

**Remarks about Events
at the Munich Security Conference on
February 07 & 08, 2015**

by Reiner Bernstein

Munich, February 08, 2015

The morning of February 07, the whole devotion of the audience at the Munich Security Conference – attended by many Prime Ministers, Deputy Presidents, and Secretaries of State (Mr. Poroshenko, Mr. Biden, Mr. Kerry, and others) – was absorbed by the appearance of Chancellor Angela Merkel after her negotiations with the French President François Hollande in Moscow yesterday with the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

To open dismay of some leaders (Mr. Mc Cain, Mr. Poroshenko, Mr. Rifkin of Great Britain, Ms. Grybauskaite of Lithuania, and some NATO leaders), Ms. Merkel's whole presentation circled around global treaty responsibilities since the Helsinki Process as well as around the appeal to the complete respect for values of international human rights and treaty obligations. She rejected proposals completely to carry heavy weapons to the Ukrainian army. *"Whatever we would deliver: They cannot win a war against Russia."* Instead, she made it clear that the only way to solve the conflict with Russia is to capitalize again and again all diplomatic channels for an immediate ceasefire as the starting piece for valuable negotiations.

Furthermore, Ms. Merkel's presentation pondered around the German and European endeavours to strengthen the security architecture in Africa ("Boko Haram" and Ebola in Mali, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and Cameroun), in Afghanistan ("Taliban"), and to fighting the terror militias of the "Islamic State" in Iraq and in Syria. Ms. Merkel emphasized the importance to come to terms with the Iranian nuclear

potential and deplored the terrible conditions of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, and she promised to continue the German support by financial means and by easier admission regulations at least for parts of the refugees in the German Republic, refraining from the utility racism to welcome them because of the German “demographic factor.” Interesting enough, Ms. Merkel claimed dealing with Mr. Assad until a personal alternative is in sight, since the West is dependent on the Russian assistance in this country as well as in Iran.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict didn't find any attention by the Chancellor, due to the 50th anniversary of the German-Israeli diplomatic relations this year? In the follow-up of questions from the audience which lasted more than half an hour, nobody touched it, even not the representative of “Human Rights Watch.” Otherwise, the attendance of the Israeli delegation under the guidance of Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon did not attract any media coverage, besides the short notice of the Turkish delegation which left the Conference in order to avoid any contact with the Israelis.

Foreign Minister Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier in his lecture on February 08 did not touch German and European ideas to overcome the power imbalance between Palestinians and Israelis and to stimulate proactively an outcome beyond the regular and well-known rhetoric formula “two states for two peoples”, represented in the communiqués of the European Union, for example by defining models of cooperation on equal footing. In addition to “*Syria, Iraq, Libya, Islamic terrorism, [and] Hybrid Warfare*” – he strengthened his position to deliver arms to the Peshmerga – he made it clear to promote the negotiations about Iran's nuclear capacity.

On February 08, Security Minister Yuval Steinitz was part of a discussion panel with Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad al-Malki, but there is nothing to write home about. Qatar's Foreign Minister Khaled

Mohamed Al-Attiyeh justified the assistance for “ Hamas”. The Statement of the Middle East Quartet of February 08 did not find public attention.

[Mr. Lawrow on February 07 attacked “the escalation” of the U.S. and the Europeans being responsible for the confrontation in the East of Ukraine. He left no room for a reconciliation course as long as the U.S. and Europe support the Ukrainian government in Kiev.]
