

200 YEARS OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE - FROM PROTECTION OF THE HEMISPHERE TO GLOBAL DOMINATION

1. The content of the declaration

On 2 December 1823, 19 years to the day after Napoleon's coronation as Emperor of the French and 25 years before the coronation of Franz Josef, American President James Monroe set out the main thrust of his foreign policy before Congress.

In doing so, he emphasised two principles: On the one hand, he stressed that the United States did not want to interfere in European conflicts; on the other hand, he demanded that European powers end all efforts to own colonies in the Western Hemisphere. He also announced that the US would intervene if Europeans disregarded these principles. The clear message was "America to the Americans", Europeans must respect the independence of the states of Latin America.

A decisive influence on the formulation of these foreign policy principles, which later went down in history as the Monroe Doctrine, was the then Secretary of State (and later President) John Quincy Adams ⁽¹⁾. Adams was convinced that all of North America should be part of the United States. Attempts to conquer this goal, including Canada, were abandoned after the War of 1812- 1814 against England. But the belief in "Manifest Destiny", in the shaping power of Providence, was still strong. According to this, the United States was destined to dominate the continent. In this spirit, Louisiana (1803); and Florida (1819) were acquired and Texas annexed in 1845. In this spirit, John Quincy Adams wrote to the American envoy in Madrid: "It is difficult to escape the idea that Cuba will one day become an integral part of our Republic" ⁽²⁾. And to the Russian envoy, Baron Tuyl, the Foreign Minister declared that "we have the right of Russia,

continue to expand on this continent, vigorously deny and no longer tolerate".

It was essential that the USA's efforts to keep European powers from intervening in the western hemisphere were also in England's interest. The balance of power was initially in England's favour: in 1830, the United Kingdom produced 47% of the total world economy, the USA only 12%. By the end of the century, the USA's share had risen to 38%, while that of the United Kingdom had fallen to 23%. In terms of population, there were 12.8 million people living in the US in 1830, but by 1900 there were 76 million. In the same period, the number of inhabitants in the UK only increased from 24 million people to 41 million ⁽³⁾.

2. The global political situation

The world political situation around 1823 was characterised by the fact that the Spanish colonies in Latin America had been fighting for years for their independence; that some feared that Spain, with the help of the Holy Alliance, could restore the old balance of power; and that Russia, too, was making efforts to expand its possessions on the American continent.

The collapse of the Spanish empire in America probably dates back to the 17th century. But the trigger for the independence movements was then that the Spanish King Ferdinand VII was deposed and captured by Napoleon. A power vacuum thus arose in the mother country, as the Joseph Bonaparte installed by his brother was refused recognition both in Spain and overseas.

Now citizens in Hispanic-American cities banded together, first to have more say, then to demand independence in the first place. The fact that Spanish authorities demanded more taxes from the colonies at the same time accelerated this process. In addition, levies were all the more burdensome because trade had declined sharply as a result of the Continental Blockade. The colonial regime was thus no longer able to fulfil one of its essential tasks of ensuring economic and social order. After the Battle of Ayacucho in 1824, the Spanish colonial empire in America came to an end ⁽⁴⁾. For the USA, the situation became threatening when there were signs that Spain would

could attempt a restoration of the former conditions with the support of the Holy Alliance.

3. The Holy Alliance

After the victory over Napoleon, the Russian Tsar Alexander I, Emperor Francis of Austria and King Frederick William III of Prussia joined forces to form the Holy Alliance. "In the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity", as the founding declaration of 26 September 1815 put it. The aim of the Holy Alliance was to secure "perpetual peace" by those monarchs who ruled their countries "by the grace of God". The Christian religion was to be the foundation of the ruling political order. The essential prerequisite for shaping international relations thus became the internal conditions in a country; a change in the "conditions willed by God" was not tolerated.

In fact, under Metternich's leadership, the Alliance pursued a reactionary policy aimed at suppressing emerging democratic and national currents, precisely the legacy of the French Revolution.

