

EUROPE-USA: COMMON VALUES AND POLITICAL REALITY

Europe and the United States of America are repeatedly portrayed as a community of values. This is often associated with the demand that Europeans should align their foreign policy with that of the USA, as if a community of values were also a community of interests. This paper will therefore begin by showing how America's political institutions emerged from the spirit of the European Enlightenment. Then, however, it is also a question of the extent to which the fundamental values have developed in unison or differently. At the same time, it is about the constellations of interests that have emerged as a result of political realities.

1. the emergence of the USA from the spirit of the European Enlightenment

Using the example of some formative figures of the European Enlightenment such as John Locke, Montesquieu and Adam Smith, we will first show the extent to which they developed the ideas of government, state, law and private property that were then realised in the American Revolution.

In his work "Two Treatises of Government", John Locke (1632-1704) already stated that all men are created equal; that they have the right to pursue happiness; and that a government is only legitimate if it has the consent of the governed. Personal liberty and property must be protected. Since religion is a matter of conscience for each individual, the spheres of influence of church and state must be separated; it is a matter of tolerance. All of these ideas had a decisive influence on the founding fathers of the United States.

The teachings of Montesquieu (1689- 1755) were also influential for the Founding Fathers. He analysed the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and came to the conclusion in his major work "On the Spirit of the Laws" that a separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government was the best way to protect the freedom of citizens from arbitrary state power. In 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence, Adam Smith published his work on "The Wealth of Nations". In it, he developed not only an economic theory, but also a philosophy of government that would later shape key areas of the United States: individuals must judge their own lives by critical standards. Everyone is responsible for their own actions. Adam Smith then applied his philosophy to practical life and came to the conclusion that economic growth is a key driver of change. Entire libraries have been written about the role played by the "invisible hand" he cited. In any case, it is fair to say that his teachings have had a decisive influence on political and economic thinking and life in the USA.

The protagonists of the American Revolution were not only familiar with ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, but of course also with those of the European Enlightenment. In practice, what was then realised in America was first conceived in

Europe. The belief in reason, the pursuit of freedom and progress, the emphasis on people's rights - all this was not only written down by the American founding fathers, but political institutions were created to realise these ideals.

The Declaration of Independence, largely written by Thomas Jefferson, adopts the principles of natural law developed by John Locke. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, it stipulates when a nation has the right to replace an old form of government with a new one. James Madison, in turn, anchored the principle of the separation of powers in the Constitution. Together with his colleagues in the Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, he argued in favour of a strong central government. In doing so, he advocated political views that differed significantly from those of his friend Thomas Jefferson. It is impressive how the two friends, despite their political differences, discussed the main features of the new constitution and political institutions at length and in detail. The point here is that the principles of the European Enlightenment and their implementation in America largely form a unity.

At the same time, however, it must be noted that further developments on the two continents very soon took different paths. The American Revolution succeeded in creating a political community in the spirit of the Enlightenment, which gave citizens the right to shape their own destiny. In Europe, the Enlightenment led to the French Revolution. This was then superseded by Napoleon's rule; the freedom movements of 1848/49 were also bloodily suppressed. It was still a long and bloody road to the declaration of fundamental rights and freedoms by the Council of Europe in 1949.

2. values and interests in international relations

Basically, it is fair to say that for centuries the question of whether a country's foreign policy was value-orientated or interest-based did not arise. Foreign policy was power politics. The acting princes all believed in their "divine favour", i.e. that the monarch could derive his claim to rule from God's grace. The Christian subjects, in turn, were educated in the spirit of St Paul to the effect that "all power comes from God". Then there were repeated religious wars, but these were also determined by political, economic and social interests.

Foreign policy was realpolitik. The end justified the means. The aim was to strengthen one's own power. This meant that behaviour that was condemned in the strongest terms in the private sphere was not only tolerated but even glorified in inter-state behaviour. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill", for example, was transformed into hero worship for those generals and soldiers who succeeded in winning on the battlefield.

to kill as many enemies as possible. In the Middle Ages, Catholic theologians still taught the subordination of the state to the church. In accordance with the teachings of the modern era, the prince then became a sovereign who, as a ruler, was able to rule both internally and externally at his own discretion. Foreign relations were intended to strengthen the monarch's power. They were his "domaine réservé", just as we were taught until the recent past.

