

Current Concerns

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Switzerland – a successful national state model

Finding the highest common denominator in the struggle against the global centralists

by Reinhard Koradi

The independence and self-determination of nation-states are enormously put to the test. The national governments often tend to play an ambiguous role when it comes to fending off attacks on national sovereignty. The defence of their countries' freedom and sovereignty is therefore becoming more and more the role of their citizens. The central challenge of maintaining their own state by democratic means presupposes an internal alliance among the people. They may have different political and ideological values but when it comes to national unity all that counts is agreement in the matter and the willingness to take joint action.

Switzerland has also – probably because as a relatively successful national state model it has a certain imitation effect – come to the attention of the global centralists. In addition to the verbal attacks, substantial pressure is being exerted from abroad to make Switzerland submit. In connection with the tax dispute and the bilateral agreements with the EU, our country is actually being blackmailed. In this way Switzerland as a financial centre and ultimately as a workplace is at the focus of an ongoing economic war.

Obviously the forces hostile to Switzerland speculate that once the economic basis has been undermined, the other pillars of the political art work Switzerland will begin to falter.

In addition to European aggressors, the US is also strongly involved. If we analyse both the current and the future situation of Switzerland in an international context, it is obvious that we are not going to escape the line of fire so easily. The long-forgotten “intellectual and moral defence” urgently needs a refresher course that covers all classes of society.

The nation-state as a troublemaker

In the global world, subtle autonomous structures interfere with the unrestricted access to freedom and self-determination on the part of the international circles of power. In recent decades we have tolerated the concentration of power at the expense of the sovereignty of our nation-states almost silently. The parliamentary debate then talks about “swallowing the

bitter pill.” But why do it, if the pill tastes so awful?

Under the umbrella of globalisation, an almost perverse dictatorship of the financial aristocracy is spreading over the world. There are hardly any areas of life that are not regulated by the principle of “efficiency improvements for higher returns”.

The primacy of economics rules in the public sector (primary care), education and health care, or even in political institutions such as municipalities. The relevant keywords are privatisation, outsourcing, organisational development, new public management, mergers, etc. Another worrying factor is the myriad of consultants that are active as change managers or PR agents in the town halls, the cantonal administrations and in Berne. Not only do they charge huge fees at the expense of taxpayers, but all too often, like Trojans, undermine the largely well-functioning state institutions.

Keen observers will realise that this increases as time goes on, that none of these changes are anywhere near bringing the promised material benefits, but instead they serve the deliberate infiltration of established values, political and cultural achievements. They are an attack on the basis of our identity and advance an obligation to reform that ultimately serves as a catalyst for the commercialisation and centralisation of the local communities.

Self-determination, solidarity, mutual aid, internal cohesion, as well as genuine equality of opportunity fall victim to the tyranny of commerce. The political art work Switzerland risks falling apart under the absolute influence of money. The (financial) economy prevails and determines what is and what is not. The term “economy” must be redefined. The primary meaning of economy – creating value – has long been replaced by the expansion of power and the unilateral enforcement of interests in favour of the rich. The manufacturing, value-adding (real) economy is gradually being replaced by a casino economy, which abuses the border-free and practically lawless economic field for more audacious speculation, thereby imposing a profound change in values. De-

liberate deception, misinformation and a business conduct that primarily pursues personal gain (i.e. the accumulation of power), have led to a far-reaching change of the world of business. In a world with strong and sovereign nation-states, the breakdown of these values would not have proceeded so smoothly. The international organisations (WTO, IMF, World Bank, OECD, etc.) must seriously ask themselves about the extent to which they have paved the way for the robber barons from high finance by creating the conditions for their plundering activities. No less questionable is the role of the media – that manipulate public opinion and have long since abandoned the task of making a genuine contribution to the democratic decision-making process.

An end must be put to the unlimited activities of the speculators and their financial excesses. They are the cause of the crises, increased poverty and hunger and destroy national wealth and thus entire economies. A renewal of the nation-state that enforces and defends its sovereign rights with the utmost determination is the obvious approach for a variety of reasons. This involves the central question of how we (each state for itself) want to regulate life together. In this context, account must be taken of the need to establish an economy that sees itself as part of society and creates solid values for the people to promote the common good.

Sovereign nation-states as a bulwark against the global rule of capital

The key to global rule of capital has been and still is the dissolution of sovereign nation-states. With the loss of sovereignty of the manageable nation-state, the people also lose their independence and right of self-determination. The incapacitation of the people by centralised power structures has reached an unbearable extent in recent years. And anyone who still believes not to be affected by this siege by the power centers of high finance, is subject to a very deceptive perception of the ongoing transformation of the world and value system. The nations must resist the centralist forc-

The citizens vote – Brussels decides

by Lukas Reimann, National Councillor (Switzerland)

Our neighbours cling to *Angela Merkel* with impressive clarity. They save us from an arrogant Chancellor *Steinbrück* and continued attacks against Switzerland. The cavalry has fallen – with the second worst SPD result in their history. Pride goes before a fall. But how important were these elections at all? The Bundestag, however, does not have much to decide anymore.

Out of 23,167 laws and regulations, adopted in the period from 1998 to 2004 and binding for Germany, almost 19,000 come from Brussels, as the Federal Ministry of Justice showed in a compilation answering a request of the CSU. The Bundestag, however, has adopted only 4,250 bills. Since then, the number of EU specific decrees has grown from 84 percent to currently over 90 percent. That shows impressively who is really responsible for the torrent of law and bureaucracy people often complain about. The problems come from Brussels. And it represents the diametric contradiction to transparent democracy. Germany votes, but Brussels decides. The improper centralization of the decision-making power is progressing. The former president *Roman Herzog* and *Lüder Gerken*, Director of the Centre for European Policy, made clear in a much acclaimed article “Europe deprives us and our representatives”: “The institutional structures of the EU suffer alarmingly

from a democratic deficit and a de facto suspension of the separation of powers.”

As a small state we [the Swiss] would have only minimal impact on EU legislation.

In addition to this are the binding decisions of the European Court of Justice ECJ. In its rulings on issues of competence it systematically decides in favor of an EU competence. EU law is – to say it with the words of the Federal Constitutional Court – predominant “in the sense of maximum exhaustion of community powers”. The EU Treaty also obliges the courts towards “the implementation of an ever closer union”.

The division of tasks between the Confederation and the Cantons is clearly established in the Federal Constitution. A corresponding catalogue of competences between the EU and its Member States does not exist. Thus the EU decides today on almost all areas of society – ineffectively, undemocratically and intransparently.

Now German politicians might say Germany as a great power could have a great influence in Brussels. What may be partly right for Germany is certainly not true for Switzerland. As a small state we would have only minimal impact on EU legislation. Due to the direct democracy and binding referendums, no national politicians would be deprived of power in favor of EU politicians. No, it is the people that would

be disempowered.

It would be degraded to the status of pure spectators who could no longer execute 90 percent of today’s referendums or their results would not be binding, because EU legislation would be superior to national referendums.

The negotiating mandate adopted by the Federal Council for institutional access to the EU is therefore dangerous and must be rejected. Under all circumstances we must prevent Switzerland from adopting dynamic EU law in the future and becoming subordinate to the EU Court of Justice.

Renouncing a sovereign legislation greatly restricts independence and direct democracy. The EU would be our highest legal authority. Switzerland does not need institutional links with the EU. On the contrary, it owes its liberal position and its good economic situation only to its independent state pillars.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



Lukas Reimann
(picture thk)

“Switzerland – a successful ...”

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es’ claim of power and regain their natural right of self-determination. The nation-state is to be strengthened so that it can function as a bulwark against unlimited access of a small but voracious elite to natural resources, traffic and goods flows and thereby also to people.

Break up centralism through self-responsibility

Freedom has its price. There is no independence without personal contribution and responsibility. Those who are not willing to lend a hand and delegate responsibility, whether to the EU or to international organisations (NATO, WTO, IMF, World Bank, OECD), lose the right to be sovereign. With the neglect of an effective military force, the surrender of a national currency, the taking over of foreign law and the compliant implementation of transnational programs (Bologna, Pisa, etc.) the corresponding organisations gain access to national control and enforcement mechanisms. The lack of courage to defend legitimate national interests

in international disputes will be exploited mercilessly by contrahendants as an invitation to meddle in internal affairs.

The time has come for the people to close the ranks and take over responsibility to contribute to the common good. There are already many valuable individual initiatives. According to the motto together we are strong –, they will lead to more decentralised life forms, characterised by personal contribution. In the course of this it is important to maintain diversity, to promote “biodiversity” of ideas and actions; always having the unifying purpose in mind to promote unity and the common good. This probably entails that we as citizens break our silence and actively correct abuses and aberrations by implementing democratic means such as elections, votings, referendums and initiatives.

