

50 Years of German Orient-Institute:

Near and Middle East Conference 2010

by Jana Belschner and Laura Schödermaier

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the German Orient-Institute the **Near and Middle East Conference on Politics, Science, Culture and Economy** took place in the "Altes Stadthaus" in the centre of Berlin on June 14th, 2010.

Dr. Willi Steul, Chairman of Deutschlandradio, and Member of the Board of Trustees of the German Orient-Institute kindly welcomed the attendants of the conference and introduced the speakers: **Dr.**



Dr. Willi Steul, Chairman of Deutschlandradio and Member of the Board of the German Orient-Institute

Gunter Mulack, Ambassador ret. and Director of the German Orient-Institute, **H.E. Dr. Hubert Lang**, German Ambassador to Bahrain, **Professor Dr. Mathias Rohe**, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and Member of the Board of Trustees of the German Orient-Institute and **Professor Dr. Yousef Abdul Ghaffar**, President of the University of the Kingdom of Bahrain and Member of the Board of Trustees of the German Orient-Institute.

In his following speech, Dr. Willi Steul focussed on the political situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He stated that in his opinion, the Western states were going to fail in Afghanistan and that the pacification of the region was jeopardized as long as any negotiation with the Taliban or other insurgents were rejected. He quoted a paper of Ahmed Rashid, one of the leading experts on Pakistan and Afghanistan, that supported his own evaluation of the situation in Afghanistan. There were some main challenges for foreign forces in Afghanistan that prevent them from effectively combating extremist groups and implementing long-term stability: on of them first is the lack of a consistent

partner in the whole of Afghanistan, since the central government has not yet achieved full control over the country.

Consequently the capital Kabul fails to exercise power in large parts of the country. A second hot spot is the pressure of European voters on their governments to withdraw the troops from Afghanistan as soon as possible. A third challenge lies in the continuation of sanctuary for the Taliban in Pakistan.

Dr. Gunter Mulack referred to the political situation in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel. He outlined that the Israeli-Palestinian question remains crucial for the region and deplored the decreasing willingness of the parties to enter dialogue, especially as the Palestinian party is divided into Hamas and Fatah. In his opinion, Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority need more support by the Western states.



f.l.t.r.: Prof. Dr. Mathias Rohe, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg; H.E. Dr. Hubert Lang, German Ambassador to Bahrain; Dr. Willi Steul, Chairman of Deutschlandradio; Dr. Gunter Mulack, Ambassador ret. and Director of the German Orient-Institute; Prof. Dr. Yousef Abdul Ghaffar, President of the University of the Kingdom of Bahrain

Moreover, Dr. Gunter Mulack stressed the important role of Syria for the stability of the Near and Middle East Region. The country's economy proves to be relatively robust and its government aims at a stabilising policy of national unity, although the need for democratic reforms remains urgent. Regarding Jordan, Dr. Mulack mentioned the country's entanglement with the Israeli-Palestinian question due to the fact that a lot of Jordan's inhabitants originate from Palestinian refugees. Still, together with Egypt, Jordan is the only Arab country of the region that signed a peace treaty with Israel and proves to be a reliable partner of the West, stated Dr. Mulack.

H.E. Dr. Hubert Lang, German Ambassador to Bahrain, held his lecture about the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU) and their different histories and common destinies, in which he emphasised that the Gulf region has become an important political actor. He reflected upon the question whether the GCC as an organisation with common grounds in economic matters will emerge as a political entity comparable to the EU in the longterm. The GCC was founded with the goal to sustain peace and stability in the region. A unified economic agreement signed in 1981 in Riyadh paved the way for a closer cooperation between the GCC member states. Similar to the EU, one of the GCC's objectives is to expand by accepting new member states.

To sum up, although the GCC-States paved the way for a closer future cooperation, they are not acting as an entity comparable to the EU according to H.E. Dr. Lang. However, the GCC region underwent massive economic growth and will remain the main energy supplier for the Western world.

Subsequently, Professor Dr. Mathias Rohe of the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg held his opening address introducing the legal systems of the Islamic World. He pointed out that the European legal systems and those of the MENA region have more similarities than differences, especially regarding the field of economy. The Islamic jurisprudence is traditionally characterised by a lot of flexible measures which are also open for implementing international legal tools. Despite some difficulties, the legal framework for



Dr. Gunter Mulack, Ambassador ret. and Director of the German Orient-Institute

continued on page 8

NUMOV's Annual Meeting 2010

This year, the Annual General Meeting of NUMOV / German Near and Middle East Association took place on June 14th, 2010.

