

Current Concerns

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“I would really like to see Europe demonstrate some real independence and sovereignty”

*Interview with the Russian Resident Vladimir Putin, conducted by Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS)**



Vladimir Putin
(picture reuters)

Vladimir Putin gave an interview to Swiss media. The interview was recorded on 25 July in St Petersburg, during the President's visit to the preliminary round draw for the 2018 Football World Cup.



View on Saint Petersburg. (picture reuters)

Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS): Good evening, Mr President. Thank you very much for making the time for this interview.

Vladimir Putin (in French): Bonsoir.

We are currently in the city of St Petersburg, where the draw ceremony is underway for the 2018 Football World Cup, which will be held in the Russian Federation, and to which you are devoting so much energy.

Yes, this is true. Congratulations to all of us.

I can honestly tell you, and there is nothing new: we do not have any special ambitions in this upcoming championship, although we certainly expect a good performance from our team.

Our goal in holding this competition fell in line with FIFA's goals – namely, broadening football's geography. I won't even mention that Russia is a very large nation – the biggest in the world in terms of territory, and the largest in Europe in terms of population.

In addition to everything else, we have a visa-free regime – free movement – with most of the former Soviet republics, which are now independent states. And naturally, this event will be important not only for Russia but our closest neighbours as well.

You are friends with Mr Blatter; you supported him.

You know, we barely knew one another before we began the process of our bid, our fight for the 2018 World Cup. During this joint work, we had many meet-

ings with representatives of the FIFA executive committee, with the commissions that came to our nation, and we met with Mr Blatter himself. We developed very good business relations and good personal relations.

As for these criminal proceedings, which are currently underway in Switzerland, do you feel that the United States is involved in any way?

As far as I know, the United States was bidding to hold the 2022 World Cup in their nation.

You think they took revenge?

I have not finished my sentence... And their closest ally in Europe, the United Kingdom, was bidding to host it in 2018. And the way the fight against corruption is playing out causes me to wonder whether this is a continuation of the battle for 2018 and 2022.

After all, nobody is against fighting corruption; everyone is for it. And I feel that we should fight even harder. But there are certain international legal norms stating that if somebody suspects a crime committed by anybody, certain data are collected and given to the prosecutor general's office in the state of which the suspect is a citizen. But this [fighting corruption] is not related in any

way to the fact that one nation – big or small – travels throughout the world, grabs anyone it wants and takes them to their prison. In my view, that is unacceptable.

I repeat, this does not mean we shouldn't fight corruption.

Mr President, a fairly important question for you and for the United States of America. Do you think these actions, which are now being taken within the FIFA framework, are a return to a kind of imperialist policy by the United States?

A return? They have been conducting an imperialist policy for a long time; this is simply reinforcing that state. I have already stated this many times publicly – and not just me, but political analysts within the United States, who also speak of exactly this, and in these exact words. These American experts in foreign and domestic policy feel that this imperialist bent is detrimental to the US itself.

This position is not related in any way to anti-Americanism; we have a great deal of respect and love for the United States, and especially for the American people. I feel that these are simply unilateral actions and the expansion of jurisdiction by one

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nation beyond the territory of its borders, to the rest of the world, is unacceptable and destructive for international relations.

Western nations' opinions about you are divided. As you know, some are delighted by you while others condemn you. When you once again spoke of your nuclear arsenal, many began to talk about the threat from your side.

This is done by dishonest and inattentive people. The process of starting a new arms race began from the moment of the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the ballistic missile defence treaty. Because this agreement was a cornerstone for the entire international security system. And when the United States withdrew from it and began to create a missile defence system as part of its global strategic weapons system, we immediately said: we will be obligated to take reciprocal steps to maintain a strategic balance of power.

I want to say something very important: we are doing this for ourselves, to ensure the security of the Russian Federation, but we are also doing it for the rest of the world, because this strategic stability ensures the balance of power.

We are currently in St Petersburg, a city that suffered a great deal in the war. As far as I understand, your grandfather and grandmother lived through...

My mother and father. My brother, whom I never met, died here during the blockade.

Is another war possible in Europe today?

I hope not. But I would really like to see Europe demonstrate some real independence and sovereignty and be capable of defending its national interests, the interests of its people and its nations.

I want to come back to the previous question. A strategic balance allowed peace throughout the planet and prevented major military conflicts in Europe and throughout the world. And when the United States withdrew from that agreement, they said, we are creating a missile defence system that is not against you, and you want to develop a strike force; do what you want, we will assume it is not against us.

And we are doing exactly what we had stated long ago. The global missile defence system is expensive and it is still unclear how effective it is. And we are developing strike systems capable of overcoming any missile defence system. And what I announced just recently has been in our plans for several years, and was publicly announced long before.

You said that you would like Europe to be more independent. For example, as far as France is concerned, during de Gaulle and Mitterrand's times. How do you currently feel about what is happening there?

I still need to finish the previous question.

All our strategic defence actions correspond fully to Russia's international obligations, including within the framework of the agreement with the United States on strategic arms.

Now, regarding sovereignty. Participation in any military and political organisation or bloc is associated with the voluntary renunciation of a certain share of one's sovereignty.

I think that at the time, France withdrew from NATO to preserve its sovereignty more than it is possible within the framework of a military bloc. It is not our business to analyse European nations' foreign policy. But I think you'll agree that if we need to discuss intra-European affairs with European partners in Washington, it is not very interesting.

Mr President, right now, we are observing a rather ironic turn in history. Currently, we are seeing you garner more support among right-wing and even extreme right parties in European nations than left-wing parties; for example, Marine Le Pen in France and the UDC in Switzerland. What do you think about this?

I think that this is not so much support for me as the realisation of national interests as the political parties see them.

There are certain tectonic changes underway throughout the world and in Europe within the public consciousness, which are aimed at defending national interests. You must understand that right now, Europe is facing a specific problem, an influx of immigrants. And did Europe make the decision that ultimately led to this situation? We need to be sincere and honest: these decisions were made across the ocean, but Europe must deal with the problem.

You mean the United States.

Of course. This is just one example, but there are many. But this does not mean – and I already said this – that we should somehow demonise US policy; that is not my goal. They are conducting their policy as they see necessary in their interests.

We must strive to find a balance of interests; we need to invigorate our work, give new momentum to the work by the UN Security Council. The US is certainly a great power and the American people created this nation over several centuries, it is simply an amazing result. But that does not mean that today's US authorities have the right to travel throughout the world and grab anyone to drag back to

their prison or act from a position of "anyone who is not with us is against us."

We need to be patient and work with our American colleagues to find solutions, the way we have in some areas of our cooperation, such as with the Iranian nuclear issue.

[...][Fragmentary] of the people who are combatting Islamism. Do you think Europeans are on your side on this issue?

Vladimir Putin: You know, when we were only beginning this struggle and came across problems in the Caucasus, I was amazed to see that even though we had proof that we were dealing with a terrorist threat, that we were fighting Al Qaeda representatives, we had no support. When I asked my colleagues, including those in Europe "Don't you see what is going on?" they said they did see, but could not support us 'due to certain circumstances, including internal policy and international ones'. Then, I would say "Fine, if you cannot support us – don't, but at least do not stand in our way."

Now I see that the situation has changed. Europe and the United States have come to see the real danger of the extreme manifestations of radicalism and have joined this struggle. We here say "better late than never". However, we have strong hope that not only in this direction, but also on other matters – on regulating the situation in Ukraine and on economic matters – we will maintain a dialogue and achieve mutually acceptable solutions.

I believe we have covered all the questions dealing with FIFA.

The last one, Mr President. We spoke of Mr Blatter at this point on purpose. As for Angela Merkel, she is one of your colleagues with whom you frequently communicate. She speaks German, so do you communicate in German?

Yes, we usually speak German.

As for Mr Blatter, you know, I would like to end with this, since this was what we started with. We all know the situation that has developed around Mr Blatter. I would not like to go into detail, though I do not believe a single word about corruption regarding him personally.

I believe that people like Mr Blatter, such heads of major international sports federations deserve special attention and gratitude from public organisations. If anyone should be awarded Nobel prizes, it is these people, because it is they who improve cooperation between nations and make an enormous humanitarian contribution to the development of good neighbourly relations between people and states.

Obama should release MH-17 intel

Memorandum for the President

by Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)

A year ago, the U.S. government issued a sketchy report on the Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 shoot-down citing “social media” and other flimsy data implicating eastern Ukrainian rebels and Russia, but then – as hard intelligence became available – went silent. Now, U.S. intelligence veterans are demanding release of that intel.

It has been a year since the shoot-down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine, resulting in the death of 298 passengers and crew. The initial response by the U.S. government supported the contention that the likely perpetrators were anti-government forces in southeastern Ukraine (the customary media misnomer for them is “separatists”), and that they were possibly aided directly by Moscow.

On July 29, 2014, we Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) suggested that the United States government report publicly what intelligence it actually had relating to the shoot-down lest the incident turn into another paroxysm of blaming Russia without cause. We are still waiting for that report.

Tensions between the United States and Russia over Ukraine are fast reaching a danger point. A major contributing factor in the American public’s negative perception of Moscow is last year’s downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.

A public report detailing the investigation of the incident by the Dutch Safety authorities is expected by October but the draft is reportedly already in the hands of the United States government. There is speculation that the report will dovetail with media and leaked government sources that have placed primary blame on the ethnic Russian Ukrainians in southeastern

Ukraine opposed to the government put in place after the Western-engineered coup of Feb. 22, 2014, in Kiev.

As the relationship with Moscow is of critical importance, if only because Russia has the military might to destroy the US, careful calibration of the relationship is essential. If the United States signs on to a conclusion that implicates Russia without any solid intelligence to support that contention it will further damage an already fractious bilateral relationship, almost certainly unnecessarily. It is our opinion that a proper investigation of the downing would involve exploring every possibility to determine how the evidence holds up.

