

The Bertelsmann Foundation – a neoliberal think tank founds war



Underneath the posh plaster of – Unter den Linden 1 – you see Bertelsmann, which step by step leaves behind the slightly antiquated bookshop some of you might know. Bertelsmann mainly is a neoliberal think tank at command of the elites. The Bertelsmann Foundation is consulting politics at the highest level, when and wherever it comes to transforming society along purely economic guidelines. Be it Hartz 4, the privatization of health and education systems or foreign policy:

Bertelsmann produces expert reports and long term studies, invites decision-makers from politics, economy and media, and in some sectors finances complete research institutes – in this putting its own neoliberal proposals on the agenda of the political institutions.

In the field of foreign policy the “Center for Applied Political Research – CAP” in Munich is of special importance. Since 2004 this institute annually draws up the “Bertelsmann Transformation Index – BTI” which is increasingly used as a basis by government and ministries. The BTI judges the development of 119 states of poorer “world regions” along the goal of a “consolidated free-enterprise democracy” and accordingly puts them in a ranking order. Besides political civil rights the Index defines “open markets for goods and factors of production, as well as the creation of a political order that encourages market and competition” to be a “constitutive basic element” of, in this sense positive, transformation. Seemingly indispensable the BTI leashes together democracy and capitalism, which means: to get support from the industrialized countries in the future, a society has to pave the way for the market. Not to forget the threat at the other end of the scale, that is to be classified as “failed state”, which is nothing short of being considered fair game for all kinds of intervention, including warfare.

Also in case neo-colonial transformation takes a conflictive course Bertelsmann provides studies and recommendations for the German and European authorities, sets the agenda for the military. Two Studies published in 1996, “Superpower Europe” and “Conflict Dominance close to War State against State”, speak for themselves. The EU starts extending their armed forces, the member states discuss about laying down an obligation to continuously improve armament in the EU constitution – the CAP keeps at it and, in its 2004 study “A European Defence Strategy”, urges to build up “a clear air superiority and a fighting strength able to operate from land- and sea-based platforms”. They talk about control over raw materials – terrorist threats and throngs of migration have to hold out for justification. Should armament and militarization be denied the CAP sees war scenarios much worse impending, described 2006 in their study “The costs of not acting”. But this is not enough.

Right now the Bertelsmann subsidiary Arvato applies for the takeover of the logistics of the Bundeswehr that is going to be privatized in 2008. The order is awarded for 10 years and has a volume of four billion Euro. Apart from Arvato the transport company DHL, a consortium of Hellmann Logistics, EADS and Accenture, as well as Schenker (Deutsch Bahn) are applying for the contract. By selling the sector infrastructure, which is transport and storage of Bundeswehr materials, another big part will be given to company hands – like the fleet of vehicles, clothing and data processing were before.