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Nord Stream Logo (Bild: Pjotr Mahhonin / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 4.0)

360 Degrees Nord Stream 2

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Born in 1959, studied journalism, philosophy and law, acquired a commercial pilot's license, was managing director of Cargolifter World GmbH and trained as a project manager. As a scriptwriter and film director, he has produced more than 20 documentaries for arte, ZDF, and ARD, which have also been broadcast on TV in more than 20 countries, including the USA, Canada, Russia, and Australia. He writes for numerous blogs and publishes on the video channel "Das 3. Jahrtausend" with over 50,000 subscribers. Together with Jens Wernicke, he has just published the book "Klimakatastrophe". Soon to be published by him is "Im Auftrag der Eliten: Der Fall Herrhausen und andere politische Morde".



In 2017 I joined the "Druschba Peace Drive" with three of my friends, driving from Berlin straight across Russia to Grozny in Chechnya to gain an impression of the country and its people.

There were many unforgettable moments. For example, as we crossed the border to the Kalmyk Republic, part of the multi-ethnic Russian state, a huge placard of the Dalai Lama welcomed us with the phrase "Om mani padme hum" in Cyrillic script. The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of the republic and at times I almost felt as though I were in Tibet, a place I know well from an expedition I went on for the German television broadcaster ZDF. The people looked like Tibetans and—what particularly struck me—they laughed like Tibetans.

The event that impressed me most of all, however, took place in Dagestan. After many dull hours of driving along dead straight roads through seemingly endless steppes, we stopped over at a road café belonging to an elderly lady. Our hostess received us with all the warmth and friendliness that most Russians still felt towards Germans at that time.

The stop-over café was right next to a cattle kolkhozs —as a sign informed us—and a deeply sun-tanned man about sixty years old was sitting on one of the chairs in the neon-lit and easy-to-clean

room. He was missing a couple of teeth and looked a bit battered. He obviously belonged to the kolkhoz—a Russian cowboy, in other words. He beckoned me closer and asked whether I was German. “Yes”, I said. Then he asked whether I knew German history. “Well, yes”, I said. And did I know anything about the history of the Cold War, he wanted to know. “Yes”, I said, “in fact, that’s my speciality.” He eyed me keenly.

“Then please tell me why the Germans—and only they, of all the peoples in the world—believe the Americans mean well with them?”

I was dumbfounded. It felt like an age before I could reply: “That is, I think, the best question I have heard in the past twenty years.” And at the same time, I thought: “This from a cowherd in the middle of nowhere in the Russian steppe.” I felt a little embarrassed; once again I been reminded never to underestimate Russian education, particularly that of the older people

The cowherd was not satisfied. “Thank you. But what is your answer? Why is this so?” I didn’t know what to say. “I’ve never given it much thought. I don’t know.” He nodded, disappointed. I was ashamed.

The shrewd cowherd’s question has pursued me ever since and, during the past weeks, has gained additional, unexpected weight. The destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines and the strained silence of German politicians and media in the wake of Seymour Hersch’s publication [1] seem like a scene in a theatre of the absurd. Or like a man who comes upon his wife in bed with a lover and tries to pretend nothing has happened, because the man in his bed is his boss and he is afraid of what might happen if he protests.

Olaf Scholz was publicly humiliated by US President Biden on 7 February 2022, when the latter, standing right beside him, declared there would “no longer be a Nord Stream 2” if Russia were to invade Ukraine. When a journalist asked how, exactly, he would do this, since the pipeline was a German project, Biden

answered: “I promise you, we can do it.” Scholz never said a word. He probably thought he had no choice in the matter, but by submitting to this humiliation he has diminished the standing and authority of Germany throughout the world [2]. By acquiescing to the destruction of Nord Stream 2, he has destroyed the foundation of the economic strength of the German nation [3], built on a business model that produced valuable products while using cheap energy. At the same time, relations between Germany and Russia, and the entire Eurasian region, are being destroyed. This may be in the interests of the USA; it is not in the interests of Germany. There is no “free West”, where all member states follow identical interests [4]. Clearly, the US administration does not mean well with Germany. The Germans, however, refuse to acknowledge this fact. And not only the Germans.

Sweden, in line for NATO membership, has examined the Nord Stream crime scene, since it lies in its territorial waters. The Swedes prefer not to share their findings. The country has a rather shameful history regarding fact-finding commissions, as is illustrated by the investigations into the death of Olaf Palme, the sinking of the Estonia, the murder of Dag Hammarskjöld, or the first two of three investigative committees into the submarine incidents in Swedish waters. Unlike Italy, where investigative judges have to be stopped with car bombs when they get too close to the truth, perpetrators closely connected to the hegemon need never fear exposure by determined investigators. In fact, Sweden has even changed its constitution.

Since November of last year, two months after the attack on Nord Stream 2 and the Swedish investigation into the matter, any person passing on information that may have a negative impact on the relations between Sweden and other nations or organisations such as UN or NATO may now be punishable by law [5].

In other words, whistle-blowers or media can now be charged with foreign espionage. This is so pathetic that one could almost call it “typically German”.

