Conference for Security and Co-operation in the Middle and Near East (CSCME)[1]

Number one on the world political agenda

February 2007

The Middle and Near East is, in more than one respect, the most conflict-ridden region of the world. The Israel-Palestine Conflict has extended to the entire region. Given the gigantic oil and gas reserves, the region also achieved a strategic key role in the hegemonial system of the USA. The industrial catching-up and political transformation in the states of this region – as incidentally also in Europe in the last 250 years – set in motion culturally biased conflict potential. The geo-strategic interests of the west, as well as the Israel-Palestine conflict contributed to the radicalisation of the political currents and to the emergence of nationalism and religious fundamentalism. The open border conflict and ethnic extremes, which came about through the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire and the colonial establishment of borders at the beginning of the 20th century, are added to this.

The involvement of varied internal, territorial, ethnic, religious and political conflict formations with the external economic and geo-strategic interests of the United States and the west, transformed the Middle and Near east literally into an explosive cocktail. Iraq has been involved in three big wars: the eight year war between Iraq and Iran 1980 – 1988 (1st Gulf War), the Iraq, USA war after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait 1990, (2nd Gulf War), and the US war against Iraq 2003 (3rd Gulf War). In Iraq at the moment something very close to civil war is taking place. The country is in danger of being split into three. The creation of a Greater Kurdistan is understandably tempting for the Kurds. But this would bring about a new front in Turkey and Iran against the Kurds. Israel has waged five wars against the Arabic states up till now. The Middle and Near East is the region with the greatest weapon imports and military expenditure in the third world. For forty years the main parties in the conflict have been in a regional arms race. Israel is a nuclear power and does not want to loose its military hegemony. Other states, like Iran are tying to upgrade militarily and are desirous of becoming a nuclear power

So the conflict potential increases from day to day. The attempts that have been made till now, for example to get control of the Israel-Palestine conflict, or at least to defuse it, have led to the expansion and entrenchment of the conflict. Experience shows that unilateral initiatives deepen the conflict, because they ignore the legitimate goals and security interests of the other party in the conflict. Selective initiatives also lead to the spreading of the conflict regionally, rather than to the solving of the conflict. The time is ripe, finally, for the development of a sustainable peace concept for the whole region. Before he gave up his position, Kofi Annan showed the interrelationship in the Middle and Near East. „We have a very disturbing Situation in the whole of the near East and we must see it as a whole, not as separate conflicts."[2] A more peaceful future in the region could, on the other hand be achieved, if one could manage to replace the selective-unilateral approach with a strategy of common security for all parties in conflict in the Middle and Near East. In what follows, the basis of this alternative will be sketched out. To this end, an appraisal of the most important structures of the conflict will be undertaken next and then the various potentials for regional co-operation

---

[1] Author: Mohssen Massarrat on behalf of the working group-CSCME, IPPNW (German Section)
[2] Frankfurter Rundschau 5th. December 2006. (Retranslated)

will be analysed, in order to prove that a stable social basis exists for common security and that this project must urgently be put on the agenda of world politics.

1.   The Basic Conflict Structures

These are multi-layered and can be set out as follows, according to their specificities and inner logic

Territorial Conflict

The most important conflicts about territories are, to list them:
Israel's occupation of Palestine and the Syrian Golan Heights; Iraq's border conflict about the border in Shatt-al-Arab (an important reason for the first Gulf War); Iraq's tenure of Kuwait and of the islands Bubiya and Warba: Iraq has no access to the the seven seas, so the ownership of these islands would make direct access to the seven seas. - This, at least was one of the motives of Iraq for occupying Kuwait (Second Gulf War); The Iranian-Arab conflict about three strategic islands (Abu Mussa, Great Tonb and Small Tonb) in the Persian Gulf and the tension between Iran and the Arab states about the appellation, the Persian, or the Arab Gulf.

Conflicts about the use of cross-border sources of water and energy

The conflict between Iraq and Kuwait was about the oil field Rumaila, which, from the Iraqi side was seen as yet another reason for the occupation of Kuwait. Added to this are the conflicts about cross-border oil and gas reserves in the Persian Gulf between most of the Gulf States. In addition the fight between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan about the oil field, Elbur in the Caspian Sea and finally also about the conflict regarding the use of the energy sources of the Caspian Sea and about the oil and pipeline routes between the abutting states. Should it not be possible to create the conditions for orderly and co-operative use of cross-border energy resources soon, then fights are foreseeable, and with the reduction in the remaining resources, these will become more intensive and could end in violent exchanges.
Given the conflict of interests about the use of cross-border water bodies, the major one is the conflict between Jordan and Israel, Palestine and Jordan and on the other hand the rivers Tigris and Euphrates between Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Here too, as water shortage increases, the potential for conflict and war rise.