Military interventions against the freedom movement in Italy and Greece were decided at various congresses, and the Carlsbad resolutions were directed against freedom of learning and teaching at the universities. At the Congress in Verona in 1822, the Holy Alliance instructed France to put down the bourgeois revolution in Spain, which succeeded with the Battle of Trocadero (and is still commemorated in the cityscape of Paris today).

King Ferdinand was restored to office, and with the support of France, the monarchical forces won a complete victory. This meant that the fear that Spain, with the support of France, might try to reconquer the former colonies in Latin America was not unfounded. President Monroe's determined message was to counter this.

4. The unfortunate Emperor Maximilian

These fears became reality when Napoleon III tried to extend the power of France to the American continent. December 2 also played a not insignificant role in his life. After all, it was on this day in 1851 that he succeeded in seizing power, which led Karl Marx to write the following

Comment inspired: "Every event in world history takes place twice. The first time as a tragedy, the second time as a farce".

Napoleon III wanted to seize the opportunity offered by the American Civil War (1861-65). He was convinced that a strong American federal state, which encompassed large parts of the North American continent, would be superior to any European state in terms of power politics. That is why he supported the Southern states, which advocated a. He therefore supported the southern states, which advocated a looser confederation, and wanted to establish a monarch of his choice in Mexico at a time of internal American struggles.

This monarch was Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria, who was to rule Mexico in his capacity as Emperor. Maximilian was born in 1832 at Schönbrunn Palace and was the brother of Franz Josef. Yet the two brothers were very different in many ways. While Franz Josef counted every penny he spent, Maximilian used his first allowance to build a summer house next to Schönbrunn Palace, which he called "Maxing". Maxingstrasse is still named after him today.

His lifestyle, it is said, always exceeded his financial means.

Now Emperor Napoleon III wanted to establish a government in Mexico that was capable of enforcing France's political, economic and military interests. In Mexico, however, a power struggle was raging at the time between the clerical conservative forces and the revolutionary republicans led by Benito Juarez, who was president of the country from 1858-1872. The latter was the son of a Zapotec peasant and spoke Spanish until he was 15 years old.

He did not speak Spanish until he was a year old. His policies advocated agrarian reform and, as Minister of Justice, he enacted reform laws on the separation of church and state, civil marriage, religious freedom and the abolition of monasteries.

Napoleon III had already sent troops to Mexico in 1861 because debts due had not been paid and it was clear that any monarch he installed would be dependent on his military support. In this circumstance, Maximilian was proclaimed Emperor of Mexico at Miamar Castle on 10 April 1864. He very much made it a condition beforehand that his accession to the throne would be in accordance with the will of the Mexican people. In this sense, he was presented with the result of a referendum, which was probably manipulated.

was. When he arrived in Mexico, Maximilian found that the reception was already extremely unfriendly. Moreover, all the American states supported President Benito Suarez, who had been deposed by the French.

After the end of the Civil War, the USA was again strong enough to demand and enforce the withdrawal of French troops under the command of Marshal Francois-Achille Bazaine in 1866, invoking the Monroe Doctrine. This also meant the end of Maximilian's government, as his calls for help in Europe went unanswered.

Maximilian then wanted to leave the country, but changed his mind after his mother wrote him a letter urging him to stay. The rest of the story is well known: He was sentenced to death by a court martial and was summarily shot on 19 June 1867.

It may be a belated satisfaction for the Habsburg on the Mexican imperial throne that five rooms are now dedicated to him in the National Museum in Mexico City. They also pay tribute to the fact that he tried to build a modern and liberal state in Mexico. At the same time, there are rumours that his republican opponent Benito Suarez had his daughter baptised.