If the Federal Council and Parliament trample on the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation and believe they can simply ignore the Constitution as part of their political actions, then the people constituting the supreme authority have to become more active. The facts are on the table. What we need is courage and a self-

assured representation of interests by the elected Swiss officials at international and intergovernmental negotiations.

It’s about our freedom, sovereignty and peoples’ rights. About the ability of an operational army to defend the country’s borders and contribute to the maintenance of peace. We must pursue an energy policy that ensures a sufficient, diversified, safe, economical and environmentally friendly energy supply. Similarly, the national supply of essential goods and services in the event of power-political or military threats and in severe shortages must be guaranteed. This includes an agriculture which is able to cover the highest possible degree of self-supply. Careful management of the limited natural resources is another topic on the list. Land and nature must not be exhausted to an extent that the livelihood for generations to come takes massive damage. Protecting the livelihood of future generations also includes education and imparting values. The protection of life with all related activities – for example in the context of health care – is also a central priority.

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War Picture 2013*

by Dr sc techn Franz Betschon, former Colonel, General Staff



Franz Betschon
(picture thk)

At a time when Switzerland has the weakest army since the outbreak of the Second World War, signs of a great war are increasing worldwide. This was the reason for the book review of “Mut zur Kursänderung – Schweizerische Sicherheitspolitik am Wendepunkt” (Courage to Change Course – Swiss security policy at a turning point – ISBN 978-3-033-03917-9) published by the Group Giardino. Those who believed, however, that the book would cause an awakening, were wrong. Although the book is being praised, it is simply dismissed as an interesting apprentice piece of the authors. Actually, this is how we must assess the enterprise WEA (Weiterentwicklung der Armee – Further Development of the Army), since just in times of extreme danger it wants to give the army back to the workshop in order to slowly rebuild and substantially reduce it, and the need for mandatory military service is [or was] seriously discussed.

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World political reality and planning in Switzerland

This might be related to the fact that the federal army planners still think in categories suggesting that a potential enemy would come only from the European environment. Once we are “surrounded by friends”, geopolitical considerations are applied only in so far as they do not interfere with our own wishes.

The very latest events are to be listed here and once again cross-relations revealed, so that the alarm bell might ring for the public at last. This is not about speculation, but about events that citizens can themselves find out about. I would

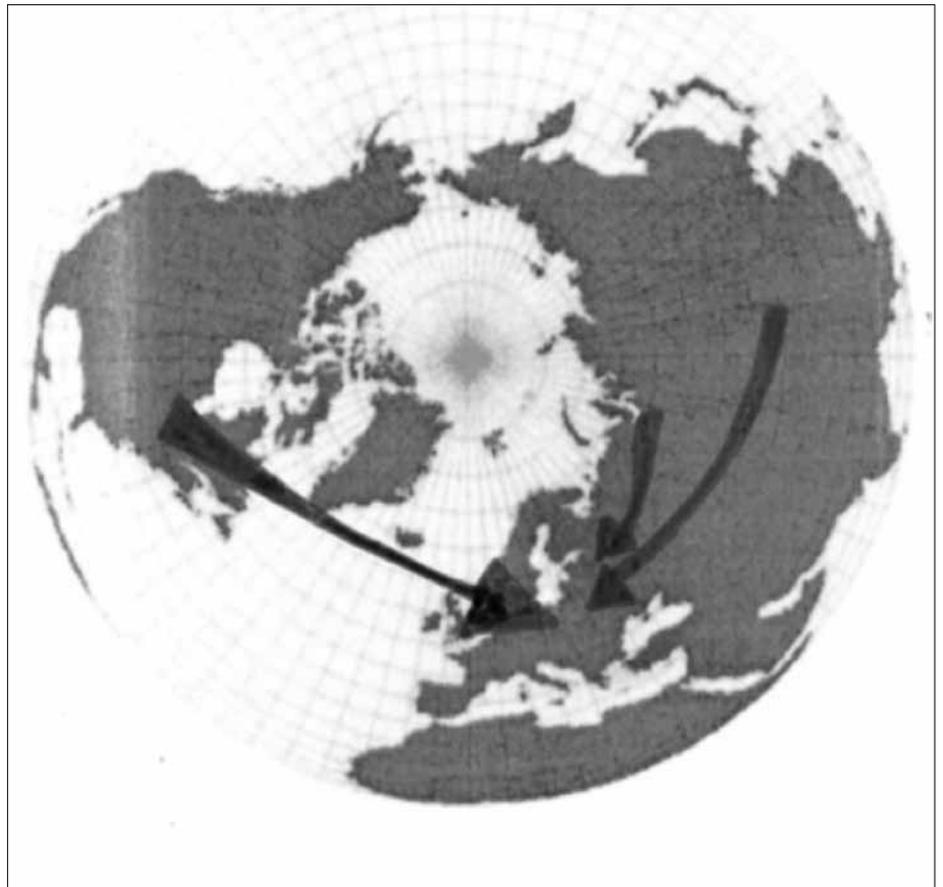
* Not classified, as all data are open for the public!

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What can we do?

A comparison between this incomplete summary of requirement specifications derived from the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation and the effective political work by the Federal Council and Federal Parliament reveals consid-



Disarmed Europe and above all Switzerland are threatened to be ground in the battle for resources between Asia and North America. (picture ma)

also like to point out specific plans of the great military actors.

Up to now the fact has not been realized that, where the maritime interests of China and the US overlap in the western Pacific, a strategic change in terms of technological weapon systems is looming, a development that might lead to ending the era of the large aircraft carriers, similar to the times when the big battleships were replaced by aircraft carriers (see ASMZ 10/2013).

The US might be tempted to create a *fait accompli* and, take the bull by the horns, so to speak. Meanwhile, the events in the Middle East follow swiftly one on the other. Certain players are eager to light

the fuse to this powder keg and provoke the clash. Once more dubious and incomplete intelligence allegations will be used as part of the argument.

Most dangerous enemy capabilities for Switzerland

This analysis, translated into the language of classical military planners, leads to the following list of “most dangerous enemy capabilities”. It goes with the *craftsmanship of these planners* to plan the army according to such criteria, and not to argue with probable scenarios. Only in the case of deployment do probabilities serve as a basis for tactical or operational decisions.

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erable sins of omission that we as citizens must not simply accept. A thorough rectification is to be demanded. And should anyone refuse these adaptations, he or she should logically resign.

And as for our economy, we can – like all other nations for themselves – seriously consider whether a parallel economy is necessary in the face of the current neo-liberal economy. This is not about competition, but solely about econom-

ic activities in the area of securing one’s livelihood. This includes food, clothing, a roof over your head and the associated upstream and downstream commercial activities. Supply gaps and unemployment can be overcome by means of small-scale structures and through personal contributions, self-responsibility and mutual help, if necessary, set up and implemented according to cooperative principles.

"War Picture 2013"

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To use them already in the planning phase is the most convenient, because anything might be alleged without having to supply the factual proof.

Of course, the list below seems at first unreal and scary. The latest events have geopolitically accelerated to such a degree that a deployment case might be near, i.e. the below-described and most dangerous enemy capabilities could already have turned out to be most probable. In military jargon, one would put it as follows:

The "enemy" can ...

- A *Destroy or threaten livelihoods*, if Switzerland does not submit to external decisions. *Cyberwar* may destroy infrastructure or put it out of operation. This threat may come from anywhere and most likely not from the Western European countries.
- B *Extort strategic resources* (money, gold, commodities, troops, patents, etc.). The inexplicable decline (i.e. manipulated) of the gold price at the time of writing this article has already caused damage worth tens of billions at the *Swiss National Bank*.
- C *Avail strategic key areas* (energy infrastructure, airports, railway control centers, etc.) and / or *strategic axes* (NEAT, highways, etc.) for purposes which are not in the national interest. This does not even require a terrestrial operation.
- D *Achieve vertical encirclements* by cruise missiles, standoff weapons, strategic bombers or drones.
- E *Perform terrestrial operations from a great distance*. Without any possibility of reaction for the Swiss army, situ-

ations are conceivable in which *foreign armies* wage war against each other *in Switzerland* about Swiss resources (Remember 1798).

F *Wage A-, B-, or C-war*, as always provided for.

Such a war will be an asymmetric one

Asymmetry means here: the use of technologies or procedures that prevent the opponent from bringing his own technologies and procedures into effect. An opponent of Switzerland can cause enormous material damage with relatively low means.