Cross-border ethno-religious conflicts

The major conflict which overlays all the other conflicts, which makes solutions difficult and which could cause a conflagration in the region is the old antagonism between Sunnis and Shiites. Indeed the Islamic roots of both tributaries and the common search for a new identity in the globalisation process are greater than their differences. However, as can be witnessed at present in Iraq, these can be artificially fuelled by targeted and bloody attacks on the holy places of the Shiites or the Sunnis, but also against the general public. Should there be an escalation of the differences between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq, then it is not impossible that a war throughout the region could develop and between Iran, the Iraqi Shiites and Hezbollah in Lebanon on the one hand and Saudi-Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and the Sunni in Iraq and Lebanon on the other. The persecution of religious minorities and pogroms on both sides, as we know them from Africa (Rwanda), would be the order of the day. Independent of their religiously motivated differences, there is a basic cultural conflict in process in all the states in the region, a conflict between modernism and fundamentalism in an historic transformation process, in which the states in the Middle and Near East find themselves at present. This conflict – seen against the background of the generally potentially violent atmosphere, which is partly lived out in actual violence, will exacerbate the fight for the access to state power

and state resources between rival religious, or non religious tendencies, as in Iran, Egypt, Saudi-Arabia, as can be seen in all the states in the region.

In addition, the danger of separatism and the fuelling of new ethnic conflicts, especially in the multi-ethnic states like Iran (Azeris, Belutchi, Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs), cannot be discounted.[3] The cross-border Kurdistan conflict is the most important one with an ethnic foundation and one, which is still unsolved. This is a permanent source for further culminations and violent exchanges in Iraq, in Turkey, but also in Iran. In this case the Kurdish national movement is concerned to change the situation for the Kurds with various goals: on the one hand cultural autonomy within the respective existing national federations and on the other hand, the founding of a Kurdish national state, which could well invite new wars and international interventions. Added to this is the instrumentalisation of the Kurds as a dead pledge for power political alliances in the rivalry between the central states: The Shah regime in Iran, in alliance with Iraqi Kurds against the Iraqi central power in the 1960's and 1970's, which brought about the use of chemical weapons by the regime of Saddam Hussein in the Kurdish city, Halabja in 1981, to make the Iraqi Kurds fearful of any further cooperation with Iran; The alliance between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds against the PKK in Turkey; The alliance between Syria and the PKK against the Turkish central government in the 1990's. The present cooperation between the USA and Israel with Iraqi Kurds against Iran and Syria, prove that the Kurdistan conflict also has an international dimension and that it could bring with it new kinds of interventions.

The Israel Palestine conflict

This is primarily about the ending of the Israeli occupation and the formation of a Palestinian state. Given the advanced state of the Israeli occupation politics and the radicalisation of Palestinian society, there came into being, along side the secular Palestinian liberation movement, the religious resistance groups, like Hamas. With the Israel-Palestine conflict new conflict potential with explosive force is being mobilised in the entire region and beyond that throughout the Islamic world. To enumerate; constant encouragement of prejudice, growing Islamic-Jewish fundamentalism and Arab Nationalism, increased propensity to violence and terrorism, as well as the hindrance of democracy in all Arabic Islamic states. The conflict is the cause of antagonism to Israel in the Islamic world, which is often equated with anti-Semitism in the west and is also one of the causes of a growing antagonism to Islam in the west.

The Israel-Lebanon Conflict

The politicisation of the Palestinian refugees in the Lebanese refugee camps and the presence of the PLO in Lebanon finally led to the Israel-Palestine conflict at the end of the 1970's and start of the 1980's, extending onto Lebanon's territory. In June 1982 Israel occupied south Lebanon, and the resulting resistance of the Shiites in south Lebanon lead to the development of Hezbollah. These tendencies, with their highly motivated and well-trained militia, developed themselves into a state within a state in Lebanon. The Israel-Lebanon conflict, which was originally started by Israel's occupation of Palestine is extending and threatens to take in the whole region. Through substantial armament supplies to Hezbollah, an arms race between Iran and Israel has developed, which, in the last Lebanon war in July 2006 almost became a greater war between Iran and Israel on the one hand and the USA on the other.[4]

The description of the basic conflict structures above, and the fact of the regionalisation of the conflict escalation, speaks for the idea of looking at a coherent regional strategy ana-

---

[3]   Cf. for example the plan of the US military theoretician, Ralph Peters, who is close to the Pentagon in; Armed Forces Journal 06/2006, who suggests a radical reordering of the States in the Middle and Near East according to ethnic borders, „Blood Borders".

