government debt. The interest rates for the new government bonds are precisely the interest rates currently prevailing on the secondary market. This means that the lower the interest rates on a government bond that is in high demand, the cheaper the issuing countries can borrow new debt. And conversely, the more investors avoid a government bond, the higher its interest rate and the more expensive the government debt.

The ECB has been buying up government bonds from all EU countries for more than 10 years to counter high government interest rates in the south. It virtually simulates an increased market demand for government bonds, increases their price and lowers their interest rate. This is the mechanism in the hands of the ECB to "rescue" insolvent states that are being squeezed dry by German imperialism. Until 2022, the ECB will buy up government bonds of all EU states on a pro rata and graduated basis in accordance with the TARGET 2 system. This means that the rich states benefit the most from the "rescue". This mechanism allows German imperialism to appoint Italians, French and Spaniards to responsible EU positions at will. Every step they take to save the fragile system as a whole, be it "rescue packages" based on cheap loans such as the ESM, EFSF, EFSM, lowering the key interest rate or the aforementioned ECB purchases of government bonds⁶³ etc. - everything serves to preserve the system as a whole and at the same time further expands German supremacy.

This straitjacket holds the EU together. At the same time, however, the interest rate is also the weak point where the entire system could burst. If interest rates rise permanently, the entire South will face a series of state bankruptcies that even the TARGET-2 system and the ECB will no longer be able to stop. And this is precisely what US imperialism is counting on if the war in Ukraine drives up interest rates even higher worldwide.

Another instrument is tightening the thumbscrews of the dependent EU states: Those caught in the debt trap are tied even tighter by rating agencies. The rating agencies assess the probability that states and companies will no longer be able to pay their interest. For states, this means national bankruptcy. Although the TARGET-2 system conceals the sovereign default of individual euro states, this does not deceive the rating agencies. They assess the probability of insolvency in the future, and the current level of government interest rates also depends on their signatures. Like catalysts, they reinforce the prevailing price/interest rate trend in government bond trading and thus amplify the differences in the interest rate levels of the various countries. This deepens the

⁶³ These are all somewhat complicated mechanisms in which the FRG appears to be the "paymaster" but is in fact the main beneficiary.

weakening of the dependent states.⁶⁴ Interest rates on borrowed capital for all companies operating in the respective countries rise automatically and to roughly the same extent as government interest rates. Once again, the merry-go-round of weakening smaller overall economies, rising government debt and renewed weakening of companies is turning. However, the merry-go-round also means that the ECB's financial outlay for the "rescue operations" is increasing and with it the contribution that the imperialist exploiters themselves have to make. The dispute among the solvent states of the North about who can best pass on the additional costs to others is decided by the question of who has the lowest national debt and the most balanced budget.

Between 2014 and 2019, the German state will be able to balance its budget completely at the expense of its "EU partners"; its expenditure - including arithmetic tricks - will remain below its income. Schäuble's "black zero" is descending on the state leaders in the south like a medieval executioner's cleaver. No OXI of the Greek people will help in 2015; they will have to suffer the dictates of the German finance minister. The working classes in the imperialist countries are barely stirring. In the bourgeoisie, the German Herrenmensch, who mocks lazy, incompetent southern countries with corrupt governments and boasts about "his" generosity of credit, is instantly reappearing.⁶⁵

Originally, the EU's Maastricht criteria stipulated that new debt should be kept below 3% of GDP and total debt below 60% of GDP. As these criteria can hardly be met by economically weaker states, they form the gateway to foreign domination. Since another "criterion" entered the scene with the German "black zero", they have been considered outdated. From now on, the "black zero" determines who in the South is "saved" and how, and who in the

⁶⁴ It can be assumed that the ECB's claims on indebted central banks are factored into the rating agencies' risk assessments. After all, the rating agencies, whose negligence towards the banking monopolies in 2007/08 contributed to the outbreak of the financial crisis, are certainly particularly thorough in their risk assessments of dependent euro states.

⁶⁵ Particularly loud are the complaints in the media from the reactionary former head of the Ifo Institute, Hans-Werner Sinn, who declares the German claims from the Target 2 balances to be lost and, as a Professor Doktor, naturally simply ignores the political effects of the partial annexations. He never misses an opportunity to come up with ethnic-racist accusations.

countries of the North has to pay how much for it. It is an executioner's axe with double blades. Characteristically, the FRG virtually "personifies" the "black zero", even when its mathematical zero has long since become history. The executioner does not need any criteria, he decides who's government bonds will be bought up unilaterally from 2022, i.e. without graduated synchronisation, in order to curb rising government interest rates, and who will not. And it decides how much everyone in the solvent North has to take on.

This second hidden source allows the original economic advantage to swell further by political means.

Hartz I

Another perfidious trick is fuelling the advance of German companies. The Hartz IV reform has been on everyone's lips since 2005 as an austerity diktat against the unemployed and has sparked protests right into the ranks of the social democrats. Its mechanism, the unoriginal reduction of social benefits, is used everywhere and is explicitly prescribed by the German austerity dictates. What is not used elsewhere is the mechanism of Hartz I. Two years before Hartz IV, the less spectacular Hartz I law - with the co-operation of the German trade unions - passes the Bundestag. It cancels all restrictions on temporary labour in companies. In 2003, German lawmakers established equal pay for all workers within a company, regardless of whether they are temporary workers or permanent employees. But why does the law remove equal pay with an opening clause? This opening clause was secretly activated by the trade unions from the outset with collective agreements on temporary work. Only when the EU followed suit in 2008 with an almost identical EU directive⁶⁶ did the German coup take effect: not in France, not in Italy, not in Spain, not in the UK were there such degenerate trade unions activating the opening clause, reducing temporary work to around a third of the collectively agreed wage and enabling up to 50% of the workforce to be replaced by disenfranchised temporary workers. Only in the FRG does the IGM, and with it the DGB, ensure exactly that. Knowing full well that not a single word in the employment contract of a temporary worker, apart from the payment of

⁶⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008L0104&from=DE>

wages, can be enforced by the individual worker against the company that hires him out. If he insists on his employment contract, he risks immediate dismissal, which does not even need to be justified: Germany, the low-wage country.

When it comes to temporary labour, capitalists in other European countries are stuck with far higher wage costs than their German competitors. They cannot dismiss their workers en masse and quietly from one day to the next without the public and shareholders being alarmed by any fluctuation or weakness. However, the greatest benefit of temporary work for capital lies in the division, paralysis and atomisation of the entire working class. Anyone who agrees to the disenfranchisement of up to half of their own workforce, who no longer even regards them as belonging to their own company, has no thought of strike action. For them, the theatre thunder of the IGM warning strikes is the highest of emotions. German capital has not forgotten the advantages of forced labour during the war; it has neatly transformed them into peaceful production and a system of partial annexations that already puts foreign competitors at a disadvantage when it comes to the appropriation of surplus value. And the German trade unions are not only playing along, they are triggering the annexation mechanism with the temporary employment contracts.

Political eastward expansion

From 2004 onwards, the EU's eastward expansion is a succession of ten more countries - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Cyprus. Bulgaria and Romania follow in 2007. Here is just one example of the immediate consequences: Polish lorry production, one of the largest in Europe, is immediately liquidated. The vehicles were said to be too loud and fuel consumption too high. Although this is true, it does not have to lead to the immediate cessation of production. After all, exceptions and transitional periods have been promised. But Daimler and VW strike immediately, take over the factories, in some cases via straw men, and have them closed. Four years later, there are no more lorries or buses coming out of the previously huge Polish factories in Starachowice and Jelcz. And it continues eastwards: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have had "neighbourhood status" since 2004, a preliminary form of "EU association". All these

preliminary stages of EU membership are nothing other than markers of ownership by German imperialism. These preliminary stages of partial annexation also dictate to the candidates what they have to fulfil in areas of their domestic policy and within what periods of time. A real accession usually takes more than a decade.

Negotiations on the association of Ukraine, Belarus and the Republic of Moldova within the framework of the "Eastern Partnership" begin in 2008. And 14 years later, in June 2022, at a "historic conference", the European Council grants Ukraine and Moldova "candidate status", a new intermediate stage between association and membership. They have to do their homework in nine areas, including the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the fight against corruption and the protection of minorities. These are all areas in which the FRG should have been excluded from the EU long ago due to serious shortcomings. But that's not the point. The EU currently has 27 member states and around 75 million more people as a result of eastward enlargement, cheap labour in abundance and corresponding domestic sales markets for the monopolies, but also plenty of booby traps that the US competitor is setting off one after the other. In addition, France has been blocking further EU enlargement to include North Macedonia (former part of Yugoslavia) and Albania since 2019.

Exactly what Wolfgang Schäuble warned of in his 1994 strategy paper *"Reflections on European Policy"* has materialised: *"The European unification process has reached a critical point. If we do not succeed in finding a solution to the causes of this dangerous development in the next few years, then the Union will inexorably develop into a loose formation with various subgroupings, essentially limited to a few economic aspects, contrary to the objective of ever closer integration as set out in the Maastricht Treaty. Such an 'elevated' free trade zone would not be able to cope with the existential problems of European societies and their external challenges."*⁶⁷ Ribbentrop sends his regards.

⁶⁷ CDU/CSU parliamentary group of the German Bundestag. Überlegungen zur europäischen Politik. Bonn, 1994 p. 1.

The Schäuble paper of 1994 - overall strategy of German imperialism

Schäuble knows that the EU's *"external challenges"* lie in developing internal structures that are not inferior to those of the USA in terms of their ability to act. As a strategist of German imperialism, his main concern is the institutional deepening of the Union by means of a solid core Europe on the basis of Franco-German cooperation, *"alongside a re-stabilised and democratised Russia"* as the *continent's* second *"key regulatory factor"*. All of this, of course, *"in alliance with the USA"*, which, however, *"can no longer play its role in the same way after the end of the East-West conflict"*.

His credo is: *"Due to its geographical location, its size and its history, Germany has a special interest in preventing Europe from drifting apart, which would return it to its old central position."* Apart from the fact that you can neither *"overcome"* nor *"return"* to a centralised position, the passage is aimed at *"a fundamental change in the European state system"*. As an imperialist strategist, he recognises: *"In the past, this situation between East and West has made it difficult for Germany to clearly align its internal order and establish a lasting, stable foreign policy balance. The key passage here is: "The attempts to overcome this situation at the centre of all European conflicts by establishing a hegemony failed." The "catastrophe of 1945 [...] made Germany [...] realise that its forces were not sufficient for this."*⁶⁸

This is not a general rejection of the establishment of hegemony. If the forces of a single imperialist are not sufficient for this, then perhaps the forces of two imperialists will do, according to the offer to France. And this could turn the *"situation between East and West"* from a problem for one into an opportunity for both. That is what he has in mind. He fights for France as someone who is aware of the French people's primal fear of German hegemony, as someone who fully recognises German supremacy and tries to put a positive spin on it by saying - without any truthfulness, of course - *"Within this system (the integration of the FRG into the EU, editor's note), Germany's relative economic superiority has not had a dominating effect, but rather a mutually beneficial*

⁶⁸ Op. cit. p. 10, p. 2

one."⁶⁹ Immediately afterwards, he argues in favour of finally discussing the reform of the EU institutions, i.e. the *"fundamental change of the European state system"*, instead of arguing the different positions in public speeches. He believes that the regular presidential/chancellor consultations are too unproductive and advocates *"finally making use of the corresponding Franco-German councils (Economic and Social Council and Defence Council)."*⁷⁰ Paris and Berlin should *"act together in a recognisably more community-oriented way than others and introduce joint initiatives."*⁷¹ *"In addition to increasing efficiency, democratisation must be recognised as a guiding principle for all reforms."*⁷² And hints that if he only wanted to leave it at German hegemony over France, the *"elevated free trade area"* could be enough for him. He then shows his ally that there is no contradiction between their desire to deepen the Union and the German line on enlargement. *"That is why the question of - prior - deepening is of such central importance for France."*⁷³

Of course, Schäuble is not saying all this because he has suddenly become a democrat or because he has renounced German supremacy. Schäuble needs this ally France absolutely and most of all. He does not need it as a mere political and economic subordinate, he needs it primarily as an ally capable of acting in order to integrate it into a primary, geostrategically far higher goal: *"Joint policy to stabilise Central and Eastern Europe. Development of relations with Russia with the one goal of a comprehensive partnership."*⁷⁴ And further on: *"The integration of Eastern Central European states into the European Union must be accompanied by a policy of comprehensive partnership between the Union and Russia. It must give Russia the certainty - insofar as this is possible from the outside - that it is recognised as the other political*

⁶⁹ Op. cit. S. 3

⁷⁰ Op. cit. S. 10

⁷¹ Op. cit. S. 7

⁷² Op. cit. S. 5

⁷³ Op. cit. S. 8

⁷⁴ Op. cit. S. 11

centre on the continent alongside the EU."⁷⁵ This is the strategy of the West-East axis.

The much-quoted sentence, otherwise *"Germany [...] could be tempted to manage the stabilisation of Eastern Europe alone and in the traditional way"*, caused great outrage after the paper was published. It was seen as a declaration of war against the countries of Eastern Europe. However, if you read on, it becomes clear that Schäuble wants to avoid precisely this confrontation - based on a very revealing argument: *"but that would far overstretch his powers and at the same time lead to an erosion of the cohesion of the European Union, especially as the historical memory that Germany's Ostpolitik in history essentially consisted of co-operation with Russia at the expense of the countries in between is still alive everywhere."* This is a plea in favour of no longer leaving the FRG, whose forces are insufficient, alone in its *"cooperation with Russia"*. His courting of France is linked to his courting of Russia.

In 1994, Schäuble warns against stopping at an *"elevated free trade zone"*. Schröder/Fischer fought for a core Europe from 1998-2005 and were defeated by Paris. Their defeats reflected the fact that the mechanisms of partial annexations had not yet had time to potentiate each other. But from 2005 onwards, German imperialism can increasingly loosen the reins and leave the political initiatives for the unification of Europe to the French. How Angela Merkel falls behind François Hollande, how much she is attacked for gambling away German influence in the EU. And how much this impression is repeated, with increased panic, by Scholz and Macron. Today, Berlin's diplomacy can react far more flexibly: If the short route to a core Europe with Paris is not possible, then the long route via Amsterdam (1997) Nice (2001) Lisbon (2007) is. As long as the foundations of the German partial annexations are in place and the gap between the economies continues to widen, let the French grit their teeth at Europe's *"federal state structure"*.

At the legendary EU summit meeting on 23/24 June 2022 in Brussels, where the *"association trio"* of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia will be given a *"European perspective"*, France will present a completely new plan: *"France has opened up a new playing field with its proposal for a European Political*

⁷⁵ Op. cit. S. 14

*Community (EPC). The European Council has not been able to refuse it. [...] The EPC is to be a platform for political coordination among all countries on the continent with which the EU has close relations. [...] It is about political dialogue and cooperation on the issues of security, stability and prosperity - in an inclusive "Group Europe" that wants to exchange views on common challenges and basic principles for their respective actions. President Macron's original proposal [...] could be interpreted as the EU wanting to create an intermediate stage on the path to membership. The 27 discussed an EPG at length in the European Council, but agreed above all on its limits. It should not be a substitute for the enlargement of the EU, and it must not restrict its autonomy in decision-making in any way."*⁷⁶ Berlin can look on calmly at all the French initiatives⁷⁷ and push ahead with cooperation with Moscow - while at the same time demonstrating to the whole world the harmlessness and apparent loss of influence of German imperialism. The deceptive manoeuvre initially caught on.

Wolfgang Schäuble is a master of the Bismarckian way of cheating. As the architect of the West-East strategy, he sells the partial annexations to the West as integration and the taming of German hegemonic ambitions. He leaves the construction of the eastern axis to Russia to others (Schröder, Merkel). In this way, as a loyal transatlanticist, he can persuade the USA to remain neutral towards its own disempowerment. In retrospect, it turns out that he has been successful for twenty years. The Americans followed the whole development with detachment, but not hostility, although the German side gave them plenty of opportunities to straddle it. The USA's patience towards an emerging "*economic bloc from Bordeaux to Odessa*", as the industrialist Carl Duisburg called for as early as 1931, will last until 2014, when Washington takes the Crimean crisis as an opportunity to signal a clear stop to the German strategy. This continued until 2022 without direct confrontation between the two imperialists. With the start of the Ukraine war on 24 February 2022, the two imperialists face each other on two different sides of a war front for the first time since 1945.

⁷⁶ Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik - Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit.
<https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/die-naechste-eu-osterweiterung-wird-kompliziert-und-teuer>

⁷⁷ Not that this German stance is explicitly represented in Brussels, but what is significant is the type of personnel who act in the negotiating committees, whether the first or the third choice.

History of the eastern axis Berlin-Moscow

Axis policy

In times of imperialism, all co-operation is always a means to other ends, whether between imperialists and dependent countries, whether between imperialists and regional powers and, of course, whether between imperialists themselves. The divided world forces everyone, without exception, into competition with each other. The term "axis policy" is intended to make this clear: German-Russian cooperation goes far beyond economic cooperation, as it takes place everywhere and constantly in the global division of labour. It is designed as deep, broad and long-term economic cooperation, accepts mutual, existential dependencies and aims at political understanding and cooperation not only between two countries, but between two blocs. Cooperation is thus directed against a third party, against the strongest imperialist, the USA.

The intricate knot of banking capital's dependence on the financial centres of New York and London and productive capital's dependence on Russia's energy supplies describes the starting position and the modern version of the "middle position" of German imperialism, despite the interdependencies on the capital and personnel side with financial capital. Today, only an axis with two strong partners harbours the chance of conquering first place in the imperialist world. After the annexation of the GDR, the fraudulent upswing of the German economy through economic and political expansion in the EU enables expansion further eastwards, towards Russia. Germany's expansions in both directions belong together: without EU domination there is no eastern axis, without a stable eastern axis there is no secure domination of the EU.

While Germany decisively expanded and consolidated its power base in the EU after 1989, the Eurasian bloc formed on the other side of the axis. Initially, Germany's alliance endeavours and Russia's alliance endeavours ran in parallel. While the EU draws the countries on Russia's western and southern flanks - Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus - into the Eastern Partnership in 2009, Russia joins the friendship and cooperation

treaty of the South-East Asian ASEAN states in 2004. An East Asia Community is being planned, and a first free trade zone with China comes into force in 2010. In the same year, Russia establishes a customs union that includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and later expands it with a free trade agreement that also includes Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan. Two years later, in 2012, the spheres of influence were demarcated: only the EU's Eastern Partnership with Belarus was not expanded further following Russia's intervention. Belarus therefore remains in the Russian sphere of influence. Ukraine is different: in 2013, Ukraine applies for observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union, which is officially founded in 2014 with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, Ukraine is negotiating association with the EU. The economic community "from Lisbon to Vladivostok", which Putin and later Merkel have been aiming for in unison for years, leaves Ukraine's status open.