Such a war might also be a hybrid one

Hybrid means that different forms of war may occur at different times or happen simultaneously with each other. The opponent can customize his package tailored to Switzerland with a "menu technology". It will not always be entirely clear, whether this is already a robust conflict that requires the use of the army, or whether other means may still be used.

"Joint Vision 2020" and the planning paper "Full-spectrum dominance"

Unfortunately, neither the debt crisis in the United States, nor the world economic crisis and the many lost wars of the United States Armed Forces made Washington reconsider their current strategic objective, which is to be the only global power, sitting "at the head of the table", at the most prominent seat of the negotiating table, and dictating the game's rules. The US debt has a different meaning for the United States than for the rest of the world, anyway. As a temporary guardian of the world's reserve currency, the US dollar, it has political tools at its disposal with which it can make the rest of the world pay their debt, for a long time to

come. The greater part of the dollar holdings does not lie in the American economy, devaluation will mostly likely hit the rest of the world over and again. This a former US Federal Reserve head once said: *The dollar is our currency, but your problem!*

It is generally recognized that other powers (e.g. China) are pushing forward, that one's own resources are limited and that third world countries are no self-service store. One even recognizes that the military situation has changed and we must therefore adjust our strategy papers.

However, the goal of "full-spectrum dominance", i.e. to have the last word everywhere, is not altered. Literature says that "*Joint Vision 2020* (meaning a perspective for directing operations including the armed forces in 2020) is a strategy paper which was published on the 30 June 2000 by the US Department of Defense containing considerations on a 'superiority along a wide front' (full-spectrum dominance) of the US armed forces, so that they may be enabled to counter threats around the globe even in the year 2020. The ability to hit a global strike plays a central part in this context."

It is true, they have tacitly taken leave from the original objective to be able to wage two separate big wars at the same time. This of course also means that the burden to dominate a world war is supposed to be born no longer alone. Big euphoric armament projects were buried as well. Instead, there are considerations how opponents who question the global dominance of the US may be disciplined by means of the old *law of the jungle* rules.

The advance warning clock has been ticking for some time, now!

On 16 July 2013, the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" reported the largest military exercises since 1991, under the title "Russian war games". The Kremlin had carried out a large military exercise in eastern Russia. They were about testing the *operational readiness* of their armed forces and sending a political signal. Up to 160,000 members of the army, about 1,000 battle tanks, 130 aircraft, helicopters, long-range bombers and other armored vehicles were deployed *from a standing start*. In addition, maneuvers with a



The Abraham Lincoln naval unit. The global military power development ("Power Projection") is still mainly based on such aircraft carrier battle groups. Their importance may have been already undermined by other military technologies, a strategic change is emerging. (picture ma)

"War Picture 2013"

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total of 70 ships took place in the Sea of Okhotsk.

Among other things, the ability was tested to quickly shift personnel, weapons and military equipment across *long distances*. Talk was also about rail transport over distances of 800 to 1,000 km a day. 16 trains with 562 wagons and special loading and unloading facilities were in use.

As early as in February 2013 there had been a similar alarm training on a smaller scale; this, however, revealed significant shortcomings in the war machinery. The recent exercise, which lasted until the 20 July 2013, was a consequence and was to show whether the necessary conclusions had been drawn. Sooner or later this will be the case. Each of these exercises was initiated personally by President *Putin* from a standing start, just like the entire Federal Council ordered the execution of overall defense exercises in Switzerland in former times.

In the military area Chierbarkul, in the Chelyabinsk region, a *Russian-Chinese* maneuver called "Peace Mission 2013" took place from 27 July to 15 August 2013, which served as an anti-terror fight. Almost simultaneously, joint exercises by the *US and Japan* took place in Hokkaido.

Thus Russia shows that it is again in a position to trigger off greater military operations *from a standing start* (zero warning time!) across greater distances after this hot phase of exercise. *The advance warning clock has been ticking for quite some time, without Switzerland being ready to take note of that! The options C and E are thus already practiced!*

The US is once again pursuing a policy of nuclear first-strike

"Prominent commentators warn that the US government is preparing a nuclear first strike against Russia and China." We owe this information to the weekly newspaper *Neue Solidarität* (www.solidaritaet.com, 7.8.2013). This allegation was raised by the well-known columnist *Paul Craig Roberts*, a former senior official in the Department of Commerce under President *Reagan*, and he goes on saying that the United States had pursued this policy already under the *Bush/Cheney* administration.

In military terms, this would make sense. It would be taking the bull by the horns, as indicated in section 1. A nuclear first strike would be directed particularly against countries that cannot be defeated militarily on the ground. In this

"Flying coffins"

In the mid-30s practically only outdated aircraft was at the Swiss Air Force's disposal, and the then head of the Department for Military Technology told Federal Councillor *Minger* in November 1937: "Major general *Bandi's* postulation on rapid rearmament in the field of warplanes and anti-aircraft warfare is completely unnecessary, as we are absolutely convinced that today a European war is even more distant than a few years ago." (*Ernst Wyler*, *Chronik der Schweizer Militärviatik*, (History of Swiss Military Aviation), 1990, pp. 86/87). *Minger* himself, was not impressed and when in the context of the international aviation meeting in Dubendorf (Switzerland) in 1937 there was the opportunity to purchase a number of then ultra-modern *Messerschmitt* fighter planes from Germany, he supported the motion to purchase 90 of them, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1938. The opponents of this urgently needed acquisition of new aircraft ridiculed the

Messerschmitt aircraft as "flying coffins". In summer 1940, when the German Air Force blatantly violated Swiss airspace on several occasions on their flights to southern France, our pilots shot down at least 11 German bombers in dangerous dog-fights with exactly these *Messerschmitts* or forced them down – much to the anger of *Hitler*, *Göring* and his cohorts *Ernst Wetter*, "Duell der Flieger und Diplomaten" (Duel of the Pilots and Diplomats), 1987; *Karl Riss*, "Deutsche Luftwaffe über der Schweiz 1939-1945" (German Air Force above Switzerland 1939-1945), 1978). Trying to prevent the acquisition of the Swedish *Gripen* fighter jets with populist polls, reminds of the defamation of the *Messerschmitts* as "flying coffins", fighter aircraft, which – as a result – gave Nazi Germany an insight into our unconditional preparedness.

Hans-Georg Bandi,
contemporary witness, Berne

respect they seem to have learned from the wars the US has lost since the Korean War. Once more they are thinking in the categories of *surgical precision strikes*, so those attacked will be deprived of the opportunity to strike back with thermonuclear weapons, and those who attacked can survive.

The plans of President *Obama* are as well based on the idea of such a first strike. They were developed earlier in a paper called "Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)" published by the US Department of Defense, for the first time in 2002. The paper did not only mention Russia and the then "axis of evil" countries like Iran, Iraq and North Korea, but also China, Libya and Syria, hence not just nuclear weapons owners. *Voilà!*

The process is all the more remarkable given the fact that in 2009 *Obama* gave a speech in Prague, in which he outlined a world view that was free of nuclear weapons. Thus people believed that the US strategy would finally turn away from the muscle games of former times, and especially the American public was lured into this belief. Agreements that include an end to nuclear arms, by whomever, or even a general renunciation of the possibility of the use of weapons of mass destruction or specifically of nuclear weapons are not in sight.

Thus, the *most dangerous enemy option F* is already back in the planning of the respective powers and must therefore be considered by Switzerland, as well. The American analyst *Lyndon LaRouche* therefore thinks, that "*the world will be threatened by such a showdown sometime between September and Christmas of this year (2013), since we*

are expecting the collapse of the transatlantic financial system for that period."

The above maneuver of troops in the Far East immediately followed the Russian-Chinese naval maneuvers in the northern part of the Sea of Japan, the so-called Gulf of Peter the Great. Actually, this does not indicate an oversized reinforced exercise activity, because they are at the normal level of war-ready forces. In the meantime, other supplementary information has become known. Obviously, the Asian focus of *Obama's* new strategy and the increasingly militant policy of the Japanese government has sharpened the awareness in Moscow and Beijing that a military confrontation could happen soon in the region.

And Gibraltar and Syria?

Anyone who reads newspapers will remember the images showing *British warships off Gibraltar* by the end of August 2013. However, the money for the fuel costs of this operation had to be laboriously scraped together. Someone decided on flexing his muscles again. What the hell does that mean? Anyone looking for Gibraltar on a map will find this rock is far away from the UK, namely on the doorstep of Spain (the same applies to the Falklands). The UK mentally still considers itself a colonial power and has "actually" always regarded Adghanistan and Syria as their playing-field; according to that out-dated point of view, Gibraltar still blocks the UK's access to the Mediterranean.