Currently, the only thing the American public and worldwide audiences know for sure is that the plane was shot down. But the shoot-down might have been accidental, carried out by any one of a number of parties. Or it might have been orchestrated by anti-government forces, with Moscow either conniving in some way in that action or not. It is also possible that the downing was deliberately carried out by the Kiev government or one of Ukraine’s powerful oligarchs to implicate the anti-Kiev forces and Russia in this mass murder. And finally, though less likely, it might even be that based on the available intelligence it is impossible to determine who did it.

In light of the high stakes involved both in terms of our extremely important relationship with Russia as well as in establishing a trustworthy narrative that does credit to the White House, the failure of the Administration to issue a coordinated intelligence assessment summarizing what evidence exists to determine who was responsible is therefore puzzling. If the United States government knows who carried out the attack on the plane it should

produce the evidence. If it does not know, it should say so.

In what follows, we former intelligence professionals with a cumulative total of some 360 years in various parts of U.S. intelligence provide our perspective on the issue and request for a second time that the intelligence over the downing be made public to counter the fuzzy and flimsy evidence that has over the past year been served up – some of it based on “social media.”

The Russian dimension

It would not be the first time for a tragic incident to be exploited for propaganda reasons with potentially grave consequences. We refer to the behavior of the Reagan administration in the immediate aftermath of the shoot-down of Korean Airlines Flight 007 over Siberia on August 30, 1983.

Hours after the tragic shoot-down on August 30, 1983, the Reagan administration used its very accomplished propaganda machine to manage a narrative emphasizing Soviet culpability for deliberately killing all 269 people aboard KAL-007 in full knowledge that it was a civilian airliner. In reality, the airliner had been shot down after it strayed hundreds of miles off course and penetrated Russia’s airspace over sensitive military facilities in Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island. The Soviet pilot tried to signal the plane to land, but the KAL pilots did not respond to the repeated warnings. Amid confusion about the plane’s identity – a U.S. spy plane had been in the vicinity hours earlier – Soviet ground control ordered the pilot to fire.

The Soviets soon realized they had made a horrendous mistake. U.S. intel-

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The last question, Mr President. The last question I would like to ask. In Europe you are now being portrayed as the new Stalin, some people present you as an imperialist. Some love you, of course, and appreciate you, but others present you in this particular way. There are even those who say that after all these years that you have been in power, you have gone mad. What would you respond to these people? After our interview, do you think I am mad?

You are smiling, despite all the prejudice.

This is part of political struggle; it has been part of my life for quite a number of years. I try not to pay too much attention to it. I simply do what I think is necessary in the interests of my country and my people.

It is not in Russia’s interests to be in confrontation with other countries, but sometimes we are forced to protect our interests, and we will undoubtedly continue to do so. However, we will seek solution not in confrontation, particularly military confrontation, but in finding compromise and mutually acceptable solutions.

With your help I would like to address not those who criticise me, but those who

support me. I would like to thank them for their support and tell them that we will continue moving ahead together. Primarily I am referring not even to those who paint my portraits, but to those who sympathise with what we are doing and agree with it deep inside.

Merci beaucoup (in French). •

* The interview was conducted by *Darius Roché* of Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS). The questions were asked in French, the President replied in Russian. The video in French language can be found at: www.rts.ch/info/monde/6967351-vladimir-poutine-l-europe-devrait-se-montrer-plus-independante-des-usa.html

"Obama should release ..."

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ligence also knew from sensitive intercepts that the tragedy had resulted from a blunder, not from a willful act of murder (much as on July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes shot down an Iranian civilian airliner over the Persian Gulf, killing 290 people, an act which President Ronald Reagan dismissively explained as an "understandable accident").

The story of KAL-007 should come to mind when considering the fate of MH-17. There might be legitimate reasons for opposing the increasingly authoritarian government of President *Vladimir Putin*, but exploiting a tragedy does not equate to constructive statecraft for dealing with an adversary.

At a minimum, the White House and State Department one year ago displayed unseemly haste in deciding to be first out of the starting gate with a narrative implicating Russia, at least indirectly – a narrative that may not be based on fact. That twelve months have passed and there has been no effort made to either correct or amplify the record is unacceptable.

Someone is lying

Both Russia and Ukraine deny any active role in the MH-17 shoot down. So do the anti-coup forces in southeastern Ukraine. Someone knows something and is lying to conceal a role in the incident. From the U.S. perspective what happened needs to be clarified and become a matter of public record. No other nation has the resources that the U.S. had to come up with an evidence-based answer; and intelligence collection and analysis are the tools that must be used. The information released to date does not bear close scrutiny; it does not permit an informed judgment as to who is lying about the shoot-down of Flight 17.

One year ago today, National Intelligence Director *James Clapper* authorized a background briefing including some sketchy talking points in a very short "Government Assessment" for selected mainstream journalists. It was just five days after the shoot-down and two days after Secretary of State *Kerry* pointed the finger of blame at anti-coup Ukrainians and Russia. Understandably, corroboration was being sought.

Like *Kerry's* presentations on the Sunday talk shows of July 20, 2014, however, much of the "Government Assessment" was derived from postings on "social media." The July 22, 2014 briefing ad-

dressed, inconclusively, the key issue of who fired the Buk anti-aircraft missile widely believed to have downed the airliner on July 17, 2014.

No update to that five-day-after "Government Assessment" has been provided over the past year. Are we asked to believe that one year later the intelligence community still cannot adduce evidence that goes beyond insinuation regarding the Buk missile?

The July 22, 2014 briefing also suggested that the missile might have been fired by a Ukrainian "defector." Has there been no clarification on that point? It is, frankly, very hard for us to believe that the U.S. intelligence community has been unable to expand its understanding of these key issues over the past year.

To be sure, there has long been a tendency in Washington to "fix the intelligence around the policy," to quote the Downing Street memo relating to the inglorious start of the Iraq War. More recently, we note the claim repeatedly made by Secretary of State *John Kerry* on August 30, 2013, that "we know" the regime of *Bashar al-Assad* was responsible for the chemical incidents near Damascus nine days before.

In that case, *Kerry* also cited a "Government Assessment" to support his charges. We saw the introduction of this unique genre of "assessment," instead of the normally required "Intelligence Assessment," as evidence that honest intelligence analysts were refusing to go along with the preferred narrative. In fact, *Kerry's* accusations turned out to have been based on false and even fabricated intelligence provided by opponents of the Syrian government.

Choosing to reveal the truth

If the White House has concrete, probative intelligence regarding MH-17, we strongly suggest that the time is right to approve it for release before the "blame Russia" narrative becomes completely dominant. The American people are perfectly capable of judging for themselves what took place but they need to have all the information presented without bias and without any attempt to evade unpleasant conclusions. And it should be done even given the risk of compromising "sources and methods," as the broader issue of war or peace with Russia is something that should be of paramount concern to every American.

What is needed is an Interagency Intelligence Assessment – the mechanism used in the past to present significant findings. We are hearing indirectly

from some of our former colleagues that the draft Dutch report contradicts some of the real intelligence that has been collected. Resorting to another "Government (not Intelligence) Assessment" to sidestep the accountability issue is not appropriate and is itself an insult to the integrity and professionalism of the intelligence community.

Mr. President, we believe you need to seek out honest intelligence analysts now and hear them out, particularly if they are challenging or even opposing the prevailing groupthink narrative. They might well convince you to take steps to deal more forthrightly with the shoot-down of MH-17 and minimize the risk that relations with Russia might degenerate into a replay of the Cold War with the threat of escalation into thermonuclear conflict. In all candor, we suspect that at least some of your advisers fail to appreciate the enormity of that danger.

The courtesy of a reply is requested.

For the Steering Group, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity

William Binney, former Technical Director, World Geopolitical & Military Analysis, NSA; co-founder, SIGINT Automation Research Center (ret.)

Thomas Drake, former Senior Executive, National Security Agency

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Karen Kwiatkowski, former Lt. Col., US Air Force (ret.), at Office of Secretary of Defense watching the manufacture of lies on Iraq, 2001-2003

Edward Loomis, NSA, Cryptologic Computer Scientist (ret.)

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Ann Wright, Col., US Army (ret.); Foreign Service Officer (resigned)

¹ The original English text evidently refers to the flight departure time in New York respectively to the local time.

Documentation

Crash of Malaysia Airlines MH-17 – Statement of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

cc. In a vote of the Security Council on 29 July 2015, the representative of the Russian Federation, Vitaly Churkin, rejected to commission an International Criminal Court with investigations about the crash of the flight MH-17 of the Malaysia Airlines via Ukraine. In most Western media this voting behaviour was sharply criticised without putting forward the arguments of the Russian government appropriately. For information we are therefore documenting our readers with a statement by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, which illustrates the position of the Russian government. The keypoints were already published some days before 29 July by different embassies of the Russian Federation.

We express our deepest condolences to the relatives of all 283 passengers and 15 crew members – victims of this dreadful tragedy.