The guiding principle of foreign policy was the reason of state. According to this, a politician should be guided by the consideration of doing what benefits the state. With regard to international relations, the thesis was put forward that international politics is synonymous with the struggle for the existence of nations. The aim of every state must therefore be to expand its territory or extend its rule over foreign peoples and territories. In this sense, foreign policy as *realpolitik* should be orientated towards the interests of one's own state. To this end, means of power could be utilised and wars waged without regard for the people.

Even the religious wars that occurred time and again were not free of power-political considerations. The 4th Crusade, for example, led to the devastation of Constantinople, which was also a Christian city. The Turks were supported in their fight against the Catholic Habsburgs by the French king, the "most Christian of all rulers". And in the Thirty Years' War, France, then led by the Catholic Cardinal Richelieu, fought on the side of the Protestants.

However, this is not about history, but about whether and to what extent values or interests still determine a country's foreign policy today. Until the recent past, the answer was quite clear: it was all about interests. At the beginning of the First World War, the German Kaiser and the Russian Tsar fought against each other. Both were not only closely related, they also believed in their divine mission. After the Second World War, the victors in Yalta and Potsdam sat at the same table, representing completely different world views. And during the Cold War, which was undoubtedly strongly ideological, the USA also allied itself with dictators in Latin America, East Asia and Africa.

This leads to a very clear conclusion: a community of interests does not have to be a community of values. The reverse conclusion also applies: within a community of values, you do not always have to represent the same interests, as the numerous power struggles within political parties, which are also communities of values, show.

It is important to bear this in mind when it is emphasised that Europe and the USA form a community of values. Obviously, Europeans should be urged to support America's political, economic and military interests more strongly. In doing so, it is important to bear in mind a characteristic feature of American foreign policy: in key areas, it is aimed at realising domestic political interests. These are primarily economic interests, but the realisation of "American values" is also proclaimed as a goal.

Washington justifies its endeavours for "regime change" by claiming that democracies are peaceful in principle and do not wage wars against each other. The aim here is to analyse which values and interests underlie US foreign policy and how the European value system has developed.

3. the USA's sense of mission

Americans believe in "American Exceptionalism", that they are a chosen nation, destined to lead the world. This belief was already deeply rooted in the thinking of the founding fathers and goes back to Puritan, Calvinist thinking. George W. Bush was not the first to speak of an "axis of evil". As early as 1656, Oliver Cromwell declared the fight against the "axis of evil" to be a crucial task for England. At the same time, he stated that the fight for God and for English interests were congruent. Almost 50 years later, John Churchill, the 1st Duke of Marlborough, declared after the victorious Battle of Höchstädt, "We did it for the Liberty of Europe". That may be true. But this gave the English military bases all over the world, such as Gibraltar, and a monopoly on the transatlantic slave trade after their victory in the War of the Spanish Succession, to which this battle had made a decisive contribution.

Even one of the first governors of Massachusetts, John Winthrop, spoke of America as the "shining city upon the hill", a model of Christian virtues that leads humanity in the Christian spirit. This thinking has survived to this day in both literature and politics.

In any case, when analysing American foreign policy, it is always important to pierce through the veil of euphoric phrases in order to get to reality. To this day, President Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy is regarded as particularly idealistic. He led the USA into the First World War "to end all wars" and "to make the whole world ready for democracy". However, Wilson actually won his election campaign with the promise to keep his country out of the war in Europe. The USA only entered the First World War when Britain's victory appeared to be jeopardised and the war credits granted by the USA were in jeopardy. The propaganda against "the Kaiser" during the First World War had already shown that an opponent of the USA is always stylised as an ideological enemy.

After the victory in the Cold War, the USA could rightly claim to have once again saved the Europeans from a totalitarian ideology. This victory confirmed the American sense of mission. Some even went so far as to speak of the "end of history", as the American values of democracy and market economy had prevailed everywhere.

The neo-conservatives in particular, who play a major role in the US foreign policy debate, have seen themselves vindicated by this victory.

