

GIVE DIPLOMACY A CHANCE!

In view of the prevailing war hysteria, diplomacy has been completely pushed into the background. What's more, essential elements of diplomacy are being discredited. For centuries, it was part of diplomacy to understand the other, friend or foe. Today, "Putin-understander" is a dirty word. Negotiations characterised the "art of diplomacy". Most wars were ended through diplomatic negotiations. Today, the saying is "you don't talk to an aggressor", which means that in Ukraine they are fighting "as long as it takes", not negotiating. And if trade relations have always been an integral part of peaceful relations, today those who have cultivated trade relations with Russia in the past in the interests of both sides are being labelled as "naive". It is certainly not possible to maintain peace through trade alone when the media, the defence industry and parts of the high bureaucracy are geared towards war, as has been the case in the West for some time.

Yet the wars of recent decades have all been a disaster: Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. All of these wars have led to hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths and millions of refugees; and have created more problems than they have solved. And another thing: in all these wars, the officially invented reason for the war was in no way true. The victory of the communists in Vietnam did not lead to a domino effect; the Taliban, victorious in the Hindu Kush, did not come to Central Europe; there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq; and in Libya, a "humanitarian intervention" was misused to overthrow the ruling regime with the help of NATO aircraft.

In contrast, diplomacy repeatedly achieved considerable success even during the Cold War and made a decisive contribution to ending it. Even Cold Warriors such as Henry Kissinger or Zbigniew Brzezinski never broke off dialogue with Moscow. Problems are not solved by talking about them with like-minded people, but with those disagree. Vienna in particular was by the fact that disarmament negotiations and summit meetings took place here, which played a decisive role in

contributed to the fact that, despite major ideological differences between the Super Powers, there was no new world war.

At a time when Communist China was supporting the USA's enemies in Vietnam, Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon travelled to Beijing. In negotiations with Mao Zedong, they succeeded in setting a decisive course and realigning Beijing's policy. In Europe, the Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) ended in 1975 with the Helsinki Final Acts, which not only established a peaceful "status quo", but also played a key role in inspiring resistance in the communist countries of the East with the human rights enshrined therein. And the same Ronald Reagan, who initially spoke of the "evil empire", then met with Michel Gorbachev to end the Cold War.

The list of diplomatic successes in these years could go on and on. Following Malaysia's independence in 1963, Indonesia imposed an economic blockade on the country, which included military incursions. When General Suharto came to power in 1966, he initiated talks with Kuala Lumpur to end the confrontation. This paved the way for the founding of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, an organisation that played a key role in maintaining peace in the region over the following decades. There has been war in the Middle East for generations, but there also been successes achieved through diplomacy. In 1977, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat travelled to Jerusalem, where he met with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. With the support of American President Jimmy Carter, the Camp David Peace Accords were signed. Brazil and Argentina were strategic rivals throughout the 19th century and for much of the 20th century. Diplomatic negotiations and summit meetings between Presidents Joao Baptista de Figueiredo and Jorge Rafael Videla succeeded in establishing friendly relations. At the same time, a series of agreements were signed on trade, joint research and co-operation in the nuclear sector.

All these diplomatic initiatives were a significant contribution to peace and security. Former enemies at least agreed to co-exist peacefully, sometimes even to work together. Of course, these agreements always involved compromises. If you assert "national interests" yourself, it is obvious that analogous considerations will be made by the other side. Today we are told that every compromise means "appeasement", and every "appeasement" paves the way for a "new Hitler". The floodgates are currently to war propaganda. But after the hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded and the millions of refugees that the current wars have already caused, it would be time to give diplomacy another chance.

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