



A DIFFERENT VIEW

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CONTENTS

Pg. Item

- 3 Editorial**
by Sven Brendel

Opinion Articles

- 5 Economic Crisis and World Order: A Shift in the Balance of Power or the Emergence of a “New World Order”**
by Nathan Andrews
- 8 Coming Back to the Basics: Greece’s Public Debt crisis and the Fate of the EMU**
by Dimitris Rapisdis
- 11 Erdogan’s Centennial Dream**
by Yelena Osipova
- 13 A Suitable Soft-Exit Strategy for Armenian-Turkish Rapprochement**
by Hovhannes Nikoghosyan

Policy Papers

- 16 EU and US Policies Towards the South Caucasus: Overview and Elements of Comparison**
by Julien Zarifan
- 24 The Role of the Gulf of Finland**
by Raluca Raileanu

Academic Papers

- 28 Pillars in Concrete**
by Robert Balogh

ADV Call for SUBMISSIONS

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Welcome to Issue 35 of ADV

by Sven Brendel

As the first and only American editor of this international magazine, I want to share with you my thoughts on American power. I feel that the humanitarian tragedy in Haiti and the response can serve as a reminder on the role the U.S. plays in international affairs. The peace in Haiti is currently kept by an international peacekeeping mission that consists mostly of U.S. Navy Personnel, the airport and incoming rescue supplies are directed by the U.S. Army, and American doctors have become the backbone of the health care system in Haiti. This is not the first time Haiti has been aided by the United States. Indeed, most roads, schools and hospitals in Haiti were built by the United States when we occupied the country in the mid 20th century. While aiding those in need, and building a prosperous Haiti must remain our top priorities, even as news of the disaster and its aftermath have faded from our TV screens, we must also consider the implications this event teaches us about American power.

Detractors of American power seem to suffer from a great deficit in their understanding of American culture and its origins. The United States was not always a superpower, nor even so much as an affluent nation. At its beginning the thirteen original colonies were poor, oppressed and exploited. America began at the mercy of the British Empire. Most "Americans" were regarded as European misfits— people who could better serve as proletarian tools for the enrichment of their British masters in a separate corner of the world. Americans had to fight bitterly for years to shed the suffocating shackles placed upon them by European Imperialism. Forget Robin Hood. Forget Che Guevara, or the other glamorized rabble-rousers of history. It was a group of enlightened, brave intellectuals that led what is perhaps the only successful revolution in the history of humankind: the American Revolution. A nation was created with the ideal that each individual is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. For the first time in the history of humankind a society had been founded upon the rational ideals of individual sovereignty, freedom of choice, and self-liberation. All preceding societies have treated their citizens as disposal servants to the collective. While the U.S. has struggled for centuries to live up to its ideal of liberty for all, after defeating the institutions of slavery and segregation, its existence has nonetheless, marked a new chapter in the history of human civilization; a chapter where the rights and choices of individuals are the highest priorities, standing above all else.

Unfortunately, much of the world has not shared in this philosophical revolution (social evolution). Women in Saudi Arabia are denied the right to drive cars, in Afghanistan girls were not allowed to go to schools and across Africa people are being slaughtered for having the wrong ancestors. The idea that each individual should be free to live the life they choose is far from a reality. In these places as

it was during the dark ages. People are shackled by ancient, baseless, and irrational prejudices. The price of pursuing your happiness in those parts of the world may well be your life.

In the meantime, we Americans have been well-served by our commitment to individual liberty. Despite our mistakes along the way, we have managed to unleash unprecedented innovation by freeing the minds of our people and opening the way for ambitious individuals to realize their dreams. The success of American society is evidenced by the willingness of thousands to risk their lives by crossing the desert in deadly heat just to get a tiny slice of the American dream. The descendants of the oppressed and exploited, Americans have risen to unprecedented levels of wealth and power. The question now is how that power is to be used?

Should the U.S. be actively engaged in international affairs to promote the province of liberty? Should the U.S. do no more than protect itself? Or should the U.S. stay removed from the international scene as much as possible, partly trusting foreign governments and the UN with its own protection? I will not answer these questions here. Instead, I ask you to send me your opinions and letters on this question. I will offer my own response next month.