They are concerned with enforcing American values by military means. In this sense, the invasion of Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein should have created the democratic structures that would have served as a model for the entire Middle East.

It has not come to the "end of history". China has used the globalisation of its economy to achieve an unexpected upswing and thus a new position of power. Russia has recovered from the threat of collapse in the 1990s. And with Islamic terror, a new danger has emerged worldwide.

This has led some to conclude that other countries, especially the democracies of Europe, must unconditionally submit to American leadership in order to master these new challenges. It is not insignificant that decisive changes have also taken place on the "old continent", namely a revolution in European diplomacy.

4 The revolution in European diplomacy

A revolution has taken place in relations between European states, which dates back to the Council of Europe and initially encompassed the Western European states. As a result of this revolution, intergovernmental relations in Europe have changed more in the last two generations than in the centuries before. While foreign policy was traditionally power politics, in Europe it now serves to promote the welfare of citizens.

This change is not only in line with the principles of official foreign policy, this new objective is also expected by citizens. If you ask people from Austria to Finland and from Portugal to Denmark whether we should create jobs, protect the environment and realise human rights through international cooperation; or whether we should wage wars against our neighbours in order to increase our own country's power, then the answer is probably clear. Since the founding of the Council of Europe, common values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law have also become the foundations of intergovernmental relations. Confrontation has been replaced by co-operation; "warfare" by "welfare". The reliance on power has been replaced by a legal system to which the members of the Council of Europe are committed.

This revolution established a new, special position for Europe in the world: Europe became a continent of peace and human rights; Europe became a leader in key areas, in social policy, in environmental protection, in development aid. Now the objection is repeatedly raised that Europe no longer counts for anything in the world because our foreign policy has too little military support. This argument is based on the past through and through. In history, those who were considered "great" - from Alexander the Great to Frederick the Great and Napoleon - were those who conquered other countries and waged wars without regard for losses

and thereby strengthened the power of their own country. But can it be said today that Europe no longer counts for anything because Europeans no longer attack, conquer or destroy other countries? This view is probably outdated. The Serbian president at the time, Milosevic, who tried to do this and declared war on his neighbours, was not called Milosevic the Great, but was brought before a court martial in The Hague.

The basis of the EU members' foreign policy towards each other was no longer "national security", but "human security". The Covid pandemic in particular showed that this was a very important step in the right direction. Today, international security is only to a small extent militarily based. Rather, security today encompasses all those aspects that affect citizens in the welfare state: the welfare state has taken on an international dimension. It is about the security of living conditions, the security of the currency, the security of health and the security of the environment. It is about human rights, education and training.

These security issues cannot be solved by force of arms. They require much more international cooperation and mutual trust. Similarly, the structure of power has also changed: it is now exercised by a large number of players, far beyond the state actors.

Countless NGOs, international corporations, media and even private actors have come onto the scene and have thus made a decisive contribution to the fragmentation of power.

In view of this development, the question must be asked whether the Enlightenment has not changed sides. In relations between European countries, law has replaced power as the basis for action. In US foreign policy, the principle still prevails: "Foreign policy without the backing of the military is like a base-ball game without a baseball bat". Accordingly, there are strong American voices that also propagate the American path of armament and military strength for Europe. In contrast, Europeans should be self-confident enough to present their model as an example for international relations in the world of tomorrow.

5 The Ukraine war has turned Europe upside down

First of all, it should be noted that European integration already had a different meaning for those states that former US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld referred to as the "New Europe" than for those that had decided to start the process of European unification after the Second World War. While Germany and France were prepared to surrender national sovereignty in order to find common solutions in key areas after centuries of conflict, Poland and the Baltic states wanted to expand their new-found sovereignty within the framework of the European Union in order to show new strength against Russia.

In fact, the peoples of Eastern Europe repeatedly suffered persecution under both the tsars and the Soviets. So while reconciliation was the order of the day in Western Europe, the East saw an opportunity to take revenge. This is why the policy of understanding initiated by Germany towards Russia, expressed through the construction of new oil pipelines, was repeatedly criticised in Poland. In Eastern and Western Europe, fundamentally different ideas have emerged about how the continent's security can be guaranteed. While the project of a "European army" was repeatedly developed in France, in the East the focus was exclusively on defence under American leadership, on NATO.

