

“To contribute to consolidating peace and security”

Resolution of the International Forum of People’s Diplomacy “Dialogue on the Volga: Peace and Mutual Understanding in the XXI Century”

We, the participants of the International Forum of People’s Diplomacy “Dialogue on the Volga: Peace and Mutual Understanding in the XXI Century”, that was held in Volgograd (Russia) on the 31st of October – 1st of November 2020 and dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 75th anniversary of the United Nations,

- acknowledging the achievements of Coventry (United Kingdom) and Volgograd (Russia), the cities that initiated the international twinning movement in 1944,
- taking into account the longstanding experience of Stalingrad-Volgograd (Russia) in developing and promoting the ideas of peace and people’s diplomacy,
- underscoring the accomplishments and authority of the UN as the main organisation regulating international relations in accordance with the principles of respect, equality and self-determination,
- firmly condemning all forms of violence, discrimination, xenophobia, racism, and any attempts to rehabilitate fascism and revise the historic outcomes of World War II,
- supporting the ideas of disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, peaceful co-existence, consoli-

dation of the international community for the sake of peace and security of the world,

- ascertaining that a global nature of the changes occurring today in the world is taking a threatening turn and calls for an immediate pursuit of constructive ways for resolving political, social and humanitarian problems,
- recognizing the growing role and capability of people’s diplomacy in overcoming modern challenges and threats, and in strengthening the relations between nations,

resolved:

1. To address international organisations, public authorities, the expert community, and other actors in people’s diplomacy with an appeal to actively contribute to the process of strengthening peace in international relations in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals designated in the Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 70/1 adopted on September 25, 2015.
2. To assist international organisations, public authorities, the expert community, and other actors in people’s diplomacy in enhancing international cooperation and strengthening

global partnership in various fields to overcome contemporary challenges and problems.

3. To encourage public authorities, the expert community, and the public to preserve the objective historical memory of World War II and its legacy, to involve the youth in this work.
4. To contribute to the media’s awareness about the work of the International Forum of People’s Diplomacy in Volgograd, as well as about the positive experience of all international organisations, countries and cities that participated in the Forum, in terms of the implementation of peace initiatives.

We are convinced that:

The implementation of the proposals set out in the Resolution will contribute to consolidating peace and security; developing international relations in accordance with the principles and norms of international law; enhancing global political, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation; and benefit civil society.

This resolution is drawn up in the Russian and English languages, which are equally authoritative.

Volgograd 31 October 2020

Source: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rxb0ML3l655pidVFLEDIZ566b1yYfUE-l/view>

“Dialogue on the Volga”

continued from page 4

- the main challenges of the emerging multipolar order
- risks of a transition from unipolar to multipolar constellation
- importance of regional groupings (i.e. European Union, Eurasian Economic Union, African Union) for a sustainable order of peace also at the global level
- more efficient approaches to tackling worldwide emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic,
- financial and economic crisis / environmental crisis through the international community (UNO)

What will come after the unipolar world?

Professor Köchler opened with an overview analysis of problems in today’s world: After the end of the bipolar world order which had stabilised the world for four decades after the war no new sustainable, stable order has emerged as yet, let alone a new power balance. During the period of time with a unipolar constellation after the end of the Cold War, many unstable situations had unfolded or be-

come even more unstable in several geopolitically important regions such as the Middle East, the Caucasus and regions in Africa. One of the most crucial problems had been the interventionist politics of the dominating power in this period and their attempts to force their views and concepts on the rest of the world. The question how the world order should be structured is interconnected with the question of the worsening relationships between the big civilisations, at present especially between the Islamic world and the West. In this regard no solution has been found either. The regional organisations which emerged after the end of the Cold War have not reached the amount of power and influence to be able to offer contributions to the global interplay of forces. The United Nations Organisation would therefore have a special role to play.

Severe mistakes of US politics

Professor Čarnogurský said the US were acting as if they still had the role of unipolar world power. Today US laws were being enforced almost anywhere in the world, which can be demonstrated in the case of Nordstream 2, where the US were sanctioning corporations which contribut-

ed to the project. Russia and China were economic world powers today and had become more influential than the US. Crises and conflicts cannot be solved militarily. As a matter of fact the USA don’t play a role any more they just haven’t noticed it yet. They need more time to understand this. The EU should stop supporting the US and end the sanctions because they damage co-operation. We are going through a dangerous period of time.

The West no longer has a power monopoly

Alexander Rahr started with an analysis of the SARS-COV 2 pandemic: the situation was explosive, riots of violent protesters like in the US could erupt here in Europe too. The world showed no signs of recovery but everybody was trying to look after themselves. Conflicts that had been there before the pandemic were heating up. We already had arrived in a multipolar world, important actors today included China, Russia, India and Turkey. The West no longer has a monopoly of power. In this context he drew attention to a proposal of *Vladimir Putin* which he had made some time ago: a summit meet-

continued on page 6

“Dialogue on the Volga”

continued from page 5

ing of the five permanent members of the UN security council to discuss ways and measures to stabilise the world order and develop a framework the world can rely on to avoid chaos. The five member states but the other nuclear powers as well had enough resources and capacities to come up with ideas. Big changes in international politics were lying ahead and concerted measures were necessary in the security field, Rahr emphasised.

Good relations between Germany and Russia created stability in Europe

Periods of stability between Germany and Russia had always created stability in Europe in the past, Rahr continued. Whenever they were waging wars against each other the whole of Europe experienced chaos. Friendly relations would also influence politics in Europe. According to Rahr, Russia had done everything to support German unification and the Germans should be very grateful to Russia for that. Russia was important for Europe and the current tensions should end. The Forum “Dialogue on the Volga” was making an important contribution in this regard.