5. The Realignment of the Monroe Doctrine under Theodore Roosevelt

In the 19th century, US policy towards Latin America focused on repelling foreign intervention. With Theodore Roosevelt, who became the 26th President of the United States in 1901, American foreign policy took on a new, offensive orientation. In an addendum to the existing Monroe Doctrine, called the "Roosevelt Corollary", the president laid down the priorities of his policy. Whereas President Monroe distinguished between Europe and America, Roosevelt divided the world into "civilised" and "uncivilised" states. And while Monroe practically placed the revolutionaries in Latin America who were fighting for independence against Spain under his protection, Roosevelt affirmed the right of the USA to oppose revolutions and all "uncivilised forces" that affected American interests in the political or economic sphere.

This established the sole claim of the US to intervene in matters that it felt were not in the American interest. This applied

for states on the American continent as well as for states in Asia or Europe. In fact, there were numerous US interventions in Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and other countries. A defensive foreign policy concept had become an offensive one.

US policy towards Latin American countries was now determined by how they behaved towards the United States.

Different presidents gave their policies different names, which did little to change Washington's dominant position. Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke of a "Good Neighbour Policy", John F. Kennedy proclaimed the "Good Neighbour Policy".

"Alliance for Progress", but during the Cold War, US forces were focused on preventing the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere. President Kennedy invoked the Monroe Doctrine when he called on the Soviet Union to withdraw its missiles from Cuba in 1962.

6. The Truman Doctrine

The respective domestic policy orientation in the Truman Doctrine became quite decisive for a country's relations with the USA. What was it about? After the Second World War, there was a civil war in Greece between the communists and the pro-Western, right-wing parts of the country, which were supported by Great Britain. In 1947, the British had to cut off aid because they lacked the economic strength. To prevent a communist victory, President Harry Truman called on his countrymen to support people all over the world who were fighting for their freedom and were threatened by armed minorities or from outside.

Now, the US has a long tradition of overthrowing unfriendly governments and liquidating their leaders:

- In 1953, Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq was overthrown in Iran with the help of the American foreign intelligence agency CIA because he had previously nationalised Western oil companies.

- In 1961, Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was liquidated by order of the CIA because the USA feared that he might lead his country, which was rich in natural resources, into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union.

- In 1968, CIA agents were at the forefront of the student unrest in Paris. They demanded the resignation of President de Gaulle, who had spoken out vehemently against the Vietnam War and had a strong following, especially in Asian countries.

- In 1973, the democratically elected president Salvador Allende was overthrown in Chile with the help of the CIA. The USA feared that he might lead his country into the "socialist camp". The dictator Augusto Pinochet was put in his place ⁽⁵⁾.

These are just a few examples of where and how the USA has carried out a change of government in its interests. The same pattern has always been followed: with the help of the media, governments and their actors have been discredited and presented as a threat. Allies were sought from opposition groups, parties or trade unions. Finally, friendly politicians were installed with the help of the military or shock troops. France acted somewhat differently from the "Third World".

7. The USA at the head of a new Holy Alliance

Since the "realist school" and the "idealist school" have merged in the USA under the influence of the neo-conservatives, interference in the internal affairs of other countries is justified on the grounds that freedom, democracy and human rights are "universal values" that must be enforced everywhere. The USA has stepped to the forefront of a new Holy Alliance. The "divine right" has been replaced by the "universal values" that are now being fought for. Whereas in the past the fight was against those who wanted to impose the ideas of the French Revolution, today those who want to replace the "unipolar world order" led by the USA with a "multipolar" one are being put in their place. An "alliance of democracies" has declared war on the rest of the world. The Monroe Doctrine has taken on a global dimension.

In this sense, the United Nations has also adopted the resolution "Responsibility to Protect". According to this, the "international community" even has the obligation to protect the citizens of a country from its own government if it is unable to prevent harm to them. The first attempt,

However, the first application of this resolution in international politics, namely the NATO mission in Libya in 2011, was a complete failure ⁽⁶⁾.