- We condemn the destruction of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 by unidentified individuals and confirm our position in favor of the inevitability of punishment for having committed this criminal act once the investigation is completed.
- We consider the issue of establishing an international tribunal concerning the MH-17 catastrophe to be premature and counterproductive. We are convinced that UNSC Resolution 2166 remains the only basis – acceptable to all – for international cooperation in the interests of an independent and transparent investigation of downing the Malaysian airliner. We call for a return to the legal framework of this Resolution and for the full implementation of the investigation mechanisms provided for in this document.
- Russia is interested in a thorough and objective international investigation of the catastrophe of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. We do not see this happening at the moment. This is due in part to the fact that Russia has been barred from any substantive participation in the investigation (the involvement of the Russian representative has been purely nominal and has not resulted in his opinion, and the data presented by Russia, being taken into account). Russia has been intentionally excluded from required objective standards of “transparency” by those who conducted the investigation – for example, Russian specialists were essentially denied full and equitable access to the materials which were in the possession of the Joint Investigation Team. The Ukrainian side has refused, up to this moment, to make public the recording of the air-traffic controllers radio exchange with the pilots of Flight MH-17.
- Russia has been insisting on making the investigation transparent to the fullest possible degree, first of all, with respect to the UN Security Council. We have proposed discussing the course of the investigation in the Council, so as to find answers to the most obvious questions (a list of such questions was distributed by Russia to the Council in 2014). There has been no reaction to these proposals from members of the Council.
- We are forced to conclude that UNSC Resolution 2166, which set out clear and professionally founded requirements for investigating the MH-17 catastrophe, has not been implemented.
- There are many serious questions concerning the organization and conduct of the investigation. Russia’s numerous calls for making use of the UN Security Council to monitor the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2166 have been consistently ignored. The investigation is being conducted without due observance of international aviation standards and without recognition of the key role of ICAO in such matters.
- We are surprised by the fact that the members of the Joint Investigation Team have not undertaken preparatory work on the basis of UNSC Resolution 2166 and have not discussed with the Council their plan of further actions. Instead, they have tabled a far-reaching draft resolution under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. UNSC Resolution 2166 does not qualify the downing of the plane as a threat to international peace and security. The tragedy, though horrifying and tragic, was an isolated act of a criminal nature. Thus a trial could be organized on the basis of either national, international or mixed law. In any case, this matter does not fall within the Security Council’s purview.
- Russia is surprised by the proposal of adopting – literally within a number of days – such a fundamental decision, without even discussing any other possible options.
- Despite the provisions of UNSC Resolution 2166, the UN Secretary-General has not identified and submitted to the Council possible options for United Nations support to the investigation.
- Since the day of the disaster we have been witnessing a powerful information attack on our country in international media and fora (including the UNSC). It has been groundlessly claimed that Russia or “separatists controlled by Russia” were responsible for the downing of Flight MH-17. Such irresponsible and unproven statements are being issued up to this moment. Their aim is to negatively influence the media background surrounding the investigation. We consider such statements and unfounded accusations as an attempt to dissimulate the true facts concerning the catastrophe and to cover up the identities of the true perpetrators of the crime.
- UNSC practice shows that the mere principle of establishing international judicial mechanisms by a decision of the Council has become a subject of serious and robust criticism by many countries and the international legal expert community. The practice of the existing international tribunals – the ICTY (former Yugoslavia) and ICTR (Rwanda) – confirm the validity of such skepticism. The activities of these two judicial organs are costly, inefficient and slow. Their decisions are highly politicized. They have not been able to finish their work – for over two decades – with acceptable results.
- Up to this moment there has been no precedent in creating an international tribunal for bringing to justice those who were accused of perpetrating an act of violence against a civilian airliner: not when a Russian airliner belonging to the Air Company “Sibir” was shot down in 2001 by Ukrainian armed forces over the Black Sea; not when the American Navy destroyed Iran Air Flight IR-655 over the Persian Gulf on July 3rd 1988; not after Pan American Flight PA103 was blown up as a result of a terrorist act over Lockerbie in 1988 or “Cubana de Aviacion” Flight CU-455 – over Barbados in 1976; not after Libyan Arab Airlines Flight LN-114 was shot down as a result of Israeli air force action in 1973. No international tribunals were created in other similar circumstances.
- The haste in pushing the adoption of a resolution and its extended scope of reference seem to indicate that the UN Security Council is being used to find a pretext for using the MH-17 tragedy to organize a “trial” over Russia on the Ukrainian dossier.
- In view of the above Russia will not engage in textual work on the draft resolution on the establishment of an international tribunal or its proposed draft Charter. At the same time we hope that our partners will understand our position and support completion of the investigation in a transparent manner which would provide a solid basis for a subsequent identification of a suitable trial formula.

Source: Statement of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Transfer union instead of Grexit

by Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer



Eberhard Hamer
(picture ma)

Since long, Europe has been in a state of tension between countries and governments on the one hand, which regard the European headquarters as a vicarious agent for Europe's nation states and do not want to give up the European

countries' principle of sovereignty and on the other hand the *Juncker* clique and EU officials in particular who are enforcing a centralisation of sovereignty from Europe to Brussels.

The week-long wrangling between Greece and the other euro countries was not only a haggling about money, but above all a power play: If European countries represented by their national parliaments wanted to and were allowed to spend money sovereignly, they should actually also have their own budgetary re-

sponsibility, and bear the consequences of their budget decisions. The no-bail-out clause of the Lisbon Treaty therefore rightly expected that other European countries had not to be held liable for the spending excesses of another country. Europe therefore needed a bankruptcy order, a regulated process in which individual euro-countries could not just socialise the effect of their own financial recklessness in Europe, but had to bear it on their own.

The Juncker clique on the other hand strives for a centralised political union with central financial sovereignty over the member states (fiscal union). The European Commission therefore intends to seize the financial difficulties of individual European countries such as Greece onto itself and then offer collective European solutions for them – but in reality merely in order to incapacitate the countries financially and gain central financial power over them.

So bailouts and debt funds were available during five years, although they did not help to improve the situation, but instead dramatically increased the debt totals of Greece from 80 to 320 billion euros. And now a third rescue package is under way,

which probably puts at stake more than a 100 billion euro by which the EU Politburo intends to gain control and financial guardianship over Greece.

Behind this are the EU Politburo's lust for power and the pressure by America aiming at keeping Greece in the euro zone at any cost because of NATO. So in future, we will go on to pay money regularly, not in our own interest, but in the interest of the EU central power and the Atlantic occupying power.

What are the consequences of the Greek bailout?

After the Greece-decision of 12 July 2015 by the Eurogroup was accepted by the parliaments,

- Greece has largely lost its financial sovereignty, has set itself financially under the tutelage of EU headquarters,
- the EU headquarter has decisively enforced its claim as the financial central power (fiscal union), this will not happen only in Greece, but in other cases as well it will be regarded as a helping,

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Greece cannot escape the tragedy Euro-Europe increasingly shows the grimace of dictatorship

by Karl Müller

Pro memoria: Only just a month ago, the Euro Group's coup-like politico-economic intervention putting the Greek government and the Greek Parliament under duress, ignored a clear popular vote of the Greeks, that was only a week old. Who is still talking about it today?

Now it comes to money. A lot of money. They speak of a new "auxiliary" – or even "rescue" programme for Greece. Nearly 90 billion euros, for which the taxpayer is liable and which are provided to Greece over a period of 3 years – above all to ensure that Greece can pay back old debts and that Greek banks remain solvent.

The German government and the German policy are displaying a critical attitude. Everything is to be scrutinised before the German Parliament can take the vote. The conditions for the Greek people are terrible. For most Greeks everything will get worse than before: more taxes, less government spending, even less pensions, etc... Economically, Greece cannot recover in that way. The new strains are "overwhelming". Even the former Greek Foreign Minister from the "Nea Dimokratia" party, *Dora Borkayannis*, says so. But these are not the reasons for the German reservations.

After a night-long debate on 14 August, the Greek parliament approved by "a large majority" – as headlines in foreign media claim – but without a majority in the governing parties. The MPs actually had no time to read the more than 400 pages that came to the vote, let alone to study them thoroughly. But that is obviously the current state of parliamentary democracies in EU-Europe. MPs are compelled to say yes, because otherwise disaster looms. "Without any alternative", the German Chancellor called these policies, similar to *Margaret Thatcher* in the 80s of the last century who said about her way towards neoliberal predatory capitalism at that time, "There is no alternative", briefly: TINA.

Using any means, all thoughts are being directed towards the question of money. Really, we should give that huge sum of money? Can the Greeks ever repay that at all? And ... can we trust the Greeks at all? Hardly anyone thinks about the political consequences. And about the poison that is spread ever and again.

On 7 August, the main topic during the Summer Festival of the Hamburg company *Kampnagel** was dedicated to Greece

(<http://www.kampnagel.de/de/programm/this-is-not-greece/>). "This is not Greece" was the English title of the panel discussion. The curator of this panel, *Margaritha Tsoumou*, opened the discussion in English: "The Greek was finally portrayed as lazy and greedy. As a 'swindler', a 'fraudster', 'a dishonest petty criminal'. And also as an undisciplined schoolchild." And then she added, "'This is not Greece!' This is a phantasm. This is a myth. The facts state the opposite! No! This is not Greece!"

Other discutants followed. The German *Harald Schumann*, for example, who has been a journalist for 32 years with multiple awards, and author of the book "The Global Trap: Globalization and the Assault on prosperity and Democracy" said, "I have been a journalist for 32 years. And in 32 years, I never experienced what has happened with Greece. If someone had told me a year ago, that all German quality media – from the *Tageschau* news to the 'FAZ', the 'Süddeutsche' and my own newspaper, the 'Tagesspiegel' – would violate journal-

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"Transfer union instead ..."

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- controlling and financial decision-maker over the euro zone countries,
- the United States have enforced their claim for "NATO unity at any price" at the expense of Europe
 - and has, contrary to the no-bailout clause of the Treaty to Lisbon, established a transfer union between the euro zone countries.

Above all, Italy and France have been interested in the "help" for Greece, as they are facing the same problem and probably soon need euro help as well. They are both politically not strong enough to carry out economic reforms, thus they will automatically slip further into debt, and thus into the auxiliary zone. It is not difficult to predict that the other countries will follow, when it is easier to organise help as domestically enforce reforms – until finally the whole Euro-club will be drowned in debt and will need a general adjustment (currency reform).