These ideas fully coincided with those in Washington, according to which former members of the Warsaw Pact should also be included in the North Atlantic defence alliance. They were prepared to push this towards Russia's borders. Although there were also voices in the USA who shared the view of former Finnish President Matti Ahtisaari that NATO enlargement should mean more stability and not more instability for a region, those who had spoken out in favour of NATO's eastward expansion prevailed in the Clinton administration.

Even the then Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who was very much in favour of America, warned against a "cold peace". When Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were admitted to NATO in 1999, Moscow regarded this as a hostile act, an attempt to encircle its own country. Although attempts were made to calm the situation

by establishing a joint "Russia-NATO Council", Moscow repeatedly referred to promises made during the reunification of Germany, according to which NATO would not be extended "one inch" to the east. An attempt by President George W. Bush to include Ukraine and Georgia in the alliance at the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008 met with resistance from France and Germany, who wanted to prevent an escalation towards Moscow.

The further development shows one thing very clearly: as much as a defence community may represent the "protection of common values", a military organisation also has a power-political dimension that is very much determined by its size and the number of its members. Russia and Ukraine have not only been linked by a common history for centuries, geopolitical analyses from various sides have shown that the power that exercises supremacy over Ukraine, connected to the Asian heartlands, has a decisive advantage over other countries. Both Zbigniew Brzezinski and the RAND Corporation came to this conclusion in a 2019 study.

As much as the West has emphasised that Ukraine must have the right to choose to belong to the Western community of values, Russia refers to its right to counter threats to national security where this is endangered by the deployment of missiles on its borders.

Now, of course, you can say "that must not happen". But if a country is convinced that it cannot assert its own interests at a political level and through negotiations, Clausewitz comes into play, who said that "war is the continuation of politics by other means". This principle was also always recognised in the West. When the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, had the crazy idea of installing nuclear missiles in Cuba, just 100 miles off the American coast, in 1962, American President John F. Kennedy demanded that they be withdrawn immediately. The possibility of nuclear war loomed large. Everyone in the West understood that the USA was concerned with safeguarding fundamental national interests.

In autumn 2021, Russia, in an analogous situation, demanded that no NATO missiles be deployed in Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg later proudly declared that Moscow's wishes had "not even been ignored". When Russian troops then invaded Ukraine in February 2022 to emphasise Russian demands, all Western governments spoke of an "unprovoked war of aggression". All leading Western media adopted this diction. What's more, President Putin was held solely responsible for the new war; Ukraine was promised full support as it was a matter of defending "the values of freedom and democracy" against the Russian aggressors "as long as it takes". The war in Ukraine was stylised by Western propaganda into a clear case of a battle between "good" on the one side and "evil" on the other, into a moral issue.

We have been familiar with the discussion about "What is a just war?" since ancient philosophers. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the USA has been keen to ensure that countries that became independent at the time could not fall back into the Russian sphere of influence. Huge amounts of aid were channelled into the region; NATO membership was intended to secure the new political orientation and ensure that

membership of the Western community of values was not called into question from outside. The fact that attempts were also made to bring about a "regime change" in Russia at the same time did not exactly help to build mutual trust. But wherever the West emphasised the need to promote its own values, Moscow saw its own interests dwindle. This is particularly true because even when talking about values, one can still pursue one's own interests.

The conviction of Western governments that Western values were being fought for in Ukraine had a huge impact: The EU peace project became a war alliance; massive economic sanctions against Russia led to Europe being cut off from cheap Russian raw materials; the USA was able to push through its long-standing desire to sell its own liquefied natural gas in Europe. As part of the newly strengthened community of values, Europe became very dependent on the United States.

6. values and interests in a multipolar world

6.1 The world became multipolar

At the beginning of the 20th century, a third of the world's population still lived in Europe and North America. If the number of people on earth increases to 10.5 billion in the next 50 years, the share of the European Union countries will fall to 3.7 %; that of the United States will be 3.9 %. China's share would be 12%; India would then have 250 million more people than today and the subcontinent's share of the world's population would be 15.6%. The population increase in Africa is particularly dramatic: in 1950, only 7.1 % of the world's population lived there, in 50 years it will be 27 %.