[4]   For full particulars cf. Massarrat, Mohssen, 2006.

logue to the CSCE process. This assumes however, that it will be supported and carried by objective verifiable economic, social and cultural potential for long-term cooperation and common interests.

2.   Manifold mutalities

In the Middle and Near East there are not only opposite extremes, but also many mutalities. In the following paragraph the most important potentials will be listed. These prove that they are of considerable importance for the economic, social and cultural cooperation in the region and form a good basis for political cooperation.

Economic potential for cooperation

It is possible that a regional division of labour with comparative cost advantages for all concerned could be achieved: through oil and gas exports, as well as petrochemical products from the Gulf states, for agricultural products, foodstuffs, textiles, consumer durables, industrial facilities and High-Tec products from Iran, Turkey and Israel, whereby Iran by virtue of its greater and more diverse climatic areas and fossil reserves, could offer both product groups in exchange. Further, potential for regional tourism in all the Gulf states, all states abutting the Caspian sea, and the Mediterranean and with the ancient developed cultural states with ancient sites (Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Jordan, Syria and all small Asian states) could be achieved by establishing common projects. In addition the broadening and deepening of common cross-border investment and financing projects (like, for example, at present the Iranian investors in Dubai and Turkish investors in central Asian states). It is both sensible and possible to extend the cross-border infrastructure (railways, regional waterways). The founding a new regional development bank could reduce the dependence on multi-national financial institutions and contribute to the decentralisation of these institutions. The founding of common economic commissions as cells in a regional economic integration, taking the European Economic Community (EEC) as its model, would also be possible and sensible

Resources- and environmental protection, development of sources of renewable energy

Given the non-sustainable use of oil and gas sources in all states on the Persian Gulf, it would be sensible to develop common strategies for the sustainable use of oil and gas sources and thereby use the varied experiences. The following should also be mentioned: Common investment projects for the use of the Caspian sea and the Persian Gulf, as well as common projects for the use of regenerative energy potential and for the creation of a regional power grid. It is particularly important that strategies for the common use of scant water resources and arrangements be made for the fair distribution of cross-border watercourses. Here too, common commissions for the coordination of environmental protection and the use of resources could come into being, which could be the institutional basis for regional integration in this area.

Social Projects

The region has considerable financial and human resources, for the creation of important cross-border social projects, which are capable of creating new jobs, in particularly disadvantaged regions, but also in regions of conflict like Palestine and Kurdistan, which, because of their permanent involvement in wars, are dependant on the import of resources. Only in this way, through cooperation can the advantages of the peaceful perspective be made to be felt, instead of separatism, with all its violent results, and new conflicts can be snuffed out before they start. Common projects to fight unemployment, poverty, drug dependence and illiteracy strengthen a feeling of identity and make cooperation in all other areas easier.

Culture and Education

All states in the Middle and Near East have common cultural and religious roots. There is certainly a relentless conflict between the Islamic states and Israel, but not until now between Muslims and Jews. After all, in all states in the region, Jews and Muslims have lived together peacefully for centuries. Anti-Semitism, in the sense of the persecution of Jews or extermination, as it is known in Europe, is as good as unknown in Islamic countries. Even today the antagonism of Muslims is clearly directed against the state of Israel, and particularly because of its occupation politics, but not against Jews as a religious community. The common history (Persian Empire, Arab Empire of the Abbasid, the Ottoman Empire), with the Iranian cultural circle (Iran, Afghanistan, small Asian states) favours the understanding of common coming to terms with modernisation problems and questions about the future. The linguistic kinship (Iranian language group, Semitic language group, Turkish language group) also favours cultural exchange in each of the respective language circles and the creation of sub-regional cultural centres. For example, the founding of common universities and research institutes in Kurdistan, in the Gulf and in the Caspian Sea states, perhaps at some point, also in Jerusalem. This pertains too to the linking of civil-societal initiatives and projects, particularly youth exchange.

3.   Perspectives for mutual security

Security can not be divided

The traditional idea of security, through the increase of power, which rests on Hobbes image of humanity („man is a wolf to his fellow man ") and assumptions of the „realist school", which show mistrust and preparedness for aggression of states, as a natural constants in international relations, has a crucial structural error. Regardless of the question, whether the assumptions of this school of thought are well-founded or not, it runs parallel to the mercantile teaching of economics of a zero-sum game as the result of inter-state relationships: More security and more prosperity for A is based on less security and less prosperity for B. This thinking legitimised, among other things, colonialism and imperialism in the last centuries and advanced both world wars, as well as the nuclear arms race in the era of the cold war.