Consequences for Germany

The now coming third aid package for Greece will not halt at 86 billion (plus 35 billion restructuring aid plus 15 billion regular Greece subsidy), but will constantly be subsidised further, as a financial compensation. This also happens in Germany, where, for example Bremen refuses steadfastly to reduce its constant deficits, because it is permanently and comfortably supported by the thriftier countries' financial compensation. In the German financial compensation system, two-thirds of recipient countries have comfortably installed themselves in the long run on the help of three donor countries. The same will be the case in the European Union, which has become a transfer union, albeit in more dramatic (debt) sizes.

So the path mapped out by the ECB called "euro-easing", i.e. the uninhibited

"Greece cannot escape ..."

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istic standards over a time of several months – in other words, not even in exceptional cases ... it happens all the time – continuously violate journalistic standards on a topic, I would have said: 'Come on, man, let's not get carried away! We are bad! But we are not that bad!'"

But the mainstream media were so "bad." "Estimated critical colleagues suddenly forgot about their nuanced view of things, had sneaked out and had adopted the German government's view on the crisis one to one", Schumann is cited by *Deutschlandradio Kultur* on 7 August.

Why?

multiplication of the euro as well as the dollar currency in the US becomes compulsory. In both zones saving is no longer wanted, but instead multiplication of money, in other words a money glut.

The US are discussing seriously, "to drown their dollar indebtedness in dollar flood". Likewise, in Europe, *Draghi* and the Euro Politburo aim at keeping the debts up while increasing the money supply.

For Germany this means the end of the hard euro, the weakening and devaluation of our money and going in direction of increasing the money quantity to galloping inflation and finally to currency reform – as it has always been in history when money supply was augmented.

That way Germany will become impoverished. The more it has to pay in transfer, the more the revenues of its own citizen will be deducted for redistribution. In this respect, the alleged aid for Greece marks not only the depletion of Greece, but also of all of Europe and Germany.

What can be done?

After their decision to turn to dollar flooding, the Anglo-Saxon financial oligarchy began to buy up all material assets and companies in the world with their freshly printed dollars. Today again there are increasing business acquisitions by US firms in Germany and Europe, which still want to invest their dollars becoming ever more worthless in company shares.

And China with its \$ 3 trillion dollar-assets buys everything at any price in the world in order to switch from the money with its dwindling value to tangible assets, just in time.

Also with regard to private matters we should recognise that the euro can not remain solid in a transfer union and with a ECB that is busy operating euro-flooding. Therefore he, who is sitting on money values and does not switch into property val-

ues early enough, will lose. Whoever takes his chance to do this first, will gain most. If all do, inflation will accelerate accordingly.

Insofar, the Greek deal from July 2015 has

not freed Greece from debt, nor has it reformed Greece, but only helped it to stay temporarily afloat,

- burdened the European donor countries with new debts for long-term subsidies,
- given the Brussels Commission a growing financial expertise and transfer sovereignty – and has turned Europe into a transfer union
- and maintained NATO united against Russia, at a high price for Europe,

The debt orgy in Greece and Europe will continue, but will be answered by euro-flooding instead by saving. Instead of the due national bankruptcy in Greece, Europe only wants to gain time, but embraces a subsequent total bankruptcy that will occur later.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

For all who are interested

Starting at the end of August 2015, the book, published by *Argyris Sfountouris* in Greece in April, is also available in German in an extended and illustrated edition, entitled:

**"Trauer um Deutschland"
(Mourning Germany)**

More detailed information find here:

https://www.verlag-koenigshausen-neumann.de/product_info.php/info/p8298_Trauer-um-Deutschland-Reden-und-Aufsaeetze-eines-Ueberlebenden-Herausgegeben-von-Gerhard-Oberlin.html/XTCsid/mtlu8r9giq3oqmg8gemmsuoju5

With best wishes and best regards

Argyris Sfountouris, argsf@yahoo.com

as well. And there isn't any God who want that. There are other forces behind. And ... the crash would not be inevitable. Today people can take their destinies into their own hands. However, they must want to. •

* In 1984 the former Hamburg crane factory *Kampnagel* was transformed into a stage complex that can be used for the most diverse events. It now comprises six stages, a cinema, nine rehearsal rooms and a restaurant. *Kampnagel* is Germany's largest free performing and producing facility and one of the most important international platforms for Performing Arts. The events that are held annually include the setting for several weeks of Summer Festival, which has around 150,000 visitors and always includes sociopolitical topics. The international summer festival is sponsored by numerous public institutions and private sponsors. For details visit: www.kampnagel.de

Why the agricultural policy 14–17 is undermining Switzerland's sovereignty

Interview with National Councillor Jakob Büchler CVP (Christian Democratic People's Party/ Canton of St. Gallen)



National Councillor
Jakob Büchler
(picture thk)

Supplying the population with its own domestically produced food is a central aspect of the national supply of provisions and hence of national sovereignty. A nation which is not able to supply its population with

enough food in times of crisis, is dependent on other countries and thus susceptible to blackmail and must undergo compromises in politically serious situations or even take over the policy of a powerful state under certain circumstances. How fast the powerful of this world take unilateral punitive measures against "unpopular states", has become increasingly evident in recent years, the list is long. When a few years ago even Austria was punished with EU sanctions, because the population had voted for the "wrong" party, albeit in a democratic election, it came clearly to the point, how fast the winds can change, even under so-called friendly states.

In addition to an operational defence force, the independent supply of domestically produced food for the population is something for which National Councillor Büchler has campaigned for many years. In the following interview, he expresses himself mainly on the misguided agricultural policy of the Federal Government, the devastating effects which the latter has on the provision for our country and what it would take to ensure that our agriculture contributes to food security.

Current Concerns: The agricultural policy 14–17 (AP 14–17) contains an incredible number of flaws and is – even though the referendum against it has not been achieved – under permanent criticism. What are the points of criticism?

National Councillor Jakob Buechler: With the AP 14–17, the so-called animal contribution payments to cover the costs were abolished. The animal contributions have been very desirable and well introduced among the farmers. They are a contribution from the Federal Office for Agriculture for each farmer. In the department of Johann Schneider Ammann they were no longer con-

sidered up to date, because they argued that animal contributions led to more animals, more animals produced more milk or more meat, and that would finally lead to falling prices. The idea was: If we abolish animal contributions, you can counteract the development towards more animals and meat.

Is that a wrong idea?

Yes, of course. The animal contribution is a measurable amount of money. It was calculated in LU (livestock unit) and thus followed a transparent system.

What is the key here?

A cow is a livestock unit, two oxen are also one livestock unit as well as 7 sheep or 10 goats. You have everything converted into the livestock unit. That was a very good system. For a long time, animal contributions were also paid to the elk farms for their deer. In early 2000 there were demands to pay animal contributions for dairy cows. This was enacted and animal contributions were introduced for dairy cows, as had been done earlier for suckler cows. But agricultural policy 14–17 abolished all that.

Why?

They want to get away from the animal contributions towards landscape quality contributions. However, the Federal Council affirmed that no farmer should receive less direct payment as he did with the old system.

Has the promise been kept?

You have to understand that landscape quality is very difficult to measure. The absurdity is that the Federal Government said that from then on there were landscape quality contributions, but they forgot to define what exactly they meant. There were the orders which the cantons were urged to implement. And there were x different systems for the implementation of landscape quality contributions. There was, for example, a fence of bushes, which was to have a certain value. It has a natural value for birds and all kinds of animals upon and under the earth, and that has to be compensated.

Where is the benefit for the agricultural sector?

Among the animals there are some useful creatures that will earn the farmers some benefit. Maybe he will notice, maybe not. But in terms of direct payments this is obviously not measurable. A number of animals can be counted, but the benefit of

a perennial herbaceous fence or a stone wall or a steep slope, where you could at least measure the area, is very difficult to measure. All that has led precisely to what we have always feared: a huge administrative burden. So-called culture engineers were needed, who then explain the farmers what to do with the perennial fence. It has changed the whole thing to the wrong side, which made the farmers object.

Did the rest of the parliamentarians not realize that such a system does not work?

We tried to prevent the development, but in the Council of States the animal contributions were rejected, and it was a farmers' representative from a large mountainous canton, who spearheaded the campaign, and afterwards there was no longer any possibility to turn things around again.

A referendum would have been possible in this case.

We were unsure whether even more would get lost in case the referendum had been adopted, especially because most farmers had become involved in this development.

Why so?

To a certain extent, this is not surprising, because they have finally been forced to adopt this system. It gets straight down to the income. If there are no more animal contributions, the income will of course decrease, and so the farmers do not hesitate to decide whether to join or not. The farmer is actually forced to join in so that he can maintain his income to some extent. That is the situation.

If parliamentarians fail here, it should be the people's concern.

Yes, in Switzerland we are lucky to have such a system. The popular initiative for food security has met with wide support among the population. The collection of signatures happened very quickly, and we soon had the necessary 150,000 signatures. But it has also shown that the population is becoming increasingly aware of the problem. Food is important, self-supply is important, quality is important, and the best quality there can of course be found in our own country, in terms of milk, cheese or meat. In the cheese business, we have international obligations since there are open borders in the cheese trade. This should not hap-

"Why the agricultural policy ..."

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pen with the milk. There have been repeated efforts to open the so-called white line, the dairy market, which means that foreign milk would also be imported to Switzerland. That would certainly mean the end of our dairy production. Fortunately, the major distributors are also against importing foreign milk, especially because the quality of Swiss milk is not achieved abroad. We have strict requirements on the quality, on all bacterial counts, on the numbers of cells. There are very high thresholds that Swiss milk must meet to make it compatible for cheese production. Other countries never come close to these standards. This is an asset for us. Wholesale distributors like Emmi want no foreign milk. This milk is frequently a mixture of several sources.

Why is this bad for the milk?