Economic Crisis and World Order: A Shift in the Balance of Power or the Emergence of a “New World Order” Again?

by Nathan Andrews

The end of the Cold War taught us a lesson that democracy, both as an ideology and institution, triumphs. Some dominant political stalwarts at that time envisioned the emergence of a “New World Order” where the ideological contentions of the bi-polar world between the East and the West would give way to the Washington Consensus and Western democracy. Reaganomics – mainly the reduction of government spending and hand in the economy, privatization, and deregulation of the market – became the rule of this new order, including democratic norms that relate to universal adult suffrage, rule of law, protection of individual rights and freedoms. Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic “Democracy in America” shows great admiration for American-style democracy as it offers individual freedoms on a social and political level, free institutions, and majoritarian rule. Despite a global consensus on the benchmarks of democracy there is still contention from forces around the world.

The 2008 global economic crisis (or what some prefer to call the Western financial crisis) in, resulted in some very daunting revelations. First, banks and financial institutions on Wall Street began recording huge deficits and experienced some degree of fright over the amount of debts that have not been paid. Since 1999 the US dollar has been

outpaced by the euro, resulting in calls for a new global currency to replace the dollar as the world’s reserve currency. Second, auto companies started calling for government support and many other companies called for some regulation from the state to avert the crisis and jumpstart the economy. Third, it was quite obvious the World Bank and International Monetary Fund could not handle the crisis, or at least they did not expect the crumbling of a system that seemed to have worked so well over twenty years or so. Also, the Group of Eight industrialized nations (G8) widened to embrace other emerging countries such as Brazil, India, China, South Africa, and many other countries that were not initially considered in the G8 were now players in the G20. The financial crisis increased the importance of these emerging countries in creating a workable solution to total financial ruin.

Economists posit that the recent crisis is comparable to the Great Depression in the 1930s. All these events seem to have proved Fukuyama wrong in his idea of “The End of History.” Will history ever end? Ahead of last year’s G20 summit in London, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said the economic crisis has been caused by the “irrational behavior of white people with blue eyes” and that the poor in developing countries should not be made to pay for such mistakes.

President Vladimir Putin in 2007 called for a replacement to the existing international financial architecture which to him had become “archaic, undemocratic and unwieldy”. In his recent visit to Syria, Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, emphatically mentioned his country has a joint mission with Syria to create a new world order based on justice, humanity and belief in God. Meanwhile, President Obama in his quest to make sure this “joint mission” does not materialize, has stepped up diplomatic efforts to strengthen ties with Syria. In the midst of all these developments, and the recurrence of die-hard and impenitent religious fundamentalists, it is quite a farce to think history has reached an end.

The world economy is projected to grow by 2.4 percent this year but that will not be enough to ensure absolute recovery. The balance of power is shifting from the US to other nations in the category of the ‘developing world’. This group of emerging nations (including Brazil, Russia, India and China), now fall under the acronym BRIC. First coined by Goldman Sachs in 2001, the BRIC nations are rapidly becoming global forces to contend with, if not to partner with. But is there going to be another Great Transformation in world history with the emergence of the BRIC nations? What explains the shift? Or is it that these countries were quickly developing and scoring very sound economic points while everyone was looking up to the ‘lordship’ of the US and other superpowers? Brazil’s economic renaissance is commendable after its GDP dropped to 13 percent (annual) by the fourth quarter of 2008. The economy is said to grow by 5 percent this year. Interestingly, emerging nations have no

resemblance of the American-style democracy, yet they are experiencing robust economic boosts. China in particular has a growing problem with human rights violations that is concealed by its economic growth. Does it mean it doesn’t really matter how you treat your people provided the economy thrives? No! But the outcome of this irony is worth examining, especially as China is considered to be in a privileged position to spearhead the new economic order.

With the imminent death of the post-Cold War world order, how would the world be? What form will it take? Who or which ideology will be in control? These are not questions we cannot simply answer without an understanding of what ‘order’ is. Is order the mere absence of chaos, crisis or disturbance? Or in this sense, does it mean the control of such crises/disturbances (even when they arise) by the powers or institutions that are able to handle them? There is ample evidence of the failure of an ‘order’ pinned on deregulation of the market, and overconfidence in the market’s ability to steer its own affairs. Simply put, the privileged position the market enjoyed hitherto has become even more questionable. Karl Marx might probably feel exonerated if he were alive today, seeing the collapse of the very foundations of a system that was thought to be the order of the day – and what everyone should practise. Democracy is still viable in most places and should indeed be practised. But the current economic devastations that the US and most other big powers find themselves in leaves one to only think deregulation of the market is not the best solution. Meanwhile, the extent to which government or the state

should get involved has also not yet been clearly ascertained.