The change in the economic performance of individual countries is also dramatic: after the Second World War, the USA generated half of the world's economic output. Measured in terms of purchasing power parity, the share of the US economy is expected to fall from 16 % today to 12 % by 2070; that of the EU countries from 15 % to 9 %. China's share, on the other hand, which currently stands at 18 %, is expected to rise to 20 %.

Shouldn't this development towards a multipolar world, i.e. towards several centres of power, be an incentive for Europe and the USA to work together to achieve their political and economic goals? Undoubtedly. But to what extent is it possible to cooperate with a country like the USA, which claims absolute leadership in all matters, does not tolerate any interference with its own sovereignty and only accepts international organisations to enforce its own interests?

Donald Trump was often portrayed as a "lone nut" because he withdrew his country from several multilateral agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement; the nuclear agreements with Iran or the Paris Climate Agreement. In fact, he was pursuing a foreign policy line that Washington has repeatedly taken. Long before the Trump presidency, John Fonte wrote the book "Sovereignty or Submission" and clearly showed how many Americans see the given alternatives: it is about preserving one's

own sovereignty at all costs; anything else would be submission to the dictates of international organisations. The ability to act in politics and economics, culture, religion and jurisdiction must be preserved just as much as one's own national identity. For this to succeed, the USA must remain the only military superpower.

In view of such an attitude, the question arises: is a genuine partnership with the USA possible? Even Donald Rumsfeld, then Secretary of Defence, said that the USA would choose its allies according to the occasion and the given usefulness. He wrote off the "old Europe" and pinned his hopes on the new countries liberated from communism.

Can we speak of a genuine partnership when one side sets the rules of the game according to its own objectives, both for itself and for the others? When President Biden has called for an "alliance of democracies" in a now multipolar world, do we need to consider whether such an alliance will lead to greater unity or greater division in the world? As pleasing as it is to see more and more states democratising their political systems, we should consider whether such a development can be achieved through more pressure from outside, or rather by setting an example, as the European Union has done for the longest time.

6.2 The attitude of the USA towards the unification of Europe

In principle, it can be said that the USA supports European unification where it believes that a united Europe would be integrated or subordinated in an Atlantic partnership. This was already the case after the Second World War, when Washington worked within the framework of the OEEC (Organisation for European Economic Cooperation) to coordinate Marshall Plan aid and facilitate trade and payments on the old continent in order to promote a future free trade area. Many saw no disadvantages in accepting the American claim to leadership, or at least no contradiction to concrete advantages for European countries. Even Jean Monnet, a key champion of European unification, is said to have been very open to advice from American politicians. Another great European, Jacques Delors, took a somewhat different view of the transatlantic relationship when he once stated: "We do not interfere in the internal affairs of the USA and trust that the Americans will not interfere in European affairs". But it's obviously not that simple.

There were always strong forces in favour of American leadership in Europe, especially on security issues. But there were always other endeavours as well. French President Charles de Gaulle, for example, endeavoured to push through French ideas of a United Europe with the support of Germany with the Elysée Treaty in 1963. But the German Bundestag ultimately insisted on emphasising the importance of the transatlantic partnership for the Federal Republic in the preamble to the treaty.

In fact, European countries' relations with the United States depend very much on their own history. Poland, for example, has always sought a protector against Russia. 200 years ago it was Napoleon, later the French Republic, today the USA and NATO are supposed to provide protection against the "arch-enemy" from the East.

Whenever the Europeans have different opinions on political or economic issues, it is possible for the USA to exploit this division. As outlined above, at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest

leading exponents of the European Union were against the eastward expansion of the alliance. They knew that NATO troops on the Russian border would not lead to more stability, but to more tensions. Poland and the Baltic countries, on the other hand, wanted NATO membership, which was then pushed through by the USA.