The quality of milk is getting worse with each new re-pumping. Milk contains fat. And the fat is present in the form of small beads, which are microscopically small. If you repeatedly pump the milk into a new vessel, these fat globules are violated. Then you can see the blobs of

fat, and that means the destruction of the milk's consistency. Therefore, it does not make sense to transport the milk so far. This is of course a problem in Switzerland. The best cheese is produced where the farmers are also at home. One cannot produce milk in eastern Switzerland and then bring it to Geneva in order to process it into cheese. That makes no sense environmentally.

That should indeed be prevented with AP 14–17, since they put ecology in the focus of attention. But what is the situation really like?

AP 14–17 was decided together with the corresponding payment frame. But now we have been realizing at the last press conference of *Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf*, that she wants to cut contributions to agriculture by 72 million. This means that the farmers have to suffer further losses. They do not even get what they were promised in the act. That is absolutely unfair and cannot be done. This development must be fought by all means, and we will do so. In the army the same is true. We must have the 5 billion if we are to have an approximate security in our country.

What other impact has the present policy?

The farmers have no more planning security, which leads to a lack of investment. We need to give it back to them. The fact that more than 40 percent of the farms have no successor, is frightening. This is of course not surprising. Of course, if a young farmer's daughter or a young farmer's son says that with this kind of agricultural policy they can no longer earn sufficient income, then he or she certainly will not even start to go into farming but choose another profession. That is very sad. If you enter "Swiss farmers are looking for farm succession" into Google you will see what it said there, and that is frightening. It is actually a bad sign when you can no longer pass your farm on to the next generation. The farm succession is not regulated in many farmers' families.

What does the future of agriculture look like? How can it regain the priority it deserves? Without agriculture no food supply in the country and without food no life.

The farmers should be granted greater freedom in terms of production. Producing of agricultural goods has lost in im-

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People's initiative for food sovereignty

Local agriculture is part of the provision with basic food supplies

by Reinhard Koradi

Seen from the viewpoint of state policy as well as security policy, food production in our own country must remain an integral part of our provision with basic food supplies. Therefore it is necessary to consider a fundamental course correction of Swiss agricultural policy.

The consequences of neglecting the provision with basic supplies can be demonstrated very clearly in the context of "food sovereignty". If the public sector cuts back here, the original idea of subsistence security is lost. Income and expenses determine the extent to which the task of securing supplies for the population is carried out and they also determine who is still to have access to supplies and provisions. Unprofitable enterprises are being shut down (structural reassessment) and state beneficiaries are losing their benefit entitlement if the potential benefit is too low in comparison with the cost (rationing). With the current agricultural policy, the Federal Council is undertaking a structural reassessment to which, according to the latest statistics, three farms fall victim daily. The local food producers lose their livelihood and the local population their security of supply. Notably in the case of supply shortages Switzerland

could be trapped in a politically problematic dependence on foreign countries, and when everything is scarce allocation issues could also lead to social unrest.

Agricultural policy in combination with the security of supply can be seen as a model lesson for the "economization of life". As soon as we start to contemplate this process, which is going on in our agricultural policy, with reference to our educational and health policy, our energy and transport policy, etc., we will very soon come to realise that there is an urgent need for action. The next few years could bring one or the other test of stamina to our country. With a little foresight and a secure provision with basic supplies based on individual responsibility and personal contribution these endurance tests might at least be somewhat alleviated.

Since a majority of the members of the executive and the parliamentarians at all levels are in favour of the privatization of basic supplies and since in the field of agrarian economy the will to strengthen self-subsistence by means of local production is still missing, the Swiss electorate is called to action.

The Swiss popular initiative for better "food sovereignty" provides an opportu-

nity for this. This initiative was launched by *Uniterre* (a farmers' organization, mostly active in western Switzerland). *Current Concerns* has already introduced and explained the initiative. The initiators want to retrieve food sovereignty in and for Switzerland. In future, agricultural policy is to ensure that farms be protected (stop closures and create additional jobs in agriculture) and that the domestic production is strengthened. Domestic producers have to be paid a fair price for their products, which will secure their livelihood. One of the initiators' demands is the protection against dumping prices (prices below the production costs). In order to secure the livelihood of agricultural producers it is also necessary that production requirements and quality regulations for imported foodstuff should meet the Swiss requirements. The initiative wants to put a stop to the imminent dependence on foreign countries for our food supply; quite the contrary, it wants to strengthen our supply with regional, high-quality products. •

Signature forms:
www.souverainete-alimentaire.ch/in/de/

No centralised control of education in federalist Switzerland

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

On 16 June 2015 the “House of Academies” was opened by a ceremony in the presence of 50 invited guests. Does this remind you of anything? Seven years ago, on 18 August 2008, the “House of Cantons”¹ had been opened vis-à-vis the Federal Parliament. In both Bernese houses one pursues the same objective: Together with various Federal Offices and the Conference of Cantonal Governments (CCG) one wants to eliminate federalism and direct democracy in order to make our entire lives manageable and controllable – and ultimately EU-compatible.

Let us first look at a current project undertaken by the House of the Academies. Then we present the various players and their closely interwoven network.

The House of Academies’ current project: summer camp “Cinderella”

On July 14, 2015 in the 12 o’clock news there was a report about a summer camp for girls in Engelberg. The Foundation Science et Cité organises such camps, in order to “get children interested in natural sciences and humanities”, said Radio SRF.

Great idea, you think, finally something is done to ensure that more children and young people are interested in the MINT professions (mathematics, computer science, natural science and technology),

“Why the agricultural policy ...”

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portance at the expense of ecology. This is bad. We cannot eat the beautiful countryside. It may be beautiful to look at, but we need food, we need cheese, milk, meat, salad and everything agriculture produces to feed the people. Of course it is good if you also respect ecology, but it should not be allowed that it goes as far as pushing the other objects into the background.

Isn’t the food security initiative that you mentioned of great importance here?

Yes, of course. I hope that the initiative for food security will take us back to producing on farms, increasing the value of the products again and bringing this whole issue closer to the citizens so that our agriculture and our country will have a future.

Mr National Councillor Buehler, thank you very much for the interview.

(Interview Thomas Kaiser)

which are so much required by the Swiss business location.

Now, in Engelberg 29 girls aged 7 to 17, spent a whole week producing bath balls, lip balm, beauty beads and peeling (skin care products), “matching the camp motto: ‘Cinderella’, the fairy tale of Cinderella preparing for her life as a princess. With the help of Cinderella the girls [...] are to get involved into the world of big science.”

Well, what out of the world of big science does stay with them? Statements of the girls: “I like to knead and so, because actually I like baking, and that indeed includes the kneading, so I think it’s cool.” – “I liked the trip, and the walking.” – “It’s funny and all, but I would rather prefer reading to walking.” – “The cool thing is that you get to know new girls.” – “The whole camp is really cool, because you can mostly take home what you have produced here, you have learned a lot here and you can make a lot of experiments.”. In short: The camp was cool. (Source: Radio SRF, “Rendez-vous am Mittag” (Rendez-vous at noon), 21.7.2015)

A lesson in constructivism

The question, how Switzerland as a business location will come to more MINT-professionals following such youth camps, is of greatest interest. In other words: How was the camp used in order to make the young participants – or at least part of them – familiar with the different training routes to MINT professions such as chemist or chemical laboratory assistant? How were further contact and further support in selecting their career offered to those girls, who had “taken the bait”?

Now: None of that did take place, since adults entering into real relationship with the kids do not match the view of the constructivist ideology. The project manager: “The goal is to stimulate interest and so to open this door. The child then decides whether to go through that door or not.” In reality, a child is not able to make such a decision without the adult taking it by the hand and setting off on the way through the door together with him or her. Only that would be the way to help the young girls to take the adults’ interest and delight in natural sciences as a model, and only by acquiring some specialised basic knowledge they would be able to get an insight into the field of chemistry, for example. Then some of them would remember this encouraging experience, whether later or even at once, – because some of the camp participants are indeed 17 years

old! – so it is about the question of vocational choice. The project leader explicitly rejects this kind of expectations: “It is not about recruiting the next natural scientists here. The idea is to show this world somehow, and to give an insight into this world as otherwise they do not have the opportunity to get it in their lives.” (Radio SRF, 21.7.2015)

Giving the children an insight into a Cinderella wonderland and then sending them back home – that is indeed very discouraging! Will they in their later jobs belong to those 80 per cent, who are allowed to fill lip balm into jars?

In any case, the hope of Science et Cité that the participants of the summer camp “by means of Cinderella will come closer to science in a playful way,” is not going to be fulfilled – not on the basis of constructivism – not by means of Curriculum 21.

The crux of the educational sovereignty of the cantons: The Federal Council brings the academies into play

Three years ago, in a parliamentary motion, a National Councillor demanded, the Federal Council should draw up a support programme for the MINT areas at schools. In its reply, the Federal Council stated “that the decisive phase of life for a decision for or against MINT is between the first years of life and 15 years of age, ie in the area of compulsory education. These educational institutions, however, are in the jurisdiction of the cantons. The Federal Government has no competence to act there.”²

But instead of respecting the educational sovereignty of the cantons, the Federal Council provided themselves with an indirect empowerment to act, an intervention surreptitiously: Admittedly, it abstains “from launching an additional programme for the MINT promotion at schools. However, it aims at better coordinating the many existing individual projects and then at closing potential gaps. The academies, which will obtain a coordination role for the MINT range” shall take over this task [...] ³

All right? Since there is no constitutional basis for the intervention of the Federal Government in the area of the elementary school, the Federal Council installed an outpost, a player outside the federal administration. We already know this approach from other sectors, for example health care.

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"No centralised control ..."

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Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences

The Foundation Science et Cité (SEC)⁴, which carried out the Cinderella summer camps, is one of the organisations that reside at Laupenstrasse in Berne in the House of Academies, together with the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT), the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW), the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS) and the umbrella organisation Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences and the Centre for Technology Assessment (TA-SWISS).