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"War picture 2013"

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Surgical precision strikes of conventional type against Syria are also currently discussed, while at the time of writing this report no one knows what the exact goals might be, what is to be achieved at all and how such aggression might be terminated. One bright spot in this mess is the *US Chief of Staff Martin Dempsey*, who apparently tends to *think independently*. He had developed the military options to the attention of his boss, Secretary of Defense *Chuck Hagel*, but expressed concerns about the feasibility and does not agree with the opinion that the Syrian president could be "shot across the bows" by a few-days-operation. Dempsey had also pointed out in earlier statements that a no-fly zone, as many politicians advocate, represented an act of war, "I'd like to understand the plan to make peace before we start a war". Dempsey refused the usual cliché that war should never be left to the generals, however, you should neither leave it to the politicians.

In the meantime (early September 2013), the British Prime Minister *Cameron* has been tied back by his House of Commons, and also President *Obama* is on the verge of backtracking.

**Switzerland and Europe
between hammer and anvil –
first phase: economic war**

From the point of view of security policy, an economic war is a borderline case for the deployment of an army. It can also

be conducted by the attacker without an army; the nature of the use of means is, however, imposed on the defender.

The *Weltwoche* No 42/2011, pp. 60, published an interview with the former President of the *Swiss National Bank (SNB), J.-P. Roth*. An EU summit was painstakingly brought to an end just in those days and was celebrated as a breakthrough. Certainly, the German Chancellor is right when she equates the failure of the monetary union with a failure of Europe and thus envisages a major threat to peace. Several weeks after the interview with Roth, things have further developed in big steps. Helplessness prevails among EU leaders, and certainly they are all about to think the unthinkable and wonder where else on earth they could get hold of money or resources of any kind?

Roth said (in 2011!), among other things:

- "The politicians do not want to hear the truth" (could also apply to Swiss security policy!).
- "We will strongly be exposed to the threats of the EU in the coming years. The EU consists of 350 million citizens, we have merely 7 million and we are also in the middle of the EU structure. Since we are relatively strong, it is clear that the others are trying to get our money. We are not popular. That is the reality."
- This is what *Konrad Hummler* had called the "struggle for the nitty-gritty" ("Mut zur Kursänderung", p. 55).

- "The reality is that protectionism increases and thus the discrimination of Switzerland". (You could also call this the "law of the jungle".)
- "We are small. Threats and pressure will increase, and we will have to continue to live with it. The stronger the financial problems of our neighbors, the higher the pressure will be." (And these problems will lead to self-strangulation unless a miracle happens.)

The fact that the United Kingdom has decided on the capital gains compensation tax with Switzerland, hence a bilateral agreement, "is a sign for me that they want to see much money. [...] The Americans want to see money as well." Germany would like to see more money, but they have time and therefore did not consent to the flat rate withholding tax.

These are not dark prophecies, but already facts. However, the following facts are provisionally mere speculation. We do not know what exactly has been decided upon them (26.10.2011) in Brussels. Conjecture: There could be a letter to Switzerland in the final editing, in which we can read something like this (*most dangerous enemy capability B*) :

"The EU recognizes the sovereignty of Switzerland as it suits her, in full. Nevertheless, it is believed that Switzerland participates voluntarily in the rescue of Europe with a contribution of 100 billion euro. It is at the discretion of the Swiss government, whether they want to pay this amount in cash to the ECB, or whether the same amount will be provided as a bank guarantee. The EU knows that the Swiss government is able to take such a decision on its own authority in the short term, as it did in the case of UBS on 15 October 2009."

Assessment of the situation: our government will not inform the public that this letter is accompanied simultaneously by massive threats in the event of an infringement. They will present the process as normal intergovernmental process and seek fulfillment because the club in their own hands, the army, is missing. They will present their own actions as those of a sovereign state and as an outflow of their own strategic art of government. Moreover, they also know, that not a single cent of the 100 billion euros will flow back into Switzerland and they will wait for the next desires. Switzerland currently has (?) the seventh largest gold reserve in the world (about 1,000 tons). So-called war supplies are virtually non-existent.

The Federal Republic of Germany has already had other interesting experiences. It seems as if they can no longer dispose of their gold reserves stored in the US and the UK. From a newsletter ("Kopp



The logistic base of the army (LBA) violates all the rules for tactical decentralization of the army's military buildup. All confidentiality rules are violated on the internet. (picture ma)

"War Picture 2013"

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Exklusiv", *www.kopp-exklusiv.de*) No. 30/13 we learn that "The Germans' gold (at Fort Knox) is supposedly gone. An expert of the scene is supposed to have said: It is naive to think that the Federal Republic would ever get back their gold reserves stored in the US. US banks had received it in recent months from the Fed to drive the gold price down, therefore the German gold stocks had entered the market."

We remember that the *Deutsche Bundesbank* was banned some time ago from creating an inventory of their gold stocks in the US and the release was reportedly postponed to the year 2018. But the UK also wants to keep the gold of the *Bundesbank*. According to "Kopp" 32/13 the justification for that is even more adventurous: This gold is most likely the gold that the *German Reichsbank* had stolen at that time in former Czechoslovakia. It is an adventurous explanation that the *German Bundesbank* is to be the legal successor to the *German Reichsbank*!

It is one thing that the *Merkel* administration needs to know the facts, but is forced by their Western allies to display good behavior; however it is another thing that they must also keep still in their own interest prior to the German elections in the fall of 2013 if they do not want to miss the re-election through a scandal. After Germany has been so badly rewarded for its western solidarity, Switzerland can expect nothing else. Why should Germany not "agree" with Switzerland to share the Swiss gold stocks? That would be the Gold War and the above mentioned *most dangerous enemy capability B*.

Europe between hammer and anvil – second phase: open war

There will always be an open war at the end of an economic war that ended without a winner. The *most dangerous enemy capabilities C, D and E* will become reality. Russia, China, hence eastern Eurasia on the one hand and the US on the other hand will go that route if the fight for resources in Europe and global military dominance will have become a struggle about to be or not to be. Thus, he who will be the first to serve himself in Europe will have a greater chance to win the final victory. In Europe any resource that you could wish for lies in the ground, unprotected.

Throughout its entire history Russia has always been attacked by the West. Why should Russia impose a special restraint on itself when its existence is at stake? China has been taught particularly painful lessons primarily by the West dur-

ing the last two centuries. Why should it hold back against the West? The US has waged war almost continuously since its founding in 1783. Most of the wars on foreign territory. They have also never imposed any special restraint on themselves, and they lack the sense for the cruel suffering of the civilian population, which they have never experienced themselves. So the European NATO allies should not feel too safe when it comes to the crunch.

Nor should the small states in Europe feel safe. Professor *Karl Schmid*, later FIT director and Colonel in the General Staff and strategic thinker, said in a lecture to the Assembly of Delegates of the *New Helvetic Society* on 16 April 1944 in Berne, "The last decade was not gracious to the structure of the small state. The recklessness, with which small states were attacked and annexed, raised the question of Switzerland's existence." The topic was the spiritual foundation of military defense efforts.

Schmid also has included these considerations in his famous book "Unbehagen im Kleinstaat" (Discomfort in the small state). Why should aggressors who wage war on the territory of Europe, suddenly show consideration for small neutral countries? They will do less so since Europe and disarmed Switzerland in particular are an easy prey for them, at the expense of which one may survive these great political and economic shocks.

Warlike operations on Swiss territory

To think such an idea is the one thing, to put it into practice, is the other. The fastest may get the idea and thus the possibility to set up without great effort well-developed *air bases* with enough kerosene and shelters on our *double airport Kloten/Dübendorf* and/or *Buochs/Alpnach* that lie open at the heart of Europe. During the first cold war Russia has already made sure to have its air forces operate on as many bases as possible. The United States must initially not envisage this option, since they already have sufficiently equipped air bases in Western Europe in the context of NATO. The aggressor will aim such a blow at first on limited regions of the territory. The remaining Swiss territory would not be molested for the time being. The cantonal governments concerned should already think about how they want to cater and provide medical care for 15,000–20,000 nationals of a foreign power.

All geographical and material information are not only publicly available for Kloten/Dübendorf, but also for the military double Airport Buochs/Alpnach all data can effortlessly be taken from *Google Maps*. In a first action, an opponent –

virtually unmolested – would be able to put a close-in defense umbrella over these sites and then abuse these air bases for all possible scenarios.

However, in case Russia wanted to realize this option, the United States would have to respond, and the *most dangerous enemy capabilities D and E* would become reality. This would include, as outlined in the book "Mut zur Kursänderung" (p. 81/82), that neither floods of tanks nor fighter-bomber swarms would dominate the picture, but so-called "surgical precision strikes". However the word "precision" cannot be taken at face value, because collateral damage is to be tolerated and equally economical long-term damage for Switzerland.

