

ANSPRACHE

RA Dr. Volker Schlegel, Vorsitzender Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. NRW
zum NOWRUZ Tag 2015
Dienstag 24. März 2015 von 10:00 bis 17:00 Uhr
im Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten
Neuer Jungfernstieg 9-14, 20354 HAMBURG

Nowruz Fest Hamburg

Importance of links between all those N. countries
as a bridge between Asia and the western world

Difficult:

N. has been existing for more than 3.000 years

It is celebrated – sometimes in different forms - by approximate ca. 300 Mio people
very many different aspects

I will concentrate my address on some of them

But let me start: what N. means:

word N. comes from Pahlavi language:

new day

At the same time it means:

feast of community and life

victory of light over darkness

victory of good over evil

of springtime over winter season

Like many very old festivities: different myths.

Iran: victory of Djam over demons

Kurds celebrate victory of Kawa over dragon king Dahak

or:

Merge of plants Mischi and Mischiyane: creating the first human being

Special importance of N. acknowledged by UN:

15. May 2010 General Assembly acknowledged N. as an important feast

A lot of details involved:

exact timing

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special food, which is served (Haft Sin)

figures, who perform

different ways of celebration

I will concentrate my remarks on some aspects of geo-political dimension:

in global trading system and political world:

Tendency to develop in different ways:

near failure of WTO reform (more than 10 years)

interests of all parties involved too different

result of that frustration:

bilateral trade agreements

EU – concluded with Korea, Canada,

negotiations with Japan, US (TTIP)

US with Asian Pacific region

simultaneously:

Building of trade and investment blocks

- ASEAN, plus 3 , plus 6: biggest economic block worldwide
- Naphta
- not to forget: EU
- new trend:

each of these entities with a kind of firewall around the respective block

common custom barriers against trade from outside

already today:

growth rates within ASEAN member states higher than trade between ASEAN and EU

Possibility:

the more integration inside those blocks

the stronger the protection against influence from outside

the higher the risk that the competition between those trading blocks could lead to a kind of trade disputes and conflicts

a trend we all cannot be interested in

our experience over a long period of time:

The freer the trading system, the higher the economic growth rates !

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Similar trend in the field of politics:

The big players are getting more and more separate, acting alone, without taking in consideration the actual or future interests of others,

conflicts cannot be solved any longer by cooperation, mutual common efforts

f.e.: Syria, Sudan, Ukraine

The only way out:

Better mutual understanding of intercultural differences, different historical backgrounds, different mentalities

Here the Nowruz group of states, the Nowruz community with more than 300 Mio people could play an important role:

These 300 millions have at least some common ground, common cultural roots

These 300 mio people are on the other hand such a big community that they cannot be neglected by the other big players

How could that idea work in practical terms:

Best example:

Öcalan made use of a common understanding between hostile Nowruz states by issuing on the Nowruz day his call for peace and cooperation between Turkey and the Kurds.

And this call is understood by both sides !

The Nowruz community had over centuries close links to the trade on the silk roads and in so far a better understanding of the importance of the silk roads for linking continents together-

They could again play a decisive role for a better cooperation in the global trading system and in settling political disputes,

perhaps sometimes better and more efficient than the UN, where the big powers are blocking each other – none of them would run the risk to loose face.

Let me conclude with the following statement:

In these days we all are watching with interest and sorrow the outcome of the negotiations between the E3 plus 3.

I sincerely hope that all the decision makers are aware of their historic responsibility and that they are strong enough in the interest of all people and nations involved:

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To reach a mutual satisfying and long lasting agreement.

All Nowruz states would benefit from such an agreement;

It would be a new beginning

a victory of good over bad,

of light over darkness.

Such an agreement could be the basis for a new beginning for that part of our world and at the same encourage the Nowruz community to get engaged in a strong and positive way for world peace