The Marxist idea of a free classless society is far too utopian for these times. The lessons of the 2008 crisis have taught us the extent to which the market can be left on its own, and when the state must intervene. A new emerging world order should take the form of a hybrid of western capitalism and socialism with reasonable government or state intervention. Well, we might need to keep trying other possible alternatives if the current status quo has failed us, else we wouldn't be learning from history. Current events suggest that the world has not yet reached an end in its ideological evolution. As of now, what we can say is that the Westphalian temple seems to be standing on quite formidable pillars – pillars that the Washington consensus reflects.

It seems I have asked more questions that provide answers. However, I conclude by making these few projections. The reign of bipolarity is over, so is that of the hegemonic tendencies of the US. Yet Western-style democracy will likely reign supreme as there's no better alternative to the freedom and dignity that an individual can enjoy under this form of government. But we cannot be certain of the alternatives the times will reveal. In the

economic sense, however, we can expect a real multi-polar world order which would force all global superpowers to bend their rules and partner with the BRIC nations and other upcoming developing nations or face very viable, and perhaps, threatening competition. Whether this will lead the world to a "Beijing Consensus" or not, time will tell. Beyond this, we can only hope that good tidings come our way!

Nathan Andrews recently completed a master's degree in Political Science (International Relations) at Brock University, Canada. He now works as a teaching/research assistant waiting to continue with doctoral studies in the fall. Nathan completed undergraduate studies in Political Science at the University of Ghana, and acquired one year of teaching experience at the University followed by another year as a broadcast journalist with a commercial radio station. His main research interest is international development (the impact of foreign aid, globalization and mining on poverty reduction) with the focus on sub-Saharan Africa, but he is broadly interested in geopolitics, regional governance, war and the environment, and the global media.

Coming back to the basics: Greece's public debt crisis and the fate of the EMU

by Dimitris Rapidis

In the midst of Greece's debt crisis and the mobilization it unfolds—i.e from daily articles to the financial press up to destructive estimations for the future of the Eurozone—some necessary contributions to this blurry situation have to be posted. Given the dimension it has taken and the confusion it has created, voices inside the European Union are calling for a vast bail-out plan to secure that the consequences of the crisis will not be spread in similar cases, like Portugal, Spain, and Ireland, and dismantle the European Monetary Union (EMU). Nonetheless, before deciding about the next steps, we have to re-consider the aim of establishing a single currency that encompasses economies with different potential, different performance, and different structural deficiencies. Was the EMU a rational or a vaguely ambitious decision? And, whatever it finally was, does the European Union possess the requisite political leverage to rescue it? These two questions have to be carefully studied in order to reach the correct decision upon the ongoing Greece's debt crisis.

The public debt of Greece has regularly been in the national agenda since the establishment of Euro in 2002. Even before, during the assessment period of the Greek economy by the European Central Bank from 1996 to 1999, financial security and rational design of economic policy was never the case for Greek decision-makers. The structural problems of national economy, the inflexible fiscal system, and the corruption observed in the public sector have reduced the credibility of the national market and discouraged foreign investors. As a consequence, public spending

was the only secure and guaranteed formula for stimulating liquidity, creating job opportunities in the public sector, and accommodating social grievances stemming from the an ill-shaped public health, educational, and bureaucratic system. This state-led model of market ended up with the creation of a relatively immense public debt which had to be served through foreign lending in the absence of any other source of public revenue. Foreign loans from private banks and international financial institutions have raised public debt which nowadays is suffocating the national market and engenders fears for permanent recession.

This is more or less the current situation of the Greek economy. Throughout these years, the European Union has been consistently overlooking these first signs of deadlock hoping that either the Greek governments would cope with it or that the so-called invisible forces of the EMU would absorb it and reduce the risks of regional asymmetries linked with high public debts, lack of investments, unemployment, and poverty.

The case of Greece should be acknowledged as a paradigmatic one for other member-states finding themselves in the same position. At the same time, it can also be considered as the strongest and most demanding crash-test of the EMU since 2002. The fundamental pioneers of the EMU, Germany and France, are pressing for a tough and rigorous year-basis plan that will diminish public debt to 3% of GDP by 2012. This is the aim of both the EU and Greece. At the same time, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland are also taking tough measures by controlling revenue

policies and introducing additional direct and indirect taxation. Hopeful predictions are talking about a two-year recession period that will put European market in quarantine and will widen the spheres of economic pace inside the EMU. No matter what, this crisis put a light on some major drawbacks of the EMU.