European governments were similarly divided over the North Stream2 project long before it was blown up. The idea was to supply Germany directly with Russian natural gas via a pipeline built for this purpose. The Americans, on the other hand, also want to sell their own gas in Europe, albeit at higher prices, in order to "protect Europe from becoming too dependent on Russia". In fact, Russia was to be weakened and Germany made dependent on American energy supplies. So it was very much about interests, not values.

As far as the ideological judgement of Europe is concerned, this is often made in the USA according to one's own political position: Conservatives often see Europeans as atheistic cowards who deserve their downfall; while liberals certainly recognise the social achievements made in Europe and the associated quality of life. However, the following fixed points can be recognised: Europe should not become too powerful and too independent; American supremacy must be preserved. Under no circumstances should Europe's own defence be allowed to emerge as a competitor to NATO. There is widespread scepticism towards Europe's own currency, the euro. Ultimately, the attitude towards America in the individual European countries is very much characterised by their own history, but of course also by their own interests. Shared values can have a balancing or reinforcing effect, but cannot replace a given set of interests.

6.3 Should Europeans support the USA's wars?

For the USA, wars are an integral part of its foreign policy and international relations. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in particular led to a further militarisation of American foreign policy. In the following seven years alone, the US defence budget increased by 80 %. Of the 1.6 million American soldiers, 500,000 are stationed abroad, spread across 800 military bases around the world. It is in the nature of things that such a huge apparatus must constantly endeavour to justify its existence, i.e. to wage wars.

In fact, America has been waging wars everywhere over the last few decades. The invasion of Afghanistan took place in 2001, followed by the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the years that followed, the USA took part in the fighting in Libya, Syria and Yemen. US special forces are also deployed in Niger and Somalia, Thailand, Jordan and other parts of the world.

One thing is also significant: when President Donald Trump decided to withdraw the US armed forces from only one of these theatres of war, namely Syria, he was criticised as an "irresponsible isolationist". In September 2002, the "National Security Strategy" was adopted, which serves as the basis for the "further" fight against terrorism. It states that the USA will not hesitate to act alone and preventively in the fight against terrorism. Preventive war thus became an official part of American military strategy.

Washington is constantly developing new military strategies to protect itself against actual or theoretical enemies. In recent decades, the theory of the "Revolution in Military Affairs" has helped to strengthen the belief in the invincibility of the US armed forces. According to this theory, technological progress has increased the destructive power of weapons to such an extent that no one in the world or in space could resist the military might of the USA. Accordingly, under President Bush (son), the USA set up the military command "CYBERCOM", which carried out over 200 cyber attacks in 2011.

The theory of the increase in "irregular warfare" was then developed (Center for Strategic and International Studies; February 2021). According to this theory, countries such as China, Russia and Iran use illegal means such as hacker attacks and espionage; special forces and private mercenary units are set up to take action against US interests. At the same time, it is stated that the USA is very poorly prepared against this type of attack. Russia is accused of fuelling social tensions in America by manipulating protest movements such as Me Too or Black Lives Matter. China and Iran are also accused of acting in a similar way against American interests.

There is no plausible explanation for the strength of Russian capabilities or the weaknesses of American capabilities in the area of "irregular warfare", as the annual US defence budget is ten times higher than that of Russia. Rather, one is reminded of John F. Kennedy's election campaign, when he massively denounced the alleged "missile gap" with the Soviet Union. However, it then turned out that the US missile arsenal was actually four times as large as that of the Soviet Union.

The question for Europeans is whether they should follow the logic of the American "Military-Industrial Complex", supported by numerous media outlets. Even fierce critics of Donald Trump have acknowledged that he has succeeded in increasing the military spending of NATO partners by \$ 43 billion in two years; further additional spending of \$ 400 billion is to follow by 2024.

The war in Ukraine has also succeeded in fully integrating the key European decision-makers into a policy that sees the solution to international problems in more armaments. Under the motto "Turning point"

an extraordinary armaments budget of €100 billion was approved in Germany and Poland announced that it would double its defence spending. The Europeans have

thus adopted the American model, according to which it is not enough to propagate values through practical examples, they should rather be enforced with military pressure.