- Under the slogan "democracy-building", the neoconservatives have declared "regime-change" an official policy. As much as the secret service CIA continues to be involved in covert actions, "regime-change" and "nation-building" have become declared goals of US foreign policy, from the invasion of Iraq to the "Arab Spring"; from the "colour revolutions" in Georgia, Ukraine or Kyrgyzstan to the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon. One of the justifications put forward is the very shaky theory that "democracies do not wage war among themselves" and therefore everything must be done to establish democracies and secure peace. In reality, of course, it is about American domination of individual countries. In fact, the USA has also allied itself with dictatorships often enough in its history.

- What is also new is that in addition to the previous allies from the political opposition, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are being used as extremely active actors in overthrows. Hundreds of NGOs are organised and financed by numerous American and other Western institutions, by the major political parties in the USA and in Germany, and are used as "civil society" is presented. This does not mean that the often young people involved cannot also be idealists. But the overall goal of achieving a dependence of the respective country on the USA is definitely a priority.

- Something else has changed: in the past, when the USA carried out a coup in Iran, Congo or Chile, it was known that it was about tangible political or economic interests. Today it is always about "values", freedom, democracy and human rights. For the longest time, foreign policy was power politics. The aim was to strengthen one's own state, if possible to enlarge it territorially. This meant that behaviour that was condemned in the strongest terms in the private sphere was not only tolerated but even glorified in inter-state relations. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill", for example, turned into hero worship for those commanders and soldiers who succeeded in killing as many enemies as possible on the battlefield ⁽⁷⁾. In the fight against "autocrats", wars have received a new justification. There is the "just war" again.

At the same time, the USA does not only want to maintain its supremacy by military means. Against one third of the entire human race, the Economic sanctions are imposed and "American law" is used worldwide against all those who are feared to be inimical to American interests. Numerous books have already been written about what a future war between the United States and China might look like.

It should not be a question of American dominance being replaced by Chinese dominance, for example. A multipolar world could be characterised by the recognition of fundamental rights concerning the national security of other countries, including Russia. Criticism by other countries of a world order that was established three generations ago should be taken seriously.

The opposite is the case, as the Western media's coverage of the BRICS summit in August 2023, which was condescendingly critical, shows. One could read, "The BRICS are a mess" ⁽⁸⁾. If they were to accept even more members, this state of affairs would only be reinforced. At the same time, it was emphasised that the optimistic expectations expressed at the time of its foundation in 2009 could not be fulfilled. Furthermore, it is disparagingly noted that the BRICS are much more heterogeneous than the G7 countries.

At the same time, however, it must be recognised that their share of world GDP has risen from 8 % in 2001 to 26 % today. If all the countries that applied to join the BRICS community are accepted, it will represent 58% of the world's population and 34% of the world's GDP. Like it or not, a large part of the "countries of the South" no longer want to be forced to conform to rules set up in the USA and Europe without their say.

In the war in Ukraine, comparisons are repeatedly made with the First World War, for example with regard to the rigid fronts. There is also another comparison: in 1914, nationalist currents were already appearing in the countries of the monarchy. That is why the battle cry was "We must wage war so that the individual peoples will once again stick together more strongly". Similar tones can be heard in the

European Union and in NATO. Even now it is said that the war has brought the countries together. One will see.

The state chancellor Clemens von Metternich tried to stop the course of history. For a little longer than a generation, he succeeded in doing so.

Notes

- (1) John T. Morse Jr; John Quincy Adams, New York 1980
- (2) John T. Morse Jr. as above
- (3) John J. Mearsheimer; The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, New York 2001

- (4) Alexander Demandt (ed.); The End of the World Empires; Munich 1997
- (5) Foreign Affairs November/December 2001
- (6) Michel Maffesoli; La Transfiguration du Politique, Paris 2002
- (7) Wendelin Ettmayer ; Old States, New World; Stability and Change in International Relations, Linz 2008
- (8) The Economist; August 19th 2023

(*) Dr. Wendelin Ettmayer; former Member of the National Council; former Austrian Ambassador to Finland & Estonia; Canada & Jamaica; at the Council of Europe; author; www.wendelinettmayer.at