Counter to this thinking, is Kant's idea of peace through cooperation, analogue to the classic idea of free-trade for all concerned, creating the possibility of more prosperity and more security and in fact through the creation of a lasting peace.
The results of the actions, which come from the philosophy of peace through cooperation, follow the logic of the win-win game: More security and prosperity for A means more security and prosperity for B. The integration of the formerly antagonistic European states in the European Union rests on this philosophy. In spite of still existent deficits in the area of social equity, participation and social security, the EU integration created a sustainable basis for economic and political cooperation, which is to the advantage of all the states concerned, and – what is of more importance – also for the banishment of war.

The European Union came into being directly because of the intention of economic cooperation of those European states with relatively similar economic systems, similar standards of living and identical cultural values. Their present security system grew organically out of the economic linkage. The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) came into being however at the height of the East-West confrontation, and indeed out of the normative requirement of varied economic systems and cultural experience of different political systems, in order to break down the antagonisms between the western and eastern states through the idea of *mutual security,* turning the arms race into a disarmament process and in the long-term, without the use of violence, achieving a lasting peace. Mutual security is a security system for states with varying cultural and living standards, which allows a maximum of security for minimum effort. It depends on *the exclusion of confrontational behaviour, on the formal and also factual equality of all member states and on the possibility for economic,*

ecological, social and cultural cooperation. The CSCE was founded in Helsinki in and in 1995, was transferred to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Today 55 states belong to it. These are all the European states as well as the USA and Canada.[5]. Geographically, the OSCE covers the entire space between „Vancouver and Vladivostok". Though the OSCE has not made much progress in the drastic goal of disarmament, at least the arms race has been stopped and the dangerous middle distance rockets, which were set up in Eastern and Western Europe in the 1980's, were being dismantled. The OSCE played an important role in the „Change through Rapprochement" between west and east European states and towards democratisation in Eastern Europe.

The states of the Middle and Near East can't follow the European model and start directly with economic integration. Their economic systems, their standard of living and their cultural experience are far too different for that. They can though follow the path of *mutual security,* which Europe took. This path is urgently indicated, as all the states in the region, which are concerned would stand to gain in the mid- and long-term and on top of that they could establish conditions for a lasting peace. This is true not least also for Israel.

CSCME now ...

The middle and long-term central aim of the CSCME must be, the creation of a nuclear-free, and respectively, a weapons-of-mass-destruction free zone in the Middle and Near East. This idea however is not new. The first initiative came in 1957, from Israel itself, when two members of the Israeli government resigned from their positions in protest against the nuclear weapons program of the government and started the *Committee for Denuclearization of the Arab-Israel Conflict*. For the first time, in 1962 this committee officially called for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the area.[6] In 1974, the UN General Assembly, at the suggestion of Egypt and Iran, adopted the resolution for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, which has ritually been adopted and every year since 1980, unanimously, that is also with Israeli assent. This idea, but also the idea of a weapons-of-mass destruction free zone (Mubarak-Initiative of 1990), was at the core of numerous negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, but which always ended in a cul-de-sac.[7] Why was this so?

The main reason why these initiatives have failed is the maximal demand of the conflicting parties. Whereas Israel always made comprehensive peace regulations a precondition for talks about nuclear disarmament, the Arab states required exactly the reverse order.[8] Both sides have obviously made a result, which would only be achieved after many years, into the precondition for the start of talks, thus blocking each other. Even the Near East Peace Process, which was started in Oslo in 1994, finds itself in a cul-de-sac, because Israel has made the total acceptance of its existence by all the Palestinian factions into a precondition for further negotiations, without being prepared to accept the Palestinian demand for a viable state as quid pro quo, free of unrealistic conditions. Although the strategy of selective approaches to the ending of the Israel – Palestine conflict, without a general perspective for disarmament and mutual security has failed, bafflingly, security experts and politicians, make the start of a conference on mutual security in the Middle and Near East dependent on coming to terms with individual conflicts. As the Near East expert, Volker Perthes says, „Realistically, one can hardly expect such a structure to come about before the basic territorial conflicts in the region – in particular, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Israeli – Syrian conflict have at least started on the path to peaceful agreement."[9] The German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in an interview in *Bild am Sonntag* after the most recent Lebanon war answered in a similar vein: The interviewer asked „In the time of the division of Europe into east and west, Willy Brand was involved in the creation of the Conference for Security and Coopera-