For a long time now, the public statements of the axis politicians on both sides have also spoken a clear language. In 2001, Putin was the first Russian head of state to address the German Bundestag - in German: Russia's heart was *"open to full co-operation and partnership [...]"* No one doubts the great value of Europe's relations with the United States. But I believe that Europe will only consolidate its reputation as a powerful and independent centre of world politics in the long term if it combines its own capabilities with Russia's human, territorial and natural resources, as well as its economic, cultural and defence potential". The Bundestag gives a standing ovation. The Minister of War, Rudolf Scharping, went on to express his desire for a *"multipolar and co-operative" "new world order"* beyond the one-sided ties to the USA.⁷⁸ The fact that this co-operation is directed against the incumbent world ruler, the USA, is not ignored in Washington - 14 days after 9/11, the symbol of US power was directly hit. The peaceful axis formation of the imperialist adversary reinforces the role of the USA as the world aggressor and keeps it there. Since 2001, Russia and Germany have met annually in the "Petersburg Dialogue" to intensify cooperation on various topics in working groups. At the Munich Security Conference in 2007, Putin described the *"monopolistic mod-*

⁷⁸ quoted from Kronauer. Meinst du, p. 131

el" as "unacceptable for today's world" without "excessive politeness"⁷⁹. Gerhard Schröder moves from the Chancellery to supervisory boards after 2005 and oversees the German-Russian energy deal at Nord Stream AG and Rosneft.

At this point, Ukraine is not yet a point of contention between Berlin and Moscow. Russia is content for Angela Merkel to veto Ukraine's admission to NATO in 2008. In 2010, Putin formulates the big goal: *"the creation of a harmonious economic community from Lisbon to Vladivostok. In the future, a free trade zone and even more advanced forms of economic integration could also be considered."*⁸⁰ The German initiative for an EU-Russia Commission at foreign minister level failed in 2010 due to resistance from the British-appointed Foreign and Security Policy Office in the EU. In 2015, Merkel positioned herself all the more clearly on the *"possibilities of cooperation in a common trading area"* between the European Union and the Eurasian Union. She had her economics minister repeat Putin's formula of a *"free trade zone between Lisbon and Vladivostok"* word for word. The German press interprets Merkel's offer as a somewhat exaggerated signal of Germany's willingness to talk to Putin and fails to recognise or conceals the real dimension: all of this at the World Economic Summit in Davos in 2015, i.e. immediately after the Eurasian Economic Union was founded, in the delicate situation following the Crimean retreat by Russia in 2014 and at the very moment when the negotiations with the USA on the TTIP free trade agreement collapsed - and failed in October 2016.⁸¹ In August 2016, the German think tank Bertelsmann Foundation published a "Focus Paper": *"A free trade area from Lisbon to Vladivostok - A means for peace and prosperity: The effects of a free trade area between the EU and the Eurasian Union"*.⁸²

⁷⁹ quoted from Kronauer. Meinst du, p. 146

⁸⁰ <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/putin-plaedoyer-fuer-wirtschaftsgemeinschaft-von-lissabon-bis-wladiwostok-1.1027908-0#seite-5>

⁸¹ at the Economic Summit in Davos 23 Jan. 2015. quoted from:
<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/ukraine-konflikt-merkel-und-gabriel-machen-putin-ein-angebot-1.2316286>

Trade in goods

The plans are so far-reaching, the history of economic cooperation goes back so far.⁸³ As early as the end of the 19th century, Mannesmann supplied high technology for natural gas extraction and pipelines, seamless steel pipes, to the Tsarist Empire. The innovative technology enables drilling to depths of up to 2,000 metres. In 1900, Mannesmann builds the world's longest oil pipeline from Baku to Batumi, 850 kilometres long. The export of long seamless steel pipes to the Soviet Union is prohibited by NATO's CoCom embargo list in 1958, which the NATO Council confirms under pressure from the USA in 1962. Just a few years later, however, the trade in goods is successful again: import of natural gas from the Soviet Union in exchange for exports of natural gas pipes. Mannesmann and Thyssen circumvent the ban via Austria and its "Vereinigte Österreichische Eisen- und Stahlwerke" VOEST. In 1970, the economics ministers of the FRG and the Soviet Union sign the contract for the first state natural gas pipe deal: delivery of 3 billion metres³ of Russian natural gas per year by Sojuzgas to Ruhrgas by 1973 in exchange for 1.2 million tonnes of steel pipes from Mannesmann-Röhrenwerke for the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Siberia to Germany. The volume of deliveries increases to 20 billion metres by 1981³. Bonn, Paris and London successfully oppose the US Reagan administration's export ban on compressors and other machinery for raw material supplies, and the US government is forced to end the sanctions at the end of 1982. In 1985, the FRG imports 24% of its annual gas consumption from the Soviet Union, and 11% of its crude oil. The Soviet side repays the loan from Deutsche Bank with the decades of proceeds up to the year 2000. Ruhrgas AG emerges from the deal as the largest pipeline and trading monopoly for natural gas in the FRG.⁸⁴

⁸² https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/GrauePublikationen/NW_Focus_Paper_EU_Eurasia.pdf

⁸³ Most of the facts are taken from the two books by Jörg Kronauer: "Meinst du die Russen wollen Krieg?", 2018, and "Der Aufmarsch - Vorgeschichte zum Krieg", 2022

⁸⁴ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/E.ON_Ruhrgas#Bis_2002

In 1988, the Chairman of Deutsche Bank, Christians, proposed to Soviet Prime Minister Ryzhkov and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze that the area around Kaliningrad be transformed into a "special economic zone" with free industrial settlement and a free trade zone. Germans from Russia are to be settled there instead of being resettled in West Germany. This expansion of economic co-operation into ethnic-territorial claims goes too far for the Soviet Union: Kaliningrad becomes a special economic zone, but without the settlement of Russian-Germans.

Russia currently has the seventh largest oil reserves in the world at 13.4 billion tonnes and the third largest oil resources at 35.5 billion tonnes. Even more attractive are the world's largest reserves of natural gas at 47.8 trillion metres³ and the world's largest natural gas resources at 152 trillion metres³. Reserves are those that can be extracted profitably according to the current state of technology, while resources are those that can be extracted profitably in the future. If $\frac{3}{4}$ of the reserves are in the ground as resources, Russia needs to cooperate with countries that can afford to develop the extraction technology and infrastructure.

Despite all the successes of world export champion Germany, a lack of raw materials and a failed energy transition have been threatening the economic supremacy of the EU with exorbitant electricity prices long before the Ukraine crisis and are jeopardising the next attempt at global supremacy. In order to turn this weakness into strength against its main adversary, the USA, the FRG needs the eastern axis. Germany's productive industry has a vital interest in Russian energy. These are the material foundations of the Berlin-Moscow axis, the formation and consolidation of which took place between 1991 and 2022 and which is only now coming to light in its full extent and significance as US imperialism attacks it. In 2012, Russia was in 11th place in the German export rankings with 38 billion euros; exports to Russia have almost quadrupled since 2000. This may not be much for the German side, but it is all the more important for Russia. The EU is Russia's most important trading partner in 2013. 88% of crude oil and 79% of natural gas exports go to the EU.

Capital ties - Energy deal

In 2013, 6,000 German companies had production worth 22 billion euros in Russia. In 1995, the figure was 0.3 billion euros. The depth and extent of the economic interdependencies and dependencies can only be seen in the export of capital in the energy sector. Following the annexation of the GDR and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the FRG is tying the strings of economic interdependence tighter than ever. On the German side, the string-pullers were the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, the then Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, Gerhard Schröder, and on the Russian side, the then city representative of St Petersburg, Vladimir Putin. Based on a partnership between Lower Saxony and the Tyumen Oblast in Siberia, "Russia's Saudi Arabia", joint ventures are established between German and Russian companies. BASF/Wintershall, and at times Ruhrgas AG, on the German side and Lukoil and Gazprom on the Russian side are leading the way. In 2003, BASF/Wintershall, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of BASF, achieves a breakthrough with Gazprom. For gas production in Siberia, in Urengoy in the Tyumen Oblast, they found the joint venture Achimgaz, each with a 50% share. New layers at a depth of 4000 metres are developed. The joint venture SevernefteGazprom is founded to produce the Yuzhno-Russkoye gas field, also in the Tyumen Oblast, with Wintershall holding 35%, Gazprom 40% and Uniper, the then still German subsidiary of E.ON, 25%. Parts of the EU are subsequently integrated into the energy deal: Austria's OMV buys Uniper's 25% stake in the joint venture in 2017. The majority shareholder of Uniper becomes the Finnish company Fortum Oyj.

The contracts between Gazprom and BASF/Wintershall had to be put on hold briefly at the beginning of 2014 after the Russian withdrawal from Crimea until the dust had settled. This made the implementation of the gas deal all the more decisive from 2015. While the American ExxonMobil suffers a loss of USD 1 billion from sanctions plus the loss of an entire oil production project with Rosneft in the Russian Arctic, Gazprom and BASF/Wintershall agree an asset swap of assets of equal value amounting to an estimated EUR 4.19 bil-

lion⁸⁵ - with retroactive effect from 1 April 2013, as if there had been no sanctions! BASF/Wintershall now owns 50% of Russian gas supplies to Germany. " *BASF [will] further expand its oil and gas production and divest its gas trading and storage business.*"⁸⁶ In return, Gazprom will receive Wintershall's share of the German gas trading infrastructure, including gas storage facilities and pipelines. The Russian oil magnate⁸⁷ Michail Fridman in turn holds a 27% stake in Wintershall. Even more important than the size of the stake, however, is the quality of the links with regard to the German energy supply with gas. A German company no longer owns large shares in the pipelines, but in the gas fields themselves, in exchange for significant parts of the infrastructure for national supply!

To ensure that the gas arrives directly in Germany undisturbed by the material and political influence of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, the Nord Stream 1 pipeline runs along the seabed of the Baltic Sea, where it does not directly touch the territories of other countries. Nord Stream 1 was agreed by Wintershall and Gazprom in 2004, confirmed at the highest government level in 2005 and commissioned in 2011. Nord Stream 1 is owned by Gazprom, Wintershall, E.ON, Gasunie from the Netherlands and Engie from France. With 59.2 billion metres³, it guarantees more than half of Germany's consumption of 95 billion metres³. The second pipeline through the Baltic Sea, Nord

⁸⁵ The amount of the asset swap, which is not specified in the contract text, can be calculated from Wintershall's stated EBIT result. The sale of Monsanto to Bayer serves as a reference value. The ratio of sales price to EBIT was 28.7. In the case of an asset swap, the premium that a buyer normally pays on the stock market value of the object of purchase must be deducted: 44% in the case of Monsanto. This results in the following factor for an asset swap: 44% of 28.7 = 16.1. 16.1 actually corresponds to the usual profit capitalisation of around 6% in the chemical industry at the time. The Wintershall result for 2014, which is closer to the contract signed in December 2013, is: € 260 million x 16.1 = € 4.19 billion. As the price amounts of the Group shares are stated to be the same on both sides, this amount can be assumed to be the amount of the asset swap. Additional information on determining value from EBIT by economic sector: <https://www.deutsche-mittelstandsberatung.de/leistungen/unternehmenskauf-unternehmensverkauf>.

⁸⁶ <https://www.basf.com/global/de/media/news-releases/2015/09/p-15-330.html>

⁸⁷ With regard to the term oligarch, we should stick to the definition in Liebknecht's 1953 dictionary of folk dictionaries: "*Oligarchy, rule by a few (formerly by aristocrats, today, in the imperialist countries, by financial capitalists = financial oligarchy, also monopoly oligarchy, etc.)*." Lenin also uses the term in this sense. So there is a good reason why the bourgeoisie uses it differently today, which we should not follow.

Stream 2, should double the amount of gas transported to Germany; half of the Nord Stream 2 supply volume is intended for sale to other EU states. Nord Stream 2 was decided in 2005, concretely planned from 2013, construction began in 2018 and, despite all opposition at home and abroad, was completed in September 2021 and filled in December.

Russia's electricity supply is also the subject of the German-Russian energy deal. The Düsseldorf-based Uniper Group, which was spun off from E.ON, operates five power plants in the industrial regions of Central Russia, the Urals and Western Siberia, which generate 5% of the country's electricity requirements. Between 2018 and 2020, the Finnish energy group Fortum will acquire a majority stake in Uniper. Like Austria, the Netherlands and France before it, Finland is now being included in the axis policy. However, this does not go as planned. From July 2022, the Group comes under pressure due to high gas prices. The Federal Republic of Germany buys 30% of Uniper shares and, as co-owner with KfW, grants loans worth 20.7 billion euros, although Fortum continues to hold a 56% majority stake.⁸⁸

The media have long played down German-Russian energy cooperation, but it goes much deeper and is much more existential than simple trade in goods: a mutual interweaving of productive capital, mind you productive, not fictitious capital! The intertwining of capital in infrastructure has an even deeper and more existential effect than the intertwining of capital in the production of consumer goods, such as car factories in the USA. The German-Russian energy deal of 2013, which converted previous gas imports into ownership rights to Russian production facilities, comes at a time when the USA is using fracking technology to become the leading oil and gas producer. Gas from Russia guarantees independence from the main imperialist adversary in the energy sector. It also guarantees freedom from dependence on oil from the OPEC states, which are dominated by Saudi Arabia, a state from the USA's hegemonic sphere. The geostrategic orientation of the FRG is reflected in this with a clarity that is not evident from the mere figures of capital exports.

⁸⁸ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniper#Geschäftskrise_2022

Military

The first steps towards cooperation can also be observed at the military level: As early as 2005, Polish military officers were outraged by Germany, *"the only Western country [...] that conducts bilateral military manoeuvres with Russia"*.⁸⁹ In 2011, Rheinmetall was awarded the contract to build a high-tech combat training centre in Mulino, west of Nizhny Novgorod. *The result is "the world's most modern training base with simulation-based training, where 30,000 soldiers can be trained each year."*⁹⁰

Ukraine - weak point of the axis

Ukraine is - after Russia - the largest country in Europe with over 40 million inhabitants and 1.7 times the size of Germany. Despite significant agricultural exports and important natural resources, Ukraine is a poor country with a monthly per capita income of 370 US dollars. Its location in Eastern Europe, on the Black Sea with a border of 2,300 kilometres with Russia, long borders with Belarus and Poland and shorter borders with Slovakia, Hungary and Moldova, makes it an interface between Europe and Asia. The American great power strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski saw it as a geopolitical "pivot": *"However, if Moscow were to regain control of Ukraine [...] Russia would automatically acquire the means to become a powerful empire spanning Europe and Asia"*.⁹¹ In the history of co-operation between the German EU and Russia, Ukraine has also proved to be the weak point of the axis. For Russia, this is about the military-strategic significance of Ukraine as a security cordon, whose existential importance has already been proven in the wars from Napoleon to the Second World War. Russia also favours Ukraine's dual membership of the EU and the Eurasian Union as a permanent link. It is not - at least not essentially - about mere economic advantages, such as Ukraine's agricultural and mineral resources.

⁸⁹ Zentrum für Oststudien, quoted from Kronauer. Meinst du, p. 77

⁹⁰ Das Profil. Newspaper of the Rheinmetall Group. 3/22, S. 1

⁹¹ Brzezinski. Weltmacht, p. 58, p. 65

The German-led EU has been laying claim to Ukraine since March 2007. At this time, Moscow itself was still toying with the idea of joining the "Eastern Partnership". In 2008, it only protested against the inclusion of Belarus in the association plan, but not against the inclusion of Ukraine. It was not until four years later, in 2011, when Putin began to pursue the plan for a Eurasian Economic Union more seriously than before, that the differences began. By then, the EU negotiations with Kiev were already in full swing. In 2013, Kiev began an attempt to associate itself with both sides: in August as an observer to the Eurasian Union and in November as an associate to the EU. Neither side has finalised its membership status yet, but neither has rejected it - that is the plan, which will certainly not be developed under Yanukovych without consultation with Moscow. Direct negotiations with the Germans are not possible: The transatlanticists, the "hawks" in the NATO apparatus, who are backed by the banking monopolies dependent on the New York financial centre, are right now insisting that Russia has no right to Ukraine whatsoever, not in principle for a start, and certainly not after it remained silent on Germany's Ukraine plans for four and a half years, from March 2007 to October 2011. Nor can the eastern axis politicians accept that Russia is suddenly treating Ukraine as a red line vis-à-vis the EU after it was Merkel who prevented Ukraine's NATO membership in 2008.

The strategic direction of Ukraine remained unclear between Merkel and Putin for a long time. While the EU pushed for association, in 2011 Putin formulated his plan for a "Eurasian Economic Union" (EAEU) modelled on the European model, which was to be formed by Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan and later expanded. A Eurasian Union (EaU) on a par with the EU is to be created, but is inconceivable without Ukraine. With Ukraine, the EaU would have 227 million inhabitants; the EU had 515 million inhabitants at the time. By comparison, the USA had 312 million inhabitants at the time. Ukrainian President Yanukovych is striving for dual membership and is demanding that Berlin negotiate this. This goes unheard in a Germany that cannot afford to fall out with the USA. In order not to jeopardise Germany's double game, Merkel refuses to negotiate and instead tries to strengthen her own power base in the "Euro-Maidan" movement against Yanukovych. The pro-EU citizens' movement initially appears to be a useful and limited means of exerting pressure on Moscow. With the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, an in-

strument of the hawks is firmly anchored in Kiev, and the boxer Vitali Klitschko has been instructed accordingly. After all, ethnic networks have been preparing Germany's eastward expansion since the founding of the German Reich. So Berlin is fuelling the opposition in Ukraine - together with the USA, i.e. in alliance with the main opponent - and is playing poker until the very end, until 28 November 2013, and therefore for too long.

Turning point "Euro-Maidan"

On 21 November 2013, the Yanukovych government refuses to sign the EU association agreement with Ukraine initiated by Berlin, which had previously been negotiated with the EU for a long time. Up until this point, Berlin wrestled with its axis partner Russia over Ukraine. It was not until 28 November that Merkel relented: *"The President (Yanukovych, editor's note) told me once again that 50% of exports go to Russia or the republics of the Customs Union, 45% to the European Union, i.e. ties to both sides. And the task for us, the EU, will be to talk even more with Russia about how we can get out of the either/or situation - either ties with Russia or ties with Europe - and I believe that this is also a task for Germany."*⁹² Quite unexpectedly, the Berlin government accepts Yanukovych's EU refusal, Moscow's resistance is too massive and German-Russian energy cooperation is too jeopardised. The German concession is coy and disguised: Ukraine is not yet ready for Europe, but above all it is too late and will cost the German imperialists much of their 30 years of expansion. The then EU Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen put it this way: Brussels has made a "terrible miscalculation".