First, the EMU was an historically unique initiative that was aiming at creating a more coherent economic model for Europe and reducing the gap between the strong center (e.g Germany, France, Benelux) and the weak periphery (e.g Mediterranean States). Equally, it was purposed to provide the internal market with a strong currency that could also compete and progressively replace dollar in the international market. The single currency would also put a safety net to weaker economies from external interventions (i.e financial crisis) and would enhance commercial transactions between member-states.

Nonetheless, one of the major drawbacks of the EMU is the binding of economies with different structural problems into a single one. As fiscal and public policy problems arise, states cannot use monetary policies to devaluate the currency, re-ignite liquidity, and get over with problems of hard money and economic stalemate. From that aspect, crisis inside the EMU need to be encountered as problems of the eurozone, and no more as single national issues. Therefore, the EMU has to assist Greece to regain credibility and inject liquidity, as the ballooning public debt is hitting euro and weakens its strength in the international market. From that perspective, Greece's problem is no longer a national issue, but a eurozone one.

Further, as national markets are bound to a single currency, peripheral shocks produced by rising public debts and destructive public economic policies are also freezing large-scale investments and hold down growth

rates. In the absence of considerable growth, price convergence is not achieved and the slowdown of economic transactions is the inevitable consequence. Thus, asymmetric cycles are striking national economies, and stabilization and regulation measures are needed.

Under this prism, Greece will follow a path-dependent model if the EU decides to support it financially. This seems to be the only way-out from the crisis, and also the only solution to avoid a potential state bankruptcy that will end up with tremendous cost for the eurozone altogether. If Greece receives aid, the same has to be for the rest of the Club Med and for Ireland in order to secure the impartiality and equality of this action towards every single member. Finally, the EMU will safeguard its existence, but its functional problems will still remain and will need to be reconsidered in order to prevent respective deficiencies in the future.

All things considered, the EMU is facing with one the most crucial challenges of its short history: the political leverage of Germany and France -i.e the fundamental pillars of the EMU- will define the extent of EU's cohesion and the will to assume the cost of an ill-shaped monetary union. In any case, for one more time, the political burden-sharing and will to test the limits of the European establishment will take over the financial and monetary issues and will re-assert the importance of political initiatives in a supra-national and multi-faceted economic environment.

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OPINION ARTICLES



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His research interests include geopolitics, democratic transition in the Balkans, and economic globalization..

Erdogan's centennial dream

by Yelena Osipova

The agenda of Turkish prime minister's visit to Washington in December 2009 was clear way in advance.

It was not going to be about Turkey's relations with Armenia, or Israel for that matter, despite the wishful thinking of some. Rather, it was going to focus on Turkey's increasingly assertive foreign policy and America's topics of the day: Afghanistan and Iran.

Of course, we do not know what exactly went on during the private two-hour-long discussion that President Barack Obama had with Recep Tayyip Erdogan; but from what the "unnamed officials" told the media, the disagreements were still there: Mr. Erdogan refused to commit combat troops to Afghanistan, he opposed to sanctions against Iran, and he was still bothered - profoundly - by what happened last winter in Gaza.

Speaking at the Trans-Atlantic Leaders' Forum at Johns Hopkins University, after the official part of the day, Mr. Erdogan gave himself another pat on the back, calling for more understanding of his government, and praising the longstanding American-Turkish relationship.

Marc Lynch, scholar of Middle East politics at George Washington University, wrote in his Foreign Policy blog, "There is probably no more interesting figure in the Middle East diplomacy these days." I tend to agree with the professor. Mr. Erdogan is trying to live up to this characterization, learning from the West and gradually realizing that often perceptions matter more than deeds. The recent public diplomacy campaign his government launched demonstrates this approach all too well.

And yet, when it comes to the United States, Erdogan does not have to convince neither the American government, nor its public about Turkey's strategic importance or their shared interests. Mr. Obama himself hailed Turkey as "a great country" and stressed he is "strongly committed to creating the best possible relationship between Turkey and the United States."

However, did he have an alternative, given the attempts to leave Afghanistan and Iraq while saving face, and given the strong desire to stay out of Iran as much as possible?

Not only has Mr. Erdogan capitalized greatly on the geostrategic importance of Turkey's location and close relations developed with the West over the past 50 years, but he has also successfully positioned himself and his government in the center of East-West relations.

Dismissing accusations of Islamism inherent in his party, Mr. Erdogan seems to have internalized "democracy-speak" very well.

For those who needed convincing, Turkey made a conspicuous show of good will when it took up a greater role in mediation and international diplomacy: in 2005, Erdogan's government co-sponsored the Alliance of Civilizations initiative (together with Spain) within the framework of the United Nations. What is more, in recent years, Turkey has mediated or attempted to mediate between Syria and Israel, Russia and Georgia, various Lebanese and Iraqi factions, and even Serbia and Bosnia, while having improved relations with Russia, Greece, Iran, and Syria.