Five not even very difficult *air strikes* would suffice to paralyze all logistics centers in Switzerland prematurely, to destroy the bulk of war material including maintenance facilities and thus make any mobilization of the Swiss army impossible. This does not even require a previous reconnaissance, since *all objective data*, including aerial images are already available *on the internet*. The same applies to the ammunition that was stored previously distributed in more than a thousand stores.

Those who want to dominate Europe need the electricity companies and the major axes. The opponent will be trying to use them for himself or to make them useless (*most dangerous enemy capability C*). Being caught by such a stranglehold of both conflicting parties, Europe, especially Switzerland, will provide everything that is required and it can only hope to remain a functional community until the end of the conflict anyway. Here, a potential attacker will pay a smaller entrance fee than Switzerland has to provide for defense. *Asymmetries* here, too, but at the expense of our country, which could not or did not want to *close the entry bar* in time. It is not a backward-looking approach, when we point out that air defense means and in particular the ground-based air defense are now sorely missing, which during the days of the *Army 61* still remained, be they "outdated" or not.

The heavy burden of remembrance of having indeed recognized the dangers, but not having done anything to ward them off at the crucial moment, however, will be resting on the souls of the Swiss for generations. Will our descendants still appear similarly confident in the international community, as we do, today? Switzerland was once a poor country which then became rich through hard work and wise policy; it could sink back into poverty in the end.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“The people’s unlimited mark of confidence in the army”

Reform sins must be corrected urgently

by Thomas Kaiser

It is an impressive figure of 73.2 percent with which on Sunday 22 September the electors have professed their commitment for our nation state, our sovereignty, our federalism and of course our militia army and hence for the defensive army of Switzerland. The result is clear and unequivocal beyond all expectations even for the proponents of the mandatory military service. National Councillor *Jakob Büchler*, CVP member and security expert, who had fought in the foremost front against the draft could not have imagined this result in his “wildest dreams” and looks at it as an “unlimited mark of confidence in the army that the people have given. This is a clear approval, they back the army.” These figures, says to SVP National Councillor *Verena Herzog*, provide a “good foundation which we can continue to work on”.

It is evident that the army still has a lot to do in order to fulfil its constitutional obligation on the one hand and to meet the hope which the people place on it on the other, and shared by representatives of non-socialist parties. What our army

suffers from are the reforms of the past, which one has imposed upon it during the last almost 20 years. Particularly the *Army Reform XXI*, which was already planned under the Federal Councillor *Ogi* and was pushed through by *Samuel Schmid* has above all weakened the army instead of adapting it to the real conditions. *Jakob Büchler* makes no secret of it: “With the *Army Reform XXI* we have abandoned a lot and have lost what we should have had to preserve by all means.” Besides, it is not only about single army units which we have given up; but blinded by the fantasy of an “everlasting peace” in Europe the army was neglected, its money was cut and the education was “rationalised” with the success that an infinite amount of know-how has got lost.

There has been a big bloodletting in the cadre education. Young recruits were taken out of the basic education too fast and were put in the cadre education. A process which is extremely problematic because the young men mostly have none or far from enough leadership experiences and therefore are not taken seriously by

their “subordinates”. In an emergency situation this can have fatal consequences. Hence, *Jakob Büchler* requires a change of training procedures. “Thereby the aim is that the experience becomes more profound and is not only a crash course.” In addition, we should not shorten the refresher courses on two weeks as is suggested by the Federal Council in the so-called Advancement of the Army (WEA). Several experts, among others the chief of the army, corps commander *Andre Blattmann*, give to understand that shortening the refresher courses would prevent the realisation of good and sensible exercises; the exercises which are urgently needed so that the army can practice the case of emergency.

But also in tangible terms, troop units which were responsible for the defence of our infrastructure and to which *Army Reform XXI* delivered the deathblow, have to be built up again. In doing so it is not a matter of reviving old-fashioned troop units but a matter of essential troop

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The non-socialist parties have worked things out with each other and set the direction

Consensus in Parliament on military issues

Interview with National Councillor *Corina Eichenberger*, FDP/Canton of Aargau



Corina Eichenberger
(picture wikipedia)

Current Concerns: How do you assess the outcome of the 22 September vote on mandatory military service?

Corina Eichenberger: The clear and distinct result shows the commitment to our present system, namely, a militia army based on con-

scription with a mandatory military service for men. However, that does not mean that it was not realized in the preceding discussions that certain things do not yet work out smoothly.

What are you thinking of especially?

From my perspective the criteria of recruitment and suitability must certainly be reviewed, so that we can achieve improvements there.

Where do you see development needs in the army? In my opinion, the “Advancement of the Army” (WEA) will consist of

a further reduction of our proven army. What is your opinion?

With the WEA the army finds itself in a new reform period. However, in Parliament we have defined the key element of 100,000 men, and now, concerning the budget, we are heading in the right direction. A budget of CHF 5 billion for the army has majority appeal. The result is that the equipment gaps are finally to be filled. This will benefit the troops directly.

So you also believe that what has been neglected for years must now be further developed?

Yes, even in logistics, where we have already taken big steps, things must work better. For example with the provision of material for military refresher courses, so that the participants can take part in interesting and challenging exercises with adequate material. The “Advancement of the Army” (WEA) is currently still in the consultation process. The rapport between civilian and military training and military service should be more strongly established. I strongly support these endeavours.

You are looking forward to a positive future concerning our army?

We were able to make decisions in recent times, concerning which the non-socialist parties have worked things out with each other and have set the direction. The decisions were thus all clearly capable of winning a majority and should put the army back on track.

Was the strong assent to the “Gripen” such a decision?

I take pleasure in the fact that the Gripen decision turned out so distinctly. This will also be a good argument for the referendum campaign. I am convinced that it is right to renew the air force continuously. Firstly, in order to have a dissuasive Air Force so as to be at eye level with our neighbouring countries; secondly, because you also have to consider that such a large purchase and its necessary evaluation take about 10 years. That is, after all, a very long time.

National Councillor *Mrs Eichenberger*, thank you for the interview. •

Interview: *Thomas Kaiser*

The retired Major General Peter Regli receives award of the "Stiftung Freiheit und Verantwortung" (Foundation for freedom and responsibility)

thk. In the context of the conference "Security Switzerland" organized by the "Foundation for Freedom and Responsibility" and by "Pro Libertate", and held in the venerable monastery of St. Urban, the retired Major General *Peter Regli* was honoured for his work as the director of the *Swiss Intelligence Service* from 1991 to 1999 and for his tireless efforts for the safety and freedom of this country. The award also recognized his constant endeavours to preserve a powerful militia army that is well adapted to the challenges of the time.

The laudatory speaker was retired Major General *Peter Regli's* former superior, retired corps commander *Heinz Häsler*. He was *Peter Regli's* superior during the smear campaign of 1999. In his moving speech, he emphasized the director of the *Swiss Intelligence Service's* high level of precision, his great expertise and his integrity as well as the circumspection, with which he managed this office. Retired corps Commander *Heinz Häsler* was behind *Peter Regli* all through the unspeakable smear campaign, and events have



Honoured Mr Peter Regli framed by the laudators *Heinz Häsler* former lieutenant, (right) and Ambassador *Dr David Vogelsanger*. (picture thk)

proved him right. The second laudatory speaker, ambassador and member of the board of trustees *Dr David Vogelsanger* also belonged to the *Swiss Intelligence Service* and was therefore *Peter Regli's* employee. He paid tribute to his superior's qualities and his commitment to the *Swiss Intelligence Service* and thus for Switzerland. Clearly concerned about what *Peter Regli* had had to go through during the defamation campaign, *Dr Vogelsanger* ex-

pressed his full confidence, which he felt then and still feels now for his former superior. *Peter Regli* himself was visibly moved by the tribute that he was paid during that afternoon. His commitment for the cause and thus for Switzerland have remained unchanged. He had withstood the defamation and unfair slander at the time, he said, thanks to his wife *Irene*, who was also present, and thanks to close friends. He expressed his thanks to all those citizens who

had shown their solidarity with him in their letters, and to his many friends in the hall, who had not allowed the smear campaign to leave a lasting impression on them. Although *Peter Regli* was completely rehabilitated, the Federal Council has still not considered it necessary to apologize for this hardship. The editorial team of *Current Concerns* congratulates *Peter Regli* on his receipt of the award.

"The peoples' unlimited mark ..."