---

[5] Zellner, Wolfgang, 2004.
[6] Mützenich, Rolf, 2004, P. 27.
[7] ibidem, P. 28.
[8]   ibidem.
[9]   Perthes, Volker, 2004, P. 18.

tion (CSCE), which was supposed to overcome precisely this division. Is such a construction possible for the Near East and in particular the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians?„ The German Foreign Minister answered, „I believe that the conference idea has its place in the future attempts for peace in the Near East. But we must move towards it step by step, lest we start in on this idea too early. It is therefore my plea that we vigorously promote rapprochement between Israel and Palestine, as this is the core conflict in the region. In addition we should engage important international and regional partners in this."[10]

Apart from the pessimistic voices, there are, happily, also optimistic ones among the experts as well as among politicians, which are for the start of a Middle and Near East Conference. Rolf Mützenich, the security expert writes, „In spite of the initiatives, which have, until now, failed, there is a realistic chance of getting nearer to the goal of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone, if we approach the negotiations with realism and patience."[11] In summer 2006, The German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, earnestly stood up for the attempt to go beyond the initiatives that have existed till now: In the *Frankfurter Rundschau,* she wrote, „I plead for an international Near East Conference, in which the Arab states also take part, as it is they, who will be negotiated about. Admittedly, the Near East conferences, starting with Madrid 1991, were not sustainable in the long-term and in this sense were not successful. A Near and Middle East conference could set in motion the process for peace and security, which would, in central issues make possible advances in economic cooperation and human security. The overwhelming majority of the people in the region want peace. Would it not be worth while to try again to achieve the seemingly impossible?" asked the minister.[12]

Volker Perthes and Frank-Walter Steinmeier however, repeat the mistake, which has led to the failure of the attempts at solutions, which have been tried till now. Obviously they do not see that we have long since distanced ourselves from the core conflict. The Israel-Palestine conflict escalated into the Israel-Syria - and Israel-Lebanon conflict. The latter brought about the Israel-Iran conflict through the Shiite alliance between Hezbollah and Iran.
In the meantime, Iran is on the way to creating its own nuclear potential. Consequently the nuclear conflict has grown like a cancer in the region and developed metastases, and has intensified antagonism, prejudice, propensity for violence and terrorism.

… and unconditionally

If one is not prepared to wait for a miracle to prevent the region, together with Israel falling into the abyss, then there is no other choice, but to dare to tackle the conflict formation in its entirety and, in the framework of a conference for Security and Cooperation. To this end it should be called into being unconditionally and without delay. The CSCME dare not be the last step, not even the second step, but must seen as the very fist step. It is essential to achieve a turnabout – away form the spirit of selection, division and the creation of conflict alliances and towards a new spirit of mutual security and cooperation. The definite target of this conference must be to create a new framework, which makes it possible for all states in the Middle and Near East, to start on a path of dialogue for mutual security and cooperation.

The preparedness to enter dialogue is the only acceptable condition for the start of the conference. Conflicting parties, which make preconditions, will cut themselves out of the process. The conference must be started, even if it is only with a small number of willing parties. The starting of the conference alone could create a dynamic effect, which even stubbornly resistant parties would not be able to resist permanently.

---

[10] Bild am Sonntag 20th. August 2006.
[11] Mützenich, Rolf, 2004, P. 28.
[12] Wieczorek-Zeul, Heidemarie, 2006.

The main work of the conference must be, analogue to the CSCE, to make steps towards the creation of trust, to list fields of conflict, to order them so that the mutual security and cooperation for all the states concerned becomes apparent and the dynamism required is achieved, to integrate all the states in the region into the project; All this adapted to the conditions of the region, naturally. Much could be achieved in 10 or 15 years, which at the present time seems utopian. Every postponement of the start of the CSCME would be a decision in favour of further conflicts and war, which would then be unavoidable.

Circle of participants

Basically it should be left to the conference process, when which state in the region enters the process. Given the interconnections of the conflict structures, the cultural relevance, the availability of resources and the geographic situation, one should differentiate between states in the core and on the periphery of the greater Middle and Near East. The core states are, Egypt, Israel, the future Palestinian state, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates and Oman. The peripheral states are in the north and the east, the entire central Asian states, which want to be part of the conference, as well as Afghanistan. In addition, in the west there are the Mediterranean Arab States Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Algeria. Consequently the CSCME could, in the long-term include the entire area between North Africa and Pakistan from the West to the East and between the Black Sea and the Caucasus to the Indian Ocean from north to south. Definitely, the success of the CSCME depends fundamentally on drawing all the core states (first group) into the process in the middle- and long-term. Or else one has to recon with partial conflicts – like the Kurdistan question, that in the case of Turkey, they would refuse to take part – would continue, but also the potential for cooperation would not be efficiently used. Nevertheless the option for the cooperation with the peripheral states (second group) would have to remain open.

