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Telefon +49 89 - 24 88 300 50/Fax +49 89 - 24 88 300 51/www.oannes-consulting.com/info@oannes-consulting.com  
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### **Lala Land in Germany - Peace without security is an illusion**

#### **Technology**

It was many years ago, during a different period of my life, a completely different life from my current perspective, when I was working as a senior manager in the world's largest market research company. The main focus of my work had been technological developments and their impact on the economic and social development within our very diverse societies. Sensors, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, software, etc. are fundamental technologies that have enabled more than just the smartphone. Many of these technologies that we take for granted nowadays originated from military developments at one time. Autonomous driving would not be possible at all without the experience gained, for example, in the field of conventional warfare, counter-terrorism or the data and target analysis of satellite images. Many companies that, for example, produce the components for our game consoles and ultra-modern vehicles, started out as pioneers in military engineering or produced for the defense industry in parallel. Thus, even during my earlier work in the segment of the highly specialized electrical engineering industry, I was always aware that technological achievements can be linked to warlike disputes. It is up to each person whether or not to take a stand on this. After all, at the same time we have to be aware that, for example, the US moon landing might not have happened without the Cold War. As a result of immense technical progress, we now use solar technologies to generate energy, fuel cells, chips or digital cameras like those found in every smartphone. Without the moon landing, which was driven by the competition among two superpowers, many of the things we take for granted simply would not be around today. Many people, intensively using their smartphones every day and trapped in their bubble, fail to take into account the fact that they are using former military achievements to shout out their aspirational, yet unrealistic, vision into the big, wide digital world. I would like to emphasize that I personally consider this a positive aspect. However, I prefer technological innovations to be born out of civilizational - peaceful thoughts. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. That's why I call the area in which those who suppress reality and pursue a utopian idea, at least at present, simply "La La Land".

#### **Welcome to "La La Land"**

I first heard of "La La Land" during an international call while I was still working for the mentioned US market research company. Several times this term came up during conferences with colleagues from Japan, Central Europe and the USA. At some point I had to ask what "La La Land" actually was. With a certain irony, my US colleague, who joined us from California, explained to me that "La La Land" is considered a synonym for an illusory and unrealistic approach. In a nutshell: The term refers to the way of life lived by a certain percentage of the Californian population in and around Los Angeles (LA LA), which contrasts with the rest of the US population, who consider the way of life of those Californian elite to be totally unrealistic. This elitist life in its own bubble is of course not transferable throughout the United States, and not only for social reasons. Economic aspects matter as well. Someone who for example originates out of an economically weak or rural US state is diametrically opposed to the ideas of the Californian elite, as long as a secure and well-paid job that protects the family is not provided. And even then, it is questionable whether anyone from Texas will find anything to like regarding the ideas of the Californian elite. The dichotomy in the United States clearly proves this. I was able to see it for myself when I visited the country in 2020 upon an invitation from the US State Department.

#### **Peace without security is an illusion**

Today's "La La Land" supporters, keeping the war in Ukraine in mind, have developed their own illusion about the conflict. Combined with desirable ideas in themselves, which I, as someone who has experienced the dynamics between war and digital technology first-hand in war-torn regions, would very much like to believe are real. However, my rational mind tells me, quite objectively, that the desire for peace through the renunciation of military protection is utterly delusional. The fallacy of the dreamy pacifists of our time lies in the assumption that disputes take place on the basis of fair rules. As a figurative example, one could consider the competition between two karatekas. Karate is an honorable sport with clear rules and a code of honor. If everyone obeys the rules, one can enjoy a fair competition. But what if one of the karateka doesn't care about the rules and puts his own victory, his own preservation of power, above everything else? Should the "La La Land" devotees then still stick to their illusions? In the same way, one could ask why the Green finance minister Robert Habeck called for defensive weapons for Ukraine months before the war erupted - after all, Habeck is part of a peacemaking party. Habeck realized, and this is to be respected, that reality is simply reality and is not based on the wishes that illusionists conjure up in a desirable but nonetheless fictitious world. Because at the end of the day, it is nothing more than an illusion emerging from a magician's hat. Many magicians are still caught in this illusion even after all the alarm bells have gone off and it is demonstrably known that Putin has lied to the entire Western

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world, broken the rules of international law and committed war crimes and obviously has no intention of restraining himself as long as no one is willing to cast aside the illusion of the well-intentioned past, combined with the realization that, at least in the time of power-hungry egomaniacs, no one will come to peace with you unless military deterrence is at work in the background. This has been the case in the past and, to my own sorrow, will be no different in the near future.

### **The strongest eats the weakest**

Aggressors cannot, unfortunately, be faced from a position of weakness. Those who believe that peace can be won with compromises should remember Hitler's Munich Agreement of 1938. Czechoslovakia was forced to cede the Sudetenland. The whole world watched and accepted it, hoping that Hitler would be satisfied. He wasn't. In 1939, the long-planned attack on Poland followed, in coordination with Stalin, using a "lie". It was only then that the Western powers responded, leading to the fall of the Nazi regime in 1945. All "La La Land followers" should ask themselves what would have happened if Hitler had been stopped at an early stage. Perhaps one of the greatest tragedies in human history could have been prevented. The loss of life would have been far less. We would have been spared the atrocities of history. The UN Charter, learning from the Second World War, defined binding rights and obligations that are anchored in international law; for example, the sovereignty of states. On 5 December 1994, at the CSCE Conference in Budapest, the USA, Russia and Great Britain agreed in three separate declarations to commit themselves to the sovereignty and territorial acceptance of Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine. In return, the three countries were supposed to renounce nuclear weapons and hand over the existing arsenal to Russia. The internationally legally binding outcome is known today as the "Budapest Memorandum".

This February (2022), Russia attacked Ukraine in violation of international law. By doing so, Russia broke its own commitments, violated the rules, broke with diplomatic practice, and shattered the truth.

Without consequences, the right of the strongest, the predator, who devours the supposedly weaker, will dominate again. According to the illusion of the "La La Land followers", we only have to "lay down" our weapons and there would be peace. In fact, peace may come. But what price has to be paid?

Which liberties could the Ukrainian people enjoy if they were forced to submit to an autocrat?

What is peace worth without spiritual freedom?

Nothing!

Indeed, "La La Land" would be the first victim in a world where freedom of expression, as illusory as it may be, is thwarted and suspended.

Simon Jacob,  
Germany, Giessen, 27.03.2022