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units, which could be deployed for the protection of our most important infrastructures. The *airport regiment* disbanded in 2003 is one of these reform sins against all reason. Even nowadays if one does not believe any more in armoured battles and fights of man against man but in aerial attacks or drone attacks, electronic waging of the war and terrorist attacks on sensitive properties, the airport in *Kloten* is certainly on top of the list of priorities. *Jakob Böhler* is also persuaded that "The airport regiment has been

given up and this was wrong. At the airport, Switzerland is most vulnerable. If the airport of *Zurich* is paralysed, a large part of our transport system has been blocked. It is well known that 5,000 soldiers are needed to protect the airport to some extent."

A decisive advantage of the Swiss army has always been its decentralised character. Different military training areas spread all over the entire country as well as the large number in arsenals have always enabled a quick reaction on possible threats which today also includes natural disasters. We are efficient where we know the area and its pitfalls. Thus it must also be possible to carry out full-scale manoeuvres again

in our own country and not to move abroad as the Federal Council suggests in the *Advancement of the Army (WEA)*. Once in case of emergency, which nobody desires and hopes, it is a matter of defending the *territory of Switzerland*, namely on conditions which our country offers.

The confirmation of the mandatory military service and of our militia army does not mean that we can rest on our laurels; it provides, however, the firm foundation on which we can re-establish the value, which our army urgently needs, so that both the country and the people will be protected in case of emergency and the constitutional obligation will again be fulfilled.

Re-claiming honesty and probity as basis for state action

Added as an afterthought to federal vote on the revised Epidemics Act

by Erika Vögeli

Even if we had wished another outcome of the vote on the so-called revised Epidemics Act, we should consider the 40 per cent no-votes to be a notable achievement for the opponents to the act. We should have the following in mind: Not a single political party opposed it in Parliament. Except for the Greens they did not even include the rEPG in the agenda, let alone discussed it at the delegates' assemblies. In the Federation's explanatory statements the population noticed that a big majority of Parliament had voted for the law. You may certainly ask yourself whether the parliamentarians did actually read the law. One national councillor had the honesty and the courage to revise his credulity later on (inter alia vis-à-vis his colleagues in the commission responsible) after reading the act and to declare this publicly. Nobody is likely to believe that he was the only one, but rather that many fared so.

In the big media there was not a real discussion about the problematical points. The media oligopoly that consists of the few still existing big daily newspapers together with public radio and television granted coverage practically only to the viewpoint of the proponents of rEPG, above all in the editorial statements, and this all in a public relation campaign. The articles that appeared here and there as under the label of pro and cons cannot deceive us. Even if pages containing controversial letters to the editor are very interesting, they cannot substitute an honest and genuine editorial discussion. A lot of opponents to the law were not even taken note of. It was only mentioned on the side that a political committee against rEPG held a press conference. In "Echo der Zeit", the main news broadcast, it was only *Daniel Trappitsch* who got a chance to speak very briefly. He was already known to the public as a promotor of the referendum committee. The national councillors present as well as a member of the Grand Council of Berne city were not even mentioned. Instead the opponents' press conference was taken as an opportunity to once more grant a platform to the proponents.

In view of the unmistakably great interests which a certain industrial branch is displaying in this law, the gentle reader further wonders. (Note in this context, if only on the side: with amazement one reads in the materials for the referendum that the revised Epidemics Act was necessary to inform our children and youths about HIV and meningitis. Nobody understands why a revised Epidemics Act is necessary to serve that end. And apart

from the year-long discussion on HIV-information one wonders why our children have to be informed about meningitis. Some days following the vote, we read that *Novartis* intended to save its line of business by means of vaccinations against meningitis.¹ It was not yet included in the vaccination regimen, though. Coincidence or necessity?)

The voting documents of the Federation were of the same non-quality. A term paper on the spindoctoring hidden in the arguments and formulations would be worth while. Exactly the same applies to various contributions given by the big media. In a professional way the law was positively associated with the "protection" of the population and in a certain sense the citizens' fear of disease was appealed to. In the same professional way it was claimed the opponents were guided solely by fear of vaccination. Fear can be an obstacle where it is unrealistic. Often, however, it is a natural and life-serving reaction. In reality in our context it is not simply a fear response but reasonable scepticism in the face of experienced disaster in this field (key word swine flue, key word Tamiflu, or the now aborted plan of area-covering vaccinations against cervical cancer with girls) is very realistic.

In spite of all that 40 per cent of the voters voted "No" and thus supported the advocates of the referendum. Many of them will have considered all the non-discussed arguments. For example, the most basic reflections concerning the state policy that were put forward against the erosion of federalism by increasing centralization were not discussed. Specifically, the incredible concentration of power in a single federal office – an administrative unit which has not been elected neither by the people nor by the Parliament – profoundly contradicts our federalist conception of state. One question that we may ask ourselves is why Parliament, particularly the bourgeois parties which had put a stop to such extension of power one year before by rejecting the Prevention Law – have not yet realized what is coming in by the back door again. The representatives of the Green Party and all adversaries of genetic engineering should ask themselves why the law puts genetically modified organisms on the same level as ordinary pathogens and why the same law allows the Federal Council to admit the release of such pathogens without any authorisation. The representatives of all political parties should also ask themselves why they did

not counter the assertion that the law was introducing data protection for the first time. It would not have required a too big effort to do that. The article on the information system to be created by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) including personal data about health, results of medical examinations, travel routes, contacts with persons, animals and objects as well as the possibility to transmit all these data to other states and international organisations not only eclipse any fiche scandal of the past but – in context with the NSA scandal – raises a series of completely different issues.

At this point at the latest we have to reclaim what has gone more and more lost in the last twenty years: honesty and probity as basis for all state action. Those who want to seduce the voters to something with PR-dressed-up informations disrespects the principle of good faith which is indispensable in dealing with each other but primarily for the authorities dealing with the sovereign. It is part of human dignity not to be made the object of another person – not even in the intellectual debate and not even by the intentional arousal of emotions without providing the necessary information. An honest debate requires the factual weighing of pros and cons. If we do not want to arrive at where an American author located his country when he wrote a book entitled "The Best Democracy Money Can Buy", we must re-claim this very urgently once again. •

¹ "Ein Impfstoff soll Novartis-Sparte retten. Pharma: Ohne die Erlöse eines neuen Mittels gegen Hirnhautentzündung droht Verkauf der Division." (A vaccine is supposed to save Novartis. Pharma: Without the proceeds of a new agent against meningitis sales of the line of business threatened) by Isabel Strassheim, "Aargauer Zeitung" of 25.9.2013, page 9. "Ein neuer Impfstoff gegen Hirnhautentzündung soll nicht nur vor der in einigen Fällen tödlich verlaufenden Krankheit schützen sondern auch die Impfstoffsparte des Pharmakonzerns Novartis retten." (A new vaccine against meningitis is said not only to protect against the in some cases fatal disease, but also to save the vaccines line of business of the pharmaceutical company Novartis.) Now approved by the EU, it is up to the individual countries to take the vaccine Bexsero into their national immunization program. The medicine is said to become available any way. "Für die Impfstoffsparte von Novartis entscheidend ist aber die Aufnahme in den nationalen Impfplan." (Nevertheless decisive for Novartis' vaccines line of business is the inclusion in the national vaccination regimen.) It was true that this plan existed without the new EPG, however, the possibility for broad regulation by the authorities did not exist to the same extent as is the case with the new Epidemics Law.

Finding the best and most practicable solution through dialogue

Solution of the traffic problem in Sta. Maria without a road by-pass

Interview with Rico Saxer, president of the interest group IG Pro Sta. Maria Val Müstair

thk. The valley of Müstair in East Engadin, “one of the most beautiful valleys of Switzerland”, is working on a solution for the traffic volume which is, at least in the time of the holidays, very high. In the centre of the valley we find the village of Sta. Maria, which has been striving for decades to find a valid and generally acceptable solution. In the village there is a bottleneck, which has, at any rate in the high season, repeatedly lead to small traffic jams and which is to be defused by means of a(n) (im)possible by-pass. In the village center of Sta. Maria, Rico Saxer runs the butcher’s shop, which is situated right on the above mentioned road. He is therefore directly concerned. In order to get some movement into the muddled situation in Sta. Maria, he has founded the interest group “IG pro Sta. Maria Val Müstair”. This interest group aims to bring all those concerned together to seek a consensual solution by means of compromise. According to Rico Saxer, this is possible. In the following interview he points out, what his considerations are and what possible solutions are being discussed.

For 40 years, there have been discussions in Sta. Maria about whether there should be a by-pass or not. What is to be said against a by-pass?

The interference with nature is too grave. We are convinced that there are better solutions than a by-pass to cope with the relatively minor frequency of cars passing through the village. Our opinion is that there is a good solution within the village, which will keep our village life intact.