In Germany, just three weeks after the attack, Sahra Wagenknecht asked the Federal Government what insights had been gained and what measures were being taken—independently or in collaboration with the EU or NATO. After all, the federal prosecutor’s office in Karlsruhe was investigating “a severe, violent sabotage attack on the energy supply”. The cowardly and criminal terror attack on Nord Stream 2—as it would probably have been described, had one been able to saddle Russia with the blame—is an act of war against the Federal Republic of Germany. In fact, it could justify the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. But of course, this is problematic, when both the attacker and the attacked are members of NATO. The only adequate response would be to leave the organisation, and to follow through with additional, tough measures.

Sahra Wagenknecht received the following answer [6]: “After careful deliberation, the Federal Government has come to the conclusion that, in the interests of the integrity of the state, no further information, not even in rudimentary form, can be provided”. The reason given was the “Third Party Rule” that regulates the international collaboration of intelligence agencies. According to this agreement, the exchange of information between states is subject to non-disclosure agreements. “The information requested pertains to extremely sensitive intelligence interests, so that, for once, the well-being of the state outweighs the representative’s right to information.”

After Seymour Hersh had published his article [7], media outlets such as *Spiegel*, *Tagesschau*, *Süddeutsche* and others never discussed the results of his research; instead, they tried to discredit him with various attempts at mudslinging, in the hope that something would stick. The same thing had happened when Hersh uncovered the “My Lai” massacre, the covert bombing of Cambodia, the CIA-operation “Jennifer” (salvaging a sunken Soviet submarine from a depth of five kilometres), the illegal operations of the CIA against anti-war activists protesting the Vietnam War in the USA, various plans to assassinate foreign statesmen, the involvement of

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Inneres — Antwort — hib 327/2017

„Third-Party-Rule“ erläutert

Berlin: (hib/STO) Um die „Third-Party-Rule“ geht es in der Antwort der Bundesregierung ([18/12297](#)) auf eine Kleine Anfrage der Fraktion Die Linke ([18/12035](#)). Danach ist die „Third-Party-Rule“ eine „allgemein anerkannte Verhaltensregel der internationalen Kooperation im Sicherheits- und Nachrichtenbereich“.

Wie die Bundesregierung weiter ausführt, handelt es sich ihrer Auffassung nach bei der „Third-Party-Rule“ nicht um ein absolutes Verbot der Weitergabe von Informationen, sondern um ein „Verbot mit Zustimmungsvorbehalt“. Dabei behalte sich „die eine Information übermittelnde Stelle in der Sache das Informationsbeherrschungsrecht vor“. Vor einer Weitergabe sei daher das Einverständnis der die Information übermittelnden Stelle einzuholen, das die Weitergabe legitimieren könne. Die Einhaltung der „Third-Party-Rule“ und des Verwendungs- und Weitergabevorbehalts sei „Geschäftsgrundlage für die vertrauensvolle Kooperation zwischen Nachrichtendiensten in der internationalen Zusammenarbeit“.

Translation of the response of the Federal Government

The Federal Government explains "Third Party Rule" (screenshot)

23.05.2017

Internal Affairs — Answer — hib 327/2017

Berlin: (hib/SIQ) The response of the Federal Government to a minor Interpellation by "Die Linke" (18/12035) is based on the "Third Party Rule". According to the government, the "Third Party Rule" is a "generally recognised rule of conduct for international collaboration in the security and intelligence sectors".

As the Federal Government further explained, in their opinion the "Third Party Rule" does not constitute a complete prohibition of disseminating information, but is a prohibition based on the principle of "originator control", which prescribes that information shared with foreign services cannot be shared with third parties without the permission of the service that supplied the information. Complying with the "Third Party Rule" and the prescriptions for the uses and dissemination of information therein is the "basis of the trust on which international collaboration between intelligence services depends".

Screenshot_ThirdPartyRule_EN.png

the CIA in the coup against Allende in Chile, Israel's nuclear weapons programme, the Saudi funding of Al Qaida, and the torture in Abu Ghraib—to mention just some of his scoops.

In other words, it is not only in cases such as Julian Assange, Edward Snowden, Michael Hastings [8], or Gary Webb [9] that the executors of the values-based West reveal that they are less enamoured of free speech and the freedom of the press than they pretend. The same holds true for Seymour Hersh, who now has to post his articles on substack, a publishing platform, and call for donations, just like Glenn Greenwald and Matt Taibbi, because *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Atlantic* are no longer available to him. The US corporate media are no longer the admirable institution that they were.

In fact, one can say that the leadership of the values-based West, including Germany, often has a distinctly creative relationship to truth—these people already begin lying while they listen. The term “Imperium of Lies” is, therefore, a well-coined phrase. However, the question must be asked: Why are we so willing to serve?

It is not conducive to autonomous and independent thinking, if almost the entirety of German political and media elites camp out under the Atlantik Brücke (Atlantic Bridge), but have no comparable relations with China, Russia, India, Brazil, South Africa or Iran.