Because now the USA is intervening massively to push back German influence. Victoria Nuland's *"Fuck the EU"* is legendary. The recording of the wiretapped phone call between the head of the US State Department and the US ambassador in Kiev is published anonymously and is causing serious disgruntlement between the "closest partners", the US and the EU.⁹³ At the end

⁹² https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assoziierungsabkommen_zwischen_der_Europäischen_Union_und_der_Ukraine#Aussetzung_des_Abkommens

⁹³ See the reprint of the wording in the appendix. Chronology, p. 109 ff.

of 2013, it is not yet possible to predict how perfectly US imperialism will be able to re-poleonise a pro-EU citizens' movement for its anti-EU goals. The Maidan movement, organised by Berlin and Washington in a race against each other, not only leads to the fall of Yanukovych. It came completely under Washington's influence and was skilfully turned against the organiser of the EU's eastward expansion. The US ambassador met with Svoboda fascists immediately in January 2014, and the German ambassador followed suit in April 2014. For us, it is irrelevant who is more focused on organising Ukrainian fascists and promoting them to government offices, both imperialists have nothing in common. The Germans do not succeed in installing their own figure, Vitali Klitschko, who is supposed to appear as moderate as possible towards Russia after his election victory. Klitschko withdraws and is fobbed off with the office of mayor of Kiev. In the tried and tested manner of regime change, the USA takes the helm in the unrest of 2013/2014 and spends 5 billion dollars on the coup against the balancing Yanukovych in favour of its puppets. Ukraine is to become a trap, like Afghanistan before it, a war provocateur and frontline state against Russia.

The answers of the main opponent USA

A Germany that has already made two attempts to seize world domination, that has a stranglehold on Europe again several decades after its catastrophic defeat, that is coming to terms with its former arch-enemy France, that is emancipating itself from economic and political dependencies on its former liberator and patron, the USA, which is strategically orientating itself towards the east and allying itself with Russia and cooperating with the emerging world power China in the long term and provoking the most sensitive moments by publicly moving away from the transatlantic axis, must provoke appropriate responses. *"The USA's primal fear is that German capital and German technologies will combine with Russian raw materials and Russian labour - a unique combination that has scared the hell out of the USA for centuries."*⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Speech by STRATFOR head George Friedman on 4 February 2015 - one year after the Maidan coup in Kiev, quoted from Freidenker No. 1-22, April 2022, p. 36f

Financial management

Since the 1990s, Deutsche Bank has been expanding into the US investment sector and the US financial market in order to play a leading role in the financial world. Deutsche Bank's criminal business practices came to light during the 2008/09 crisis. Penalties totalling 1.4 billion dollars are imposed. In 2015, the Russian money laundering scandal is added to this: the bank had laundered Russian black money totalling 10 billion roubles since 2011. In autumn 2016, the bank's reputation and almost its very existence were abruptly destroyed when it was rumoured that the bank would have to pay horrendous fines in the USA, amounting to 14 billion dollars. The fines imposed by the New York and London financial regulators in 2020 are ultimately modest, in the hundreds of millions, but a clear warning shot to German imperialism that if not its energy monopolies, then at least its banks should be reined in.⁹⁵ After all, the main transaction centres of fictitious capital are in New York and London. Permanent sanctions or an exclusion from the US banking market would be the end of the financial sector of German imperialism, which invests around 7 trillion euros a year in unproductive growth. euros annually for unproductive multiplication. Now that this part of monopoly capital has failed miserably with its expansion endeavours in the US and has been disgraced, it remains bound to the transatlantic orientation. *"German banks have greatly reduced their involvement in Russia since 2014,"* Christian Sewing, head of Deutsche Bank and chairman of the German Banking Association, hastens to assure us in the Bankenbrief on 1 March 2022.

Digital sector

The Franco-German initiative Gaia-X, an attempt to create a data structure for the EU that is independent of the USA and - according to official statements - China, was launched in 2019. Large German and French companies are to create the technological prerequisites. But the Big Five from the USA, Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Facebook (= Meta Platforms) and Google (= Alphabet), have dominated the huge data market that has been developing for more than a decade, together with Alibaba and Huawei from China. Market

⁹⁵ Recommended: Laabs, Dirk (2018), *Bad Bank. Aufstieg und Fall der Deutschen Bank*, Munich: DVA

dominance in digital expertise, servers, line capacities and end products is necessary to collect, analyse and profitably use the huge amounts of data. This requires amounts of capital that are only available in global digital monopolies. However, European companies are so far behind in terms of technology and capital that all of the aforementioned data giants will be admitted as members and "sponsors" of Gaia-X in March 2021, even the CIA company Palantir. Independence, transparency and data security are disappearing even before the cloud.

In 2019, American intervention prevents Huawei from participating in the development of the German G5 mobile phone network. Telekom Deutschland, which is expanding into the USA with the takeover of the US telecommunications group AT&T, removes Huawei from the cooperation.

Energy sector

In 1992, the US company Chevron signed a contract with Kazakhstan for a joint venture to exploit the oil fields in Tengiz. But Chevron is unsuccessful: the estimates of oil resources have to be revised far downwards as a result. In order to break Russia's monopoly on natural gas transit, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan agree to build the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which is inaugurated in 2005 and expanded in 2009 and is largely operated by the British company BP.

The Nabucco pipeline - named after the opera in which the liberation from captivity is sung - is intended to transport Central Asian natural gas via Turkey to Austria as a transatlantic alternative and competitor to the Russian South Stream project (by Gazprom and Wintershall). Again under British leadership, the Norwegian Statoil Group, the Austrian OMV and - for rather obscure reasons - the German RWE are also involved. Even before South Stream is brought down by EU intrigue in December 2014, Nabucco is suddenly cancelled in June 2013. It is not possible to explain here who is pulling which strings in the EU scandal. In any case, EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger is involved in the cancellation of both projects. In the same year, 2013, planning begins for the second Nord Stream 2 pipeline to the east, and Germany emerges victorious from the power struggle within the EU between Berlin and London (Catherine Ashton) - for the time being.

While BASF/Wintershall and Gazprom have been interlinking their German-Russian energy infrastructure since April 2013, the USA is now relying heavily on expensive oil and gas fracking, which has been heavily criticised as harmful to the environment. In 2011, it overtook Russia as the largest gas producer and in 2018 Saudi Arabia as the largest oil producer. After the Crimea crisis in 2014 and in the middle of the fracking boom around 2015, Germany is the only country with a seaport in Europe that cannot afford to build a single LNG storage facility. An unmistakable signal across the Atlantic.

Sanctions

In 2016, TTIP, the long-negotiated transatlantic free trade agreement between the USA and the EU, bursts, putting the icing on the cake. In the same year, a new US law, CAATSA, ends the sanctions agreements with the EU and extends the effect of the sanctions, which were previously only directed against Iran, Russia and North Korea, to European countries. This delays the construction of Nord Stream 2. At the start of construction in May 2018, US senators threatened the Swiss pipe-laying company Allseas with the demise of their company, which then cancelled the work. 150 km are still missing. In December, the Russian company Akademik Cherskiy takes over further pipe-laying work. In order to prevent Nord Stream 2 after all, two subsequent US laws, PEESA and PEESCA, threaten not only individuals and companies, but also insurance companies, municipalities and even catering companies that supply the pipelay vessel, as well as the mayor of Sassnitz, who is responsible for the ferry port of Mukran on the island of Rügen. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas explained to his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in 2020: *"No state has the right to dictate Europe's energy policy with threats, and it will not succeed."*⁹⁶ The majority of EU states lodge a formal protest. Shortly before completion, the Russian construction management of Nord Stream 2 complains about risky manoeuvres by the Polish navy in the vicinity of the works. At the end of 2021, Chancellor Scholz and Bavarian Prime Minister Söder approve commissioning, which is only temporarily halted on 22 February 2022.

⁹⁶ Handelsblatt <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/streit-um-ostsee-pipeline-eu-kommision-us-sanktionen-gegen-nord-stream-2-verstossen-gegen-voelkerrecht/26084214.html>

NATO and EU enlargement to the east

The eastward expansion of NATO, in which the USA sets the tone, contradicts all the promises made to Gorbachev and Yeltsin, but nobody in the West cares anymore: Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary in 1999, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria in 2004, Albania, Croatia, North Macedonia and Montenegro by 2020. Suddenly and unexpectedly for Washington, Berlin vetoed the admission of Georgia and Ukraine to NATO at the NATO summit in 2008. This open affront to the USA is necessary for the axis. After all, Georgia and Ukraine mark red lines for Russia, as Russia's military intervention in the Georgian war in 2008 made unmistakably clear.

At the same time, Berlin continues to promote EU enlargement through association, partnership and cooperation agreements: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Tunisia, Israel, Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. All of this with the approval and backing of the USA. But as early as the mid-1990s, a warning voice was heard in the USA: *"Germany's dominant position cannot be disputed, but any public endorsement of German leadership in Europe must be weighed carefully. This leadership may be useful to some Central European states [...] and tolerable to Western Europeans as long as it is subordinate to US supremacy, but in the long run the European house cannot be built on it. [...] It is conceivable that a united and powerful European Union could at some point become the political rival of the United States."*⁹⁷

As the axis between Berlin and Moscow solidifies, the competition is becoming more open. From 2009 to 2014, a staunch opponent of Germany's axis policy sat in an EU switchboard, the high-profile British transatlanticist Catherine Ashton, as High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - a dangerous wedge between Berlin and Moscow. The BND has her and US Secretary of State John Kerry wiretapped. The battle for supremacy between Berlin and Washington finally ignites as if in a burning

⁹⁷ Brzezinski. *Weltmacht*, pp. 103, 98, 5

glass in Ukraine. The USA needs Ukraine as a provocateur of war against Russia in order to attack the German-Russian axis. The FRG needs Ukraine as a link between Europe and Eurasia.

Military

In the very first war in Europe after 1945, the USA put German imperialism in its military place by bombing Serbia in 1999. With the "War on Terror", NATO declared a state of alliance for the first time in 2001, with Russia also providing temporary support. The American complaints about Germany's insufficient military involvement in Afghanistan continue unabated. In 2003, Chancellor candidate Schröder's refusal to take part in the US-led war in Iraq led to an ice age between the USA and Germany. While France joined Germany, Great Britain under Prime Minister Tony Blair formed a "coalition of the willing". The FRG only acts in the background. The German US base in Ramstein serves as a logistical centre in the Iraq war, while the BND (Federal Intelligence Service) spies on targets in the background.

Russia is surrounded by NATO vassals, by Finland and the Baltic states in the north, Poland, Ukraine, Georgia in the west, Mongolia and others in the south, on whose territories weapons systems are being installed that can effectively destroy Russia's first and second strike power with conventional weapons. Although the US military tactic accepts an expansion of the war, the goal is different: the combination of Russian defence incapacity and pro-Western "civil movements" is intended to bring about a change of government in Moscow with a new government that is more compliant towards Washington.

The change in US tactics from the previously pursued gradual rapprochement with Russia via the NATO-Russia Council is being finalised: In addition to the military encirclement of Russia with state-of-the-art weapons systems, US imperialism has been preparing to attack the Berlin-Moscow axis since 2014.⁹⁸ Until then, the double game of German imperialism is working: the

⁹⁸ Kronauer adds. Aufmarsch. p. 53: "In 2014, the Western powers also began to expand their military positions in the north-east of the Alliance's territory. The first to immediately begin not only preparing possible defence measures on NATO's north-eastern flank, but also to put pressure on Russia, was the United States shortly after Crimea became part of the Russian Federation. On 3 June 2014, the White House announced the launch of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI)."

Axis politicians are not yet openly messing with the USA, are not messing with Russia and are only getting their hands a little dirty in the wars. The German government succeeds in organising negotiations in the "Normandy format" - after the location of the meeting - on a "peace process" in south-eastern Ukraine with the French, Russian and Ukrainian governments without US involvement. A first ceasefire, known as Minsk I, was signed on 15 September and ended in disaster 13 days later in the battle for Donetsk airport. The Ukrainian side is of the opinion that the airport in the separatist-held city of Donetsk is not protected by the agreement and attacks there.⁹⁹ Berlin does not succeed in taking the lead in the Ukrainian civil war at the negotiating table in Normandy: *"Washington, in turn, secures its influence indirectly: with its support for the Ukrainian armed forces, it can fuel the most aggressive forces in the country at any time and torpedo any compromises."*¹⁰⁰

While the global public is outraged by the militarily aggressive strategy of US imperialism, the Germans are behaving as mediators with Minsk II and the Normandy format, as understanding partners with their large eastern neighbours and also as the number one climate protectors who do without dirty fracked gas. The deceptive manoeuvre no longer works. Only Germany's peaceful, successful and far-reaching policy of co-operation and understanding with Russia and China can break open the conflict between the imperialists over the Ukraine issue. The peaceful tactics of one imperialist are fuelling the non-peaceful tactics of the main imperialist opponent. The confrontation behind the co-operation between the German-EU and the USA is becoming apparent - for those who want to see.

Ukraine - the USA's war provocateur against Russia

After 2014, the militarisation of Ukrainian society accelerated rapidly. Although all nuclear weapons were returned to Russia by 1996, launching pads, missiles, tanks and other heavy equipment from the Soviet era remained. Even before the war, Ukraine was one of the ten largest arms exporters in the world

⁹⁹ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zweite_Schlacht_um_den_Flughafen_Donezk

¹⁰⁰ Kronauer. Meinst du, p. 160

and supplied numerous countries with its defence industry, which had been powerful since the Soviet Union. Military expenditure, measured as a proportion of gross domestic product, will increase from 1.9% in 2010 to 4.1% in 2021, or in absolute figures from around USD 2.2 billion to around USD 6 billion. In the ranking of the Global Militarisation Index, the country therefore occupies 16th place out of 151 countries in 2020 - compared to 47th place in 2012. In 2021, Ukraine is one of the most highly militarised countries in the world.¹⁰¹ On 7 February 2019, the Kiev parliament included the country's accession to NATO as a goal in the constitution; on 2 August 2019, Washington terminated the INF Treaty, which has been in force since 1988 and stipulates the destruction of all ground/land-based missiles with a range of 500-5,500 km.

The NATO ring of weapons that enable a so-called decapitation strike against Russia is closing: the US land-based Aegis Ashore missile defence system is due to go into operation in Poland at the end of 2022. It can be equipped with various types of missiles, surface-to-air interceptor missiles and surface-to-surface medium-range missiles with a range of 1,650 km. A slightly older version of the system has been in operation in Romania near the town of Craiova since 2013. The distance Craiova-Moscow is 2,000 km. The distance of the new Polish site slightly west of Gdansk is 1,500 km. Moscow is within the range of this system, which can coordinate and control up to 100 missile launches simultaneously from launch pads located far apart. Moscow has been protesting against the deployment of this system in Romania and its construction in Poland since 2013 and has repeatedly demonstrated that the claim that these are defensive weapons is false. Deploying the Aegis Ashore facilities in Ukraine would halve the distance between the missiles and Moscow to 730 kilometres. Moscow could be destroyed within 10 minutes, the political and military command structure "decapitated" and Russia would be largely incapable of defence. On 19 February 2022 at the Munich Security Conference, Ukrainian President Zelensky calls for nuclear weapons for his country; five days later, the Russian attack takes place.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ https://www.ruestungsexport.info/user/pages/04.laenderberichte/ukraine/2021_Ukraine.pdf

¹⁰² Harald Projanski, in: *junge Welt* 19/20 March 2022, p. 13

Cracks in the foundations of German imperialism

The progress of the German-Russian axis formation is forcing US imperialism to act. It uses the return of Crimea by Russia in 2014 as a turning point in its policy towards Moscow. Russia is excluded from the G8 in 2015. Washington seizes the opportunity to position Ukraine and Poland¹⁰³ against Russia in such a way as to stop Germany's expansion plans there. With the "Euro-Maidan" coup, Washington reduces German influence in Ukraine to a minimum. The east of Ukraine, the Donbass, is bombed by the Ukrainian military until the Minsk 2 agreement negotiated by Germany and France and the Normandy format (Germany, France, Russia) to end the conflict are blown to smithereens and over 14,000 people are dead. In Germany, the hawkish camp received an enormous boost in Berlin as a result of the Russian withdrawal from Crimea in March 2014. In 2015, the Syrian refugees provided a reason for Schäuble to shoot at Merkel from the sidelines like never before. Refugee policy is only an issue for the public. Behind the scenes, the dispute rages over how to continue successfully selling Germany's west-east strategy to its main opponent, Washington.

But the axle is not broken. On the contrary, construction is now continuing at full speed. The German-Russian gas deal with capital linkage will be finalised as quickly as possible in 2015 with retroactive effect. The German-American free trade agreement TTIP bursts in 2016, while the goal of a European-Eurasian economic union is invoked at every opportunity. High-ranking German politicians and DAX managers regularly take part in the SPIEF Forum, the Russian counterpart to Davos. In 2017 and 2018, the Germans and French President Macron sat at the same table in St Petersburg as India's President Modi, China's Vice President Wang Qishan and Japan's Prime Minister Abe. On the fringes of the forum, deals worth 2 trillion. dollars were concluded. Despite all the sanctions and obstacles, construction of Nord Stream 2 begins in 2018 and is completed in September 2020.

¹⁰³ Although Poland has been a NATO member since 1999, at that time it was still under the hegemony of German imperialism, which ensured its admission to the EU in 2004. The Polish strategy of submitting to two competing imperialists in order to establish one as a counterweight to the other became clear in 2014.

In 2019, Ukraine writes not only NATO membership but also EU membership into its constitution. During her visit in April 2022, von der Leyen unwaveringly asserted that EU membership should now be "accelerated" and that Ukraine was part of the European family. This is hardly a cause for concern on the other side of the Atlantic; it would just be another US ally in the EU, in the "backyard" of its adversary. The Ukrainian iron - and therefore the people of Ukraine - remain in the fire of imperialist expansion. Massive "democracy movements" in Belarus from 2020 are intended to destabilise Russia's most loyal Western ally. The protests in Kazakhstan at the beginning of 2022 not only threaten the pro-Russian position in Central Asia, but conveniently also Germany's most important economic partner in Central Asia and thus further energy imports for the FRG economy. At the end of 2019, Washington imposed its first sanctions against the construction of Nord Stream 2, after Nord Stream 1 had gone into operation unchallenged in 2011.

The imperialist competition between German and US imperialism is igniting at the "pivotal point" of Ukraine to the point of a proxy war. In Ukraine, the two main imperialist adversaries, the FRG and the USA, are diametrically opposed for the first time. Moscow does not react with an invasion of the Donbass, as the war provocateurs had expected, but attacks the whole of Ukraine. For Germany, the cancellation of Nord Stream 2 becomes unavoidable. When the war begins, the sanctions against Russia and the oil and gas embargo in Germany cause prices to explode. It is not only in the energy sector that German capital is capitalising on the expected shortage of goods for extra profits and huge speculative gains. Maintenance work on Nord Stream 1 and Russian threats to turn off the gas tap are doing their bit. Since then, energy prices in the EU have gone through the roof. The German-Russian energy deal is under fire and the USA is expecting Germany to return to its side. The fact that the USA also stands to gain economically from taking Russia's place in the gas trade with the EU means extra income for them at best, nothing more.

But in addition to the raw materials deal, Washington is also aware of the second weak point of German imperialism: the entire EU structure stands on the feet of clay of low interest rates. If the government interest rates of the highly indebted southern EU states rise, the German "House of Europe" will totter. From January to July 2022 alone, interest rates on Italian government bonds

will increase 3.28-fold and those on Spanish government bonds 3.5-fold. In August, the Italian state will pay almost three times the interest rate compared to the FRG. All the greater the opportunity for Washington to compromise the oil and gas supplier of this fragile German hinterland with a war, to drive up energy prices to such an extent that the price increase affects all types of goods and inflation finally brings down the low interest rate. This is exactly what is currently happening. In July 2022, the ECB will raise the key interest rate to 0.5%, with a further increase to over 1% expected. A new bond-buying programme is intended to save countries that are being crushed by debt, such as Italy, from collapse and thus save the eurozone. It is questionable whether the ECB will succeed in its rescue programme.