A question of just as great importance is which states will in principle be interested in CSCME and which state or groups of states would take the initiative. That the initiative would fist start and gain momentum in the region itself is to be expected. Are there however states or groups of states outside of the region which would want to and be able to take the role of pioneers? This question requires further clarification: The states, which loose power in the framework of the CSCME, would no doubt not present themselves as pioneers. Israel will belong to this group, as long as the Zionist ideology, which still propagates the idea of Greater Israel dominates. The pre-democratic elites, especially in Saudi Arabia, which are more interested in maintaining their rule through an alliance with the USA and are prepared to put these interests above the interests of their people and mutual regional security. On the other hand, one can assume that most of the small states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), in addition Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, but also Egypt and Iran, possibly also Turkey, can be seen as supporters of the CSCME, as they could well see more security for themselves than they have at present. Iran would, in all likelihood, only in the framework of a regional security conference be prepared to stop uranium enrichment. In spite of objective interests, it is initially difficult to see that the last named states, because of actual conflicts, and power alliances around the axis Iran-Syria on the one hand and Egypt-Saudi-Arabia on the other, would be able to take on a pioneering role. In order to call the conference into being as soon as possible, in spite of principle disadvantages, the initiative will have to come from outside the region.

EU and CSCME

„What happened since 1956," writes Gideon Levy in the Isreali daily newspaper, Haaretz, „when the U.S. made Israel withdraw from Sinai overnight with a single telephone call, immediately after the "Third Kingdom of Israel" speech by the strongest Israeli leader of all times, David Ben-Gurion? Now, as the occupation continues for years, with a government no

less dependent on the good graces of the U.S. than in the past, why is America a by-stander?"[13]

The answer to this question is that stability through mutual stability in the Middle and Near East is not conducive to the USA's hegemonial interests.[14] Israel as the regional hegemonial and nuclear power has developed itself into an important element of the US hegemonial system. From this it follows that the USA can see no reason to take the initiative to call for the start of the CSCME. This does not however mean that they would be able to block an existing CSCME on a permanent basis, particularly as the USA itself, as the Iraq-disaster shows, has reached the limits of its unilateralism.

According to a realistic assessment of the powers, which are to be considered, the EU has the greatest chance of supporting a long-term CSCME in many ways. However, one can not ignore the fact that in the EU, there is the position that Europe's short-term energy and re-newable resources interests must be enforced either by the EU subordinating itself to US hegemony and the existing unilateralism and therefore of necessity sharing the burden of the hegemonial order with the USA, or building its own hegemonial system, including a military base in competition with the US hegemony.[15]

The obverse of this is that the EU would have a realistic chance, to develop Europe as a re-gional civil power worth imitating, to build up multi-lateral and peace furthering structure in the world. Its own long-term interest, the historic integration experience after 1945 and the political results of the CSCE process are of incalculable value for this.

This also requires however that a new political elite establishes itself, counter to the present leadership, which has neither identity nor profile, that does not look first to Washington, but rather one that feels itself committed to the positive European achievements in the areas of democracy, human rights and peace, and which is aware of its moral power potential.[16] The CSCME could well prove to be an efficient lever with which to finally free itself of the trans-Atlantic strait jacket. The EU, by its support for the CSCME, would have the historic chance to return to awareness of the OSCE, the largest system of cooperation and mutual security in the world, which, in the last 10 years has been pushed into the background by the NATO wars on European territory, and to breathe new life into it and to visibly strengthen the OSCE's creative potential. The EU itself would have the most to gain in the short, middle and long-term from the establishment of a regional integration and security community in the Middle and Near East: the security-political risks of a many layered source of conflict on one's doorstep would be dissolved, the policy of energy-security would be lastingly achieved and the preconditions for economic cooperation with the region improved.

Mutual security, democratisation and disarmament

The US government maintains that it wishes to democratise the region with its *Greater-Middle-East*-Initiative. Should they sincerely man this, then the structures of a mutual security in the Middle and Near East would be the best route. Because it is only in an atmosphere of mutual trust that the economic and political transformation which at present is suffering from the massive armament, wars, mutually threatening behaviour and backward-looking struc-tures, would have a chance of taking place.