Given the history, as well as its close ties with the United States and Israel, Turkey has long been a disliked and distrusted actor in

the region. Nevertheless, thanks to Turkey's location and his strong popularity at home, Erdogan has set out to achieve what he called a "360-degree look at the world."

Mr. Erdogan's university speech underscored the value he gives to strengthening Turkey's standing on the international arena. Just as throughout the past year, he once again criticized Israel's actions in Gaza - particularly the use of phosphorus bombs - by appealing to what he called "humanist" values, and at least trying to demonstrate impartiality, openness, and a desire for justice. He did not say, however, to what extent he adheres to these values when dealing with the Kurdish guerillas at home, for instance.

He did not shy away from talking about Turkey's expanding relations with Russia and Iran: not the most popular states in Washington. He even defended Iran's right to have a "peaceful nuclear program" and called on the West to "practice what they preach," openly criticizing the U.S. attitude toward Israel's own nuclear arsenal.

He took a swipe at Israel, dismissing the "people who are unhappy [and] envious of Turkey's position" and achievements in the region, and who are "trying to disrupt" the

increasing expansion of its influence. Still, he emphasized his desire, yet again, for Turkey to join the EU and be recognized as a secular, democratic, and prosperous state.

He was not modest in stating his objectives for 2023, the centennial of the Kemalist Republic: to be one of the top 10 economies in the world, and to be a major agenda-setter in global affairs.

Although he claimed there can be no "shift" in Turkey's foreign policy focus because of its inherently diverse nature, the West seem to be getting increasingly wary of the more independent path Mr. Erdogan has chosen to pursue. But given the key role Turkey has come to play in the region in all respects – be it military, economic, or political – Turkey's 2023 goals appear to be quite reasonable.

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A suitable soft-exit strategy for Armenian-Turkish rapprochement

by Hovhannes Nikoghosyan

It was last April 22 when Armenian-Turkish-Swiss trilateral joint statement was published (still agreed on April 2) underlining the commitment by ruling elites of two estranged nations to normalization by addressing the core issues of misunderstanding. The follow-ups were marked with the affiliated communities keeping the fingers crossed for positive developments. Despite all the growing pessimism of allegedly failed rapprochement, initialed protocols were published on Sept. 1 (2009). When even more pessimism loomed over the process and, moreover, a dramatic breakdown was quite close, the two documents were signed in Zurich, Oct. 10 (2009), with the strong push from the United States. The protocols then were sent to the National Assemblies, while in Armenia also passing the Constitutional Court, which issued a “green light” and political blessing on January 12 in the “detailed” decision. One can think there is nothing but political will to take the courage of the last step in legislatives. Having completed the subsequent internal procedures, the sides now have been thinking about exit strategies... What an irony, right?!

Of course, the Armenian-Turkish relations are full of important “midnight” decisions, but I assume the strategy below will be valid and thus utilized if nothing that extraordinary happens, as, for example, a small-scale military-political crisis in Nagorno Karabakh till April 24 this year. Despite all this pessimism, despite certain things in this epopee used to develop independently from Armenia’s will, now, after the Constitutional Court ruling, in fact there is a situation where

Turkey remained in “brilliant isolation” together with her minor ally Azerbaijan. Turkish diplomacy was proven not that successful linking Nagorno Karabakh settlement with the normalization issue. Armenians officially even say they are not naïve, and do recognize the linkage between those two issues, but they supposed to be mutually reinforcing, not the one conditioning the other. Under the light of this, the only counter-argument Turkey is eligible to bring forcing the United States back its stance – the allegedly rising anti-American tensions inside a major NATO ally in Middle East. On the flip side, no one remembers that Turkish economy is too dependent upon World Bank and IMF to commit any real anti-American moves. And European aspirations are too important to be forgotten about. But instead, as a comfortable face-saving measure, the following might be useful, at least, as a soft-exit strategy.