In April 2022, the following report sounds truly threatening for the German-dominated EU, which reveals, through an indiscretion, the subject of a secret conversation between British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Zelenskyy in Kiev: the creation of a *"European Commonwealth"* as *"a new system of political, economic and military alliances, an alternative to the European Union"*, which would bring together the UK, Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, as well as *"possibly at a later stage"* Turkey - due to their *"distrust of Brussels"*, their dissatisfaction with Germany's slow response to Russia's attack on Ukraine and their concern about the threat to security on the continent posed by Moscow, according to the report.¹⁰⁴ The EU split into a part loyal to the US and a part dominated by Germany - that would be worthy of media attention. The report only appeared in the widely read Italian daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera* on 26 May and was picked up by some Austrian media the following day. In Germany, only the liberal internet portal Telepolis commented on the report.¹⁰⁵ Not a single major German media outlet mentions the British initiative. When the US Permanent Representative to NATO Julianne Smith was asked in Brussels in June 2022 *"how the United States would react*

¹⁰⁴ https://www.corriere.it/economia/finanza/22_maggio_26/piano-segreto-boris-johnson-dividere-l-u-craina-russia-ue-commonwealth-europeo-02d3b232-dc6b-11ec-b480-f783b433fe60.shtml

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.teletrader.com/bericht-johnson-unterbreitete-zelenskyy-die-shdee-eines-neue/news/details/57955786>
<https://exxpress.at/boris-johnson-bastelt-heimlich-an-einer-anti-eu-auch-mit-der-ukraine/>
<https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Boris-Johnson-und-die-Anti-EU-Achse-UK-Polen-Baltikum-und-Ukraine-7126088.html>

if London succeeded in realising this idea of a 'European Commonwealth'." only the Russian channel RT Deutsch reports: *"Smith replied that such an alliance could actually contribute to NATO's goal of further strengthening its eastern flank, which has become a priority for the US-led military alliance following the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict in late February. The US envoy said: 'Of course we support initiatives that contribute to capacity building. And when NATO members come together in partnerships or groups to build capacity and work together to strengthen the alliance, that's something we want to support.'*"¹⁰⁶ In the ZDF interview with Julianne Smith the next day, not a single word is said about the British initiative and the US position on it. When German, French, Italian and Romanian heads of state and government were in Kiev negotiating Ukraine's admission as a candidate for EU membership, Johnson unexpectedly turned up at Selensky's house the day after their departure. The German press insists that this is only about arms deliveries. The Bavarian broadcaster Bayerischer Rundfunk takes the cake when it claims that Johnson wants to support Kiev as the venue for the Eurovision Song Contest.¹⁰⁷ On 7 July, Johnson stumbles across another domestic scandal and resigns.

With Russia's attack on Ukraine, the media hour of the transatlantic hawks has come again in Germany. If the occasion were not so bitter and bloody for the workers and labourers in Ukraine and Russia and so painful for the workers here who are paying for armaments and price explosions, we could have fun with the show business, with the slaps in the face every minute that the German great power strategists are receiving from the current victors in their own camp and from their imperialist competitors: The BND president, Bruno Kahl, has to be rescued from Kiev by land with a special unit because he is surprised by the Russian attack. The US and British secret services and, of course, the Axis partner know about it, but nobody tells the Germans, allowing them to fall into the trap with relish. The bellicose Zelenskyi likes to receive the Baltic presidents, but he uninvites the German Steinmeier. If he

¹⁰⁶ <https://test.rtde.tech/international/141220-usa-wurden-idee-weiteren-europaischen/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.br.de/nachrichten/deutschland-welt/johnson-spricht-sich-fuer-esc-in-der-ukraine-aus,T9Crufk>

does, he wants the chancellor and the government in front of his desk. And Melnyk, still a Ukrainian ambassador and Bandera supporter in Germany, rants that the chancellor should not play "*offended liverwurst*". Habeck is fawning over oil in Qatar, his olive-green governing party is quickly setting up LNG tanks for as much expensive and dirty fracking gas as possible and Baerbock wants to "*ruin Russia*" immediately and decisively. The hunt for the energy contact man in Russia, Schröder, is costing him honorary citizenship in Hanover, his pension and his staff. The whole kindergarten theatre with a bloody background is bitinglly dissected in Russia Today by Dagmar Henn.¹⁰⁸

No matter how fiercely the Axis politicians are reviled, how loudly the howls of war and Russia-baiting sound again, both initially fulfil the financial sector's need to appease the US leadership and present a Germany that is on Washington's side, at least in the media. The energy and manufacturing sectors also benefit from threatening gestures towards Russia. They signal to the axis partner not to overdo it with military interventions and not to jeopardise the common axis. German capital has played the Schröder joker to prevent excessive distortions. The former chancellor can explain the German double game in Moscow. It will not have been concentrated economic expertise that brought Schröder to the chairmanship of the Nord Stream operating company and the supervisory board of Rosneft. Subaltern personnel are out of the question for such a diplomatic royal task. Since 22 February 2022, the commissioning of Nord Stream 2 has been halted for the time being. Wintershall's website announces that no further plans for cooperation have been launched for the time being.¹⁰⁹ The existing energy deal remains in place. Only when Nord Stream 1 and 2 are physically dismantled, only when the German-Russian capital ties in the energy infrastructure are dissolved, only then would this - together with the collapses in the EU - be a serious setback for the overall strategy of German imperialism.

¹⁰⁸ https://de.rt.com/meinung/136080-seine-demutigung-ware-fur-steinmeier/?utm_source=pocket_mylist.

¹⁰⁹ <https://wintershalldea.ru/en/who-we-are/history>

How resilient is the east axis?

Cui Bono

Since Bismarck's time, German alliance policy has served the goal of becoming number one among the great powers and imperialists. Otherwise it does not take place. Both German-Russian co-operation and the sanctions imposed by the FRG against Russia pursue this goal. The Berlin-Moscow axis is based on one condition: it must not jeopardise the FRG's leading role within the EU and it must not make business in the USA impossible. Neither would be advantageous for Moscow, because a meaningless FRG would have served its purpose as an axis partner. The war in Ukraine jeopardises the Eastern axis by compromising the axis partner. This threatens both the German EU leadership and US business. Open, bold, sometimes provocative cooperation with Russia in the East, as Merkel did in Davos in 2015, has had to be abandoned for the time being since February 2022. It can only be continued covertly and in code.

EU sanctions

To what extent is the FRG still acting, albeit cautiously and covertly, as an Axis partner of Russia within the "Western" camp directed against Russia? Covert Axis policy can be demonstrated by at least three punitive measures.

Firstly, the German government is delaying the exclusion of Russian banks from the SWIFT banking messaging service, which optimises international payment processes. It is also ensuring that Gazprom Bank is not on the EU sanctions list. At the end of July, Tagesschau reports that the EU sanctions on the German banking sector are largely coming to nothing. Law firms act as front men for trading in Russian financial products.¹¹⁰

Secondly, the sanctions in the energy sector are seen as an EU bazooka against the Russian economy. Berlin ensures that the sanctions are limited to

¹¹⁰ <https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/ndr-wdr/russland-sanktionen-swift-101.html>

the supply of Russian coal and a ban on oil imports "by sea".¹¹¹ The gas trade remains completely excluded on Germany's initiative. At the beginning of April, Berlin appoints the Federal Network Agency as trustee over the Russian Gazprom Germania GmbH GPG and grants the company a state KfW loan in June, the amount of which is not publicised. According to an indiscretion from government circles, Der Spiegel reports a figure of 9 to 10 billion euros.¹¹² In order to conceal the Russian origin of GPG, the company is renamed "Securing Energy for Europe GmbH" SEFE. Gazprom has been reducing deliveries in varying amounts since June. This puts Uniper, the German-Finnish energy group, in a precarious position, which the government is compensating for with payments of around twice the amount of GPG. However, the government-ordered gas levy is primarily justified with the rescue of Uniper.

Thirdly, the EU sanctions provide for the freezing of the assets of 1,200 Russian individuals and organisations. The owners of these assets are required to report them. At the beginning of August, it becomes known that the German authorities have not received a single report and have not requested one from any of the billionaires.¹¹³ Out of an estimated 25 billion euros, 4.3 billion euros are frozen by the beginning of August, 2.3 billion euros of which is due to bank reports.

Military measures of the FRG

A closer look at Germany's military policy reveals even more clearly than the EU sanctions what an advantage it is for Russia to have a firm ally in the ranks of the hostile NATO. At the beginning of the war, the German govern-

¹¹¹ <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/de/aussenpolitik-frankreichs/landerinformationen-erklarungen/europa/ukraine/frankreichs-standpunkt-zum-krieg-in-der-ukraine/article/krieg-in-der-ukraine-diese-sanktionen-wurden-gegen-russland-und-belarus>

¹¹² <https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/drohende-insolvenz-deutschland-hilft-gazprom-germania-mit-kfw-loan-a-4c3d86ac-1cf1-4186-bf4a-1d6369a8279a>

¹¹³ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/ukraine-krieg-trotz-schaerferer-regel-kein-russischer-oligarch-hat-bislang-sein-vermoegen-offengelegt/28585616.html>

ment generally ruled out arms deliveries and only provided "humanitarian support". When the pressure from the EU and NATO became too great, Berlin sent light weapons. In July, heavy weapons cross the border, but no tanks. The three Gepard delivered are armoured ground-to-air weapon systems, but not tanks. Tanks, i.e. flexible ground-to-ground systems, have top priority if a foreign army is to be driven out of the country. The Bundeswehr is even refusing to supply Ukraine with the 50-year-old "Fuchs" armoured transport vehicles, which do not have a cannon. The reason given is that *"the operational readiness of the troops would be jeopardised"*.¹¹⁴ However, the "Fuchs" can be handed over to Slovenia.

Poland delivers 240 tanks to Ukraine by the end of April in the belief that it will be able to replace them through the ring exchange agreed with the FRG in order to avoid becoming unable to defend itself. Berlin replies that there was never any talk of replacing them with modern Leopard 2 tanks, as Poland is demanding. Moreover, it had not been agreed when the replacement was to be delivered.

German counter-deliveries of Leopard 2 tanks will be agreed with the Czech Republic (17 units) and Slovakia (14 units) at the end of August. Deliveries are to be made by the end of 2022. So for the time being, the countries that are not as involved with US imperialism as Poland will get their turn. Further agreements are being planned with Slovenia and Greece. With the ring swaps, the Soviet-style weapons stocks of the former Eastern Bloc states can be "disposed of" and replaced by free German deliveries. However, the ratio of modern to old weapons is around 1:10, which means that modern weapons will also have to be purchased from German manufacturers in the future. *"That German tanks should never again shoot at Russian tanks was one of the lessons learnt from the Nazi past and the Second World War"*, is the official justification when dependent states are ripped off by Germany.¹¹⁵ This is what coming to terms with the German past looks like.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/ringtausch-101.html>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/ringtausch-101.html>

In August, it becomes known that Spain wants to deliver 40 of its own Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine. Berlin intervenes and prevents it.¹¹⁶

So what is the FRG really supplying? In terms of heavy weapons, only the Gepard, the aforementioned ground-to-air weapon system against air attacks. Of the 12 Gepard initially promised at the beginning of May, only 3 were delivered by the end of July due to a shortage of ammunition. In August, 12 units actually arrive in the Ukraine, and 15 more are planned. The modern 2000 self-propelled howitzer, an actual ground-to-ground weapon, remains at 10 units.

The government updates the list of German deliveries to Ukraine on a daily basis.¹¹⁷ By the time two frigates are listed, Putin knows what he has in Chancellor Scholz. Perhaps Putin will call Berlin one day: "Olaf, you forgot the shoelaces." While 2 billion euros in deliveries for 2022 are announced, the list reports arms deliveries totalling 725 million euros by the beginning of September.

The sabotage of sanctions and military measures, together with the official government line that the FRG did not want to contribute to the escalation of the war and did not want to become a party to the war itself, sent clear signals of German loyalty to the alliance to Moscow.

But for what reasons has the FRG been actively participating in the military encirclement of Russia since 2017, which Moscow cites as a reason for war? Until then, the FRG took part in the joint manoeuvres as part of its NATO membership, as did others. Neither the German government nor German companies are significantly involved in the deployment of the modern missile defence system "Aegis-Ashore", which poses a massive threat to Russia from Romania and Poland. After NATO launches the "Enhanced Forward Presence" (EFP) mission in 2014, the Federal Republic of Germany participates in one of four permanently stationed "battlegroups" and takes over command in Lithuania in 2017 with 1,600 soldiers, two thirds of whom are Bundeswehr

¹¹⁶ <https://www.stern.de/digital/technik/leopard-2-panzer-fuer-kiew-aus-spanien---darum-scheitert-der-deal-32597368.html>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/krieg-in-der-ukraine/lieferungen-ukraine-2054514>

soldiers. The selection of the FRG is very revealing: Lithuania borders the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. This area has been the subject of repeated negotiations with Moscow since the 1990s. German attempts to "internationalise" the region are regularly rejected by the Russian leadership. Since 2017, a favourable constellation has once again arisen for the FRG: on the one hand, the Axis partner can be made to understand that it is better to have German troops in Lithuania than US, Canadian or British troops. On the other hand, if Germany's influence is not sufficient to prevent a military escalation against Russia, it is strategically in the most favourable position to divide it up.

How should the 2016 Defence Policy Guidelines (Bundeswehr White Paper) be classified? Do they not include a militarily aggressive orientation of the German army against Russia? On page 31, it states: *"Through its willingness to assert its own interests by force and to unilaterally shift borders guaranteed under international law, which has come to light in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, Russia is openly calling the European peace order into question. This has far-reaching consequences for security in Europe and therefore also for Germany's security. [...] Without a fundamental change of course, Russia will therefore pose a challenge to security on our continent for the foreseeable future."*¹¹⁸ On the very next page, however, it says: *"At the same time, Europe and Russia continue to share a broad spectrum of common interests and relations. [...] Sustainable security and prosperity in and for Europe can therefore not be guaranteed in the future without resilient cooperation with Russia. This makes the right mix of collective defence and building resilience on the one hand and approaches to cooperative security and sectoral cooperation on the other all the more important when dealing with Russia."*¹¹⁹ If read selectively, this can also be interpreted as a declaration of war, but after the conclusion on dealing with Russia at the latest, one must refrain from doing so: *"What is therefore essential for the common security space of our continent is not the conception of a new security architecture, but respect for and consistent adherence to the existing and proven common rules and princi-*

¹¹⁸ <https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/dossiers/weissbuch>. Page 31

¹¹⁹ Op. cit. S. 32

ples."¹²⁰ A clear demarcation from NATO's "*new security architecture*", which describes an ever-increasing aggression and advance towards Russia's borders. What a broadside against the USA!

With the start of the war in Ukraine, Berlin is replacing its overt axis policy with a covert one. In this way, it retains its political leadership role in the EU and remains capable of doing business with the USA. The German eastern axis, combined with partial annexations in the west, provides the only plausible explanation as to why the FRG is both participating in and undermining or holding back sanctions, arms deliveries and NATO encirclement of Russia.

A completely different picture of German imperialism emerges when its participation is explained by fear of the USA and its undermining by fear of Russia. Instead of an imperialist, it appears to be a US court dog kicked by Russia. A dependent state that cannot get a grip on energy prices and inflation, overreaches with armaments and unfortunately has an unsavoury past. Others still recognise the imperialist whose past is not over. But they see their own main enemy as a shadow of itself and look for its particular aggressiveness in everyday statements and actions, in its tactics. Neither camp recognises the peaceful strategy that is driving the world war.

100 billion "special assets" - spring awakening and summer theatre

What a spring for militarism! One hundred billion euros in special funds for the Bundeswehr, double the "normal" war budget. It is being sold as Germany's response to the war in Ukraine. "*The arms build-up programme, which was announced on 27 February and had long been in the drawers*"¹²¹, is causing a shock in the anti-militarist camp and parts of the population. The spring awakening of militarism is followed by the anti-Russian summer theatre of politics, and both have the effect that nobody asks when exactly the programme has been in the drawers and what exactly it is for.

¹²⁰ Op. cit. S. 32

¹²¹ Arnold Schölzel in Rotfuchs 9/22

In mid-2017, Germany and France agree on a first joint project to completely re-equip both armies in the army, air force and navy with state-of-the-art technology. This was confirmed in mid-2018 and has been concretely planned since mid-2019. At the end of 2018, the "Information Centre for Militarisation" (IMI) presented all the major projects at a congress. Handelsblatt complained on 26 November 2018: *"Instead of publicising her plans widely, von der Leyen opted for the discreet route. Since last week, a short announcement has been hidden on the website explaining how von der Leyen and Parly (until recently French Minister of War, the publisher) envisage the construction of a joint battle tank and combat aircraft."* The Handelsblatt article informs readers for the first time that it is not just about battle tanks and fighter aircraft as successor projects to the Leopard 2 and the Eurofighter. *"It is to be a combination of heavy and light, manned and unmanned, networked tanks and vehicles."*¹²² This "Main Ground Combat System" MGCS is expected to generate *"sales of around 100 billion euros from the mid-30s"*.¹²³ The "Future Combat Air System" FCAS air force programme, whose aircraft are equipped with satellite communication, escort swarms and their own tanker aircraft, promises five times as much, namely 500 billion in sales.

Four years later, the long-term Franco-German project is being hyped up in a huge show with a turning point and an amendment to the Basic Law. A programme to implement the 2016 defence policy guidelines, which had previously been kept almost secret, is now being transformed into a German response to "Russian aggression" thanks to the war in Ukraine.

It is now apparent that the figures for 2018 and 2022 from the justification of the "special assets" are exactly the same for the Bundeswehr's new acquisitions. Calculated are

Tanks:	2018 for 15 billion euros - 2022 for 16.6 billion euros
Aircraft:	2018 for 33.3 billion euros - 2022 for 33.4 billion euros
Ships:	2018 for 10 billion euros - 2022 for 8.8 billion euros

¹²² Handelsblatt, 26 November 2022

¹²³ Ibid.

Together: 2018 a total of 58.3 billion euros

A total of 58.8 billion euros in 2022.¹²⁴

So far, however, the development costs are still missing. War Minister Lamprecht told the Bundestag on 1 June 22 that *the special fund would also be used for "the development of the European Future Combat Air System (FCAS) aircraft project [... and] for the development of the new Main Ground Combat System (MGCS) main battle tank"*.¹²⁵ The development costs of the new air and ground weapons amount to 81.5 billion euros¹²⁶. The Federal Republic of Germany and France each share these costs with 40.8 billion euros. 58.8 billion euros for procurement plus 40.8 billion euros for development totals 99.6 billion euros. The entire rearmament programme, including 100 billion "special assets", has therefore already been fully planned by the end of 2018.