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (a +) are a think tank, which is juridically organised as an association in accordance to Art. 60ff of the Civil Code (CC), but in accordance with its statutes (latest version dated 8 May 2015) it reaches far beyond the usual activities of an association under private law. A powerful network with great influence: a "group organised in about 160 specialised societies, about one hundred permanent committees and 29 cantonal societies, altogether an estimated amount of 100,000 persons"⁵, all of them controlled and monitored by the headquarters in the House of Academies.

And: The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences are neither financially nor in terms of their mandate independent of the Federal Government, as becomes obvious by its statutes.⁶

**Comment on the statutes
of the Swiss Academies of
Arts and Sciences (a +)**

1. Claim to represent the sole truth (infallibility)

The "idea to redesign the relations between the sciences and society as a whole and to assign a central function to the four academies in this field" arose, by its own account, "because in times of growing scientific skepticism *the sciences as a whole need a consistent representation*".⁷ [Emphasis *Current Concerns*]

This statement alone is a monstrosity! Since the modern age it is well-known that the claim of any scientist or any organisation to represent the sole truth would mean the end of all science! Once again the globalised world shows its merciless grimace of dictatorship and lack of freedom.

2. Federal Council and Cantonal Governments violate civil rights and liberties of citizens

If it were just about the expression of opinion of an association in private, it would be to the academies' discretion to convey their biased views concerning issues related to social and science policy to the so-

ciety. (Art. 4 par. 1) And they could also declare what topics they considered as "socially relevant" and how they intended to define "ethically justified responsibility" (Art. 5). But a + is not an association like a football club or a brass orchestra:

Because the association of academies

- "is in its cooperation closely connected with science-funding authorities and institutions" (Art. 4 par. 4), with different offices and directorates of the federal administration and with the Conferences of Cantonal Governments.
- is largely funded with our tax money (Art. 22; we would very be interested to know, which "third parties" besides the Federal Government are sponsoring this think tank).

By incorporating the biased perspective of the academies in their administrative and legislative work, such as consultation responses (Art. 16a), by presenting the statements of the academies, inter alia with phrases like: the science, the scientists, the experts are of the opinion..., the federal administration and the Conferences of Cantonal Governments violate a whole bunch of personal rights of all other scientifically active people in Switzerland, – of all those citizens, who prefer to have other scientific views different from those of the academies – as well as the political rights of the voters:

- Art. 20 of the Constitution, guarantee of the freedom of scientific teaching and research
- Art. 8 of the Constitution, commandment of equal rights and ban on discrimination
- Art. 9 of the Constitution, protection against arbitrariness
- Art. 16 of the Constitution, freedom of expression and freedom of information
- Art. 34, par. 2, protection of free formation of will (as part of political rights)

We as citizens are called up to require compliance to fundamental rights by the Executive in the Federal Government and the Cantons!

3. In particular: controlling the scientific actors and shaping of public opinion

That the structures of the academies originate from places further to the West, becomes evident in provisions such as: "Controlling takes place by a consistent management and supervision" (Art. 7; similar in Art. 5). In Switzerland as a direct democracy we have nothing to do with strategically controlling and governing think tanks. The control and monitoring of its members goes particularly far within a+: it is not only checked whether their statements are really nicely uniform, but it is also "recommended" to them, what topics they are to elaborate (Art. 5). Those, who don't comply, can "be excluded with immediate effect" (Art. 2 par. 5). Oops!

The academies themselves are not bound "in disciplinary terms nor by any university"; that means, they consist of former administration officials and professors, who are neither subject to the disciplinary regulations of the federal administration, nor to those of universities. For their own management team "Open and pluralistic understanding of science" is therefore practically without restriction, but for everyone else involved in this authoritarian system, it is allowed only as far as the "unified control and supervision" allows it.

The following poses a particular threat for direct democratic Switzerland: the influence of the academies is intended to capture the entire population. "Fostering the dialogue between science and society" as is it is harmlessly phrased in the statutes. (Art. 5c) In the "portrait" it sounds less innocuous: the academies are "[...]" best suited, to become active in an efficient way in the area of early detection, in ethics as well as in the dialogue with the society".⁸ To become efficiently active in this way means a serious and unconstitutional interference with regard to the voters' free opinion forming, because here the politically correct versions of mainstream press opinions are forced on them by "science".

4. International networking

Internationally, the academies are especially well interconnected in the scientific bodies of the EU: they are today member of the European Science Foundation (ESF), the All European Academies (Allea), the European Academies of Science Advisory Council (EASAC), the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (IAP), the InterAcademy Council (IAC).⁹ A detailed investigation about the individual organisations goes beyond the scope of this article, but could be done if necessary.

5. Awarding of contracts to like-minded people

According to Art. 8 par. 1c. of the statutes, the academies can "to ensure the strategic management of the coordinated tasks, grant mutually orders to members and third parties and delegate tasks against clearing or tender".

Can you imagine something like that: former professors and administrative officials and their assistants in the academies give orders to carefully selected right-minded persons or associations without public tender; on behalf of public authorities "the politically correct theory" is published, and the contracting authority in the federal administration can issue government programmes according to the "latest scientific findings", Parliament and the electorate remain sidelined or are bypassed in

House of Cantons: reign of the executive instead of Swiss federalism

mw. Reminder: The foundation of the Conference of Cantonal Governments (CCG) has been arranged with regard to the planned EEA membership, because the cantons, they too, wanted to participate in case Switzerland was to be integrated in the EU. Despite the rejection of the EEA membership by Swiss voters, the CCG was nevertheless established in 1993 and has been serving the Federal Government for over 20 years as a “common voice” of the cantons, not only in foreign policy. Because there is also a GDK (Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health), an EDK (Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Education), etc. – according to the pattern of the ministerial conferences in the EU.

The CCG – henchman for a smooth integration of Switzerland into the EU

In its positioning of 24 June 2011, the CCG speaks plain language: It is primarily with concern to the European policy of the Federal Government in which “the cantons”, say some cantonal executive members, want to participate “with one voice”. The CCG accommodates to an “increasing deepening of relations between Switzerland and the EU”. In its earlier positioning of 23 March 2007, it was even clearer:

“Because of domestic and foreign policy reasons in short and medium terms, the accession to the EU continues indeed to be out of the question, but in the opinion of the Cantonal Governments it has definitely to be kept open as a longer term option.” One would expect from our Cantonal Governments that they take note: We citizens do not elect our Cantonal Government in order to “speak with one voice with the other 25 Cantonal Governments”, but expect that it sets itself the goal of incorporating the concerns of our canton. For this purpose federalism has been installed. And, as long as the sovereign says No to EU membership, it is the bounden duty of our cantonal authorities – and, incidentally, the federal ones! – to comply with this requirement.

“No centralised control ...”

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their decisions? In the private sector such procedure is called “nepotism”, for the authorities in the constitutional state, this is plainly and simply unlawful.

Conclusion

It has been known for a long time: It is outrageous that the executive authorities think of tricks to manipulate voters (for-



The House of Academies in Berne. (picture©Haus der Akademien)

tunately they do not succeed in all cases). We also have long noticed that the pseudo science-based, politically correct “truths” that are circulating in Switzerland as well as in the EU, are controlled from somewhere else. Now we know: In the House of Academies there resides an opinion manipulation headquarters, wrapped in scientific guise, tightly enmeshed with the government and funded by the federal treasury, to permeate the population with their politically correct mainstream theories. This surpasses the permissible limits!

Prime example “national educational strategy”

The “Plea for a national educational strategy”¹⁰ of 2014 is a prime example of the subtle interplay between the federal, the democratically not legitimised EDK (Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education)¹¹ and the “Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences”, which were used as editors of “arguments” and which are beyond any democratic control.

To emphasise the supremacy of the Confederation in the educational system, as of 1.1.2013, the “Federal Department of Economic Affairs (EVD)” has been renamed as the “Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (WBF)”. All areas of education – some of which were previously settled in the “Federal Department of the Interior (EDI)” – have been concentrated in this department. The centralisers set to work under the leadership of the WBF and the assistance of the EDK to engineer a “coherent and coordinated national educational strategy”. As a basis they utilised the very openly formulated educational Art. 61a of the year 2006¹², to abolish the educational sovereignty of the can-

tons: “By the new Constitution Art. 61a, the political and legal foundations of the education system were redefined by the sovereign. Therefore the Federal Government now has an enhanced responsibility in education.” (Plea, p. 13).

Therefore the academies were commissioned to design a “national educational strategy”, which is then to be applied as a so-called objective scientific expert perspective in the programmes of the Federal Council and EDK. This strategy is to be eventually used as a basis for any future legislative projects. In New-German it is called “educational monitoring”. Incidentally in the working group “Future Education Switzerland”, whose members wrote the “Plea” on behalf of the academies, the former Zurich Cantonal Councillor *Ernst Buschor* takes a seat among others, who in the Canton of Zurich once enforced his unspeakable reform programmes in health and education. Today the whole of Switzerland is suffering from the consequences.

Cantons as henchmen of the control centre– or: Who doesn’t like Swiss federalism?

The “Plea for a national educational strategy” seeks to achieve a serious paradigm shift for the federally organised and diverse Swiss school system:

The leadership in the Federal Government and the EDK – that is, the reign of the executive – aims at introducing the centrally controlled standardisation and the reduction of cantonal diversity.