Since the beginning of the process parties have been changing their rhetoric quite often. Turkish side has been harsh by default, but their deeds not always reflect the actual steps – in a good sense. Azerbaijan has been doing its best to loom over, however with no major success. On the contrary, Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan has been speaking from absolutely positive and optimistic in the beginning, to “if we don’t try we don’t win”-like justifications later on. Now Sargsyan’s move to amend the legal background for recalling the signature under the protocols was thought to prepare the exit strategy. Draft amendments to Armenia’s Law on International Treaties now have been put on the agenda of the Parliament. A new (draft) Article 38.1 will

entitle the president to recall or suspend the signature under the international treaty practically at any stage of contracting or ratification. The idea behind is quite reasonable. Feeling (however, maybe wrongfully) betrayed, Armenians want to have a secure exit strategy ready-to-implement, as president suggested to have still back in December. While being ready to implement the protocols, "we will never tolerate this whole process being used for advancing preconditions," says Deputy FM Shavarsh Kocharian, introducing the amendment (RFE/RL, 19.02.2010).

Nearly the same time with the amendments, protocols were sent to the parliament, too. Being so far at the front doors, they can remain pending for 10 years or more, as ruling party leaders' say. Technically, as far as both president Sargsyan and PM Erdogan hold constitutional majorities in the parliaments, the ratification process initially was thought to be functional. But as Erdogan once put it, he could not guarantee successful vote, because it would be a secret ballot, thus winning an excuse to possible failure. In response, Armenian president once more reminded the audience at Chatham House about holding the majority legislative seats and personally guaranteeing a successful voting if Turkey agreed to go on the first. Later on some new statements from MPs came into light, suggesting proceeding with ratification before Turkey, which showed certain disconnections in the ruling elite in Yerevan.

But will the protocols be ratified together, or one-by-one, this is the question here!

Recently I didn't miss the chance to ask this question to Vigen Sargsyan, a notable "grey cardinal" in Armenian president's office. He firmly answered it is not feasible to proceed with the one protocol missing the other, because they are heavily interlinked and that

will harm the essence and substance of the agreements, making it impossible to move on. The irony here is that international law is higher than any other domestic legal act. And I will present this in detail.

Even though, maybe being totally wrong, no one still could explain sustainably why there are two protocols instead of one, single, integrated document about the whole complex of issues. The protocol on diplomatic relations speaks about exchanging diplomatic missions and just "the decision to open the common border", which has no time limits to be done and is not formulated in a legally binding manner. Besides, protocols are really at the very bottom in the hierarchy of international treaties, being only "notes after the discussion", with no binding character, but rather an emerging political commitment. All the sub-commissions and the border opening with specific timeframes are embodied in the protocol on development of relations. And the annex itself is "an integral part of this protocol".

I strongly believe that the whole noise in Turkey (after January 12) comes to prove an assumption that the political decision in Ankara has been made to separate signed protocols, by accusing the Armenian side, and vice versa, on changing the spirit of the documents by "detailed ruling" of the Constitutional Court. This shall be quite in line with the international law provisions. Particularly the Articles 44(1) and 60(1) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969) provide that:

1. To denounce, withdraw from or suspend the operation of the treaty may be exercised only with respect to the whole treaty unless the treaty otherwise provides or the parties otherwise agree. (Article 44(1))

2. A material breach of a bilateral treaty by one of the parties entitles the other to invoke the breach as a ground for

terminating the treaty or suspending its operation in whole or in part. (Articles 60(1))

International law foresees no mechanism (if not mentioned in the actual texts of treaties), except for the political goodwill of the state-parties, to proceed with the ratification of the signed agreements in a timely manner. And the protocols themselves do not set out any order for ratification. The 2nd protocol only says that both documents "shall enter into force on the same day, i.e. on the first day of the first month following the exchanges of instruments of ratification". And the Armenian Constitutional Court added that "it implies further that either protocol cannot acquire legal force or take effect without the other". But still, theoretically they can be ratified one-by-one, whenever the parties have enough political will, and only then they can enter into force.

Of course, everybody realizes that major Armenian interest is to open the border rather than to have another diplomatic mission elsewhere. (Even without that an Armenian diplomat has been working in Istanbul with wires to BSEC.) Armenian side would agree on separation of protocols either under the pressure of her ad hoc allies (Russia, United States, France and Germany), or if Turkey gives legally binding and firm guarantees about another reasonable timeframe for border opening, perhaps until the end of the 1st term presidency of Sargsyan in February 2013. Thus, 2012 can be a best option to push the process to a positive end, since there will be no elections, and will prepare a good background for Sargsyan himself to be re-elected in early 2013.

Ever since, if separation happens, the best option for Armenia will be to suspend both

treaties at all. Of course, and unfortunately, the huge efforts by international community will then become in vain. Armenia's stance so far has proven that it is the constructive party to deal with even in this case, and that will not harm Armenia's reputation as a state. But this will make the international community to keep an eye open to the case, not to slip the next chance to normalization, whenever it comes.