Why all the anti-Russian theatre thunder since March 2022 with the "turning point" and amendment of the Basic Law? Firstly, the theatrical thunder is to fool our own public and allies into believing an unexpected German lightning reaction to the war in Ukraine, which deliberately eclipses all previous military armaments. Secondly, the financing of the overall project, which has so far been parked and underfunded at the European Defence Fund (EDF) with 7.5 billion euros, is being brought back into a bilateral Franco-German affair. Companies from other EU countries can be involved, but without the states having a say. *"The United States of Europe [are] either impossible or reactionary under capitalist conditions"* (Lenin). War also becomes the father of all things in the alliance between the two imperialists, Germany and France. The focus shifts to renewing the basic military equipment of the army, air

¹²⁴ The figures for 2018 from the Handelsblatt 26 November 2021, the figures for 2022 from: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/sondervermoegen-bundeswehr-2047518>

¹²⁵ <https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/ministerin-wir-sorgen-fuer-voll-einsatzbereite-bundeswehr-5438596>. Of course, she only mentions the two large-scale projects at the end of her list of purchases, as a distant memory. At the beginning of her speech it says: "In future, 1.9 billion euros can be used to buy NATO-standard helmet radios or night vision devices, for example."

¹²⁶ Handelsblatt, 26 November 2022

force and navy with the latest technology, to merging the two armies.¹²⁷ The war in Ukraine only gives the whole thing a new boost. And thirdly, the "black zero", the executioner's axe of partial annexations against the other EU partners, remains intact thanks to the special funds coup. Two articles of the Basic Law are quickly amended and financing outside of the regular budget is possible in an ostensibly war-related special budget.

The secrecy of 2018 will be replaced by loud sabre-rattling in 2022, a spring awakening with summer theatre that even integrates the wave of protests against the "100 billion for death" as a useful role in the overall production.

Russia turns eastwards

In China, Russia has found an ally with a stronger power base than the Axis partner in the West. An ally that has the same advantages to offer as the FRG, technology in exchange for raw materials, but to a far greater extent. The immense technical and financial power of the new superpower China can increasingly replace what Russia may be losing in the West.¹²⁸ Like Russia, China is also being attacked economically and threatened militarily by US imperialism, and that welds us together.

In addition to this motive, another economic one is also emerging: *"The background to this is climate change, which is causing the polar ice caps to melt. [...] For the Arctic, this has two main implications: firstly, it opens up access to new deposits of raw materials; the U.S. Geological Survey [a scientific agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, ed.], for example, estimates that 13% of all unexplored oil reserves and 30% of unexplored natural gas can be found north of the Arctic Circle. [...] It is estimated that 17.3 billion tonnes of oil and 85.1 trillion cubic metres of natural gas are stored under Russia's northern continental shelf. [...] The second far-reaching consequence of climate change for the Arctic itself is that it is opening up new sea routes. Probably the best-known example is the so-called Northeast Passage:*

¹²⁷ The war also retains its paternal role in the question of overcoming the difficulties of the new European "unification of the empire", which are considerable in the armaments project between Berlin and Paris.

¹²⁸ more on Russia-China cooperation, Harald Projanski, in: Junge Welt 8 April 2022, p. 12f

*the sea route along the northern coast of Russia that connects the Norwegian Sea with the North Pacific; [...] Whether this will succeed is, of course, written in the stars. The hurdles are enormous; the regular use of the Northeast Passage as a sea trade route requires the development of a certain infrastructure, which devours enormous amounts of money."*¹²⁹

The turn towards the eastern neighbour is by no means only bilateral. Political solidarity is currently forming around the alliance of the five BRICS states, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. In the vote on the UN resolution condemning the war in Ukraine, five countries voted against and 35 abstained.¹³⁰ Other powerful states, such as Argentina, Iran, Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are seeking or considering membership of BRICS+. The flows of gas, oil and other goods are redirected, the combination of technology, raw materials, labour and sales markets in the new "Eastern bloc" would have the makings of an *"anti-Western alliance, more powerful than ever before"*.¹³¹

Further east, to Beijing

Since the German strategy to disempower the USA has led to a confrontation between the two imperialists, Berlin has been working increasingly on cooperation with Beijing. Of course, there is also a prehistory here.

In the mid-1970s, after his visit to Beijing, the Bavarian grand strategist Franz Josef Strauss asserted: *"There is no Strauss-Mao axis with an anti-Soviet thrust"*, yet the new Ostpolitik must not end in Moscow. Even then, the FRG

¹²⁹ Kronauer. 2022. p. 78f.

¹³⁰ against: Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, Russia, Syria: Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burundi, China, Congo, Cuba, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, India, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe

¹³¹ Is the conservative press afraid <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/plus239572955/BRICS-Gipfel-Ein-antiwestlicher-Block-entsteht-so-maechtig-wie-noch-nie.html>

was China's largest foreign trade partner.¹³² Today, even the bloated EU internal market, which has been developed down to the last hut, is not enough to absorb German overproduction and capital exports.

Trade in goods

Germany becomes by far China's most important trading partner in Europe, China becomes Germany's number one economic partner country in Asia. In 2016, the Federal Statistical Office reports that China has replaced the USA as Germany's most important trading partner.¹³³ A comparison of Germany's economic relations with China and the USA reveals the following picture:

Germany's exports to China 2021: 103.7 billion euros - to the USA: 122 billion euros Like the USA, Germany mainly exports machinery, automobiles and parts, electrical engineering and chemicals to China.

Germany's imports from China in 2021: 142 billion euros - from the USA: 72 billion euros. Most imported goods in Germany come from the "Middle Kingdom".¹³⁴

Trade volume of the FRG - China 2021: 246 billion euros - FRG - USA: 194 billion euros.

Capital exports

German capital exports to China tripled between 1990 and 2020 to 89.5 billion euros. In comparison: 352.5 billion German direct investments flowed into the USA in 2020. Here too, the dynamics and trends are far more signifi-

¹³² <https://www.welt.de/politik/article136090954/Wie-Mao-einst-Franz-Josef-Strauss-entfuhrte.html>
<https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/vor-30-jahren-wird-franz-josef-strauss-von-mao-ze-dong-100.html>

¹³³ https://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2017-02/china-deutschland-handel-exporte-import-statistisches-bundesamt?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.startpage.com%2F

¹³⁴ https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Wirtschaft/Aussenhandel/Tabellen/rangfolge-handelspartner.pdf;jsessionid=998CEFC8F743E1E764C5DD02FB4CF9F8.live712?__blob=publicationFile

cant than the absolute figures. In 2020, the USA's threatened role as a global economic power is on everyone's lips: In the coronavirus year, global investment in the USA fell by 49%, while investment in China rose by 4%.¹³⁵ The German Chamber of Industry and Commerce therefore views the US trade war against China with concern: *"German companies employ more than 850,000 people in the US, while China employs over a million people. The economies are closely linked, supply chains and production facilities are intertwined and difficult to distinguish."*¹³⁶

In 2015, the People's Republic adopts the "Made in China 2025" strategy. Cooperation with German companies features strongly in the plan. The focus is on aerospace, high-speed trains, electromobility and the expansion of power grids.¹³⁷ The proportion of Chinese takeovers and investments (M&A) by and in companies in Germany rises from almost zero in 2009/10 to 19 M&A in 2011 and peaks in 2016 with 47 companies. The Who's Who of German SMEs is represented: Kuka in 2016, plastics machinery manufacturer Krauss-Maffei by ChemChina in 2017, Osram spin-off Ledvance in 2017, Vossloh AG's Locomotive division by the world's largest rail vehicle manufacturer, China's CRRC, in 2019. This means that Chinese takeovers exceed German ones for the first time, prompting regulatory countermeasures on both the German and European side in 2018 - against the resistance of German industry, which is benefiting strongly from the influx of Chinese capital. The Chinese takeover of electricity grid operator 50Hertz was prevented in 2018 by the state-owned KfW buying up a 20% stake. Today, Chinese direct investment is back at the level of 2011.

The current reluctance of Chinese capital to invest in Germany is certainly not only due to government restrictions. After all, capital exports, especially direct investments, cannot and should not increase continuously like exports.

¹³⁵ <https://www.manager-magazin.de/politik/weltwirtschaft/auslaendische-direktinvestitionen-china-verdraengt-usa-von-platz-eins-a-ac847562-f9dd-4b0b-b4b4-ffd85dbecf99>

¹³⁶ <https://news.ihk.digital/newsletter/ihk-bayreuth/Aussenwirtschaftaktuell/September2018/Auswirkungen-des-Handelskonflikts-USA-China.pdf>

¹³⁷ <https://china.diplo.de/cn-de/themen/wirtschaft/wirtschaft-bilateral>

Rather, the decline in Chinese foreign investment is in line with the 14th Five-Year Plan of the People's Republic, which will be adopted in 2021 and focuses more strongly on the huge domestic market as the next step in development, as well as the capital-intensive Belt & Road project, which is intended to encompass a world without North America and Australia.

Knowledge transfer in research and development

Bavaria is leading the way again: in 2007, the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts and the Bavarian Rectors' Conference set up the BayCHINA University Centre to strengthen academic relations between China and Bavaria.¹³⁸

In 2018, just as the German government was making it more difficult for Chinese capital to enter Germany, Berlin and Beijing adopted the Sino-German Cooperation Network Industry 4.0 and Smart Services. The aim is to exchange information and transfer technology on intelligent manufacturing technologies as well as German-Chinese research cooperation. Everyone who is anyone in German research is involved: the Max Planck Society, the Fraunhofer Society and the Helmholtz- Association of German Research Centres.¹³⁹

Eastwards and against the USA

After lengthy negotiations, the EU concludes an investment agreement with China at the end of 2020 as a "*first step*", as a prerequisite for the start of talks on a free trade agreement. The EU considers the American criticism that it was not included in the negotiations to be "*understandable, but unjustified*".¹⁴⁰ While the USA has been waging a losing trade war with China since 2016, the former German Minister of War and current head of the EU Commission, von der Leyen, grandly announced the "Global Gateway" infrastruc-

¹³⁸ <https://www.baychina.net/>

¹³⁹ <https://www.zukunft-der-wertschoepfung.de/de/I4GC.html>

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/eu-und-china-schliessen-historisches-investitionsabkommen-a-86d994dd-989f-4fb8-a78f-d60170643f0c>

ture project at the end of 2021 as a European declaration of war on the Chinese Silk Road. In her "State of Europe Address", she pointed out that it makes no sense for Europe to *lay* a road "*between a Chinese-owned copper mine and a Chinese-owned harbour*". That sounds rather restrained for a declaration of war. In fact, the first project of the European alternative is, of all things, a feasibility study for new railway links between the EU and China! The EU and China are paying for the study in equal parts. But that's not all: "*Both the EU and China are committed to a comprehensive strategic partnership*", according to an internal EU Commission paper. Handelsblatt comments: "*The political explosiveness can hardly be overestimated. [...] Announcing Global Gateway on the one hand and deepening an infrastructure partnership with Beijing on the other. This back and forth is symptomatic of Europe's strategic vacillation.*" The Americans are annoyed and are snubbing the EU with the AUCUS pact with the Australians and the British, which is costing France the submarine deal of the century. And now there is great indignation in Europe "*that the USA is secretly forging an alliance that is changing the security architecture in Asia*".¹⁴¹

Let's translate the words of the bourgeois press: German imperialism is using its dominance in the EU to try to appease its main opponent, the USA, with small-scale activities that do not harm its expansion and whose costs are borne by the European countries. Behind the scenes, it is working on the eastern axis and its extension in co-operation with China in order to become strong enough for the battle for supremacy in the world.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ All quotes from Handelsblatt, 05.10.2021, print version, p. 8f, and the extended online version <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/belt-and-road-trotz-kritik-an-der-seidenstrasse-eu-treibt-infrastrukturpartnerschaft-mit-china-voran/27674282.html>

¹⁴² <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/belt-and-road-trotz-kritik-an-der-seidenstrasse-eu-treibt-infrastrukturpartnerschaft-mit-china-voran/27674282.html>

What to do when the secret is out?

From all that we know today, we can formulate Lenin's quote about imperialist alliances as follows: *"Peaceful strategies prepare wars and in turn grow out of wars, mutually condition each other, produce an alternation of forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on one and the same ground of imperialist connections and interrelations of the world economy and world politics."*¹⁴³ To consider the wars and belligerent expansions of one imperialist independently of the peaceful expansions of the other *"separates one link of the unified chain from the other"*, presents *"instead of the living connection [...] a dead abstraction to the workers"*.¹⁴⁴ Once this connection is known, it is easier to defeat the warmongers this time before the war.

Of course, we have to assert ourselves undiminished today:

Cessation of all arms deliveries and withdrawal of all German soldiers and weapons stationed abroad behind the German border

Cancellation of all special expenses for the German army

Complete state neutrality towards the warring parties Ukraine and Russia, lifting of sanctions against Russia

Having become a movement uniting the peoples of all other Western states against their respective imperialists, these demands would strengthen the Russian proletariat and the Russian peoples in their struggle to end the war and against their government and their bourgeoisie.

Below these demands there is no anti-war struggle. That is proletarian internationalism.

But in this country, if we only push through these three demands for neutrality, we are merely enabling our main enemy to pursue its Axis policy again and continue its attack against US imperialism.

¹⁴³ Lenin. Imperialismus, p. 301

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

The imperialist power struggle, which triggered one warlike barrage against the German-Russian axis, rages on and triggers the next.

The struggle against war means fighting for a situation that removes Germany from the imperialist redivision of the world. The levers for the attacks on the basis of imperialism, capitalist property, are in the streets. For almost 30 years, the population has been experiencing that the private ownership of social infrastructure runs counter to their basic needs, that nothing - wherever you look - works any more. Initiatives to expropriate and re-nationalise the wealth that was built and paid for by the people are multiplying. The complete expropriation without compensation and nationalisation of the economic sectors of health, education, public transport, housing, telecommunications, etc. can improve the living conditions of the broad masses for the time being.

Added to this is the necessary expropriation of all energy suppliers in order to curb price increases, which are primarily triggered by the influx of huge amounts of speculative capital on the energy exchanges. In these struggles, a broad popular front is gathering and creating its organs of socialisation. Then the complete expropriation of all capitalist property without compensation comes into focus and becomes a social possibility.

In view of the history of our imperialists and the history of the entire imperialist system, these are obvious and necessary demands. How can we ensure that expropriation becomes a matter of course in the social class struggle?

Let's take a look at our opponent, the imperialist. In his case, the redivision of the world determines all his actions and those of his political personnel. Let us study our opponent and learn from him. As stubbornly as he sticks to his goal of world domination and as relentlessly and flexibly as he pursues his strategy of expansion, we too must pursue our goal and our strategy just as stubbornly, relentlessly and flexibly.

The goal, the possession of the productive forces and the conquest of state power, must determine all our daily struggles.

And if our opponent subjugates and unites entire peoples for his goal, we gather and unite all forces among the people who, like the workers, can no longer and no longer want to live under the conditions of the private econo-

my, for our goal: the revolutionary end of class society and its wars through communist society.

Appendix: Chronology of economic relations between Germany and Russia

The arrangement of the empirical facts in chronological order with brief comments is intended to provide quick orientation. Most of the facts in this chronology are taken from the books by Jörg Kronauer: "Meinst du die Russen wollen Krieg?", 2018, and "Der Aufmarsch. Vorgeschichte zum Krieg", 2022. The facts taken from these books are not cited; longer passages are labelled as quotations and the source is given in footnotes.

Prehistory 1890: Mannesmann supplies an oil pipeline to a Russian factory. Speciality: seamless steel pipes. The Group's technology enables drilling to depths of up to 2,000 metres.

1900: Mannesmann builds an oil pipeline from Baku to Batumi (port of loading), the world's longest at 850 kilometres.

1958: Long seamless steel pipes for natural gas pipelines are removed from the CoCom embargo list against the Soviet Union, which is dependent on these pipes.

1962: Under pressure from the USA, the NATO Council declares the sale of natural gas pipes to the USSR undesirable. The FRG government bans Mannesmann from exporting pipes.

1968: Austria (Vereinigte Österreichische Eisen- und Stahlwerke, VOEST), as a neutral country, takes over natural gas from Russia in exchange for the export of natural gas pipes to the USSR. VOEST commissions Mannesmann and Thyssen with the construction.

1970: First natural gas pipe deal between the Soviet Union and the FRG. The contract is signed by the two economics ministers (Schiller, Patolichev): De-

livery of 3 billion m³ of Russian natural gas per year (until 1973) by Sojuzgas to Ruhrgas, 1.2 million tonnes of steel pipes from Mannesmann-Röhrenwerke (Mannesmann and Thyssen) for the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Siberia to Germany. The Soviet side uses the proceeds, which are fixed for decades until the year 2000, to repay the loan from Deutsche Bank. The deal makes Ruhrgas AG the largest pipeline and trading monopoly for natural gas in the Federal Republic of Germany.¹⁴⁵

1972: Expansion of the annual gas supply volume from the USSR to 7 billion metres³

1979: Expansion to 9.5 billion m³ annually

1981: Expansion to 20 billion m³.

The US Reagan administration imposes an export ban on compressors and other machines required for the supply of raw materials. Bonn, Paris and London oppose the ban. In November 1982, the US government is forced to end the sanctions.

1985: The FRG imports 24% of its annual gas consumption from the USSR. (The share for crude oil is 11%.)

Development of German exports to the USSR: from DM 0.8 billion in 1960 to DM 11.2 billion in 1983, 2.6% of total West German exports. The USSR rises to 9th place among the exporting countries.

1988: Deutsche Bank CEO Christians proposes to Soviet Prime Minister Ryzhkov and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze that the area around Kaliningrad be turned into a "special economic zone" with free industrial settlement and a free trade zone. And instead of emigrating to West Germany, Russian-Germans are to be settled there. Kaliningrad will become a special economic zone, but without the settlement of Russian-Germans.

1989:

13 June: The foreign ministers of the FRG and the RSFSR sign a treaty "on the promotion and mutual protection of capital investments"

¹⁴⁵ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/E.ON_Ruhrgas#Bis_2002

1990:

9 November: Treaty "on good neighbourliness, partnership and cooperation".

1990 - 1993:

The FRG grants the Russian Federation 40 billion US dollars in "transformation aid" (USA: 11.8 billion, Japan 4.6 billion, Great Britain 1 billion)

Russian debts to international creditors (Paris Club) rise from USD 68 billion to USD 100 billion in the 1990s. The FRG is the largest creditor with a share of 40-45%. At the end of the 1990s, Russia's GDP is 64% of its 1990 level.

1991:

The FRG obtains 15.8% of its imported crude oil and 43.6% of its natural gas from the Russian SFSR.

2 February: The federal state of Lower Saxony, Prime Minister Gerhard Schröder, signs a joint declaration on the establishment of partnership relations with the RSFSR. Just over a year later, the Lower Saxony Minister for Federal and European Affairs, Jürgen Trittin, signs another "Joint Declaration ...", this time with the Tyumen Oblast. This oblast, together with the two autonomous districts it administers, is around four times the size of the Federal Republic of Germany and is referred to as "Russia's Saudi Arabia" because it contains two thirds of Russia's oil reserves and nine tenths of its natural gas reserves.