What is the number of cars passing through the village?

Last weekend we have had a maximum of 4,900 cars per day. But this is a peak, which we have on three, four weekends a year. At other times, there are less cars, the lowest figure is at around a thousand.

How many inhabitants has the village got?

The village has 380 inhabitants. There is a tendency towards an ever accelerating decrease, if things go on the way they are now.

What would be the consequences for the village, if the by-pass were built?

The village would certainly be a dying breed, if the by-pass were to be built. This becomes obvious if you look at other ex-

amples – when there is a by-pass you do not drive into the village any longer. We are an economically poor village. The problems in the village will remain. The bottleneck will remain. We have a postbus every half hour, either from the Engadine or from the other side. There is still not enough room for pedestrians to pass through the village. With the by-pass there will be no improvement for the village. Everything will be left here as it is, and the village will go to seed.

Our community Val Müstair does not have enough money to bring about a significant change. Therefore the “Interest Group By-Pass” is of the opinion, that we ought to have a strong partner behind us, and that means the canton. We could continue to let the traffic pass through the village, if we sacrificed two houses. It is a matter of two houses, and three quarters of the problem would be solved.

What would this mean exactly? What options do you have to defuse the traffic problem in the village?

One step would be to tear down the two houses which form the bottleneck. One of the houses is in a very bad condition. Its fundament is gradually rotting away, and as far as I know, the owners do not invest anything into the house any longer. The second house is a former hotel, which has been closed with a “For Sale” sign hanging there for a long time. For the last 40 years, the chances to find a useful solution for our village have never been as good as today. We could remove the two houses. We have more than 100 old houses in the village. By removing two of them, we should be able to create a beautiful village centre. Nobody would regret those measures, especially when we should have more room for walking and driving afterwards.

How does it look under the aspect of the “Heimatschutz”?

We would be able to tear the houses down because they are only under very limited



Rico Saxer with a draft of the planned bypass. (picture thk)

protection. I know from a reliable source that there is no opposition concerning the demolition. But here we have the protection of the countryside on one and the homeland protection, the “Heimatschutz”, on the other hand. I think in this situation protection of the countryside is to be rated higher than two old houses that nobody wants to buy. There will hardly be a win-win situation, one side has to give in. One must decide what is more to be refused: taking away the farmers’ land for the by-pass or demolishing those houses. In my opinion you can rather do without the two houses, but maybe there is even another solution: There is a company that does nothing apart from solving traffic problems all over Switzerland. Perhaps our problem can be solved by installing a frequency-controlled light signal. We must join up to find the best and most viable solution, together with the homeland protection, landscape protection, the advocates and the opponents. We must find a solution of which everyone can approve.

If the traffic is routed around the village, what does this mean for the industry in the village?

The peak season is mainly in summer and autumn, specifically from late June to late October. During that period our small businesses have much to do and earn well. But the year does not have only four months. Although less sales are made in the remaining eight months, there are always a few customers who pass through here and then stop. With the bypass we will lose those customers. They will go on to Zernez, where

Protection of important cultural assets in the Val Müstair

Interview with Dr Dr hc Raimund Rodewald, Managing Director of the Foundation for Landscape Conservation

thk. The proposed by-pass would have a devastating impact on nature and man and would merely shift the problem over to the surrounding villages. In the following interview Dr Raimund Rodewald, director of the Foundation, outlines what natural treasures are hidden in the Val Müstair and what the alternatives to a by-pass are.



Dr Dr hc Raimund Rodewald. (picture thk)

How do you assess the traffic problems in Sta. Maria and Val Müstair?

For many years, I have repeatedly been in the Val Müstair, also during different seasons. The traffic situation there is not as dramatic as is always claimed. On peak days at high summer there is a relatively serious problem. This results from the fact that there is a triangle in the road system. The problem arises when – from all three directions – vehicles push into the bottleneck which is about 150 metres long and so that a classical traffic jam occurs. But it is fair to say that I experienced this only on a few weekends in summer or sometimes in winter at peak holiday seasons. Oth-

erwise the traffic is reasonably smooth. Actually, what bothers me more is the overall noise exposure which we have in the valley. To me, this seems to be a much bigger problem than the actual traffic situation in Sta. Maria.

What does the canton-proposed by-pass mean for man and environment?

The by-pass is a south-facing bypass. That means that on this route we enter a populated region. Therefore, the marked-out route has to be brought further up hillside. This would mean decisive caesura changing the road-village of Sta. Maria completely. Furthermore, there would be an immense extension of noise which we do not have there today. Because of the changed route in the upper villages of Fuldera and Valchava, motorcycles and other vehicles will have to sharply speed up. This will lead to a devastating extension of noise on the slopes. In addition to the noise and the changing configuration of settlement there is the loss of cultivated land. The valley has positioned itself as biosphere and much emphasis has always been placed on the cultivated land in the past. In the melioration period in the 70ies it was tried to retain the arable land for the communities and to improve its structure for farming. Now they go and destroy not only the soil, but the arable land is also to be segmented. This

runs completely counter to agricultural interests.

Were these things not enough considered by the Canton, or is there simply no alternative?

Indeed, the Canton took it quite easy. On the plan, they drew up a detour. 16 years ago, when this had already been a subject, a northern by-pass was recommended leading into the direction of the river Rombach. This, of course, attracted the attention of the conservationists. They in turn considered it completely impossible. The Rombach had been revitalized. The shore regions should be preserved. Again, this solution was not feasible. The Canton just took it much too easy. A comfortable road was drawn up without thinking about alternatives.

What would be an alternative? Is there any alternative at all other than driving through the village?

I wrote a letter to the municipality of Val Müstair and made several comments on the issue in the media. Also, an expert from our foundation who is capable of assessing this, is clearly of the opinion that a by-pass is not sustainable unless all measures will be tested. We proposed an intelligent signalling, which means that we would measure by means

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"Finding the best ..."

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they have to pass through a village again, or they might drive through to South Tyrol. If you ask me, the guests will be lost for Santa Maria. In winter, our attraction is not strong at all. All around us there are huge ski resorts, we are almost the only ones who have nothing. With our world-champion Dario Cologna we were able to gain a foothold to a small degree. With the cross-country skiing, we will probably gain a few more customers in the coming years, but it is very difficult. When you say in Zurich that you come from the Valley of Müstair, then everyone already knows where this is, namely very far away. It is too far away to come here just for a day. If the bypass comes into existence, no one will drive into the village any longer. You can see a few roofs driving past, but nothing that would invite you to make a detour. There is no reason to drive into the village. The traffic will bypass it and the trade in the village will feel the effects pain-

fully. When guests are here in the summer, they leave for the mountains at 9 o'clock in the morning and come back home in the evening. During the day the shops and hotels are mostly empty. But during this time, there are always some tourists who take a break and have lunch on the sunny terraces of the restaurants or hotels. Those guests would entirely disappear.

What is the sentiment in the population?

The opinions are divided. Unfortunately something happened that we had certainly not intended when we founded our interest group. The aim of the IG was to reach a reasonable solution as quickly as possible. Now there is a counter initiative, which is for the bypass. This is not what we aimed for. We have had this situation for years now. Now we have founded a group with opponents, proponents, protectors of the countryside, people from the "Heimatschutz", and our community representative, so that we may find a common denominator and reach a common goal that most of our population can endorse.

That would be a genuine Swiss compromise and a signal for dialogue...

... Yes exactly, everything else makes no sense and will lead to nothing. Therefore, we – the interest group – are taking the step of having a representative of that company "Metron" come to us and examine different alternatives of traffic routing through the village. If it is possible to find a feasible solution, we can reduce a lot of costs. But unfortunately, the canton has not much interest in saving costs. If we decide on a route through the village, we could certainly save more than half the cost. We could use this money to buy the two houses and then tear them down. That would certainly be cheaper than CHF 20 million for a bypass, with which no one is happy in the end. What you also need to know is that the plan for the bypass dates back to the 70s. Today we are 40 years further on, and we have very different ideas and considerations.

Mr Saxer, thank you for the interview. •

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of cameras how many vehicles actually pass this almost 150-metres-long bottleneck. At peak times this intelligent signalling would be put into operation. In other words, the signalling system would start operating when the traffic volume is high.

Are there other options?

We do need traffic-calming measures in these villages. This is a cantonal road and there are already some court decisions which allow installing 30 km/h-zones on canton roads leading through villages. To be fair it has to be mentioned that the entire Val Müstair has a far too large traffic volume and above all the exaggerated leisure time traffic. This damages tourism, the national park and the recreational traffic as well as the local residents. Therefore, one would have to develop a traffic plan for the entire valley. Müstair and Taufers beyond the border would have to be included. Sta. Maria should not be considered an isolated problem.