So, concluding the overwhelmingly pessimistic scenario, I hope this will remain a science-fiction. This is rather a good chance in order not to let it away. We definitely need to give a great credit to Sargsyan administration, who felt confident to say at Wall Street Journal, that, in fact, we are brave enough to deal with Turkey. Of course, he should have sought the political guarantees from his ad hoc allies next time to become "more proactive", which is not bad in itself....

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EU and US Policies towards the South Caucasus: Overview and Elements of Comparison

by Julien Zarifian, Université Paris 8

**The Georgian-Ossetian War and Russia: humanitarian intervention or military occupation?
A tactical mistake of president Saakashvili or a crime against Ossetian people?**

The August 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia shed light again on the South Caucasian region¹ and its geopolitics. It raised attention on its endemic conflicts, its regional complex equilibriums, and the way regional and world powers play a sort of “great game” for influence and control in this region. Whereas Russia, the main regional actor, was directly implicated in the conflict, it is to note that the US and the European Union (EU), two other actors of major importance, played a rather different role in this conflict and in its resolution stage. The EU, under the impulsion of French and then European President Nicolas Sarkozy, played a crucial role, managing to get two important agreements from Russia: the

cease-fire, and the Russian withdrawal from Georgian territory (while Russian troops maintained themselves in South Ossetia, the small secessionist Georgian province, now officially recognized as an independent republic by Russia). The US, in the meantime, did not do much: American officials only clearly condemned the Russian invasion, and sent some humanitarian assistance to Georgia. This state of fact (action and dynamism from the part of the EU, and relative inaction from the US) is quite interesting and, at a first glance, a bit surprising. Even though it can be explained by internal US factors (the former Bush administration was at the very end of its mandate and somewhat moribund), it is to note that it is not in full coherence with the traditional behaviour of these two international actors, the US and the EU, in the South Caucasian region. While the first usually leads an active policy of geopolitical penetration in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the second is often more cautious, and the policies it has tried to put in place seem generally less efficient.

In this context, the recent inclusion of the three South Caucasian Republics into 2009-launched Eastern Partnership (EaP), which also includes Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, and

¹ Although most scholars and diplomats refer to it as a “region,” it is important to note that the South Caucasus, or Transcaucasia for the Russians, does not cover any political or economic official reality. In that sense, it clearly differs from organized regions such as the UE, the Mercosur, the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), etc. Therefore, we will use here both “the South Caucasus” and “countries south of the Caucasus” to refer to the three republics commonly considered South Caucasian, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Indeed, although “South Caucasus” is more common and “practical”, “countries south of the Caucasus” is more descriptive, neutral, and does not characterize these territories as a region, whose existence should first be discussed by scholars and diplomats.

which “concentrates on four policy dimensions: bi- and multilateral relations, governance and financial assistance²”, is noteworthy. This new rapprochement, and the EU involvement in the Russian-Georgian war resolution, might be considered as signals of the EU’s interest in the region. In the meantime, the level of involvement that Barack Obama’s presidency is seeking in Eurasia remains somewhat unclear. All this, at first glance, tends to suggest that things are changing in terms of geopolitical influence in the region.

However, before reaching such a conclusion, it is necessary to precisely evaluate the objectives of both the EU and the US, the main policies they put in place to achieve them, and the efficiency of these policies. In order to do so, we propose here to observe and analyse the respective long-run perception both actors have of the region and the past and current policies they have implemented.

US/EU and the South Caucasian region: different actors, different perceptions, different approaches

The US and the EU are two very different geopolitical actors. The US is a country, a state, and is today’s world super power with regard to its economic and military potentials. The EU is an evolving integrated international union, presently made up of 27 sovereign countries having their own interests and their own foreign policies. Therefore, any comparison of

their respective policies or strategies must be done and received with much caution. However, both the US and the EU have affirmed themselves as two important geopolitical actors and they both are present in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Therefore, comparing their policies toward these countries sheds new light on their respective international roles and behaviours. It is also an interesting way to approach the complexity of the regional equilibriums the South Caucasus.