March: The Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations opens a representative office in Leningrad and is given the former GDR Consulate General on Bolshoi Prospekt. Vladimir Putin (1985-1990 for the KGB in Dresden), who is responsible for foreign trade, acts as an intermediary.

28 June: The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) dissolves

1 July: The Warsaw Treaty Organisation also dissolves. The defence alliance had been formed in 1955 from eight states: Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Albania (left in 1968).

28 August: The FRG establishes diplomatic relations with the republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which have separated from the RSFSR.

8 December: Foundation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) from the 12 countries Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (Turkmenistan joined in 2005). Georgia leaves in 2009, Ukraine in 2018. Each country has its own currency. Population of the CIS states: 222.29 million (Soviet Union: 290 million)

20 December: Foundation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NACC, together with the former socialist states of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe as a forum for dialogue. In the middle of the founding meeting, the Soviet representative announces that his country is dissolving and that he now only represents the "Russian Federation". For over a year, Moscow pursues Russia's accession to NATO.

26 Dec: Dissolution of the Soviet Union, which fragments into twelve individual states. The Russian Federation loses control over a quarter of Soviet territory and around half of the Soviet population. By 1993, all parts except the Baltic states join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Recognition of Ukraine as an independent state by the FRG. Opening of the German embassy on 17 January 1992, one of the first Western states to do so. Leading separatist politicians from Baltic and other Soviet states had previously been regularly received and advised in Berlin.

1992: Joint declaration by the FRG and Russia. Main point: "the need for further development of bilateral co-operation in the oil and gas sector"

Establishment of joint ventures. Explicitly mentioned: Wolgodeminoil, in which BASF/Wintershall and Lukoil are to each hold 50%.

Russia has the seventh largest oil reserves in the world (13.4 billion tonnes) and the third largest oil resources (35.5 billion tonnes); according to the current state of technology, reserves can be extracted profitably, while resources will only be extracted in the future. The ratio for natural gas is: the world's largest natural gas reserves (47.8 trillion metres³) and also the world's largest natural gas resources (152 trillion metres³). The ratio of reserves to resources

of approx. 1:3 in each case not only establishes a dependence of the FRG on Russia, but also, conversely, a dependence of Russia on the FRG due to the necessary expansion of the production infrastructure.

March: Recognition of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan by the FRG

6 April: Contract between the US company Chevron and Kazakhstan for a joint venture to exploit the Caspian oil fields in Tengiz. Chevron is the first western oil company with access to Caspian resources. From 2002 onwards, the initial estimates of the oil quantities located there have to be revised far downwards.

BASF/Wintershall founds the joint venture "Wingas" together with Gazprom. An agreement for a joint venture for gas production in Siberia follows in 1998. Wintershall moves closer to direct access to the raw material.

Dresdner Bank is the first Western bank to receive a full banking licence in Russia. In 1996, it coordinates the first international sale of Gazprom shares. It also arranges a USD 2.5 billion loan for the construction of a pipeline to Frankfurt an der Oder. Warnig is later appointed to the supervisory boards of the oil company Rosneft, Bank Rossija and the world's largest aluminium producer Rusal. He is Managing Director of Nord Stream AG from 2006-2016.

1993:

The European Council gives the green light for the EU's eastward enlargement.

Mid-1990s: The Federal Intelligence Service, BND, establishes relations with Chechen separatists and actively supports them.

1994: Town twinning between Tyumen and Celle.

January: Foundation of the "Partnership for Peace", which is gradually joined by the formally neutral states of Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Austria and Malta. This partnership, which includes military co-operation, makes it possible to slowly integrate the armed forces of foreign countries into NATO and bring them closer to Russia's borders.

Partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU: regular meetings between Russian government agencies and the EU troika (cooperation between

the ECB, IMF and European Commission) as well as meetings at ministerial and official level.

November: First Chechen war from the end of 1994-1996. Chechnya, with 1.5 million inhabitants, is an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation. At the end of 1994, Russian troops invade Chechnya to prevent an armed secession. The war claimed 80,000 lives and ended in a peace treaty on 12 May 1997 with de facto independence for Chechnya.

1995: Moscow provides Russian troops for the NATO-led intervention in Bosnia, a mission against its own interests. The damage limitation in Yugoslavia hoped for by Russia does not materialise.

1996: Shortly before the presidential election (Yeltsin), another German loan totalling DM 4 billion arrives in Moscow. Yeltsin (35.8%) beats Zyuganov (32.5%) in the run-off election.

1997: Partnership between the Lower Saxony state parliament and the Tyumen Oblast Duma, culminating 10 years later in a "partnership" between the Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland (Association of Germans from Russia) and the 26,000 German-speaking citizens of Russia remaining in Tyumen. Organised by the German Ministry of the Interior, of course.

8/9 July: At the NATO summit, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are offered membership of NATO. To appease Moscow, a "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security" was signed between NATO and the Russian Federation on 17 May. In essence, this is nothing more than a "*watery non-aggression treaty*" (Kronauer), which guarantees that NATO will not permanently station any additional combat troops in Eastern Europe. A provision that is currently being undermined by the regular exchange of troops, which makes for a much more effective military operation.

Inclusion of Russia in the G7 (France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany, Japan, USA, Canada), an informal grouping without institutionalised structures that emerged in 1977 from "fireside chats" to discuss financial and currency issues. Until 2014, the year Russia was excluded, it operated as a G8 meeting.

1998: Ruhrgas AG (9,100 employees), a competitor of BASF/Wintershall, initially buys a 2.5% stake in Gazprom and increases this to 6.4% by 2003.

Ruhrgas board member Bergmann becomes the only non-Russian member of the Gazprom supervisory board. In 2010, E.ON Ruhrgas (since 2003) sells all its shares.

Unlike German imperialism, US imperialism is pursuing the further disempowerment of Russia by breaking the Russian oil transit monopoly. Under the leadership of the USA, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan sign a declaration on the construction of a "Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline" (BTC). On 18 November 1999, an intergovernmental agreement is signed in the presence of US President Bill Clinton. Construction began on 18 September 2002 and the pipeline was inaugurated on 25 May 2005. It is extended in 2009. The operating consortium is led by the British company BP.

Financial crisis in Russia. GDP falls to 55% of the 1990 level.

1999: BMW starts assembling cars at Avtotor in Kaliningrad.

12 March: Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary become members of NATO.

24 March: A NATO war against Yugoslavia, which lasts until 10 June and claims 5,000 lives, documents the decline of Russian influence at international level. Despite a veto in the UN Security Council, Moscow is unable to prevent the war against Yugoslavia. The participation of Russian troops in the NATO occupation of Kosovo ends in a fiasco for Moscow after 200 Russian paratroopers occupy the military part of Priština airport without consultation with NATO troops. Putin orders the withdrawal on 1 August 2003.

26 August: Second Chechen war from 1999-2009: On 7 August, Islamic paramilitary units attack the Russian Republic of Dagestan from Chechnya. As a result, 100,000 Russian soldiers march into Chechnya and support the Maskhadov government against the rebels, who extend the war into Russian territory with terrorist attacks and hostage-taking. The war, which lasted 10 years, claimed over 100,000 lives and ended with an extended autonomous status for the republic, which developed into an Islamic state.

October: In a strategy paper, the Russian government welcomes the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) because it could "limit the

United States and NATO and their dominance on the continent". It creates a "counterweight" to the "NATO-centredness in Europe".¹⁴⁶

2000:

26 March: Vladimir Putin becomes President of the Russian Federation. Representatives of the German economy meet with him on 13 March: Otto Wolff von Amerongen, Chairman of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, Daimler manager Klaus Mangold, Ferrostahl CEO Klaus von Menges, Allianz CEO Henning Schulte-Noelle, Wintershall CEO Herbert De-tharding, Ruhrgas CEO Burckhard Bergmann and Siemens manager Volker Jung.

June: President Putin pays his inaugural visit to Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in Berlin. A complete success from a business perspective. An "Economy and Finance Working Group" is established, which begins its work immediately on 26 July.

2000-2010: Consolidation of the Russian economy. GDP increases six-fold in ten years from USD 0.28 trillion to USD 1.64 trillion. US dollars to 1.64 trillion US dollars. US dollars. Government spending on healthcare increases seven-and-a-half-fold in the same period, from USD 96.2 per capita to USD 727.4. Infant mortality halves. Poverty falls by more than half.

Results of German-Russian cooperation: German exports rose from 10.3 billion euros in 2001 to over 38 billion euros in 2012, almost quadrupling. Russia is in 11th place in the German export rankings. Capital exports: 0.13 billion euros in 1995, 22 billion euros in 2013. 6,000 German companies have production facilities in Russia, including Siemens, Linde, Bayer and the medium-sized company Claas (agricultural machinery). VW founds Volkswagen Group Rus in 2006 and establishes a new plant in Kaluga, south-west of Moscow. Fraport owns a third of the shares in St. Petersburg's Pulkovo Airport, Metro is building 70 Cash & Carry stores and 50 Media Markt outlets (9% of group turnover), building materials group Knauf has 6000 employees and accounts for 20% of its business.

¹⁴⁶ quoted from: Kronauer. Meinst du, p. 128

Exports to Ukraine quadrupled from 1.4 billion euros (2000) to 5.75 billion euros (2012). Capital exports: from USD 0.24 billion in the same period to USD 6.3 billion.

The EU is Russia's most important trading partner. 88% of oil and 79% of natural gas exports go to the EU and account for 40% of total Russian government spending.

2001: Russia is allowed to set up a permanent representation at NATO in Brussels.

April: Foundation of the Petersburg Dialogue. An annual meeting, alternating between Russia and Germany, to promote *"understanding and open dialogue between all sectors of civil society in both countries"*. Interesting how the annual meeting was suspended for a year following Russia's withdrawal from Crimea in 2014, only to resume undisturbed a year later.

May: The EU-Russia summit in Moscow establishes a "privileged economic partnership". At the next summit in 2003, three further "common spaces" - justice, home affairs and "external security" - are added to the economic area. Research and education followed in 2005. The 2008 and 2013 summits end without results. The time intervals already indicate that this format will be phased out from the mid-2000s. It is unclear whether this was desired by the FRG or enforced by other parties in the EU.

June: Russia, China and the four Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan found the foreign and military policy alliance Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which is officially directed against separatism, terrorism and jihadist activities. The focus is currently on cooperation between intelligence services and the military, but optionally a transformation into a geopolitical counterweight to NATO. India and Pakistan join in 2017.

9 September: 9/11 terrorist attack on symbolic centres of power in the USA, USA declares the first alliance in the history of NATO

25 September: Second visit by the Russian President to Berlin. Putin is the first Russian head of state to address the German Bundestag. He speaks in German: *"Nobody doubts the great value of Europe's relations with the Unit-*

ed States. But I believe that Europe will only consolidate its reputation as a powerful and independent centre of world politics in the long term if it combines its own capabilities with Russia's human, territorial and natural resources, as well as its economic, cultural and defence potential." Four days later, German War Minister Scharping wrote in the SZ newspaper about a "*multipolar and co-operative*" structured "*new world order*" beyond the unilateral ties to the USA.¹⁴⁷

September: Washington obtains authorisation from Uzbekistan before the war in Afghanistan to lease two air bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The attempt to establish a military foothold in Central Asia fails. US troops are forced to leave Uzbekistan in 2005 and Kyrgyzstan in 2015. Uzbekistan's stance was a reaction to the Washington-led "colour revolutions", attempted coups in several former Soviet countries, which were modelled on the ousting of Yugoslav President Milosevic.

2002:

May: The NATO-Russia Council is created, also just another framework for dialogue.

September: In order to break the Russian monopoly on gas transit, the construction of a "Nabucco pipeline" is planned under British leadership, alluding to the Verdi opera in which the Jewish people attempt to free themselves from Babylonian rule. Companies from Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria are involved. In June 2013, Nabucco is suddenly cancelled. BASF/Wintershall and Gazprom have other plans.

2003: BASF/Wintershall founds the Achimgaz joint venture in co-operation with Gazprom, which expands the production facilities around the Urengoy gas field in Siberia (gas production since 1978). New layers at a depth of 4,000 metres are developed. Both parties each hold a 50% share in the company.

October: Moscow grants the FRG permission to transport supplies for the war in Afghanistan by rail over Russian territory.

¹⁴⁷ Kronauer. Meinst du, p. 131

Cooperation with NATO in the war in Afghanistan began two years earlier: use of Central Asian military bases, 2004/05 cooperation in the fight against drugs and terrorism, 2008 transport of non-lethal equipment over Russian territory, 2010 authorisation to transport NATO weapons, 2012 use of Russian airspace, including Ulyanovsk airport, which led to protests among the population. In 2015, cooperation was discontinued following the escalation of the Ukraine conflict.

23rd November: henchmen trained in Yugoslavia from an organisation called "Otpor" reappear in Georgia in an organisation called "Kmara", financed by US organisations such as George Soros' Open Society Institute, and organise riots that lead to the resignation of the Shevardnadze government on 23rd November.

January: The representative of the Chechen separatists, Akhmed Zakayev, meets with representatives of the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and Alliance 90/The Greens in Berlin.

29 March: NATO is expanded to include seven more countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria.

12 May: The EU announces a new "European Neighbourhood Policy".

14 June: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan are admitted to EU neighbourhood status. Together with Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, six new states of the former Soviet Union come under the German sphere of influence.

At the end of the year, the Georgian "Rose Revolution" (2003) was followed by the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine and the "Tulip Revolution" in Kyrgyzstan (2005). All were modelled on the successful Georgian model, which had previously been tried out in Yugoslavia. A futile attempt was made in Belarus. In 2005, the government of Uzbekistan responded with a massacre of demonstrators in which several hundred were killed. And it withdrew the airbase from Washington. Further US defeats in the region followed. The tide only turned 10 years later with another uprising in Ukraine.

Russia joins the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in South-East Asia. The ASEAN alliance consists of 10 smaller Asian states (excluding Chi-

na, Japan and India) with a population of 611 million, expanded in 1997 as ASIA+3 to include China, Japan and South Korea, and since 2009 ASEA as an economic union modelled on the EU. In 2005, the first East Asia Summit is held in Kuala Lumpur, attended by the ASEAN+3 states as well as India, Australia and New Zealand. Further development into an East Asia Community is being planned. The first free trade area between the ASEAN states and the People's Republic of China comes into force on 1 January 2010.

July: Completion of the EU's eastward enlargement to include Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. This means that six states of the former Warsaw Treaty Organisation and three states that were formerly part of the Soviet Union are integrated into the German hegemonic area for the time being.

24 July: BASF/Wintershall agrees with Gazprom to build a pipeline through the Baltic Sea, Nord Stream 1.

2005:

11 April: Agreement on Nord Stream 1 confirmed at the highest level by Chancellor Schröder and President Putin. The route through the Baltic Sea is agreed, bypassing the previous transit through Ukraine and Poland. E.ON Ruhrgas is initially opposed to the route through the Baltic Sea. The company favours another pipeline via Belarus and Poland and the expansion of Ukraine's transit options. After a year of negotiations, Ruhrgas agrees to the Nord Stream project, acquires an equal stake with Winteries (Wintershall and E.ON Ruhrgas) are to reduce their shares from 24.5% each in order to involve a fourth project partner. The Netherlands' Gasunie and France's Engie (formerly GDF Suez) will join in later. The construction of a second pipeline, Nord Stream 2, is also being finalised. In 2000, the EU included the pipeline in its directive for trans-European energy networks (TEN-E). Gazprom now holds a 51% stake, Wintershall and E.ON 15.5% each.

The conflict between Ruhrgas and Wintershall regarding the route of the pipeline extends into the German parliamentary election campaign,¹⁴⁸ where the lines of hawkish and axial politics face each other. After his election defeat in

¹⁴⁸ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nord_Stream#Planung

September, Schröder takes over the chairmanship of the Nord Stream operating company.

July: German-Russian special forces units hold parallel manoeuvres at military training areas in Zweibrücken and in Pskov, which Polish military specialists are upset to learn Germany is "*the only Western country [...] that conducts bilateral military manoeuvres with Russia*".¹⁴⁹

2007:

Wintershall acquires a 35% share in production from the Yuzhno Russkoye gas field, which, like Urengoy in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, is under the administration of Tyumen, the "Russian Saudi Arabia" with which the state parliament of Lower Saxony under Gerhard Schröder had established a partnership 10 years earlier.

The joint venture under the name "Severneftegazprom" is 40% owned by Gazprom, 25% went from the German E.ON subsidiary Uniper to the Austrian OMV in spring 2017, which has been managed since 2015 by former Wintershall boss Rainer Seele, the President of the German-Russian Chamber of Foreign Trade.

February: President Putin speaks at the Munich Security Conference: "*The format of the conference gives me the opportunity to dispense with excessive politeness.*" His topic is the monopolistic world. "*No matter how this term is embellished - in practice, it only means one thing:*" a "*centre of power, a centre of strength and a centre of decision-making.*" The monopolistic model is therefore "unacceptable" for today's world.¹⁵⁰

March: First negotiations by the EU Commission on an "extended agreement" with Ukraine, which lead to the decision to "associate" the country with the EU on 9 September 2008. There are no objections to this from Russia.

6 October: Russia establishes a customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan. It is a first step towards a Eurasian economic community (see 27 Nov. 2019)

¹⁴⁹ Zentrum für Oststudien, quoted from Kronauer. Meinst du p. 77

¹⁵⁰ quoted from Kronauer. Meinst du, p. 146

2008:

17 February: Kosovo proclaims its separation from Serbia. Moscow vehemently opposes this move initiated by Berlin and Washington. *"Now those who feel they won the Cold War want to divide up the world as they see fit."*

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2 April: At the NATO summit, the dispute between the US and German governments escalates over the issue of Ukraine and Georgia joining NATO. Berlin vetoes the admission of the two countries to NATO in order to promote their association with the EU.

The dispute between the FRG and Russia over Ukraine is of a different nature than the dispute between the USA and Russia over Ukraine. Since 2 April, the FRG has been able to present its Ukraine plans to Russia as the more acceptable version of two unavoidable ones. This has brought it temporary success in Moscow. Moscow's opposition to the EU association in 2013/14 is based less on its rejection of the military integration of Ukraine into the EU, the military part of the association agreement, than on the fact that Moscow took up the realisation of a Eurasian Economic Community again months later, on 6 October 2007, with a customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan (2000). Putin first formulated the comprehensive plan for a "Eurasian Economic Union" based on the European model, which is inconceivable without Ukraine, in an article for the daily newspaper *Izvestia* on 3 October 2011, three years after the EU-Ukraine special summit on 9 September. 2008 (see 9 September 2008 and 7 May 2009).

7 August: The Russia-Georgia war is Moscow's response to the crossing of the red line by the planned admission of Georgia and Ukraine to NATO. When Georgian troops march into the autonomous province of South Ossetia on 7 August, where armed militias have been fighting for independence from Georgia since July, Russian soldiers cross the border to Georgia, take South Ossetia in five days and move further into Georgian territory.

