

59th Pugwash Conference, Berlin 1-4 July 2011

STATEMENT by

Egon Bahr, 01 July 2011

Yesterday I presented the position of the "German 4" on current challenges to peace and security. Now I ask for your understanding that I begin to tell you an old story - not surprising for older men:

In February 1970, the talks with the then longest-serving foreign minister, Andrej Gromyko, had begun in Moscow.

Gromyko told me, "as long as we cannot agree on the borders we have agreed on nothing". The proposals he offered one after another were:

All frontiers in Europe have to be unchangeable or untouchable, have to be unchallenged or to be guaranteed unquestionable.

All these were unacceptable for me, following my conviction and in respect to my basic law, our constitution with the goal of German unification.

As the result of very long and difficult negotiations, we found the solution that **all frontiers could only be changed with the consent of all partners involved.**

This was acceptable for all partners five years later at the Conference of Helsinki, because all the countries present at this conference were convinced: This is the end of the "German quarrels". It was impossible to imagine reaching peacefully a consent between East and West to get rid of the border between the GDR and the FRG.

In other words: The idea of renunciation of force was the key because it was the key to the Moscow Treaty, the treaties with Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Four-Power-Agreement on Berlin, the Basic Treaty between the two German states and the Charter of Paris 1990.

In practice, the renunciation of force became the key of the whole policy of détente. It has allowed confidence building measures, reduction and even elimination of the most destabilizing nuclear missiles, and the biggest agreement on reduction of conventional arms in history (CFE). And finally, it produced the end of the split of Berlin, Germany and the European continent.

It seems to me that this idea remains relevant, maybe for other regions, in the Near and Middle East, even in Asia.

There are some discussions in Asia about lessons learned from OSCE confidence-building, initiated by Kazakhstan's initiative to establish the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) as an "inter-governmental forum for enhancing cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia".

However, up to now no binding treaties exist on confidence-building measures in all these cases of potential violence. Instead, in most cases we have arms races as far as budgets are allowing it in states which are proud of their sovereignty.

They have the capability to decide on their own. We cannot give a binding advice to solve their problems but we can offer our experience. And Pugwash with its merits to overcome the East-West conflict might have the capabilities to collect new merits.

All the successes of Pugwash in the international field will have positive implications for Europe which we need.

Before I repeat the contents of the main points of my yesterday's presentation to the ELN conference, I want to make some remarks on Europe. One has to admit that Europe is in a position of defacto incapability to act as a united entity.

When the UN Security Council had to decide upon Libya, we were confronted with the act of Great Britain and France, based on their VETO rights since the existence of the United Nations.

This act took place even without any consultation and even without information in Berlin and without any intent of trying to find a common position with the other European states in the UN Security Council, Germany and Portugal.

In practice, the European Union was excluded.

The lack of a convincing German concept in the field of foreign and security policy became painfully clear.

In addition, we see the French position with contradicting elements: On the one hand France repeats its willingness to follow the intentions of the European Union for closer cooperation on foreign affairs, on the other hand France cultivates close relationship to London which repeatedly declared its decision not to accept any further steps towards European integration and cooperation.

This is in contradiction to the repeatedly agreed goal of the European Union to reach self-determination as a sovereign entity in the multipolar world.

In this situation, the lack of leadership in Europe is especially painful. This leads to the reality that we have to envisage the fact that nearly nothing will be changed as long as the elections in France, the U.S. and in Russia, and one year later in Germany have taken place. Only then it might be possible to analyse seriously whether Europe will be able to reach its capability to act internationally.

Until then we will have to try to avoid major mistakes and try to overcome the mistake of institutional European structure:

Who is able to speak on behalf of Europe - President Rompuy, Madam Ashton or President Baroso?

The whole of the European Union with its 27 or 28 members - or Euro-Land with its 17 members, excluding Great Britain?

Meanwhile, 30 years ago Henry Kissinger stated he had no phone number for Europe without really missing it. Now he can dial at least three, and if he wants to get reliable information, he will call the national governments....

When the European Community had six members, we were unable to reach a common position on the Near East. Now we are 27, with the same result.

And even between France and Germany, there are different positions.

I have not the slightest idea how Europe could get the courage to overcome this regretful weakness.

Above all, the rest of the world will not wait until the Europeans have finished their homework and realize their promise which they repeated since 40 years.

I am suffering as a German, who is deeply convinced that our destiny is depending on a strong healthy economic and political European Union. I want to confess this conviction in all frankness with the view on the international scenery.

I am deeply convinced that we are at the eve of decision between cooperation and confrontation.

Therefore let me summarize the position and proposals of the "German Four" on how to promote a newSTART follow-up and avoid a dangerous deadlock of arms control and disarmament:

During the entire Cold War, deterrence was as a shared responsibility of Washington and Moscow and has worked, even and especially in some crises.

The United States and Russia have been the only two nations possessing intercontinental nuclear weapons with a second-strike capability. This will remain so for the foreseeable future. Its qualitative value should not be reduced.

It would be put in jeopardy if most advanced technologies are being developed enabling conventional weapons to replace strategic weapons. The term for this new quality of weapons already exists: "Prompt Global Strike", the abbreviation PGS is introduced and might become familiar. To the extent that conventional systems would achieve strategically deterrent qualities, the relevance of the umbrella of deterrence would dwindle.

The "new system" could become the enemy of the old. A dangerous drawback could be the result. In the short run some countries could try to deploy a nuclear deterrent against such a new strategic threat. In the long run the new capabilities might be more affordable and easier to acquire for a number of countries. The world would be faced with a proliferation of new strategic players.

As the experience with nuclear weapons shows, we can expect that the United States will not be able to perpetuate its monopoly. The proliferation of deterrence would constitute a factor of uncertainty, a danger to stability on a global as well as on a regional scale.

President Obama has made it clear that he is committed to the principle of cooperation instead of confrontation along with Russia, but of course on the basis of the existing structure of bilateral deterrence. The success - not only for the two nations - lies in the ratified treaty for the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons - New-START.

Missile Defence will unavoidably bring us to a crossroad of the relationship between Washington and Moscow for long time. In addition to this, it will have consequences for the other unsolved problems such as the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and other agreements on Non-proliferation, No-First-Use, tactical nuclear weapons, space. This can also touch the relationship with China and the other BRICS nations, because the fundamental positions of Russia and China in these questions are either identical or at least very close to each other.

From an American as well as a European point of view, strong arguments speak in favour of securing the closest possible understanding between the West and Russia.

From a German point of view we propose that steps are taken to win time: By agreeing on a binding regime of missile defence, the U.S. and Russia should demonstrate their willingness to start talks with other nuclear as well as non-nuclear states, about the issue of conventional weapons with strategic dimensions.

A success would mean green light for the continuation of further reductions of strategic weapons on the way to Global Zero. Failure would most probably lead to a new conventional arms race in Europe, including not only Germany.

Therefore, we urge and strongly encourage the United States and Russia to reduce the dangers inherent in their respective "force postures" which create uncertainties for other nuclear as well as for non-nuclear states.

Speaking also on behalf of Helmut Schmidt, Richard von Weizsäcker and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, I underline our conviction: The core interest in stability for Europe, including the United States and Russia, require the continuation of reduction of forces with the effect that we all together can turn our view to Asia with its mixture of different intentions and interests.
