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**“War is unacceptable!”**

**Gerald Häfner: Neutrality and overcoming the bloc – a perspective for Ukraine and Europe**

**Gerald Häfner, Head of the Social Sciences Section at the Goetheanum, expressed extreme shock at the “Russian invasion” of Ukraine. If the armed conflicts that have now begun are not immediately stopped, millions of people will suffer. War can no longer be permitted as an option in European politics.**

Gerald Häfner sees the tug-of-war between East and West over Ukraine as the consequence of a collective paralysis in consciousness: “Crises are normal. But it is by no means normal to react to today‘s crises with the answers of yesterday. The tensions in and around Ukraine must not be an excuse to fall back into the outdated bloc thinking of past decades. On the contrary, it should be an occasion finally to overcome precisely this way of thinking.”

The developments of the last few weeks have led to a hopeless constricting of views in thinking and politics. Old reflexes and rivalries determine what is being done. Gerald Häfner: “The traditional logic of black and white, Nato or Russia is false. Ukraine needs a path leading not back into its warlike past but on to a peaceful future: active neutrality, self-determination and collegial cooperation beyond military blocs.” This could also resolve the current tensions within Ukraine: cultural autonomy of the different languages and ethnic groups, equality of rights and peaceful cooperation across borders.

No country has such a long and successful experience in neutrality and political self-determination of its citizens as Switzerland. Gerald Häfner sees a real opportunity if the Swiss government would immediately address all the conflicting parties, as an honest and neutral mediator, with a proposal that is relevant and to the point. “Even if success cannot be certain, such an initiative would be a ray of light and signal of hope in these darkening times,” Gerald Häfner continued.

(1850 characters/SJ; English by Eric Hurner)

**Statement of Gerald Häfner (in German)** goetheanum.tv/programs/gerald-haefner-about-the-war-in-the-ukraine?categoryId=98823 **Podcast and interview (in German)** dasgoetheanum.com/never-again-war-for-an-europe-beyond-the-may **Web** socialnew.goetheanum.org

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