The cantons are to be relegated to be mere recipients of orders and henchmen of the control centre: “As part of a national educational strategy, a federal organi-

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Foundation Science et Cité

mw. A notable member of the association Swiss Academies of Arts and Science is the Foundation Science et Cité. It describes itself as a "central national network unit in the field of science communication. [...]The nationally operating foundation promotes the dialogue between science and society." It "specialises in low-threshold and innovative forms of communication, if possible with direct contact between scientists and citizens. Science et Cité deals with pertinent, socially relevant topics and encourages the knowledge and the opinion-forming at the service of democracy." (Source: www.science-et-cite.ch)

We have already seen one example of "low-threshold" communication in the style of Science et Cité: the summer camp Cinderella with the lofty goal of letting the young participants have a look through the portal of entry to science, for once in their lives.

In light of the findings about the academies it should be noted that considering their claim to infallibility the "dialogue" with citizens could quickly degenerate into manipulation – providing that there are any Swiss citizens willing to engage in it. At any rate, the foundation's arrogant tone does not conform to the Swiss mindset of all the citizens' being on the same eye level: "low-threshold forms of communication", "direct contact" between scientists and citizens! In direct-democratic Switzerland scientists do not belong to some higher caste, here every-

one has exactly one vote. Here with us, there is only a direct dialogue between citizens, which often takes place on the highest level.

How did this foundation come into existence?

According to its website, the Foundation Science et Cité was founded in 1998 by the Swiss Scientific Academies SAHS, SAMS, SCNAT, SATW, the Swiss National Science Foundation SNSF, the Swiss Trade and Industry Association (today *economiesuisse*) and the private foundation Silva Casa at the suggestion of the State Secretariat for Science and Research (now SERI). So this was an amalgamation of public and private actors. But why a foundation? This legal form is advisable when there are assets dedicated to a specific purpose. The endowment is managed by a Board of Trustees, whose competences are limited to the fulfilment of the foundation's purpose.

Foundation assets

It is however very interesting to note the origin of Science et Cité's foundation assets. According to Article 3 of the statutes of 2 June 2003 (revised on 7 December 2011) the four Academies each contributed 25,000 Swiss francs, the Swiss Trade and Industry Association 100,000 Swiss francs, and the Silva Casa Foundation 1 million Swiss francs. Thus the lion's share of the assets is the million given by a very generous benefactor and

the other donations are small change in comparison.

Google provides only scant information about the Silva Casa Foundation. From moneyhouse (which gives commercial and economic information) we may gather the following facts: It was active between 1992 and 2006 and headquartered in Berne, incidentally at the address of the globally oriented major US corporation PricewaterhouseCoopers. Its purpose was "to sell all paintings and objets d'art which had passed into its ownership within ten years, as reasonably as possible, to invest the proceeds from these sales, as well as any assets gained in other ways, safely and favourably, and to pay the capital and the income derived from it to the beneficiaries within ten years." And this foundation had just 1 million Swiss francs left to shell out to Science et Cité, of all things? Silva Casa certainly had nothing to do with science.

And to cap it all off: Who presides over the Board of Trustees?

"The knowledge of today is the error of tomorrow. This keeps science alive, but also requires constant dialogue with the population."

This quintessential remark was made by the President of Science et Cité's Governing Board *Thomas Zeltner*, former director of the Federal Office of Public Health, whose activities there have already been presented in a critical light in several issues of *Current Concerns*.

"No centralised control ..."

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sation can create per se a good basis for the necessary adaptation, specification and contextualisation of strategic objectives on site." (Plea, p.21)

What is the Swiss Academies of Arts and Science's conception of federalism: "A small-scale particularism, amplified by general federalism leads to a modernisation at different speeds. Also the regional language differences are accentuating. Compared to many other countries, therefore the Swiss educational system is confusing for many who are involved and affected." (Plea, p.17) Indeed, our 26 cantonal educational systems are confusing for a national control centre – it happens to be in a federal state. Modernisation at different speeds is also true. For example, with respect to the inter-cantonal agreement HarmoS, which ten cantons did not join. Who cares? In any case the Swiss population does not care. That precisely reveals the diversity in our state. To discredit this diversity as a "small-scale particularism" and even attack (!) the diversity of the four linguistic cultures, unmasks an intolerable lack of federalist sentiment and

indicates that there are other objectives intended.

The actual purpose of the national educational strategy: "alignment with supranational practices"

Under the title "position and foundation of a national educational strategy in the context of national and international actors" the interested reader learns, that the centralisation of our federalist education shall occur for completely different reasons: "In a mobile, economically and politically interconnected environment, the education and training systems are also a part of a globalised world." Therefore, "national educational systems must be designed [...] in particular with regard to a sectoral globalising labour market in alignment with supranational practices. [...] The active participation in the international and supranational efforts and developments is a prerequisite for the strengthening of our national educational system." (Plea, p.22)

It is well-known by now that before aligning with supranational practices the Swiss educational system was in incomparably better shape than the education killers from Brussels or overseas such as Pisa and Bologna! Does it mean

"strengthening" when due to orders from outside our good elementary schools, vocational schools, secondary schools and universities are being run down? This is pure cynicism, because such strategies promote a 20:80 school system. 20 per cent of the pupils will be pushed so that they can fill the executive jobs in a globalised labour market. The rest will be kept busy and happy at their schools with gimmicks and "self-directed" internet surfing and are at best useful for the Swiss economy as back staff, in the worst case as social welfare recipients.

Who benefits from a school dumbed down that way? Unfortunately, there are many actors in the educational area nowadays, who are not so much interested in our youth learning anything useful at school: "Switzerland has established itself as a committed and innovative partner in this area. Also position and quality of a well-known educational research depends significantly on this international exchange and cooperation in supranational institutions such as the OECD or the EU [...]" (Plea, p.22). In short: Some education activists have gained a plush armchair

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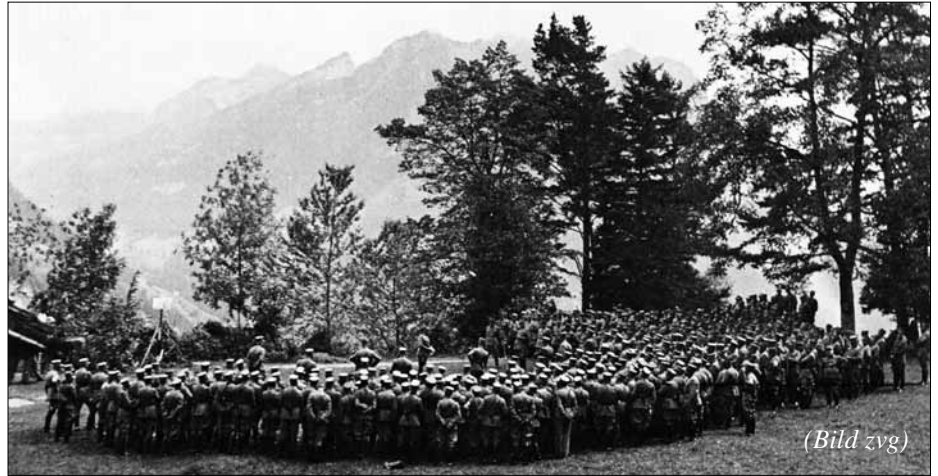
Commemoration of General Guisan's "Rütli-Rapport" in 1940

by Dr Elisabeth Nussbaumer and Trudi Sprock

On Saturday 25 July 2015 the Swiss Officers' Society and the Canton of Vaud invited to a commemoration celebration of General *Guisan's* so-called "Rütli-Rapport", i.e. his military address on the Rütli, birthplace of the Swiss Confederation, on 25 July 1940. Some 450 invited guests from military and politics as well as relatives of Henri Guisan travelled on a special ship from Lucerne across Lake Lucerne to the Rütli station.

They travelled with the "City of Lucerne", the steamboat General Henri Guisan, commander-in-chief of the Swiss army during the Second World War, had taken 75 years earlier with all the commanding officers of the mobilised troops. Faced with the encirclement by the Axis Powers he had assembled the army leadership on the Rütli, presented them the *réduit*-strategy (i.e. the strategy of withdrawal into the mountains) and convinced them of the need for unity and resistance. As we know, by this speech the incontrovertible will to defend the freedom and independence of our country was newly anchored both in the minds of the military and the civilian population.

Brigadier *Denis Froidevaux*, President of the Swiss Officers' Society, welcomed all those present including *Claude Hêche*, President of the Council of States, Federal Councillor *Ueli Maurer*, Army Chief *André Blattmann*, the Cantonal Councilors *Béatrice Metraux* (VD) and *Heidi Z'graggen* (UR) and the historian Prof.



Rudolf Jaun. Brigadier Froidevaux invited all the guests consisting for the most part of soldiers to stand and to listen to the ensuing addresses standing upright in a semicircle just as it had been done 75 years earlier. The atmosphere was becoming tranquil and solemn imbued with respect for the memory of General Guisan and his courageous struggle for commitment to the freedom and neutrality of our country.

Accompanied by the military band all the guests collectively sang the national anthem. The speakers lauded General Guisan's military address as a credible act for a stronger spirit of resistance and drew parallels to the situation we are facing today. What were the requirements needed to defend Switzerland's sovereignty? The

values stressed by General Guisan such as strength of will and self-confidence were highly relevant even today.

Many of those present must have thought of their parents and grandparents, how they had told them about General Guisan when they had still been children and that they had felt great respect for the general and had trusted him completely.

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in the relevant bodies of the OECD and the EU and are keen on keeping it.

What are your feelings on direct democracy?

The authors of the Plea are obviously aware that their national educational strategy does not correspond to the school system as most Swiss want to have it. Rather than submitting their plans to the vote of the people by a referendum, they think about how they can best elude the people's will: "Its [project] implementation is likely to trigger a fierce debate and perhaps a politically motivated resistance. Therefore, it is particularly important that this process is initiated and supported broadly by civil society." (Plea p.15) – "An informed discussion about the fundamental orientation and the overall objectives of the educational system cannot keep up with the attention

spurts and waves of public exasperation." (Plea, pp. 18)

It is all the more important that we citizens counteract, as we are currently doing in many cantons with popular initiatives against Curriculum 21 and for an exit from HarmoS.

