

EDITORIAL

Most Positive Outcome of the G-20 Summit: The Putin-Trump Meeting

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July 8—The presidents of the world’s two greatest nuclear powers, U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, had their first face-to-face discussion on the sidelines of the Hamburg G-20 Summit, and according to U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, they established “a positive chemistry.” Both Tillerson and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stressed that the discussion was constructive. And Trump said, “We look forward to a lot of very positive things happening for Russia, the United States, and everybody concerned.”

Concretely, the two decided on a ceasefire in Syria and a new channel of communications on Ukraine. North Korea, terrorism, cyber-security, and new ambassadors were also discussed, among other things. Who, among those who are committed to world peace, could not be deeply relieved by such an outcome, which obviously must be followed up with further cooperation. Only the hardcore warmongers and over-zealous editors, like those at the *Washington Post*, were unable to hide their rage that the two foxes—and this I say with due respect—have outfoxed the trans-Atlantic neoliberal

establishment. Because it was precisely to prevent this kind of U.S.-Russian cooperation—which Trump had promised during the election campaign—that the British as well as the American intelligence agencies, still staffed by appointees of the Obama Administration era, rigged the whole “Russia-gate” fairytale.

Merkel’s Window-Dressing Smashed

Apart from this outstanding meeting, the Hamburg G-20 Summit demonstrated anew that the fragility of the old economic model of neoliberal globalization cannot be covered over with an attractive window dis-



U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

play. Chancellor Merkel had obviously thought that Hamburg could present such a window-dressing, as the “Gateway to the World” and a symbol of global free trade.

And what came of this? An outlay of \$130 million euros for an event during which the sherpas—due to the lack of substantial agreement among G-20 heads of state—had to haggle up to the last minute about the formulation of a final communiqué, in which the theme of climate change was essentially omitted. There was no discussion about, much less a solution for, the global financial system, whose glaring injustice increasingly widens the chasm between the poor and the rich—a situation against which the peaceful portion of demonstrators were there to protest, and which can lead to a crisis much worse than that of 2008 at any moment.

We now have to pay several million euros for the damage that the masked rioters caused—burned autos, broken windows, looted stores—not to mention the cost of medical treatment for more than 230 wounded policemen and an unknown number of others. How could the security situation have been so catastrophically misjudged? Interior Minister de Maizière had grandly declared before the summit that any violence would be nipped in the bud. We have just witnessed what that meant.

In May, the Interior Minister of Hamburg, Andy Grote, had announced quite arrogantly: “This is the opportunity to show heads of state with an autocratic, populist background how a vibrant democratic society functions, no matter how intense the confrontations are.” He went on to say that “In principle this is a festival of democracy,” and added that “The G-20 Summit will also be a showcase of modern police work.” Federal government spokesman Steffen Seibert had declared in June 2016 that the Hamburg site fulfilled all the “logistical and technical security requirements” for the G-20 meeting.

The Hamburg chairman of the German police union, Jan Reinecke, blamed the politicians for the many wounded policemen and the destruction in the city: “Hamburg never should have been the venue for the G-20 Summit.” In that he was right. What obviously was conceived as a shining stage production for Merkel’s international diplomacy—wishful thinking that prevented a competent evaluation of the security situation—totally misfired.

The question naturally arises as to how such a blatant misevaluation of the potential for violence by a section of the demonstrators was possible. Given the total surveillance of the world’s population by the NSA, GCHQ, and their various cooperation agreements with Germany’s BND and other European intelligence services, it is astounding that the political class could have been so unaware of the danger. Equally disconcerting is the argument of the previously quoted Interior Minister of Hamburg, Andy Grote, that the police had not intervened when the hooligans rampaged in Hamburg’s Schanzen District, because there was danger to “life and limb of the policemen.” If the state can no longer protect the safety of its citizens, it has lost its monopoly on the use of force.

A Workable Model of Cooperation

Therefore what happened at this G-20 Summit should provide everyone the occasion to reflect on the premises of the current policy. Can a body like the G-20 ever come up with solutions to the existential challenges facing this world, if the sherpas, instead of agreeing on principles, fiddle around with formulas to paper over the differences? The G-20, founded in 1999, had already proved during the systemic crisis of 2008 that it was incapable of seizing the moment for the real reorganization of the bankrupt financial system. Instead, at the G-20 Summit in Washington on Nov. 15, 2008, the group set the course for the policy of quantitative easing with all its injustice, which led to the global revolts against this policy—from Brexit, to the election victory for President Trump, the “no” in the Italian referendum on constitutional changes, and even the peaceful part of the protest against the G-20 Summit in Hamburg.

A totally different model of cooperation between countries was recently demonstrated at the Silk Road Summit, at the Belt and Road Forum, in May in Beijing. There, 110 nations participated in a conference which was premised on “win-win” mutual cooperation for building the New Silk Road. This initiative has many aspects, such as the upgrading of international infrastructure, the development of industry and agriculture, cooperation in scientific research, cultural exchange, and cooperation on space exploration and research—to name only the most important areas.

Since this model of cooperation is based on real

principles, which take into account mutual interests and establish overall a higher level of reason, it functions in a harmonious way. Fortunately, it is gaining ground.

In addition to the summit between Trump and Putin, a broader, potentially very positive development emerged during the G-20 Summit. The recent worsening of the refugee crisis—in addition to the positive effect of the enormous Chinese investment in African railroads, dams, power plants, industrial parks, and agriculture—has apparently led Mrs. Merkel to realize that Germany must change its policy toward Africa. Shortly before the Hamburg Summit, all of her ministers were instructed to work out new concepts for trade and economic relations with Africa.

Then, during the meeting between President Xi and Chancellor Merkel, it was announced that China and Germany would jointly build a hydro-electric complex in Angola, which Merkel characterized as a model for further such cooperation. At the same time, there was a meeting in Berlin involving several ministries, at which the intensification of joint investment by Ger-

many and China in Africa was discussed. That this was the first step in the right direction was obvious from the fact that the British *Economist* magazine found it necessary to attack Merkel's new Africa policy and to stress that she is by no means the new "leader of the free West."

Otherwise, the hysterical commentary in the *Washington Post* on the Trump-Putin summit not only makes it clear that their meeting was successful, but also that the mainstream media are the true enemies of mankind.

Thus, even though the G-20 summit was a disaster, everything is not so bad. The opportunities are definitely there to realize what the G-20 summit neglected to put on the agenda: The reorganization of the trans-Atlantic financial system through the enactment of the Glass-Steagall law, and the creation of a new credit system in the tradition of Alexander Hamilton, as well as collaboration by the United States and the European nations with the New Silk Road—above all, in economic development of Southwest Asia and Africa.