

## Mit ihrer Rolle im Ukraine-Krieg riskiert die Europäische Union ihre eigene politische Zukunft – Michael von der Schulenburg

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von Michael von der Schulenburg und Hans-Joachim Funke

Die sich verschlechternde militärische Lage in der Ukraine und der zunehmende Rückzug der Vereinigten Staaten aus diesem Krieg führten zu einer Situation, in der die EU nun in die vorderste Reihe bei der Bewältigung dieses Problems gedrängt wird. Vermutlich zum ersten Mal seit dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs hätte die EU somit die Möglichkeit, unabhängig von geopolitischen Erwägungen der USA eine Führungsrolle bei der Bestimmung des Schicksals Europas in einer so entscheidenden Frage wie Krieg und Frieden in Europa zu übernehmen. Man würde hoffen, dass die EU, die einst als europäisches Friedensprojekt geschaffen wurde, diese Gelegenheit nutzen würde, um eine Politik zu verfolgen, die auf eine friedliche Lösung für die Beendigung des Ukraine-Krieges abzielt.

Besorgniserregend ist jedoch, dass dies nicht der Fall ist. Andererseits! Während im amerikanischen politischen Establishment die Forderungen nach Verhandlungen mit Russland ohne Vorbedingungen immer lauter werden, verfolgen die herrschenden Politiker der EU und fast aller ihrer Mitgliedstaaten genau den gegenteiligen Ansatz. Sie schließen solche Verhandlungen aus und verfolgen stattdessen eine Politik der Kriegsverschärfung mit sinnlosem Militärgelbe. Mögliche Orte für eine diplomatische Lösung der Grundkonflikte, die zum Krieg geführt haben, werden von EU-Politikern gar nicht erst in Betracht gezogen.

Dies überzeugte die große niederländische Zeitung NRC, die wie die etablierten deutschen Medien bisher eine Fortsetzung des Krieges befürwortete, erstmals eine Warnung unter dem Titel „Die Niederlande schlafwandeln in einen neuen Weltkrieg“ zu veröffentlichen. Eine solche Warnung gilt sicherlich auch für die gesamte EU. Riskiert eine politische Elite in der EU aus falscher Selbstgerechtigkeit die Zukunft Europas?

Die USA ziehen sich zunehmend aus dem Ukraine-Krieg zurück

In diesem Jahr begann Präsident Biden seine Rede zur Lage der Nation damit, dass er der Ukraine erneut seine volle Unterstützung zusicherte. Nur klang es dieses Mal eher nicht überzeugend. Zwei weitere Bemerkungen in seiner Rede waren wohl viel wichtiger: Erstens betonte er, dass er auf keinen Fall amerikanische Soldaten in den Krieg auf ukrainischem Boden schicken würde, und zweitens bekräftigte er, dass nur die Ukraine Russland stoppen könne. Biden erklärte nicht, wie die Ukraine dies nach zwei Jahren Krieg tun sollte, für den die Ukrainer bereits mit einem enormen Blutzoll und der Zerstörung eines Großteils ihres Landes bezahlt haben. Er erwähnte auch nicht, welche Form die US-Unterstützung annehmen würde. Daher ist es leicht zu verstehen, warum die Frau des ukrainischen Präsidenten Selenskyj die Einladung von Präsident Biden zu seiner Rede im US-Kongress abgelehnt hat. Die Ukrainer – und insbesondere Präsident Selenskyj – müssen ziemlich verbittert darüber sein, dass die USA sie de facto im Stich gelassen haben.

After all, while the Ukrainian armed forces are suffering ever greater losses, the USA had largely stopped its financial and military support to Ukraine over the last months. There is no longer a majority for this in the US House of Representatives. Even in the recently approved US emergency budget covering the next six months, no mention is made of any support for Ukraine. As we approach the US presidential election in little more than seven months, the chances that Congress would approve such a large assistance package for Ukraine are fast dwindling. At the same time, the chances for Donald Trump of becoming the next President of the United States are increasing. In this case, we may expect a complete change in US policies towards Ukraine. In all likelihood, Trump could negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine with Russian President Putin over the heads of the Ukrainians and Europeans. For him European interests would hardly matter. The EU could find itself left in the cold, having squandered an opportunity to take charge of its own future.

But it's not just Trump who may seek an end to the Ukraine war. Also, an increasing number of powerful US political analysts and policy makers in the anti-Trump camp now accept that this war can no longer be won for Ukraine and must be resolved through negotiations – without preconditions – with Russia. The influential foreign policy magazine Foreign Affairs has just published an article by Charap (RAND Corporation) and Shapiro

(European Council on Foreign Relations) under the title “How to pave the way for diplomacy to end the war in Ukraine”. In January, Foreign Affairs had already published a surprisingly reconciliatory article by Shapiro and Kimmage entitled “The Myths That Warp How America Sees Russia—and Vice Versa:How Mutual Misunderstanding Breeds Tension and Conflict”.

In February of this year, the Washington-based Quincy Institute published an article by Beebe and Lieven entitled “The diplomatic path to a secure Ukraine”. In this article, they even argue that ceasefire negotiations would be extremely urgent for Ukraine, as “the war would not lead to a stable stalemate, but to a collapse of Ukraine”. Last year, Haass (then still President of the US Council on Foreign Relations) and Kupchan, also member of the Council of Foreign Relations and one of the most influential US foreign policy advisors to the government, had already appealed for a negotiated solution in their article “The West needs a new strategy for Ukraine: from the battlefield to the negotiating table”. Last year, General Milley, then still Chief of Staff of the US Armed Forces, repeatedly warned against continuing the war and suggested starting ceasefire negotiations.