¹ See box "The House of Cantons"

² 12.3622 Motion Favre Laurent

³ 12.3622 Motion Favre Laurent

⁴ See box „Science et Cité“

⁵ Swiss Academies of Arts and Science, – Past Future – Swiss Academies of Arts and Science, page 3

⁶ Statutes of Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, 8 May 2015

⁷ Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, Detailed portrait, p. 3

⁸ Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, Detailed portrait, p. 7

⁹ Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, Detailed portrait, p. 9

¹⁰ Plea for a national education strategy, written by the working group "Future Education Switzerland", Publisher: Swiss Academies of Arts and Science, 2014 (cited: Plea)

¹¹ One each member of the government from the 26 cantons sits in the EDK.

¹² Federal Constitution Art. 61a Educational area Switzerland

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"Commemoration of General..."

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Our gratitude is also due to the whole war generation who had to live through those difficult years actively working together to preserve the freedom and independence of our country.

The welcoming address from historic Switzerland is reproduced in the box in a slightly abridged version.

"Switzerland's right to exist"

Dr Rudolf Jaun, Professor of history of the modern age and military history, explained what the historical situation had been like in which General Guisan's speech on the Rütli meadow was created

and what importance it still had today for our country:

"On 20 June 1940, the Wehrmacht had defeated the French army and the British expeditionary forces: thus, not only the enemy of our enemy that we wanted to go along with then failed – France – but Switzerland was encircled by the axis Germany-Italy, the army was confronted with a threat all around. [...]"

Did Switzerland have to join the 'fascist Nazi Europe' in any form or at least adjust? Or should Switzerland try to remain a constitutional state which knew no racial differences and respected the personal rights of each individual?

Guisan forced himself to the decision to lead the fight. But how? As a solution

three strategies turned out to be possible: delaying tactics at the border and in the Midlands, decisive battle in the Alps: an operational strategic solution that was to go down into history as the *réduit*. [...]"

We have the right of sovereignty on our side, but that's not enough at this moment, it may be necessary to preserve this right also by the force of arms and to continue the history of the Swiss Confederation founded here.

He wanted to fight even in a desperate situation, looking for success in the difficult struggle, to justify the claim of Switzerland's right to exist again if necessary even out of the defeat. This was the message Guisan wanted to send to his commanding officers. And he wanted to tell them how to wage the fight in these desperate circumstances. [...]"

'Our only resort is our will to defend ourselves to the last', this was Guisan's great political and military message." [...]"

"Willpower and confidence"

Brigadier Denis Froidevaux pointed out to his guests the parallels between Switzerland's situation of 1940 and that of 2015 in an impressive way:

"We should remember without melancholy but with respect to this generation who knew to protect Switzerland from the horrors of history. In this context, I would like to highlight the role of women in this difficult period of the 1940s. They had to do the farm work all alone or were used as cheap labour in the industry. We also owe them what we are today. [...]"

How many are they who sacrificed their personal interests, their careers, their families, their well-being to the benefit of the community, to the benefit of the overall interest of the fatherland? I know only too well that these words may sound hollow to some present-day spirits, often marked by individualism, hedonism and egoism... But I remain convinced that the values Henri Guisan represented on this 25 July 1940, namely willpower and confidence, have kept their whole freshness and timeliness by 2015. Everybody present today will agree to acknowledge that we love this Switzerland, so diverse, so different, sometimes complicated but so beautiful. Yes, we love it above all, and therefore the Swiss Officers' Society, without any nostalgia and beyond all political divisions, wanted to come here to feel together with you the beat of the heart of our country on this meadow and to whisper these words of love to it, to express our gratitude to and love for it. I am very grateful that you are here today."

Three young officers from German-speaking Switzerland, from the French part of the country and from Ticino spoke

"The determination to defend our country strengthened"

by Ms President of the Cantonal Council Dr Heidi Z'graggen, Uri

"Federal Councillor, Mr President of the Council of States, Ms Cantonal Councillor, Mr President of the Cantonal Council, Cantonal Councillors, Members of the National Council and Council of States, Officers of the Swiss Army, Ladies and Gentleman.

On behalf of the people of Uri I warmly welcome you to the ceremony commemorating the "75th anniversary of the Rütli-Rapport". This event falls in line with the great number of historic anniversaries we are celebrating this year. But while historians disagree about Morgarten and Marignano there can be no doubt that General Henri Guisan gathered around himself the senior officers of the Swiss army at the Rütli on 25 July 1940 so as to demonstrate in times of utmost peril Switzerland's military preparedness to defend itself and to call the Swiss people and the armed forces to unconditional resistance.

In 1940 the Central Powers posed a serious threat to Switzerland. The situation was dramatic. But precisely at this period of utmost tension, peril and uncertainty in the Swiss population and in politics General Guisan assembled the senior officers of the army as if at a "Landsgemeinde" (people's assembly) – not at some barack yard but here on the Rütli, that is on the meadow where by early August 1291 the Swiss Confederates had supposedly sworn their first alliance. [...]"

Guisan's address activated our determination to support our country in the most difficult times. We do not know if during the difficult years of the Second World War resistance would have been enough to defeat the hostile armies. We do know, however, that Guisan's speech strengthened the determination to defend our country and that Switzerland was indeed united by

this determination. I am convinced that even today the power and the courage of Guisan's generation is still present in our hearts. Let us hope, however, that we will never have to suffer the same fate.

The commitment to stand for a successful future of our country must be upheld every day. However, this is not to be expected from an abstract and nebulous "somebody-should do this", because this determination will not come from nowhere. We cannot delegate the care for a bright future for Switzerland, we must ourselves work for it, every day. Thereby we assume responsibility for the positive future of our country. [...]"

The Rütli reminds us of the fact that our country is founded on an alliance among three countries that freely joined their forces to shape their common future, and it is a symbol for communion and solidarity, a symbol for our standing together especially in difficult times and for mutual aid.

Where could the General have better called the officers and the population to unity and cohesion than on the Rütli? Together with the highest-ranking officers he invoked the alliance of 1291 very much in the spirit of the preamble of our Federal Constitution: 'resolved to renew their alliance so as to strengthen liberty, democracy, independence and peace in a spirit of solidarity and openness towards the world'. [...]"

Federal Councillor, Ladies and Gentleman, I am delighted that you have found your way to this place, today, in commemoration of the "Rütli-Rapport" 75 years ago. I wish you an impressive day and above all that you can take home with you something of the calmness, serenity and grandeur of the Rütli."

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Commemoration of General...”

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in their native language to us. They invited all of us, especially the younger generation, to create the future actively so that we can look ahead with willpower and self-confidence, two basic values, which General Guisan represented 75 years ago and which are just as important today.

“Threats and Challenges are manifold”

Senior lieutenant *Simon Waldis*, Officers' Society Schwyz:

“We are products of a generation blessed by peace. We take security as granted, it is natural for me. The army's task must be among others to communicate the principle that security can be guaranteed in the long term only if we don't look at it as a matter of course. [...] This leads me to the conclusion that at the present time communication becomes a core task of security policy more than ever.

There is an interest in the army, I can feel it in every conversation. [...]

75 years ago with the Rütli rapport, General Guisan found a way of communication that was understood. With this symbolic event he laid the foundations for the existence of independent Switzerland during the Second World War.

Today's threats and challenges are varied and different than at that time, but the solution is the same: communication! Because it creates willpower and trust!”

“Military service is more relevant than ever”

Lieutenant *Edouard Hediger*, Officers' Society Vaud:

“This is a young, concerned officer who speaks to you now. His concern is not the uncertain future of Europe which we are all well acquainted with but the morale of his comrades. In 1940 above all, Henri Guisan had this concern in mind. The Rütli message was aimed at re-encouraging the population and especially the cadres of our army. Maybe it is a similar message, the sense of community that we need to call to mind among the young Swiss, today. And God knows that we were lucky. Switzerland is not one of those European countries which offers hardly any future prospects to young people. It is not too late to change course. Yes, the army makes sense indeed and military service is more relevant than ever. [...] Vive l'armée suisse, vive la Confédération. Vive le Général.”

“National cohesion”

Senior lieutenant *Michele Bertini*, Officers' Society Ticino:

“The words of General Guisan are more relevant today than ever. Switzerland is placed in a very complex and difficult international context, with sudden changes in the political, social and economic fields. [...]

In a similar situation of widespread uncertainty, Guisan had conjectured the fundamental importance of national cohesion as an element of strength of our nation. [...]

The topicality of the concept of national cohesion is obvious. Therefore, it is now more than necessary to update and consolidate those bonds, which hold us Swiss together. [...]

As representative of the Canton of Ticino and the entire Italian-speaking Switzerland, it is important for me to assure

you, dear Confederates, that our devotion to Switzerland and the very strong national feelings that bind us to the Confederation, are honest.”

Around four o'clock ships were waiting for the Rütli visitors down on the Lake Uri: Slowly they all set off down the steep way back to the landing stage. Suddenly, the Patrouille Suisse flew over the area in front of the Rütli: The formation appeared above the Mythen, raced in an arch down across the narrow Lake Uri, past the Fronalpstock and back up along the walls of Chaiserstock where they disappeared for a short time behind the mountains. They repeated that flight several times – we were all fascinated by this drama. When I asked a soldier if it had been planned, he replied: “No, that's a surprise, our comrades are greeting us.” At this moment, the aircraft circled for the last time, leaving a loop of lights in the sky. Everybody was pleased by this greeting.

We went down to the berth: Certainly many of us were absorbed in thought about that worthy memorial and determined – just as Heidi Z'graggen had wished for – to take a bit of the calmness, serenity and grandeur of the Rütli home and to share what we had heard with our fellow citizens.

(Excerpts from speeches translated by *Current Concerns*)

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