

Switzerland

# “Taking responsibility”

## Are we up to the new challenges?

by Thomas Scherr

*What will happen next? Inflation. Ukraine war. Energy crisis. Wave of refugees. Nuclear threat. Pension fund gap. Supply chain disruption. Economic war with China ... How much leeway is left? Will there be a secure future? Is the right personnel available for it? Will Switzerland fall victim to the “malice of time” after more than seven centuries?*

*The year 2022 is turning into an emergency. In addition to the homemade problems, foreign policy events occur that can only be mastered if the country comes to its senses. – “Switzerland reloaded”.*

### Several lessons

After the first lesson for our country in 2008 (banking crisis – too big to fail), there was a second one in 2015 (first refugee wave) and the third lesson in 2020 (Covid crisis). Now we assume that the homework has been done ... that the finances have been put in order and financial dependencies on foreign countries have been cushioned, but also that immigration is regulated independently again and that not only disinfectants and our own vaccine production are provided for nationwide ...?

### November 2021 – the last warning sign

In terms of foreign policy, for years there is every sign of a storm brewing: there was a clear signal to stop in November 2021, when the Russian government publicly demanded guarantees from the USA for the security of its country. The US administration under *Joe Biden* ostentatiously let the Russian request pass. It became obvious that Washington was interested in escalating the situation. With the invasion of the Russian army in February 2022, the conflict finally escalated militarily. It must have been clear in the FDFA and DDPS that the choice was between peace or war.

### Germany is being driven to the wall

The known geopolitical consequences of the Russian invasion in a nutshell: The EU supports

Ukraine militarily, boycotts Russian goods and energy imports and thus strangles itself and the entire European economy. The consequence of the now missing gas deliveries is an economic grounding of Germany, the economic locomotive of Europe and Switzerland’s largest trading partner.

### Europe pays for the war and absorbs the victims

Parallel to the economic downturn, the EU is financing the war in Ukraine with billions in debt, mainly spent on US-made weapons. Through a “land and lease” agreement, Washington has ensured that it is not the USA itself that will foot the bill, but its allies, i.e. the taxpayers of the EU. At the same time, the EU and Switzerland are taking in millions of Ukrainian refugees and providing for them – alongside increased refugee streams from Afghanistan, Syria and Africa.

### Istanbul instead of Geneva

Switzerland: In spring, the Federal Council joined the Western sanctions policy of the EU and NATO without any apparent need. An easily foreseeable consequence was that Moscow no longer recognised Switzerland’s policy of neutrality. Generally, diplomatic contacts no longer take place in Geneva, but in Istanbul or Ankara. Obviously, Turkey can now offer more independence than Bern.

### Nuclear threat and conflict with China

In the meantime, the war – with Western arms deliveries, smuggled NATO military experts and mercenaries in Ukraine, as well as training camps for Ukrainian soldiers in the various NATO countries – has been pushed so far that the use of nuclear weapons is once again under discussion.

Almost unnoticed, the US administration is igniting an economic war against the Chinese economy. In the process, the Western allies are being drawn in, i.e. economic relations of European SMEs with China are to be cut – the Swiss government is once again nodding its head. In paral-

lel, the Biden administration is fuelling the conflict between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. *Nancy Pelosi* made a not coincidental contribution with her visit to Taiwan a few weeks ago.

### **Questionable foreign policy**

Switzerland: Against this background, leading media plus well-known politicians present a dubious picture. Instead of acting as a break on the war in Ukraine and using all diplomatic skill to bring about peace negotiations, every further escalating demand from Washington, Brussels or Kiev is accepted without criticism. – This is contrary to the identity of the country they represent.

More and more citizens are asking themselves: where are the level-headed and at the same time far-sighted politicians who have the well-being of all and the role of Switzerland for the world in mind? And where are the well-balanced and constructive voices in the media?

### **Tasks ahead**

Our northern neighbour is being economically "grounded". Keyword: attack on *Nord Stream 1*

*and 2.* Without energy no production, without production no work. Switzerland is tied to it. There is no point in pulling the wool over one's eyes. Germany can only survive economically if there is peace and it can once again obtain energy from Russia. – And, our exports and jobs are not independent of that. Peace is needed now. Germany is unable. Its government is incapable of it.

### **"Taking responsibility"**

"Taking responsibility" can only mean resuming the role as a neutral state and thereby again providing a venue for negotiation and good offices. Modest, low-key but effective diplomacy –, a strength of our country – to find ways out of war instead of photo shoots in foreign capitals. This is sorely needed.

"Taking responsibility" does not mean breaking with the country's tradition, does not mean "cooperative neutrality". What is needed is genuine neutrality! Today there is no alternative to peace negotiations! Everyone knows that, and that should also be known in Bern.

*(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")*