The unexpected resignation of Victoria Nuland as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs at the US State Department must also be seen in this context. With her resignation, one of the main architects of the disastrously failed US policy of expanding NATO into Ukraine and Georgia and a radical anti-Russia voice is leaving Washington’s political stage. Her greatest intellectual contribution to diplomacy was probably her statement “Fuck the EU”.

#### European Union’s irresponsible approach to the Ukraine war

This could have been the European Union’s hour to take greater responsibility in showing a peaceful way out of the Ukraine war. After all, it was unresolved conflicts in Europe that caused humanity to descend into the catastrophe of two World Wars. Europe should not again be the source of such a human disaster and therefore accept its historic responsibility by taking a reconciliatory approach to the Ukraine war. After all, this is the first war in human history in which nuclear arms play a strategic role and any miscalculation could bring an apocalypse on humankind that is unimaginable greater than anything we know from the two World Wars.

And yet, peace is not part of the EU’s discourse. It is the language of war that unites the majority of European governments and the established media today – and this, although there is no common EU strategy on the Ukraine war, no common approach on what can be achieved and how. The Polish Prime Minister, for example, declared that Europe was already in a pre-war situation, perhaps already at war, and Sweden’s Prime Minister called on Swedish families to prepare for war. The President of the EU Commission can think of nothing else but to demand more and more money, more weapons and more ammunition and demands a conversion of Europe to a war economy. Even Chancellor Scholz, who we must thank for having prevented the deployment of Taurus missiles so far, only talks about Russia not being allowed to win the war. Wouldn’t it have made more sense for him and his European colleagues to think rather about how to win peace in Europe?

The acrimonious and irreconcilable attitude of the EU towards Russia is particularly evident in Germany in the two motions tabled by the governing and opposition parties in the Bundestag, the German parliament, on the second anniversary of the war in Ukraine. These motions read more like declarations of war against Russia, in which highly questionable arguments are combined with unrealistic maximum demands and simultaneous threats. They leave no room for compromise. Hence, any attempt at negotiations is made impossible from the outset. After two years of war, this approach is tantamount to a denial of reality. It is a policy of clinging to a continuation of the war, knowing full well that there is no realistic hope of a victorious peace in Ukraine.

This may also explain why individual EU member states are plunging into irresponsible actionism. This includes France’s proposal to send NATO troops to fight in Ukraine and its plans to station French units in Moldova. It also includes once again the belief in a miracle weapon by German political hardliners and their demands on making Taurus missiles available to Ukraine. Such plans appear to be ill-conceived and therefore potentially dangerous. They are also unrealistic. The EU has neither military capabilities, nor sufficient political unity nor any popular support for individual states or the EU as a whole to launch such adventurous ventures. In any case, they would be unlikely to change the course of the war but would lead to further killing and destruction in Ukraine.

Furthermore, such plans run the risk of leading to an escalation of the war in Ukraine, with the frightening prospects that this could develop into a pan-European or even a nuclear World War. When a French president claims that such considerations are just a sign of cowardice and a German Green party tells us that there is no nuclear risk at all, even if Moscow or Russian military nuclear installations are attacked, they are gambling with the survival of us all. And for what? Just because we don't want to admit to ourselves that we can no longer win this war and that negotiations are the only option left.

The EU could break over the Ukraine war

In a best-case scenario, the EU's Ukraine policy will only undermine its credibility; in a worst-case scenario, the EU could break apart over its misguided Ukraine policies. While the EU's political elites continue trying to convince us that this war can still be won with ever more powerful weapons or even direct military intervention, they are losing the support of a growing majority of the European population and with it the touch to reality. Due to the negative economic effects of this war, more and more people could turn to anti-European parties.

Time is also running out for the EU in another respect. In just a few months, political relationship with the USA could change dramatically should Donald Trump become US President. There are already considerable differences among the EU member states, and a political landslide in the USA could divide the EU member states rather than bring them closer together. With its uncompromising pro-war and anti-Russia policy, the EU will also further isolate itself from most non-NATO states in the world. There will be no understanding there for continuing to escalate militarily while at the same time refusing to negotiate with Russia without preconditions.

Der EU droht ein gewaltiger Misserfolg, wenn sie ihren bisherigen Weg der Lösungssuche durch immer mehr Waffenlieferungen und Sanktionen fortsetzt. Die Europäische Union braucht im eigenen Interesse dringend einen Strategiewechsel, der auf eine gesamteuropäische Friedens- und Sicherheitsordnung auf der Grundlage der Pariser Charta für ein neues Europa von 1990 abzielt und die Ukraine und Russland einbezieht.

Die bevorstehenden Wahlen zum Europäischen Parlament wären daher für die Europäer eine Gelegenheit, der militanten Politik der EU abzulehnen und am 9. Juni für den Frieden zu stimmen.

Autoren

*Michael von der Schulenburg war ehemaliger stellvertretender Generalsekretär der Vereinten Nationen und war über 34 Jahre lang in vielen Kriegsgebieten der Welt in leitender Funktion bei UN-Friedensmissionen tätig.*

*Hans-Joachim Funke ist emeritierter Professor für Politikwissenschaft am Otto-Suhr-Institut der Freien Universität Berlin und Autor von „Ukraine – Verhandlung ist der einzige Weg zum Frieden“. (Berlin 2023)*