The social organisations which support democratisation in the region could extend their field of operation and deepen their basis if external threats of violence were to be removed. And on the contrary, they would loose considerable room for manoeuvre to the conservative

---

[13] Levy, Gideon, 2006.
[14] More extensively cf. Massarrat, Mohssen. 2006a.
[15] Further to the present foreign policy weaknesses of the European elite. Massarrat, Mohssen, 2006b.
[16] The US-Political scientist, Norman Birnbaum, has for some time, tirelessly challenged the Europeans to de-velop initiatives in this direction themselves and to support the true US-Multi-lateralists. Unfortunately they have not taken this to heart yet. Cf. Essay, Birnbaum, Norman, 2006.

groups and social ranks, if such conflicts with the neighbouring states, like that at present between Iran and the United Sates, were to come to a head. Apart from the undeniable positive effects on democratisation, the perspective of mutual security is the most effective guarantee that the proliferation of nuclear weapons be prevented and disarmament advanced. The Iran nuclear conflict can only be resolved on a continuing basis in this context. This however takes as read, Israel's willingness to accept that the disarmament of their nuclear weapons and conventional weapons arsenals will lead to more prosperity and security, whereas otherwise, Israel's population, would remain trapped under the present conditions of war and permanent anxiety about one's own safety. As long as the western states, especially the USA – continue to give Israel guaranties of security, as they are doing, there is, in principle no comprehensible reason that the existence of an demilitarised Israel should be threatened in a demilitarised Middle and Near East. If this idea could attain a majority in Israel, then the USA would have no other course, but to support it.

A challenge for Israel – but one, which is sustainable

Since Israel was founded, there has been a permanent arms race in the Middle East. Israel felt itself to be threatened by the mere demographic superiority of the Arab states and decided - in order to defend itself against the perceived threat – to build up a stronger military power, including nuclear weapons and oriented itself economically as well as politico-culturally away from the region, in which the Jews finally set up their own state and developed instead many layered relationships with states, which were geographically far from the region – particularly the USA. The Arab states and Iran, from their side, reacted to Israel's armament and orientation to the west with an arms race. The Iranian nuclear conflict is the latest result of the arms race in the Middle and Near East. The reorientation of Israel, away from the west and towards the region where this state and its citizens are at home, is an important condition for regional cooperation and for a lasting peace in the entire area. Uri Avnery justified the this perspective as follows on the occasion of the Lebanon war:

„The whole Zionist enterprise has been compared to the transplantation of an organ into the body of a human being. The natural immunity system rises up against the foreign implant, the body mobilizes all its power to reject it. The doctors use a heavy dosage of medicines in order to overcome the rejection. That can go on for a long time, sometimes until the eventual death of the body itself, including the transplant.(Of course, this analogy, like any other, should be treated cautiously. An analogy can help in understanding things, but no more than that.) The Zionist movement has planted a foreign body in this country, which was then a part of the Arab-Muslim space. The inhabitants of the country, and the entire Arab region, rejected the Zionist entity. Meanwhile, the Jewish settlement has taken roots and become an authentic new nation rooted in the country. Its defensive power against the rejection has grown. This struggle has been going on for 125 years, becoming more violent from generation to generation. The last war (The Lebanon War 2006, M.M.) was yet another episode. What is our historic objective in this confrontation? A fool will say: to stand up to the rejection with a growing dosage of medicaments, provided by America and World Jewry. The greatest fools will add: There is no solution. This situation will last forever. There is nothing to be done about it but to defend ourselves in war after war after war. And the next war is already knocking on the door. The wise will say: our objective is to cause the body to accept the transplant as one of its organs, so that the immune system will no longer treat us as an enemy that must be removed at any price. And if this is the aim, it must become the main axis of our efforts. Meaning: each of our actions must be judged according to a simple criterion: does it serve this aim or obstruct it? According to this criterion, the Second Lebanon War was a disaster.“[17]

The mental reorientation and the willingness of Israel, to see itself as an organic part of the region, in which Jews have found their home state, is probably a great challenge for Israel's

---

[17] Avnery, Uri, 2006a, see as well 2006b.

population. Accepting the neighbouring states as such and to being prepared to enter into partnership with them on the same level is however the most important conditions for a lasting peace.