Perhaps it would also have made sense for Europeans to make more reference to the "Revolution in NON-Military Affairs", i.e. the changes that have taken place in the field of international law and social policy with regard to warfare. Accordingly, wars are no longer an "extension of politics by other means", war rather means the failure of a policy. Today, international law prohibits the use of force. Waging war means killing and destroying. What is new is that the world is now watching, with the mass media reporting directly on combat operations. The attitude towards heroism has changed. The "field of honour" has shifted from the battlefield to the football pitch. These considerations largely coincide with the expectations of EU citizens, who expect more commitment from the European Union in the fight against unemployment and in environmental protection. This expectation should at least be built into the transatlantic dialogue as soon as the euphoria over the war in Ukraine has subsided.

6.4 Together for human rights?

When the Charter of the United Nations was adopted after the Second World War, it still emphasised the "sovereignty of states" and non-interference in their internal affairs. However, as early as 1948, the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" was adopted, partly at the instigation of the President's widow Eleanor Roosevelt, which initially only represented a recommendation for member states. The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, then enshrined special protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for the citizens of its member states. So you might think that Europe and the USA would act together on this issue. This is what happened at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), when the aim was to defend common values.

The Final Act of the CSCE adopted in Helsinki in 1975, which was signed even by the Soviet Union and the then communist countries of Eastern Europe, achieved a great deal. All signatory states pledged to grant their citizens freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the rule of law. In fact, human rights groups made a significant contribution to the fall of totalitarian regimes.

After the victory in the Cold War, the neo-conservatives in the USA probably also demanded that civil rights be enforced with military support in those countries that opposed America.

Various models such as "regime change" or "nation-building" have been developed for this purpose.

In 2005, the UN General Assembly even adopted the "Responsibility to Protect" resolution: all member states were to take measures in future to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This opened up the possibility of "humanitarian interventions" and contributed to the militarisation of American foreign policy.

"Humanitarian missions" were then carried out from Afghanistan to Libya; in Somalia and in the Balkans. In practice, however, it turned out that nation-building is hardly possible where there are not even pre-state structures. "Regime change, i.e. the replacement of people at the head of a state, did not necessarily lead to more democracy and prosperity, but could also lead to more chaos and economic decline, as in Somalia.

It also proved difficult time and again to determine the extent to which power-political considerations were involved in "humanitarian actions". This applies to the "regime change" in Libya just as much as it did to the operations in the Balkans. The primacy of power politics becomes very clear when weapons worth billions of dollars are sold to dictatorships without hesitation, but sanctions are imposed on Chinese companies that compete with American companies for human rights violations.

The US judiciary also repeatedly uses American "law as a weapon" when it comes to enforcing power-political or economic interests against competitors. Laws from the 18th century are used in the same way as the Foreign Corruption Act. If the USA is actually interested in working with Europe to enforce human rights more strongly in future, then it would be appropriate not only to take joint action, but also not to make the necessary decisions unilaterally, but to leave these to international courts. The idea of human rights was developed in Europe and initially implemented in the USA. A joint approach would also be beneficial in the future, with the European Court of Human Rights serving as a model.

6.5 Can Russia be our partner?

Even before the war in Ukraine, there was no other country against which the United States had imposed as many sanctions as against Russia. Donald Trump even wanted to improve bilateral relations. In particular, the accusation that "Putin" had interfered in the 2016 presidential elections poisoned the atmosphere. The most serious accusation is that Russian agents tried to undermine the credibility of the US political system. Be that as it may. The only question is whether you can undermine a political system any further than the Americans themselves are doing. For years now

The most important political players deny each other legitimisation for their political actions.

Then there is the war of the secret services. When the willingness of the Europeans to impose further sanctions against Moscow has reached a low point, a poisoned double agent suddenly appears. Shortly before Nord Stream2 is about to be completed, an opposition leader is poisoned. Only the Russian bureaucracy knows why he is then arrested and sentenced on camera so that these images shock the whole world. But Russia has always been different. For 1000 years, Russia's political system has followed its own rules. How these could suddenly be changed by a "regime change" is

again a secret known only to the neo-conservatives in Washington. Russia cannot be pigeonholed and subordinated like other former communist countries. Russia is not Albania.