Anton Varfolomeev posed the question if unipolarity ever had existed in the first place or a unipolar world had not rather been an illusion. Unipolarity would need a hierarchical system to come to solutions. Never had something like that existed, the world had always remained diversified. Other countries such as Turkey were gaining significance right now. Iran had been pursuing their independent policies successfully for 3,000 years. The BRICS states had their own agenda as had other countries. The role of the state has to be re-considered. There had been the immature notion that independent states were no longer existent. But key problems like pandemics could only be solved by states. This is why the states still had an important role to play.

Roundtable

“German Russian Dialogue”

The author contributed with a brief statement to a roundtable about the topic: “German Russian dialogue: problems and opportunities for co-operation”. This roundtable was moderated by Professor *Tatiana Vasilievna Evdokimova*, Head of the Department of general history and the methodic of teaching history and social studies at Volgograd State Social and Pedagogical University. In two hours almost 15 speakers participated. She was able to acknowledge every single contribution with a few words. Again, only a short summary may be offered here.

Two introductory statements were made by the director of the centre for Germany-related studies at the Europe Insti-

tute of the Russian Academy of sciences in Moscow Dr *Vladislav Belov*, and by former Oberbürgermeister of Cologne (2009 - 2015) Jürgen Roters, who now promotes the twin city co-operation between Cologne and Volgograd in his capacity as the director of the communal programme of the German-Russian Forum.

Co-operation between Germany and Russia

Dr Below provided an overview about the various phases of German-Russian co-operation since the 1990ies. Although relations were more difficult today there was a good dialogue on the administrative level. In certain specific areas such as the war on terror, organised crime and illegal immigration Russia was a reliable partner for Germany. Economically speaking he saw potentials for co-operation in the areas of new technologies such as hydrogen research or waste recycling. Minister of Foreign Affairs *Sergey Lavrov* kept calling for a renewed dialogue.

Jürgen Roters praised this years’ “Dialogue on the Volga” as exemplary for a convention of citizens who wanted to personally contribute to reconciliation and peace work. “Volgograd has developed into an internationally renowned platform for peaceful dialogue across national borders. [...] The forum is an excellent example for political reconciliation and peace work.” The meeting was proof that dialogue is possible and the line of reasonable arguments doesn’t have to be cut short. Furthermore he referred to the end of the Second World War 75 years ago: “We are thankful that the Russian nation who suffered the horrendous number of 27 million casualties due to the German war of aggression reached out to us after the war and reinvited us into the community of nations. Commemorating this here in Volgograd today has a special significance.” He continued that it was necessary to look ahead and stress common goals since both sides were dependent on each other. “The number of twin city agreements between Germany and Russia has increased to more than 100. Despite the political ice age activities and projects at the municipal level contributed to the invigoration of German Russian relations.”

A platform of peacemakers

Yuri Starovatych is former mayor of Volgograd, chairman of the Volgograd “Russian Endowment for Peace” and honorary citizen of both Volgograd and Hiroshima. “We are all friends here”, was the opening sentence of his speech. “Dialogue on the Volga” was a platform of peacemakers. This was again the common theme of this years’ talks. At 75 years after the end of the war there had been a 30 year long history of partnership between Cologne and

Volgograd. In 1945 Germans and Russians had been enemies, later partners. But unfortunately the gap between Germany and Russia was deepening again. Some German politicians – he singled out *Ursula von der Leyen* and *Angela Merkel* in this regard – were actively pursuing a deterioration of the relations. This was undermining trust.

From one human being to another at a level of friendship

The author of this article criticised the current policies towards Russia, too: “The hybris in the West’s behaviour towards our neighbour Russia is beyond endurance. A policy which is dominated by imperial power schemes alone rather than being rooted in ethics makes a fruitful co-operation all but impossible.” She diagnosed a struggle of competing vigours in the current German-Russian relations: between those who aim for a continuous improvement of relations and others who chose and stick to confrontation. As always, a differentiation between the actual view about Russia in the German public and the picture painted in the published media products was mandatory. There is still a majority of more than two thirds of German citizens who would favour more co-operation with Russia and 94% of them at least regards good relations with Russia as “important”. It would be the task of the mainstream media to truthfully mirror the intentions of public opinion in their products but unfortunately this was rarely the case. One example is how little the numerous constructive projects on the communal level, which were made topics at this years’ dialogue on the Volga, were recognised in the media. One should not underestimate the significance of twin city relations. These partnerships were tools to counter the ongoing policies of confrontation. They are important keystones for the survival of German Russian dialogue and offer the opportunity to create a broad foundation of trust and mutual respect on an equal footing, from one human being to another in friendship. •

¹ *Rosstrudnichestvo* (Russian:

Росотрудничество) is the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs (CIS), Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It has the task of promoting the knowledge of the Russian language abroad, fostering international cultural cooperation and conveying a comprehensive, up-to-date picture of Russia. The 61 Friendship Societies include the *Switzerland-Russia Society* (GSR) and the *Austrian-Russian Friendship Society* (ORFG).

² “Volgograd Dialogue” is a discussion platform organised by the Centre for Public Diplomacy (Volgograd State University) on current issues of world politics and security, created to promote the positive profile of Volgograd State University and the city of Volgograd as a peace ambassador, as a capital of public diplomacy, as a founder of the international movement of twin cities.