In the autonomous Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, independence efforts have been fermenting since 1989. Since 1992, both provinces

¹⁵¹ op. cit. p. 137

have been in a state of de facto independence protected by Russia. The five-day war in August 2008 ends with Georgia's defeat and the withdrawal of Russian troops. On 26 August, Moscow recognises South Ossetia (population 51,500) and Abkhazia (population 243,000) as independent republics. As the protecting power of Abkhazia, Moscow gains a coastal strip on the Black Sea, which increases its own coastline there by 50%.

9 September: Special summit between the EU and Ukraine with the decision to "associate" Ukraine with the EU (see 7 May 2009).

2009:

12 April: Albania and Croatia join NATO.

7 May: E.ON Ruhrgas acquires a 25% minus 1 share in the Yuzhno-Russkoye natural gas field via the operating company OAO Severneftegazprom (SNGP). Other shareholders are Gazprom (50% plus 2 shares) and Wintershall (25% minus 1 share). This gives E.ON Ruhrgas access to employees.¹⁵²

At its summit in Prague, the EU establishes the "Eastern Partnerships" with Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to accelerate political association and economic integration. The "association agreements" envisaged in this plan are new types of EU treaties that differ from previous EU enlargement agreements and are aimed at eastward enlargement. This plan was adopted six months earlier, in December 2008 at the European Council. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov commented on the treaty on 25 November 2009 that Russia could also imagine joining the Eastern Partnership. Moscow does not intervene against the admission of Ukraine at this time, but officially protests to the EU against the admission of Belarus.¹⁵³ After a brief trade war between Russia and Belarus, the dispute is settled and the co-operation partners Germany and Russia divide up their spheres of influence: Russia receives Belarus for the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the FRG/EU receives Ukraine for EU association. At the time, it remains to be seen to what extent Berlin will accept the experiment favoured by Moscow of using Ukraine as a

¹⁵² https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/E.ON_Ruhrgas#Bis_2002

¹⁵³ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russisch-Belarussische_Uni#2006_bis_2011

dual member and link between the Eurasian and European Union. Kiev therefore pursued both EU association and observer status for the Eurasian Union until 2013 (see August, November 2013). Yanukovych continues to demand that Berlin negotiate with Moscow on this issue.

In contrast to NATO's eastward enlargement, Ukraine was never declared a red line by Moscow in terms of EU enlargement until 2013, which in turn is important for the question of the extent to which German-Russian cooperation and US escalation by means of NATO enlargement differ. It would be a mistake to lump the two together. The aggressive eastward expansion of NATO is also a reaction to German-Russian co-operation. What looks like a race between the two imperialists, the USA and Germany, for dominance in Russia's neighbouring states is, in the full dimension of the contradiction between the two superpowers, the strategic alignment of an entire continent against another. And the corresponding reaction to this from the other side (USA).

27 November: Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan expand their customs union into a customs code, although this is only gradually implemented. The customs borders between the three countries are abolished in July 2011.

2010:

Russia becomes a member of the Asia-Europe Meeting, an association of 51 states (Europe 31, Asia 20, EU Commission), which was founded in 1996 on the initiative of Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and his French counterpart Édouard Balladur to deepen relations between Europe and Asia. The format includes annual summits of the heads of government, ad-hoc meetings of the respective ministers for foreign affairs, economy and finance as well as culture, education and social affairs.

2011:

Contract awarded to Rheinmetall for the construction of a high-tech combat training centre in Mulino, west of Nizhny Novgorod. *The centre will be "the world's most modern training base with simulation-based training, where 30,000 soldiers can be trained each year."*¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Das Profil. Newspaper of the Rheinmetall Group. 3/22, S. 1

3 October: In an article for the daily newspaper *Izvestia*, Putin formulates the comprehensive plan for a "Eurasian Economic Union", which is to be founded on the European model by the states of Belarus, Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan and later expand. Only at this point does Moscow oppose Ukraine joining the EU exclusively. It was only Berlin's refusal to negotiate Ukraine's position as a link between the EU and the EAEU that led to Moscow's opposition to Ukraine's association with the EU from around 2013.

18 October: Free trade agreement between eight CIS states. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan agree to waive import and export duties for entire groups of goods from 2012.

8 November: Nord Stream 1 goes into operation. Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Medvedev inaugurate the facility. The production volume is increased to 59.2 billion metres³ per year by 2015. If the volume doubles as a result of the planned Nord Stream 2, almost 50% of the Nord Stream 2 supply will be sold to other EU states, given Germany's consumption of 95 billion metres³.

2012:

30 March: The EU initials the Association Agreement with Ukraine. However, before the ratification process by the EU states, the Ukrainian judiciary is supposed to drop the proceedings against Yulia Tymoshenko and other opposition politicians, which is why not a single government representative appears at the initialling (= public approval of a treaty text). This humiliation of Ukraine appears to be more a result of Merkel's power struggle against her own hawkish camp. After all, the association has been dragging on for exactly five years (March 2007). A ruthless EU eastward enlargement against Russia looks different.

22 August: Russia becomes the 156th member state of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), founded in 1994 (now 164 member states). The members' actions are based on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which is based on four basic ideas: 1) the prohibition of state trade restrictions 2) the fixing and continuous reduction of tariffs 3) most-favoured-nation treatment 4) national treatment. The aim is to achieve a level playing field between countries and between domestic and foreign products. One of the

WTO's main task is dispute settlement, for which three arbitrators are appointed. The term of office of two arbitrators ends on 11 Dec. 2019. Since then, the USA has been preventing the posts from being filled, which means that the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism is suspended and the entire institution is under threat.

Russia had to fight for 18 years to be admitted to the WTO. Most recently, the war in Georgia was blamed as an obstacle, while the war in Yugoslavia in 1999 was of course no reason to exclude the USA, Germany and others from the WTO.

20 October: Rosneft, one of the three largest Russian oil producers, acquires the oil company TNK-BP for around USD 55 billion. TNK-BP is owned equally by the British BP and four Russian billionaires. Rosneft acquires BP's 50% share for around 28 billion US dollars. BP receives 17 billion US dollars and increases its stake in Rosneft to just under 20%. Like BP, the Russian owners' company AAR also receives around 28 billion US dollars for its 50% stake.¹⁵⁵

November: Two thirds of the Uzbek population are in favour of joining the Eurasian Economic Union. The political leadership is divided. Seven years later, in December 2020, the dispute is resolved. The country is granted observer status in the EAEU (together with Cuba). Peru expresses interest. Observer status includes the harmonisation of industrial standards, synchronisation of customs and tax regimes, promotion of trade relations and preparations for full membership. This is followed by free trade agreements with Vietnam (2015) and Serbia (2019).

2013:

Wintershall/Gazprom start planning the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

June: Ukraine negotiates a free trade agreement with the EU. Moscow then initiates border harassment for lorries, which delays the transport of goods from Ukraine to Russia by days, and threatens to impose tariffs on Ukrainian goods. The EU immediately suspends the free trade agreement with Ukraine

¹⁵⁵ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosneft#Unternehmen>

until the end of 2015. And even in the already initialled association agreement (30 March 2012), the point of free trade is left out. Berlin insists on the position that the EU-Ukraine plans were developed six years ago (March 2007) and that Moscow - unlike Belarus - never made them an issue. There is therefore no need to accept Moscow's change of attitude in this regard

June: Ukraine applies for observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union.

21 November: In Kiev, President Yanukovich refuses to sign the association agreement negotiated with the EU and calls for renegotiations with Russia.

A citizens' movement, fuelled by both the FRG and the USA, demands immediate accession to the EU. There is unrest and street fighting along the lines of the colour revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005). The first fatalities occur. Parts of the police force subsequently sided with the demonstrators. It is unclear who is shooting at whom.

28 November: In this situation, Chancellor Merkel declares in the German Bundestag - surprisingly for many - her understanding for the suspension of the signing, thereby accommodating Moscow. Berlin's concession comes too late. Eight years later, the fact that the hawks prevailed on this issue cost German imperialism much of what it had achieved in 30 years of expansion. But the Kiev Anschluss movement is underway and Ukrainian fascists are increasingly determining the forms of action.

2014:

4 February: The recording of a wiretapped telephone conversation between the head of the US State Department, Victoria Nuland, and the US ambassador in Kiev, Jeffrey Payette, is leaked. The conversation reveals the controversy between the US and EU administrations ("Fuck the EU") and vividly shows how civil movements are being controlled, politicians installed as puppets and entire regions embroiled in wars. We are therefore printing it in full:

Victoria Nuland (Sub-Department Head at the US State Department): What do you think?

Jeffrey Payette (US ambassador in Kiev): I think we're in the game. The issue regarding Klitschko is obviously the complicated electron here. Especially the fact that Yanokovich offered him the position of deputy prime minister. You

have my notes on the problems of this partnership. So now we'll try to find out more quickly about where he stands on this. But I think your argument for him, that you should make it clear to him, I think that's the next call we should make, is exactly the same as what you said to Yatsenyuk. I'm glad you positioned him to fit into this scenario. I'm glad he's in that position to say what he's saying.

Nuland: Good. I don't think Klitschko should be in the government. I don't think it's necessary. I don't think it's a good idea.

Payette: Yeah, I mean, I guess (embarrassment, pause for thought), in the event that he doesn't go into government, just let him stay out and do his political homework. I just think when it comes to moving this process forward, let's keep the moderate Democrats together. The problem is Tyahnybok (leader of the fascist Svoboda) and his people. And I'm sure that's what Yanukovych is speculating on in this situation.

Nuland: I think Yatsenyuk is our man. He has the economic and administrative experience. What he needs is Klitschko and Tyahnybok outside the government. He needs to talk to them four times a week. I just think that if Klitschko comes in and works with Yatsenyuk at this level, it won't work.

Payette: Yes, I think that's right. Good. Would you like us to arrange a phone call with him as a next step?

Nuland: I understood that the call you told me about was about the big three (Klitschko, Yatsenyuk, Tyahnybok, the author) wanting to organise their own meeting. And that in this context Yatsenyuk proposed a meeting of three plus one or three plus two together with you. Did you understand that differently?

Payette: No, I think that's what he proposed. But the proposal has no momentum. Klitschko is the leader. He's going to be supporting all the events for a while. He's probably talking to his people about it right now. So, I think if you talk to him directly, it helps with the personnel management of those three. And it also gives you a chance to act quickly and position us behind the whole thing. Before they all sit down and he explains why he doesn't want it.

Nuland: OK, good, I'm glad. Would you talk to him and ask him when he wants to talk about it, before or after?

Payette: OK, I'll do it, thanks.

Nuland: Oh, one more thing, Jeff (Jeff: Yes?) I can't remember if I told you this already or if I just told Washington. When I talked to Jeff Feltman (?) this morning, he has a new identifier for the UN guy: Robert Serry (Dutch diplomat who travelled to Ukraine on behalf of the UN in 2014. In 2015 he was detained by Russian forces in Crimea, the author). Did I write that to you this morning? (Jeff: Yes) OK, he has now persuaded both Serry and Ban Ki Moon (Secretary General of the United Nations) that Serry will come on Monday or Tuesday. (Jeff: OK) I think that would be great to tie the whole thing together and help the UN, and, you know, fuck the EU.

Payette: Exactly. I think we have to do something to keep everything together. Because you can be sure that if the whole thing doesn't gain altitude soon, the Russians will try to torpedo the whole thing behind the scenes. And again, the fact that this is in the room now, I'm trying so hard to understand why Yanukovych did this. But in the meantime, there is a "Party of Regions" meeting (incumbent ruling party, ed.) and I'm sure there will be a lively discussion on this topic there. Anyway, we could achieve success if we hurry. Let me work on Klitschko. And could you just ... we should try to get someone with an international personality to come out here and help us here. The other question is how we can outclass Yanukovych. Maybe we should discuss that again tomorrow when it's clear how things are developing.

*Nuland: Well, on that subject, Jeff, when I wrote about it, Sullivan replied to me: You need Biden. I replied to Sullivan: Maybe tomorrow to work out the details. Biden agrees.*¹⁵⁶

20 February: On Kiev's Maidan Square, Yanukovych's opponents run in hundreds against the Ukrainian special unit Berkut, parts of which are allied with the provocateurs. What exactly happened was never clarified. Over 100 demonstrators and 20 police officers are killed. The new government immediately deploys the Berkut troops in the Donbass, which would prevent them from being recalled to clarify the events on the Maidan.

¹⁵⁶ <https://youtu.be/xvAXNqITVY8>. (english Original. A.N. IK)

21 February: Ukrainian President Yanukovich flees first to Kharkov, then to Moscow. A revolutionary regime under Oleksandr Turchynov of the Tymoshenko party All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland" and with the participation of the fascist Svoboda declares the government deposed.

18 March: Russia takes military action to secure the Crimean peninsula, which was handed over to Ukraine in 1954 in an intra-Soviet administrative act. This is followed by the exclusion of the Russian Federation from the G8 meeting.

The USA is using the Crimean action as an opportunity to train Ukraine to become a warmonger against Russia. Every Ukrainian government since 2014 has fulfilled this mission with the participation of the Svoboda and Azov fascists with such willingness that it can be assumed that no action by the official representatives of Ukraine, be it in the Donbass or on the international stage, takes place without instructions or at least approval from Washington.

21 March: At the EU summit in Brussels, the heads of state and government of the European Union and Ukraine sign the political part of the EU Association Agreement, the part containing the foreign policy and military provisions.

29 March: Vitali Klitschko, as party leader of UDAR ("Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms", the abbreviation UDAR means "strike" in Ukr./Russ. "Blow") has nominated the billionaire Petro Poroshenko as his presidential candidate. Klitschko is the representative of the Germans. Endowed with money from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, he is supposed to push back Washington's influence in Kiev (see Nuland phone call). On 25 May, he was elected mayor of Kiev and after the parliamentary elections on 26 October, he entered the Ukrainian parliament as the first member of the "Petro Poroshenko Bloc". Over the course of his career, he has at times allied himself with "the anti-Semitic and nationalist Svoboda party."¹⁵⁷

7 April: The Donbass regions of Donetsk and Lugansk secede from Ukraine.

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.mdr.de/brisant/vitali-wladimir-klitschko-104.html>

14 April: The Ukrainian army invades the Donetsk Oblast. Over the course of a year, 1,400 inhabitants are killed in the war against the breakaway provinces of Donetsk and Lugansk.

2 May: In Odessa, Ukrainian fascists set fire to the trade union building after street battles with pro-Russian demonstrators. 32 people are burned to death, 10 die jumping from the windows or are beaten to death on the pavement by the mob. The government sabotages any investigation. Even the EU does not make the investigation a condition for association.

25 May: Petro Poroshenko wins the Ukrainian presidential elections with 54% of the vote with Klitschko's support. His party is initially called "European Solidarity" and from 27 August 2014 "Petro Poroshenko Bloc" (BPP).

29 May: Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan sign the treaty to establish a "Eurasian Economic Union", which begins its work on 1 January 2015. Armenia joins on 2 January 2015 and Kyrgyzstan on 12 August. The aim is to establish a "Eurasian Union" modelled on the European Union.

6 June: Peace negotiations in the "Normandy format" without US participation.

27 June: Poroshenko signs the remainder of the EU Association Agreement, the economic part with the provisions of the free trade agreement suspended until the end of 2015. At the same time, as a non-member of the Eurasian Economic Community, Ukraine continues to enjoy duty-free access to the market of this customs union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan via various free trade agreements.

1 August: Following EU travel and account bans against officials in Russia and Crimea, the first economic sanctions against Russia come into force. These are still being coordinated by the USA within the transatlantic framework.

German exports to Russia collapsed by 41% between 2013 and 2016. But a closer look at the sanctions shows: German export industries increased their exports to the USA by USD 18.7 billion between 2013 and 2016, which more than compensates for the loss of USD 14.5 billion in business with Russia. While the medium-sized mechanical engineering sector has been hit hard, the

German natural gas industry has been completely spared. On the other hand, steps to recover oil in the Russian Arctic Ocean are prohibited, which will hit the US company ExxonMobil with losses of USD 1 billion by the end of 2015.

Shortly afterwards, Russia imposes counter-sanctions in areas that spare German industry. The ban on food imports affects German agriculture, for which Russia (1.6 billion euros per year) is one of the three most important export countries alongside Switzerland and the USA. However, exports of agricultural products to China doubled between 2012 and 2018. And companies with subsidiaries in Russia, such as Ekosem-Agrar, are benefiting from the sanctions against their own country. So much for the sanctions regime of the Western states from 2014-2016, which will fundamentally change in 2017.

The Russian economy slumped sharply until 2016 as a result of the sanctions, exacerbated by the crash of the rouble, and did not recover until 2019.

2015:

23 January: Three weeks after the Eurasian Economic Union comes into force, Chancellor Merkel speaks in Davos to the representatives of all the assembled imperialists and their monopolies about a *"free trade zone from Lisbon to Vladivostok"*.¹⁵⁸ Washington can only take this for what it is: a German declaration of war to undermine the supremacy of the USA via a Berlin-Moscow axis.

12 February: With the Minsk II agreement, the negotiators of the four "Normandy states" succeed in reaching a further agreement on "peace measures" for the two Donbass republics. Russia submits the Minsk II agreement to the UN Security Council on 13 February and is successful. On 17 February, the proposal is unanimously adopted as Resolution 2202 (2015).¹⁵⁹

Barack Obama reserves the right to continue supplying Ukraine with weapons. It is impossible for the USA to allow the two synchronised Axis

¹⁵⁸ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasische_Wirtschaftsunion#Diskrepanzen

¹⁵⁹ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minsk_II#Europäische_Union

powers, Germany and Russia, to succeed in a successful "peace process": Minsk II and the contrived plan to end the civil war in the Donbass are slowly and agonisingly failing.

4 September: The gas deal between BASF/Wintershall and Gazprom: Both companies agree on an asset swap (exchange of assets at the same price) as of 30 September with retroactive economic effect as of 1 April 2013! As a result, Germany's dependence on Russian gas will become 50% dependent on BASF/Wintershall. Here is the wording of the BASF/Wintershall publication:

"BASF subsidiary Wintershall to focus on oil and gas production and divest its gas trading business - transaction expected to be finalised by the end of 2015

BASF and Gazprom have agreed to complete the swap of assets of equal value agreed in December 2013, which was originally scheduled to take place at the end of 2014. As a result of the swap, BASF will further expand its oil and gas production and divest its gas trading and storage business. The swap is expected to be completed by the end of 2015 and, as already agreed in December 2013, is to take place with retroactive economic effect from 1 April 2013. The European Commission already approved the transaction at the beginning of December 2013.

Wintershall, a wholly owned BASF Group company with 2,500 employees worldwide, will receive the economic equivalent of 25% plus a share in blocks IV and V of the Achimov formation of the Urengoy natural gas and condensate field in Western Siberia. The two blocks are being developed jointly by Gazprom and Wintershall. According to the development plan confirmed by the Russian mining authorities, Blocks IV and V have hydrocarbon reserves totalling 274 billion cubic metres of natural gas and 74 million tonnes of condensate. This corresponds to a total of 2.4 billion barrels of oil equivalent (boe). At least 8 billion cubic metres of gas per year are to be produced from the two blocks in the plateau. Production is scheduled to start in 2018.

