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German Power Politics May Just Herald the End of European Cooperation¹

Germany wants to cut back on the European benefits of Central and Eastern European countries, if they keep opposing the mandatory migrant distribution quotas proposed by Brussels. This power politics could well mean the end of European cooperation.

The leading German magazine *Der Spiegel* recognized this week the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, as the political winner of the refugee crisis, as the Hungarian population supports his hard line migration politics and other Central and Eastern European nations are following suit. *Der Spiegel*, however, does not say who the loser of this crisis is.

We can find the answer to this question on the front page of another renowned German newspaper, *Die Welt*. As the newspaper points out, the loser is no other than their own German Chancellor 'Mutti' Angela Merkel. The Chancellor lacks leadership, and she is even accused of *Ratlosigkeit* in the current crisis.

Stereotypes

Viktor Orbán has been demonized in recent weeks by the Western *mainstream* politics and media for his so-called 'hard line' migration policy – incidentally, the Hungarian politician considers himself a realist - closing the borders to illegal migration.

He has been tagged with the classic stereotypes, because he dares to express criticism on the European – read German – open-door migration policy.

Dramatic levels of anti-Hungarian campaign was started by the contested remark of Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann, that Hungarian policy reminded him of the Holocaust in World War II, which is a slap in the face to Jewish victims and survivors of the Holocaust. As the migration crisis deepens in Europe, it is becoming clearer and clearer that the German open-door policy has limits.

¹ Article appeared originally in Dutch in the weekly Elsevier on September 20, 2015.

<http://www.elsevier.nl/Buitenland/blogs/2015/9/Duitse-machtspolitiek-kan-zomaar-het-einde-van-EU-inluiden-2689411W/>

Migration Crisis

The European migration crisis caught Hungary in the middle of an ambitious recovery program that the country has been busy with since the election of Viktor Orbán in 2010.

Orbán and his think tanks have in recent years completed a rational analysis of the global challenges of the 21st century, including the financial and economic crisis, energy crisis, and the migration crisis.

The Orbán government, which has secured broad social support after five consecutive, *landslide* election victories, came up with answers to the challenges of our times that by European standards are considered to be unorthodox.

The core of the answer is simple. After the fall of the Berlin Wall the Hungarian state is in disrepair and must be *empowered* again. This is democracy in the 21st century: a government cannot indefinitely go against the will of its own people. So the Budapest motto is rationalism, but certainly not terror of the mind, xenophobia, callousness, and anti-humanism, but also rejecting post-modernist tyranny and daydreaming.

Mafiosi

Orbán inherited an almost bankrupt Hungary from his post-communist predecessors who converted Hungary into an onshore anarchy with rampant corruption and money laundering.

Orbán called an end to this. Local mobsters disappeared under the lock and new rules were set for Western multinationals to stop tax evasion, to stop Hungary being used as a tax haven and to stop channelling money away from the Hungarian economy. The new laws forced them to pay due tax.

Orbán has given them limited tax breaks in anticipation, while the Hungarian economy returned to growth and is still growing. As a result, nowadays multinationals in Hungary eat out of Orbán's hand.

Atomic Energy

For the energy crisis the situation is similar. Orbán noted that the European energy production costs are too high, especially in comparison to that of the United States. The main reason for this is that energy is relatively expensive in the EU. So, Orbán proposed to Brussels to reduce the price of energy to stimulate European growth.

Orbán's proposal fell on deaf ears in Brussels and he then understood that the major European players have their own arrangements in place already. France went down the nuclear power route and Germany overtook Europe with the modern version of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Nord Stream. The result was that an EU energy policy was not launched. The rest of Europe had to figure it out by themselves. And this is what Orbán precisely did. In February this year he signed a nuclear energy pact

with Putin. The controversial Russian leader was received with all respect in Budapest, which led to a storm of protest in the Western world.

Orbán, however, kept his back straight and closed a profitable deal, though he refused to Putin the visit to the graves of Russian soldiers who died during the Hungarian Uprising in 1956.

Alarm

In this spring Orbán raised the alarm in Brussels that the massive flow of migrants arriving on foot to Hungary will put the Schengen regime under pressure.

Instead of determination to defend Schengen, he was treated to a quota policy coming from Berlin and he was informed that Brussels has been litigating with Greece for the last six years for not protecting its borders, which are also Europe's external borders.

Orbán argued that the European Commission had put the wrong link. Schengen lives by the grace of closed external borders, but not in those of an endless redistribution of migrants. Unlike globalists, cosmopolitans and post-modernists, Hungarians do not believe that the state has been dismissed as an ordering principle of society.

According to the Hungarian analysis, the European Union is not a post-modernist historical experiment, but a variation on the concept of state. Hence, the Hungarians believe that internal European borders can be open only, if the external borders are protected, just the same way as in ordinary states.

The deep crisis in Europe has confirmed the accuracy of the Hungarian analysis and Orbán decided to close the borders. The resulting fence on the country's southern border has then been added to the list of other European fences used in the fight against illegal migration.

Blackmail Politics

But now it is not about Schengen itself. If anyone has still not grasped the seriousness of this crisis: the survival of the EU itself is now in jeopardy, as the Hungarian rationalism is broadly supported, especially in the Central European Visegrád countries Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Instead of an open debate on European migration policy, the German government responded with political blackmail reminiscent from the darkest days of German history, which also reveals that Merkel's political leadership is now questioned from within our own ranks.

Hangers

In their Ratlosigkeit, the German government's power politics can put an end to any European solidarity. Germany wants to cut back on the European benefits of Eastern European countries - I prefer to speak about Central European countries - if they keep opposing the mandatory migrant distribution quotas proposed at the Brussels summit this week.

Merkel, however, forgets that European subsidies to the Central Europeans are not alms, but are an integral part of a deal with the newcomers from the former Soviet bloc: financial compensation from Brussels for the unilateral opening up of their markets.

If this week in Brussels this deal is pushed through by Germany, Austria and their followers, it will encounter massive resistance from the Visegrád countries, and in fact it may herald the end of European cooperation.