How will it go on?

In cooperation with the community of interests we suggested to carry out a local study in our letter to the municipality. We made proposals as to institutions that could help create a smart signalling system. With this, an alternative could be indicated. Our foundation already said that it could make some small contribution to the realization of such a project. The point is, that the entire discussion can be objectified and a sensible common solution may be found which serves everyone.

What will be done next?

We have suggested in our letter to the municipality that they should work together with the interest group on site, to design a study. We proposed authorities, which could help to create an intelligent signalling system. So that one could point out an alternative. Our foundation has already said that a small contribution could be made to create such a study. The point is that we have to be able to run the entire discussion objectively and come to a practical, common solution that will serve all.

You mentioned earlier that there is arable land of very high quality in the Val Müstair. What importance has it got for agriculture in the Val Müstair?

It has a very high value, there. You have to know that agriculture in this valley is one reason why the area has been recognized as a biosphere. An additional rea-

Meaningful charitable work for young people

From time immemorial, we have been depending on the mountain forests as protective forests. They protect us from avalanches, rockfall, erosion and flooding. They also serve as habitats for many animal and plant species, as recreational rooms and timber suppliers.

Mountain Forest Project

The Mountain Forest Project, founded in 1987, is a non-profit foundation based in Trin, Canton Grisons.

Purpose of the Foundation

The *Mountain Forest Project Foundation* has the purpose to promote the preservation, restoration and protection of the forest and the cultural landscape in mountain areas, especially by maintenance and rehabilitation work in work assignments and by promoting public understanding of the needs of the forest. Since the beginning more than 34,000 volunteers have worked in the mountain forests of Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Catalonia, Ukraine and the Princi-

pality of Liechtenstein in the context of the mountain forest project. The Foundation is politically and denominationally neutral.

The idea and aim

Forestry laymen go into the mountain forest or perform volunteer work missions. On site they learn about circumstances and contexts of the fascinating mountain forest ecosystem from experts. When performing this work the volunteers experience the mountain forest at first hand and make an active contribution to the preservation of the diverse protective effects of the mountain forest. This promotes their personal and environmental awareness.

Financing

The work of the Mountain Forest Project Foundation is made possible by donations, bequests, contributions from partner organizations and forest owners.

Source: www.bergwaldprojekt.org/de
(Translation *Current Concerns*)



Aual Foppumwasch. (Bild Archiv SL)

son is that it is one of the most beautiful valleys in all of Switzerland. If you keep on interfering with agriculture at the bottom of the valley, you will as well endanger cultivation up there on the slopes, in Val Mora. The basis for animal husbandry, that means the cultivation of animal feed, grows on the valley floor. The planned by-pass road is not only a quantitative loss of arable land, but a caesura that disrupts agriculture to the largest extent. The irrigation plants which have been built with expensive subsidies from the federal government would be completely useless, in the area of Sta. Maria because all the conditions, which we created here since the 70's, are then no longer adequate. What was done at that time, was not always in favor of nature and landscape, but this planning means doing agriculture a disservice.

You have mentioned irrigation plants as something exceptional, now. What did they set up at the time for that much money? Were the old systems restored that existed in the Engadine as well as in



Aual Putschai. (Bild Archiv SL)

the Valais, or did they install completely new systems?

In the Val Müstair in the 70s, they began to meliorate the landscape, i.e. to join plots of land – and they did so with heart and soul and with a lot of subsidies – together with partner communities, outside of the valley. While doing this, one intensively set on forage and dairy farming. As a result, cheese dairies were built and the road network expanded. Milk lines were moved to individual Alps. With the projects at that time you did not really fulfill the demands of today's agriculture. From today's perspective, it must be said that the procedure was too intense and a loss of biological variety was accepted. The

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former grain fields on the rubble cones in the Val Müstair are of course gone and the dairy industry has changed, as well. The farmers switched over to suckler cow husbandry. The structures established at that time for the dairy industry are no longer profitable today. Some farmers want to go towards cereal. That means, the irrigation system is no longer adequate.

What was as well destroyed in those days were the traditional "Auals", i.e. water channels, similar to those known in South Tyrol, Vinschgau ("Waalwege"). Several years ago we began to promote awareness of the old water channels, together with the population. In unison with the "biosfera" we drew up a list of assets and liabilities, which was financially supported by our foundation and other partner organizations. On the slopes we found a rather great variety: old ditches and wooden channels and many stories that exist in this context.

How did the population take this?

They reacted enthusiastically towards the revitalization of this tradition.

What is the function of these "Auals" and are there many left?

Meanwhile we have been able to reactivate five water canals, "Auals", which is motivated by tourism on the one hand. On the other hand it is important for the drainage of the sliding slopes in Val Müstair. These "Auals" have fostered and supported the irrigation of the dry alpine areas. But they also have a draining function which we have been working on for years. And tourism has realized that this is an important cultural asset.

How old are these systems?

The documents we found, the so-called "Rodel" – i.e. water rights recorded in writing, as they exist in the Valais, in the Vinschgau and in other alpine regions – sometimes date back to the 17th century. In Val Müstair we found documents from the 19th century. The oldest sources are found in the episcopal archive in Chur. As for the Vinschgau we know that they

go back to the 12th or 13th century. Hence we can assume that the irrigation system is as old as the permanent settlement of the valley. So it is clearly of medieval origin.

What is the function of these irrigation or drainage canals? Do they collect surface water; are they installed under the surface? Can you explain it for us laymen?

In contrast to the Valais where the canals collect water directly from the glaciers, we have a different situation in Val Müstair. Our water drainage areas do not contain glaciers but snow fields. The soil contains a lot of water and the water canals have been dug from the vertical ditches that carry the water over the dry slopes to the individual farms, sometimes as far as 2000 meters. In Val Müstair farming was practiced at an altitude of up to 1800 meters, which is very high. But irrigation was mainly for the meadows, less for the acreage. Water was transported from the vertical ditches parallel to the slope, some of them for 100 meters, in some cases for kilometers, to the cultivated areas of the farms which were situated in the valley or on the slopes. This was vital. Then the ca-

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Rico Saxer was interviewed just before an expert of "Metron", a company that specializes in the solution of traffic problems, visited Sta. Maria and analyzed the "bottleneck". The result of the analysis is the attempt to regulate the transit through the village by means of a frequency-controlled light signal.

(picture thk)

Current Concerns

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nals were divided into side ditches. The individual farmers have branched side ditches off the main canals, with slabs or water shovels, channeling it zigzag over the meadows.

Who owned these systems?

The community was responsible for the main water canals. A community was always responsible for the water transport and support, either a village community in the old sense or a corporation, a cooperative of owners. This is a very nice model for collective work and mutual dependence. Nobody was allowed to simply consume as much water as he liked but it was necessary to adhere to certain rules which made sure that everybody got the water he needed but nobody was able to make a maximum profit. This is actually an optimum principle of economy which has been confirmed by the 2009 Nobel Prize for *Elinor Ostrom* who has investigated precisely these cooperative water works, albeit not

in Val Müstair but in Valois. But they worked very similarly in Val Müstair. It is remarkable that the cooperative form of organization has developed here and is still being practiced in a meaningful form today.

Can young persons help in these restorations and learn about the meaning and history of these irrigation systems?

Sure! In contrast to the overhead sprinkling systems the water canals have always been open. They have been put in ducts only in the 1950s – out of sight out of mind: they were simply forgotten. Hence farmers started to erect overhead sprinkling facilities on the slopes. It is our goal to bring the old canals back to the surface. But we need to come to terms with seepage. On the one hand, seepage is good for the mountain forest since water is coming to the roots. On the other hand, losses are too high. Then it is necessary to put concave larch or Swiss pine logs into the gullies which is very expensive. We have a mountain forest project in Val Müstair. This is a volunteer service by young persons who repair these canals every year, under the leader-

ship of the forester service. Every spring-time, the canals have to be put to work by letting the water flow from the main stream into them. In autumn, they have to be cut off to prevent damage during winter time. The foliage and the soil that has fallen into the canals have to be removed. This is a big effort every year. And it is very positive that it can be accomplished by volunteers. We work mainly with volunteers from all over Switzerland, mainly young people, to get the canals back to work.

If a teacher was planning such a service with his students, whom should he contact?

It is possible to turn directly to the Mountain Forest Project. There is also a Mountain Forest educational institution. This is a second organization working also with adults. You can turn to the Mountain Forest Project and tell them that you want to serve in it as a school or a class. You can also turn directly to *Biosfera Val Müstair*.

Dr Rodewald, thank you very much for the interview!

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