



Prof. John Mearsheimer in Brussels, March 2, 2015.

Debate in Europe

'Remember, Russia Has Nuclear Warheads'

by Nilufar Bahadorvand Shehni and Roger Moore

BERLIN & WIESBADEN, March 5—A spirited public debate over the U.S./NATO confrontation with Russia is underway in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

University of Chicago Prof. John Mearsheimer, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point who served five years in the Air Force, is on a tour in Europe. He spoke on March 2 in Brussels along with professor emeritus Stephen Cohen (Princeton, New York University) and Katrina van den Heuvel of *The Nation*, at an event on “Defining a New Security for Europe that Brings Russia from the Cold,” sponsored by Gilbert Doctorow of the American Committee for East West Accord.¹ Many European Parliament members attended.

In Berlin on March 4, Mearsheimer addressed an overflow event sponsored by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, which is affiliated with Germany’s Die Linke (the Left Party). He was joined by Bundestag member Andrej Hunko and Helmuth Markov, Justice Minister of Brandenburg (both of Die Linke).

1. Former Reagan Administration Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock had planned to speak at a December 2014 event of the group, but was unable to attend.

Mearsheimer said that NATO escalation in Ukraine, with the supply of weapons and training, will not permit victory over the Donbas militias in eastern Ukraine. “It’s a dream” to think a military solution is possible, he said, and “will only lead to more Ukrainians dying.” “If I am wrong and if the West is successful with a strategy to raise the deployment and costs for Russia, one should be reminded, Russia has thousands of nuclear warheads.”

Calling Out the Nazis

Parliamentarian Hunko reviewed the Ukraine crisis, including the Western-financed coup d’état of Feb. 22, 2014, including how all Western governments legitimized the sabotage of the Feb. 21 agreement, brokered in Kiev under the leadership of German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. He pointed out that the 2013 EU free-trade negotiations with Kiev, forcing Ukraine to choose, “you are either with us or against us”—despite the country’s close economic ties with Russia—was the key to the subsequent escalation and civil war.

Hunk emphasized that what happened in Ukraine was not a revolution (as many in Germany believe, recalling the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989), but a coup, which had also been recognized as such by the scientific advisory board of the German government.

The parliamentarian further identified the role being played in the war by neo-Nazi fighting forces, “the Bandera cult² in western Ukraine,” which serve as pri-

2. See “Western Powers Back Neo-Nazi Coup in Ukraine, *EIR*, Feb. 7, 2014.



Member of the Bundestag Andrej Hunko



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Brandenburg Justice Minister Dr. Helmuth Markov

even nuclear war, and the policy of regime change. In response to one of the questions on the threat of war in Europe, including the use of nuclear weapons, Mearsheimer said the danger is known by reasonable people in Washington, and he didn't think it would happen. All of the speakers argued that a nuclear scenario is not probable, but agreed that it's still not a good idea to provoke Putin.

vate armies, an issue that has to be resolved. He reported that he had asked protesting mineworkers in eastern Ukraine, during a visit in April 2014, why they were demonstrating, and was told, "Because of the Banderistas in Kiev."

Mearsheimer's remarks focused on three policies of the U.S. government that caused the Ukraine crisis: NATO expansion, EU expansion, and the promotion of democracy. He stressed that ignoring Russian President Putin's many warnings or provoking him is foolish and dangerous, especially since Russia is in possession of nuclear weapons. He recalled the late U.S. Russia expert George Kennan's warning that "the expansion of NATO will lead to a crisis with Russia and we will blame the Russians for it" (cf. Kennan, *New York Times*, Feb. 2, 1997). Mearsheimer affirmed that the intent of the NATO/U.S. policy is to overthrow Putin and to contain China.

Helmuth Markov attacked the EU for pushing the Association Agreement on Ukraine, and welcomed the emergence of the BRICS association. He said he believes that Russia's increasing involvement with China is enhanced by the sanctions against it. He was quite optimistic about the Minsk II agreement for a ceasefire in Ukraine, whereas Hunko was less hopeful, since after the Minsk agreement was signed, there was promotion of more sanctions, which block collaboration and trust.

During the question-and-answer period, many people brought up the danger of a potential war, and

A Schiller Institute representative asked about the U.S. Prompt Global Strike military doctrine and the U.S. modernization of nuclear weapons to improve their use in a first strike, but the speakers avoided the question. Asked about President Obama's backing for regime change against Putin, Mearsheimer mentioned that the statement by Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, on how the U.S. "invested" \$5 billion in Ukraine for that policy, is still posted on the White House website. He ended the event with an appeal for Germans to take their own interests more into account.

On March 6, parliamentarian Hunko spoke at an event in Stuttgart on the impact of the Greek election. Asked by Schiller Institute representatives about the initiatives by the BRICS, he replied that he fully endorsed "bridge credits for Greece from Russia, India, and China," mentioning that such credits from India have been in discussion for several years. As a member of the Bundestag, he said that Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras personally asked his party to back the compromise with the EU over Greece's debt, when it came up for vote in the Bundestag. The request led to a hot debate in his party. (The compromise agreement was eventually voted up.)

Hunko said that the war danger is one reason to support the Greek government, as Greece could vote against new sanctions against Russia going into the Summer.