Despite the tumultuous global circumstances, NUMOV was able to face the economic crisis and to increase the number of members. Therefore, the long-lasting suc-

cess of NUMOV was continued in 2009. Martin Bay highlighted the 50th anniversary of the German Orient-Foundation that was founded by NUMOV on 14th June 1960 and is Europe's oldest private Science Institute for the Near and Middle East region. Under its roof, the German Orient-Institute became one of the most famous and important scientific research institution with regard to Near and Middle East politics, economics and culture. Therefore, the event of NUMOV's annual meeting and the celebration of the anniversary of the German Orient-Institute at the same day were not only a sign for the success of both institutions but as well a symbol for the deep connection between scientific research and economic activities of German companies in the region of the Near and Middle East and the necessity of understanding the cultural and political developments and changes within the region to be economically successful. After a term of three years the Board of NUMOV was reelected. Four Members of the Board were elected for the first time. The Board of NUMOV elected on 14th June 2010 is:



f.l.t.r.: Jens-Ove Stier, Managing Director of Winterstein-Kontor GmbH and Dp. Chairman of NUMOV; Helene Rang, Proprietor of Helene Rang & Partner and CEO/ Dp. Chairperson of NUMOV; Martin Bay, Chairman of the Board of Managing Directors of Deutsche Bahn International German Railway Group and Chairman of NUMOV

Martin Bachmann, Member of the Board of Wintershall Holding AG; Martin Bay, Chairman of the Board of Managing Directors of Deutsche Bahn International German Railway Group and Chairman of NUMOV; Erik Bettermann, Chairman of Deutsche Welle, Germany's International Broadcaster; Jürgen Chrobog, Chairman of the Board of BMW Stiftung Herbert Quandt; Burkhard Dahmen, Member of the Board of SMS Siemag AG; Klaus Eberhardt, Chairman of the Board of Rheinmetall AG; Dr. Bernd Eisenblätter, Managing Director of GTZ, Ges. für Techn. Zusammenarbeit; Joachim Enenkel, Chairman of the Board of Bilfinger Berger Ing.Bau GmbH; Dieter Ernst, Chairman of the Board of Berlinwasser International AG; Jürgen Fitschen, Member of the Management Board of Deutsche Bank AG; Marc Hall, CEO of Bayerngas GmbH; Dr. Martin Herrenknecht, Chairman of the Board of Herrenknecht AG and Dp. Chairman of NUMOV; Joachim Hörster, MdB, Member of the Federal German National Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag); Elke Hoff, MdB, Member of the

Federal German National Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag); Dr. Peter A. Kaemmerer, Member of the Executive Board of Landesbank Baden-Württemberg; Dr. Norbert Kloppenburg, Member of the Board of KfW banking group and Dp. Chairman of NUMOV; Wolfgang Kunz, Managing Director of Giesecke & Devrient

GmbH; Martin Marsmann, Head of International Business of UniCredit Bank AG; Hartmut Mehdorn, Chairman of the Board ret. of Deutsche Bahn AG; Marc Neumann, Chairman of the Board of Managing Directors of Ferrostaal Industrieanlagen GmbH; Helene Rang, Proprietor of Helene Rang & Partner and CEO and Dp. Chairperson of NUMOV; Bernd Romanski, Member of the Management Board of HOCHTIEF Facility Management GmbH and Dp. Chairman of NUMOV; Jürgen Sander, Managing Director of VEM motors GmbH; Maria-Elisabeth Schaeffler, Owner of Ina-Holding Schaeffler KG; Paul Schockemöhle, Owner of Paul Schockemöhle Pferdehaltung GmbH; Werner Schoeltzke, Proprietor of Entracon; Prof. Dr. Rainer Schwarz CEO of Berlin Airports; Jens-Ove Stier, Managing Director of Winterstein - Kontor GmbH and Dp. Chairman of NUMOV; Dr. Jochen Weise, Member of the Board of E.ON Ruhrgas AG; Dr. Monika Wulf-Mathies, Member of the European Commission ret. and Proprietor of Wulf.mathies.consult

continued from page 6

Near and Middle East Conference 2010

business relations between European countries and the Near and Middle East region could therefore constantly improve. In the region of the Near and Middle East, the tool of arbitration is traditionally widespread. All GCC states have adopted the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, also known as the New York Convention. However, Professor Rohe recommended businessmen to profoundly study the legal framework with the

legal framework before starting business relations with partners from Muslim countries.

Finally, Professor Dr. Yousef Abdul Ghaffar, President of the University of the Kingdom of Bahrain and Member of the Board of Trustees of the German Orient-Institute spoke about the development of the education system in the GCC States, exemplified by Bahrain. He firstly stressed the close historical ties between Germany and the GCC Countries in fields of economy and

sciences. He expressed his hopes to see a continuation and intensification of the cooperation between both countries.

He disclosed Bahrain's national vision of massive investments in the educational sector in order to reach international standards. To improve the quality of the education system, Bahrain plans to privatize governmental educational institutions and wants to encourage investors to found new private schools and universities in the country.