Serving the interests of US foreign policy—possibly at the cost of the German economy—is not a sustainable strategy. Of course, it is useful for members of the political and media elites to have ties to US think tanks, when they scramble for posts in European and German institutions [10]. These are almost completely filled with people of this ilk, who also, unflinchingly, eliminate dissident thinkers by means of cancel culture. This is indicative of opportunism and irresponsibility; it is not a strategy.

The RAND Corporation, one of the most influential US think tanks, recently published a paper that German journalists prefer to ignore. It is titled “Avoiding a long war. US policy and the trajectory of the Russia Ukraine conflict” [11]. Prior to this, in 2019, the RAND Corporation had published a study titled “Extending Russia”, clearly the script for the American conflict with Russia [12]. After all, the current war, which began with the Russian invasion, was anything but “unprovoked”. The West did nothing to prevent it—on the contrary [13].

The defining sentence in the more recent paper states: “The costs and risks of a long war in Ukraine are significant and outweigh the possible benefits of such a trajectory for the United States”.

The analysis, therefore, seems to have shifted. As recently as six months ago,

the goal of the US and its NATO vassals was to ruin Russia with sanctions, thereby bringing about a regime change [14]. Once that had been accomplished, Russia was to be divided into several new states, a balkanisation that was framed as “decolonisation” [15].

The more recent, sober report by the RAND Corporation is proof that US geo-strategists are capable of assessing facts and producing competent analyses in accordance with US interests. In Europe, on the contrary, particularly in Germany, strategic geo-political thought is denounced as “conspiracy theory” and even cautious attempts at it have become punishable by law.

Today, I would answer the perceptive cowherd in Dagestan as follows: It is because of the absence of any vital intellectual life, an insufficient love of truth—of which courage is invariably a part, and an incapacity for stringent geo-political analysis. It is because of a specific type of inane moralism in foreign policy, the result of a failed process of coming to terms with the nation's past crimes against civilisation.

How badly this process has failed is evident in the support given by German politicians to the “social nationalist” extreme right wing in Ukraine, in the politicians’—of the CDU, SPD and Green parties—celebration of the phrase “Slava Ukraini”, the rallying call of Nazi collaborators [16], and in statements made by Germany's foreign minister, Baerbock,

Sources:

- [1] Free21, Seymour Hersh, „Wie Amerika die Nord Stream-Pipeline ausschaltete“, 17.02.2023, <<https://free21.org/wie-amerika-die-nord-stream-pipeline-ausschaltete/>>
- [2] Free21, Scott Ritter, „Im Auge des Bruders“, 19.02.2023, <<https://free21.org/im-auge-des-bruders/>>
- [3] The Unz Review, Michael Hudson, „German Interview“, am 15.12.2022, <<https://www.unz.com/mhudson/german-interview/>>
- [4] Nachdenkseiten, Oskar Lafontaine, „Ami go home!“, am 23.12.2019, <<https://www.nachdenkseiten.de/?p=57308>>
- [5] Handelsblatt, „Schweden verabschiedet umstrittene Verfassungsänderung zu Spionage!“, am 16.11.2022, <<http://web.archive.org/web/20230302090727/https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/whistleblower-schweden-verabschiedet-umstrittene-verfassungs-aenderung-zu-spionage/28814108.html>>
- [6] Berliner Zeitung, Christine Dankbar, „Sahra Wagenknecht: Regierung verweigert Informationen zu Pipeline-Anschlägen“, am 16.10.2022, <<https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik-gesellschaft/exklusiv-nord-stream-explosionen-ostsee-linke-politikerin-sahra-wagenknecht-bundesregierung-verweigert-informationen-zu-pipeline-anschlaegen-li.277250>>
- [7] siehe [1]
- [8] New York Mag, Benjamin Wallace, „Who Killed Michael Hastings?“, am 08.11.2013,

at a conference staged by the American Atlantic Council on the “Transatlantic Green Deal” and “German strategies against Russia and China” [17].

The moderator, Fareed Zakaria, mentioned that Joschka Fischer had “thrown a couple of Molotov cocktails in anti-American demonstrations”, before he became a pro-American NATO supporter. Baerbock told her that she remembered the eastward expansion of the EU in 2004. At the time, she recalled, she stood on a bridge over the Oder at the border to Poland. “My own grandfather fought at this border, at this river, in the winter of 1945 ... And at that moment I really thought, wow, we not only stand on the shoulders of Joschka Fischer but also on those of our grandparents who made it possible that hostile countries were not only able to live together in peace, but even in friendship.”

In the meantime, however, nobody seems to see that, time and time again,

even after the end of communism and the introduction of capitalism, Russia continues to be painted as the arch-enemy. Obviously, the Russian political system—the mantra continuously repeated during the Cold War— is no longer the defining criterium. Does the negative assessment of Russia perhaps reflect geo-political interests? Could they, in truth, be the decisive factor? And does the absence of any such line of analysis, in the end, prevent a realistic assessment of whose interests Germany's current, insane foreign policy actually serves?

As an impartial look at a map clearly shows: Germany is a part of Central Europe, and Europe is a part of the Eurasian continent. We are further away from northern America than we realise. Russia is close to us. China is within reach. Looking forward, these are fundamental, hopeful facts.

I remain deeply indebted to the cowherd in Dagestan.