CSCE/OSCE and CSCME: An important difference

The CSCE is certainly a model for a CSCME, but not one, which can be carried over on a one-to-one basis. The starting conditions of the conflicting parties are in an important aspect very different. The parties in the East-West conflict, Western Europe and the USA on the one hand and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union on the other, were following complementary goals. The eastern side hoped for permanent acceptance of their territorial borders, which were brought about by the Second World War. In addition it was interested in limiting the arms race, in order to overcome the economic bottlenecks, which had come about due to it. And, finally it was interested in loosening the western trade restrictions and in making it easier to get access to more developed western technologies. The western side, particularly the Federal Republic of Germany aimed to intensify relations with West Berlin and Poland and to deal with open questions contractually. In addition to this, Western Europe in its entirety was interested in the disarmament of the conventional arsenals of the Soviet Union, as it was clearly superior to Western Europe in this area. The potential for the Soviet Union to threaten Western Europe was to be abolished thereby. In addition and not least, the West aimed, with its strategy of „Change through Rapprochement" to bring the eastern side to commit itself to the extension of individual freedoms and to make assurances with regard to the adherence to human rights. On the grounds of these very different, but complementary bilateral expectations, the CSCE was, from the very beginning based on the perspective of give and take in at least three areas: Security politics, economic exchange and human rights.[18] Both sides had an interest in advancing the CSZE process in the realistic expectation that they would be able to achieve as great a part of their aims as possible. The eastern side, though it was initially not keen, was finally prepared to improve the human rights situation, which the western side particularly favoured, because it put great value on its own political security and economic interests.

In the case of the perspective of a CSCME, the interests of the conflicting parties are not complementary in all areas. Iran and the Arab States would have to take on board the acceptance of Israel and guarantee its existence on a permanent basis. In return, Israel would have to finally pull back into the 1967 borders and no longer block the existence of a viable Palestinian state and accept this state on its borders. Then one would have to look at building up mutual regional security, through disarmament on both sides, conventional as well as nuclear. Iran, Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich states in the Middle East are, however, in contrast to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, because of their foreign currency surpluses, and other varied potential, not dependent on western concessions and certainly not on concessions from Israel. On the contrary, Israel, Europe and also the USA could profit from the oil from the oil states in the Middle East not being used as a political weapon in future and that the energy-political security, which is an important aim for all industrial states could be permanently guaranteed. In this respect, there is no reason to expect the Middle Eastern states, in the area of politics, to make any concessions on human rights as quid pro quo. Consequently all political questions in relation to democratisation would have to be left to the dynamics of the process. Those who set human rights as a first condition for the start of CSCME, or make all questions dependent on them, should realise that in so doing they are hindering the CSCME.

Initiated by IPPNW e.V. (Registered Association) Germany and IALANA Germany

---

[18] Tudyka, Kurt P. 2002.

Literature

Avnery, Uri, 2006a: America's Rottweiler. 26.08.06.
[http://www.counterpunch.org/avnery08262006.html]

same, 2006b: Sorry, wrong continent, 23.12.06.
[http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1166960371]

Birnbaum, Norman, 2006: Die Zukunft des Imperiums, in: tageszeitung 24.10.06.

Brzoska, Michael/Neuneck, Götz, 2006: Verhandlungen und andere Optionen im Atomstreit mit dem Iran, in: Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft 4/2006.

Levy, Gideon, 2006: The mystery of America, in: Haaretz 08.10.06.
[http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/771541.html]

Massarrat, Mohssen, 2006: Im Libanon prallen auch Israel und Iran aufeinander, in: Frankfurter Rundschau 23.08.06.

Massarrat, Mohssen, 2006a: Kapitalismus – Machtungleichheit – Nachhaltigkeit. Perspektiven revolutionärer Reformen, Hamburg.

Massarrat, Mohssen, 2006b: Der Iran und Europas Versagen, in: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 5/2006.

Mützenich, Rolf, 2004: Ein Mittlerer Osten ohne Massenvernichtungswaffen – Von der Utopie zum Konzept, in: Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft 4/2004.

Peters, Ralf, 2006: Blood Borders, in: Armed Forces Journal 06/2006.

Perthes, Volker, 2004: Bewegung im Mittleren Osten, in: SWP-Studie September 2004.

Wieczorek-Zeul, Heidemarie, 2005: Friedensperspektiven für Nahost, in: Frankfurter Rundschau 05.08.06.

Tudyka, Kurt P., 2002: Das OSZE-Handbuch. Die Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit von Vancouver bis Wladiwostok, Opladen.

Zellner, Wolfgang, 2004: Die Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, in: Rinke, Bernhard/Woyke, Wichard, 2004: Frieden und Sicherheit im 21. Jahrhundert, Opladen.