Security in Europe without Russia is difficult. Russia is part of our continent and its geography cannot be changed. The sanctions imposed in connection with the war in Ukraine are intended to isolate Russia politically and weaken it economically. However, the repercussions of these sanctions also affect the countries that imposed them. One does not get the impression that the Europeans are emerging stronger from this conflict. Rather the opposite is the case. But the USA cannot be interested in Europe being weakened in the long term either.

The sanctions imposed on Russia in connection with the war in Ukraine have driven the country into the arms of China. Under the current circumstances, it must be assumed that the Moscow-Beijing axis will be further expanded. Is this in the interests of the West, in the interests of Europe? Given the interests between Europe and Russia, it should be possible to re-establish the partnership in three areas: politically, economically and in the area of security.

Russia became a member of the Council of Europe in 1996 and, like the other members, entered into the corresponding obligations with regard to the European Convention on Human Rights and could be measured against the signed treaties. Even then, there was resistance to Russia's admission to the Council of Europe. With the start of the "special operation" against Ukraine, Russia was excluded from the pan-European organisation.

The foundations of the economic partnership are clear: Russia is rich in oil and natural gas, which Europe needs. The countries of the European Union, in turn, are in a position to help Russia build the economic structures that a modern economy needs. Considerations regarding a security partnership must be based on the threats to which a country or region is exposed. If there are common dangers, there is probably a corresponding incentive to work together to defend against these dangers. In this sense, there are significant reasons in favour of a partnership between Europe and Russia. The USA obviously sees things differently; all the more reason to discuss these issues openly as part of the transatlantic dialogue.

6.6 How should we behave towards China?

Originally, it was primarily the globalisation of the world economy driven by the USA that contributed significantly to China becoming the second strongest economy in the world. Now the Middle Kingdom is seen by the USA as a "strategic rival" and an economic war is taking place. Europeans are being advised to "de-risk" and "de-couple", i.e. to withdraw from business with China. In 2020, however, China overtook the USA as the European Union's most important trading partner for the first time. This year, the EU's trade volume with China totalled € 586 billion, compared to € 555 billion with the USA. Despite the coronavirus crisis, EU exports to China continued to rise by 2.2% to € 202.5 billion.

In 2017, the US reemphasised in its National Security Strategy that it is the guarantor of the international order; Russia and China, on the other hand, were classified as hostile states. This is because these two countries are striving to reshape the international order, which, according to Washington, they are not entitled to do. In fact, in recent decades, China has emerged as an economic power that is quite willing to realise its influence in terms of power politics. In Washington, this Chinese policy, in particular President Xi Jinping's pet project, the Belt and Road Initiative, is seen as a threat to the existing order. Leading academics are also of the opinion that this development would lead to war between the USA and China.

The West often argues that economic strength automatically means political power. This is not true. Decades ago, Europe and America were flooded with Japanese cars and Japanese high technology without Japan's political influence increasing significantly as a result.

Donald Trump has declared an economic war on China, which his successor Biden has intensified. This is about much more than trade issues. It is about dominance in a new international order. How should Europe behave in this context? Will the Europeans be able to defend their own interests? As the new US administration is emphasising its desire to place greater emphasis on human rights and the rights of minorities with political rivals such as China, Europe will be expected to do the same. But how can a change in behaviour be achieved in an ancient civilisation that has followed its own code of values since Confucius? Are we prepared to accept permanent tensions with Beijing under the motto of "human rights"? Where is the line between "spreading universal values" and neo-colonialism in disguise?

If there is a way to promote the rights of citizens, it is probably to create an even broader middle class through the development of the economy or to present institutions such as those in Europe as a model. In any case, the European Union should endeavour to negotiate a new international order within the framework of multilateral institutions and not try to impose it through violent conflict.

Is it possible to reshape, perhaps even improve, transatlantic relations under the conditions described here?

YES! However, this must be based on political realities, even if they are viewed critically, and not on wishful thinking. There are opportunities both in the bilateral sphere, from trade agreements to increased scientific cooperation and environmental protection, but also in the multilateral sphere, in the development of a new international order. Above all, however, it is about mutual political understanding and trust. This must not be decreed by one side, even if the leadership role of the USA is recognised, but must be developed through dialogue.

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