In return, Wintershall will transfer its stake in the natural gas trading and storage business, which it has operated jointly to date, to its long-standing partner Gazprom. This includes the 50% shares in the natural gas trading

companies WINGAS, WIEH (Wintershall Erdgashandelshaus Berlin) and WIEE (Wintershall Erdgashandelshaus Zug), including the shares in the storage company astora, which operates the natural gas storage facilities in Rehden and Jemgum/Germany, as well as the share in the natural gas storage facility in Haidach/Austria. Gazprom will also acquire a 50% stake in Wintershall Noordzee B.V., which is active in oil and gas exploration and production in the southern North Sea (Netherlands, UK and Denmark). In total, these activities contributed around " 12.2 billion to sales and around " 260 million to income from operations before depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) of the BASF Group in 2014; in the first half of 2015, they contributed around " 7.2 billion to sales and around " 240 million to EBITDA of the BASF Group. The cooperation in the natural gas transport business will be continued.

'We are continuing our strategy in Oil & Gas and focusing on growing profitably at the source in our oil and gas-rich focus regions,' said Dr Kurt Bock, Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of BASF SE. "We are pleased to further expand the joint production of natural gas and condensate with our partner Gazprom in Western Siberia.

'This year we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of our successful cooperation. Today's signing represents another milestone and will open up new opportunities for our companies to realise important projects,' said Alexei Miller, CEO of Gazprom."¹⁶⁰

2016:

The free trade agreement between the EU and the USA, TTIP, fails in the 15th round of negotiations. The plan for this was announced at a press conference of the G8 states on 17 June 2013. A fortnight later, Edward Snowden revealed the eavesdropping practices of the NSA/USA against its negotiating partners in the EU - and has been living in exile in Moscow ever since. As the conflict between the USA and Germany intensifies, it becomes clear why

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.basf.com/global/de/media/news-releases/2015/09/p-15-330.html>

Washington is spying on "its friends".¹⁶¹ The TTIP negotiations are nevertheless started. In February 2015, 120 negotiators end the 8th round of negotiations still optimistic. Before the 9th round in April 2015, the German think tank Bertelsmann Foundation publishes a "Focus Paper" with Angela Merkel's slogan from Davos as the title: *"A free trade area from Lisbon to Vladivostok - A means for peace and prosperity: The effects of a free trade area between the EU and the Eurasian region"*.¹⁶² Shortly before the 15th round, on 28 August 2016, the German Minister of Economic Affairs and Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel (SPD) announced: *"The negotiations with the USA have de facto failed because, as Europeans, we naturally cannot submit to American demands [...] Nothing is moving."* The failure of TTIP is a logical consequence - not of German protests against US chlorinated chicken, but of German cooperation with Russia and China.

Deterioration in relations between the USA and China since 2016 leading to one of the world's largest trade wars from 2018

2017:

Founded in 1997, the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), the Russian counterpart to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, has since become a world-renowned event. It attracts 14,000 participants from 143 countries (in Davos, founded in 1971, there were 3,000 participants from 100 countries with 40 heads of state and government and 1,000 member companies in 2017). In 2017, deals worth 2 trillion US dollars will be concluded on the fringes of the SPIEF. US dollars will be concluded. Prominent guests in 2017 are Narendra Modi, in 2018 China's Vice President Wang Qishan, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and France's President Emmanuel Macron. Annual participants from Germany include the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations and German politicians and managers from DAX companies.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transatlantisches_Freihandelsabkommen

¹⁶² https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/GrauePublikationen/NW_Focus_Paper_EU_Eurasia.pdf

18 May: Rosneft Deutschland opens its headquarters in Berlin. The company supplies over 25% of Germany's crude oil requirements and owns 12% of German processing capacity and announces plans to double its investments in the country to 600 million euros. On 27 September of the same year, Gerhard Schröder is appointed Chairman of the Supervisory Board.

2 August: A new US sanctions law (CAATSA) ends the policy of agreeing sanctions with the EU and extends the previous extraterritorial economic sanctions against Iran, Russia and North Korea to European states. The sanctioned persons include all leading members of the Russian government and owners of large Russian companies. The sanctioned company Ole Deripaska is the majority owner of Rusal, the second largest aluminium company in the world, which supplies around 30% of German raw aluminium and the majority of aluminium oxide. The company will be removed from the list after Deripaska relinquishes control of the group. An interesting aspect of this bill is the majority ratio in the US Senate: 98:2, and in the House of Representatives: 419:3.

Foreign Minister Gabriel and the Austrian Federal Chancellor speak of a breach of international law.

2018:

May: Start of construction of Nord Stream 2 with two new pipelines, each 1,250 km long and 1.2 m in diameter. Planned construction period until the end of 2019. In addition to Gazprom, the shareholders are now Wintershall, Uniper (ex-E.ON Ruhrgas), OMV, Shell and Engie. Gazprom is the formal sole owner after the Polish antitrust authorities prevented the joint venture. All other parties involved can therefore only act as financial investors. The battle against Nord Stream 2 is coming to a head internationally.

2019:

The share of income from oil and gas in Russia's state budget fell from 51% in 2014 to 39% in 2019, but the Russian economy is recovering overall.

¹⁶³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Petersburg_International_Economic_Forum

7 February: The Ukrainian parliament incorporates both EU accession and NATO membership into the constitution.

May: Volodymyr Zelensky becomes President of Ukraine.

December: A second US law, PEESA (Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act), comes into force to "secure Europe's energy supply", actually against the construction of Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream. TurkStream is an international gas pipeline, slightly shorter than Nord Stream, from the southern Russian coast through the Black Sea to Turkey. Half of the capacity is destined for the Turkish market, the other half for the Balkans. TurkStr

With reference to CAATSA, the construction of Nord Stream 2 is being delayed . US Senators Tes Cruz and Ron Johnson threaten the Swiss company AllSeas with the demise of their company in a letter because of the laying of the pipes for Nord Stream 2.

9 December: The "Normandy meetings" to save the Minsk II agreement to end the civil war in south-eastern Ukraine have now reached the 6th summit, without any significant progress.

2020:

19 January: The Libya conference to end the civil war that has been raging there for almost 10 years begins in Berlin.

Russia has been successful as a conflict mediator in the past: during the civil war in Syria in 2013, Moscow managed to persuade the government there to disclose and destroy chemical weapons and organised talks between the warring parties Turkey and Iran in 2017, which curbed the fighting. When Azerbaijan launched a war against Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region with the support of Turkey on 27 September 2020, Moscow succeeded in involving Turkey in the mediation and, after deploying Russian "peacekeepers", managed to enforce a ceasefire. At around the same time, Moscow established itself in the Central African Republic and Mali with advisors and arms supplies, which had previously been considered the domain of France.

Chancellor Merkel has to travel to Moscow before the Libya conference to seek the help of the Russian government due to her lack of sufficient influ-

ence in Libya. And this at a time when German imperialism must regard its "Normandy format" in the Ukraine conflict as a failure.

June: The 3rd US sanctions law PEESCA against Nord Stream 2 comes into force retroactively from 19 December 2019 to supplement the PEESA law. In addition to individuals and companies that favour pipeline construction, insurance companies, municipalities (Sassnitz-Mukran port) and even catering companies that supply the pipelay vessel are now also subject to sanctions. It can no longer be overlooked that the economic interest in US liquefied natural gas exports and the weakening of the Russian economy are not the primary objectives. This is a direct attack on the material basis of the German-Russian axis, the gas deal between the two companies Wintershall and Gazprom.

July: The ferry port of Mukran on the island of Rügen receives another threatening letter from three US senators. What was previously reserved for Russian billionaires - personal sanctions - now affects the mayor of the German Baltic Sea community of Sassnitz.

11 August: Foreign Minister Heiko Maas says at a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Moscow: *"No state has the right to dictate Europe's energy policy with threats, and that will not succeed either"*. He also made this very clear to his US counterpart Pompeo.¹⁶⁴

12 August: 24 of 27 EU member states lodge a formal protest against the US sanctions.

December: The USA imposes sanctions against NATO ally Turkey, which procured the Russian S-400 Triumf missile defence system.¹⁶⁵ Pressure is exerted on New Delhi and Indonesia on the same grounds. Indonesia stops the purchase of the Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jet.

7 December: The EU follows suit and also imposes extraterritorial sanctions. Its *"Global Human Rights Sanctions Mechanism"*, modelled on the US, makes it possible to deny people entry and freeze assets in the EU. The EU goes

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.udo-leuschner.de/energie-chronik/200801.htm>

¹⁶⁵ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Countering_America's_Adversaries_Through_Sanctions_Act

even further: accusations of torture, murder, genocide, serious human trafficking and sexualised violence can trigger sanctions without a court ruling. Imperialist repression quite openly cancels international law and domestic law.

2021:

From 2014 to 2021, the USA spent over USD 2.5 billion on arming Ukraine militarily and training the Ukrainian military. London, Paris, Prague and Warsaw are involved in the arms deliveries.

Missile defence and launch systems are stationed in Romania and Poland.

Variable and fixed combat troops from all NATO countries are stationed in a semi-circle around Russia and are constantly deployed in new series of manoeuvres.

April: The Russian construction management of Nord Stream 2 complains about risky manoeuvres by the Polish navy near the construction work. Construction of the first line of Nord Stream 2 is completed in June 2021.¹⁶⁶

20 April: Since the beginning of 2017, the Bundeswehr has been permanently stationed in Lithuania as part of multinational battalions with three other NATO command centres (USA in Poland, England in Estonia, Canada in Latvia) and is building its own barracks. To mark the "Führer's birthday", German soldiers sing a "birthday serenade" to the Bundeswehr there.¹⁶⁷

August: The new US President Joe Biden waives the implementation of sanctions against Nord Stream 2 if the German government gives assurances that it will take tough sanctions against Russia if Moscow uses "energy as a weapon".

10 September: Construction of Nord Stream 2 is completed. Both strings are filled by 29 December.

16 November: The Federal Network Agency temporarily suspends Nord Stream 2 AG's certification as an independent transmission system operator.

¹⁶⁶ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nord_Stream#Planung

¹⁶⁷ Kronauer. Aufmarsch, p. 57

Nord Stream 2 AG decides to establish a subsidiary under German law for the German section of the pipeline only. The subsidiary is named *Gas for Europe GmbH* and is based in Schwerin. It is entrusted with the management of the 54 km pipeline on German territory and the landfall station in Lubmin.

In December, Chancellor Scholz spoke out against stopping Nord Stream, and in January 2022, the Bavarian Minister President Söder was also in favour of commissioning.

*17 November: The Russian Foreign Ministry publishes "parts of its Ukraine-related correspondence with Berlin and Paris on its website. This was a first-class breach of diplomatic taboo."*¹⁶⁸ The exact content of the correspondence is not known. The humiliation of the partners is a warning shot from Moscow.

*30 November: President Putin repeats his warning from April of this year to foreign diplomats in Moscow that "a red line would be crossed if NATO were to consider deploying missile systems in Ukraine as it did in Romania and Poland. The defence systems mentioned - Aegis Ashore - can easily be equipped with attack systems. Moscow could then be reached from Ukraine in up to ten minutes, Putin stated - possibly too little to be able to defend itself."*¹⁶⁹

17 December: Talks take place in Moscow between the US State Department's European Envoy, Karen Donfried, on negotiations on the Ukraine conflict. The Russian government presents two draft agreements, "one for an agreement between Russia and the USA, the other for one between Russia and NATO. NATO should "undertake to refrain from admitting new members - especially Ukraine. In those countries that had joined the alliance since 1999, the presence of other NATO states was to be reduced to the level of May 1997, the date on which the NATO-Russia Founding Act came into force. Moscow also demanded an end to NATO's military activities in Eastern Europe - for example in Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central Asia. There were

¹⁶⁸ Kronauer. Aufmarsch, p. 23

¹⁶⁹ Op. cit. p. 45

also further demands for arms control."¹⁷⁰ The fact that Russia must ultimately make these demands at the end of 2021 shows that Moscow bears the least responsibility for the outbreak of war on 24 February 2022 .

2022:

10 January: Deputy US Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and her Russian counterpart Sergei Ryabkov negotiate in Geneva. The meeting takes place without the participation of the EU. France and the FRG, who have been negotiating in the Normandy format for seven years, have been booted out. Olaf Scholz's initiative in a telephone call with Putin on 21 December to revive the Normandy format ends with negotiations at advisor level. During her inaugural visit to the USA on 5 January, the new Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock demands that *there should be "no decision on security in Europe without Europe"*.¹⁷¹

7 February: French President Macron arrives in Russia for talks.

14 February: Federal Chancellor Scholz arrives in Kiev. He obtains a commitment from Zelenskyi to adopt three of the laws laid down in the failed Minsk II agreement of 12 February 2015. This is not just an admission that Kiev sabotaged the Minsk II agreement from the outset, and no one doubts that it will never honour this commitment either. With this humiliating result, Scholz wants to get the Normandy talks back on track in Moscow - what a joke of a story.

19 February: At the Munich Security Conference, Ukrainian President Zelensky calls for nuclear weapons for his country, possibly the last straw for the Russian attack that begins five days later.¹⁷²

21 February: Russia recognises the constituent republics of Donetsk and Lugansk as independent states.

¹⁷⁰ Op. cit. p. 46f.

¹⁷¹ Op. cit. S. 49

¹⁷² Projanski, in *junge Welt* 19/20 March 2022, p. 13

22 February: Federal Chancellor Scholz halts the certification process for Nord Stream 2 due to Russia's recognition of the Donetsk and Lugansk Republics. Commissioning is halted for the time being.

In a speech to the UN, the Russian UN ambassador points out that tens of thousands have fled to Russia from the Luhansk and Donetsk regions - 96,000 of them on Wednesday 16 February alone. This makes it clear how badly the Kiev government is treating the people there.¹⁷³

The OSCE reports more than 1,000 detonations of heavy artillery within 24 hours in Donetsk and Luhansk. Both Kiev and Donetsk and Luhansk are reporting dead and wounded in the area.³⁰

The government in Kiev declares a 30-day state of emergency. Parliament approves a bill at first reading that allows Ukrainians to carry firearms and act in self-defence. Prior to this, President Zelensky ordered the mobilisation of around 250,000 reservists - in addition to the 200,000 regular soldiers.¹⁷⁴

US President Joe Biden rules out the possibility of US troops fighting in Ukraine. At the same time, he mobilises the 82nd Airborne Division and moves it to Ukraine's western border.¹⁷⁵

New EU sanctions against Russia put 351 members of the Russian parliament who voted in favour of recognising Luhansk and Donetsk on the sanctions list. In addition, 27 other individuals and organisations have been sanctioned. In addition, the Russian state's access to EU financial markets is to be restricted and EU trade with the breakaway regions is to be limited. The sanctions come into force immediately.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ <https://www.br.de/nachrichten/deutschland-welt/ereignisse-im-russland-ukraine-krieg-im-rueckblick,SxWdozS>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.jungewelt.de/artikel/421357.ukraine-konflikt-donbass-unter-beschuss.html>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/meinung/usa-joe-biden-praesident-krieg-ukraine-sanktionen-1.5535728>

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.dw.com/de/sanktionen-des-westens-gegen-russland-treten-in-kraft/a-60881205>

24 February: The Russian army attacks Ukraine. The government in Kiev declares a state of war.

1 March: In the Bankenbrief, the organ of the German Banking Association, its chairman, Christian Sewing, who also heads Deutsche Bank, hastens to emphasise: *"German banks have greatly reduced their exposure to Russia since 2014."*¹⁷⁷

9 April: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson arrives in Kiev. In public talks with Zelenskyi, he promises to supply modern weapons worth 120 million euros. The secret part of the conversation concerns the establishment of an anti-EU alliance and only becomes known in May through an indiscretion:

May: The Italian daily newspaper Corriere della Sera reports that Johnson is proposing the establishment of a "European Commonwealth". While the news is picked up in some Austrian reports, not a single word in the major German media, only the internet portal Telepolis reports and comments on the British interest in *"establishing a UK-Poland-Ukraine axis [...] to weaken the EU, which is also likely to be in the interests of the USA"*.¹⁷⁸

14 June: The German media also completely ignore what the US Permanent Representative to NATO Julianne Smith said at a meeting in Brussels when asked *"how the United States would react if London were to succeed in realising this idea of a 'European Commonwealth'"*. She replied: *"Of course we support initiatives that contribute to capacity building. And when NATO members come together in partnerships or groups to build capacity and strengthen the Alliance together, that is something we want to support."*¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ <https://bankenverband.de/content-paket/bankenbrief-ausgabe-2022-40/>

¹⁷⁸ https://www.corriere.it/economia/finanza/22_maggio_26/piano-segreto-boris-johnson-dividere-l-u-craina-russia-ue-commonwealth/europeo-02d3b232-dc6b-11ec-b480-f783b433fe60.shtml <https://www.tele-trader.com/bericht-johnson-unterbreitete-selenskyj-die-shdee-eines-neue/news/details/57955786>

<https://exxpress.at/boris-johnson-bastelt-heimlich-an-einer-anti-eu-auch-mit-der-ukraine/>
<https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Boris-Johnson-und-die-Anti-EU-Achse-UK-Polen-Baltikum-und-4-Ukraine-7126088.html>

¹⁷⁹ <https://test.rtde.tech/international/141220-usa-wurden-idee-weiteren-europaischen/>

17 June: Boris Johnson makes a surprise appearance in Kiev, where the heads of state and government of Germany, France, Italy and Romania endorse Ukraine's accession to the EU. The German media trivialise suspicions about what the surprise visit might be about, possibly differences over the scope of arms deliveries. Only the newspaper "Die Welt" suspects that it could have something to do with Scholz's visit.¹⁸⁰

End of 2022: The land-based US missile defence system Aegis-Ashore is to go into operation in Poland. It can be equipped with all types of missiles, surface-to-air interceptor missiles and surface-to-surface medium-range missiles with a range of 1,650 km. A slightly older version of the system has been in operation in Romania near the town of Craiova since 2013. The distance Craiova-Moscow is 2,000 km. The distance of the new Polish site slightly west of Gdansk is 1,500 km. Moscow is within the range of this system.

Since 2013, Moscow has been protesting against the stationing of this facility in Romania and its construction in Poland, proving that the claim that they are defensive weapons is false. Moscow naturally recognises the connection when, on 7 February 2019, the Kiev parliament includes the country's accession to NATO in the constitution and, on 2 August 2019, Washington terminates the INF Treaty, which has been in force since 1988 and stipulates the destruction of all ground/land-based missiles with a range of 500-5,500 km. Deploying the Aegis Ashore systems in Ukraine would halve the distance between the missiles and Moscow to 730 km compared to the Polish site. Moscow could be destroyed within 10 minutes and Russia would be largely unable to defend itself.

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Imprint

Date of Publication: German Version: July 2022.

Englisch Version: October 2024.

Publisher: CC of the KPD

ISSN 1433-6375

Translation: From the German by the International Commission at the

CC of the KPD

Production: In-house printing

Own publishing house and distribution “Wilhelm Pieck”

Franz-Mehring-Platz 1, 10243 Berlin

www.k-p-d.org