The EU and the US do not have the same perception of this region. For the EU, the three republics are, first and foremost, close neighbours. Both the EU and the three countries are part of Eurasia, and share a long common history. The Caucasus has been present in the European imagination for centuries³. European nations and states (especially France, Italy, Poland, Britain, and Germany) have interacted with the people of the region at least since the Middle Ages. In terms of modern state-to-state relations, it is noteworthy that France, Britain, and Germany established strong relations with what we call “the first Republics” of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, during their short existence in the late 1910s, before they were integrated to the Soviet Empire. In contrast, the US does not have much historical experience in the region. From an American perspective, the South Caucasus is a small region, far away from the US, whose principal geo-strategic role and relative importance come from its very location, at the crossroads of greater geopolitical regions and spheres of influence. Indeed,

² Nona Mikhelidze, “Eastern Partnership And Conflicts In The South Caucasus: Old Wine In New Skins?”, *Essays And Analysis*, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), September 2009, 14 pages, p. 2.

³ Mohammad-Reza Djalili and Thierry Kellner, « Moyen-Orient, Caucase et Asie centrale: des concepts géopolitiques à construire et à reconstruire? », *Central Asian Survey*, Volume 19, numéro 1, 2000, pp. 117 à 140, pp. 120-121.

former Russian Transcaucasia constitutes a possible point of junction of two significant and highly strategic greater regions: the core part of Eurasia or British famous geographer Mackinder's description of the "world's heartland"⁴, and the Middle East.

The EU policy towards countries south of the Caucasus: regional approach and the question of integration

Even though the bilateral relations of some EU members with countries south of the Caucasus should not be neglected, we will focus here mostly on the EU policies in the South Caucasus, that is to say on what Roy H. Ginsberg defines as "the common external policy actions of the EU institutions"⁵.

Importance of the South Caucasus for the EU and EU ways of approaching it

Since the mid-1990s, the EU has shown a certain interest for the region south of the Caucasus. However, it is difficult to precisely figure out and explain the real objectives of the Union in that area and their reasons. Although different EU institutions have frequently explained that the region was important, it is clear that is not crucial for the EU. Its first goals are indeed the defence of common interests of its members and the defence of its specific cultural, political, social, and economic

identity.⁶ And it is obvious, in that regard, that the South Caucasus is important, but is not of vital importance for the EU.

We can divide the EU policies into two great periods: the first one, under the aegis of TACIS programmes (Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States), from 1992 to 2003/2004, and the second one, from 2004 onwards, within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Even though it is too early to consider the newly launched EaP, it might constitute a third period starting in 2009-2010.

In these first two periods, TACIS and ENP, the key logic of the EU policy toward the area, and the catch-word to understand it, has been "regional cooperation". The EU has tried to deal with and to act on the three republics together. The Council of Europe has tended to do likewise, integrating both Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2001, and Georgia two years earlier in 1999. As French scholar Damien Helly explains, "The action of the EU takes, from 1992, a regional dimension and the three countries are considered as a whole, the 'South Caucasus'"⁷.

The TACIS era programmes

The first actions taken by the EU after the independence of the three republics were humanitarian ones and of technical assistance.⁸ In the first decade after the independence of

⁶ Bertrand Gallet, *La Politique étrangère commune*, Économica, Paris, 1999, 155 pages, p. 147.

⁷ Damien Helly, « Les modes d'actions extérieures de l'Union européenne, le cas du Sud Caucase », *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 55, n° 2, avril 2005, p. 243-268, p. 247 (author's translation).

⁸ Michèle Kahn, « L'Union européenne et le Sud-Caucase. Un tournant politique », *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, 2004/3, n°1043, pp. 4 to 11, p. 6.

⁴ John H. Mackinder "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal*, Volume XXIII, N° 4, April 1904, pp. 422 to 444, 431.

⁵ Roy H. Ginsberg, "European Foreign Policy and the United States", in Michel Dumoulin & Geneviève Duchenne (eds.), *L'Union européenne et les États-Unis*, P.I.E./Peter Lang, Bruxelles, 2003, 433 pages, p. 181 to 215, p. 181.

Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan the EU provided about 1 billion euros in assistance to these three countries, through different programmes⁹, and especially under the the TACIS “umbrella”. First of all, it is to note that these TACIS programmes were not only and specifically directed towards Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, but to a range of Eurasian NIS (Newly Independent States). The most famous and emblematic of these programmes certainly is the TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia, sometimes referred to as the “New Silk Road”) project. Its aim was to finance the construction of communication routes linking Europe to Asia. This project has not met the expected success, especially because it was related to the evolutions (or non-evolutions) of the Karabakh conflict resolution¹⁰. Indeed, after four years of intense war, between 1990 and 1994, Armenia and Azerbaijan are still today in a “frozen” conflict for the control of the Armenian enclave placed in Azerbaijan by Soviet authorities in the first year of the USSR. Even though Karabakh Armenians, constituting the large majority of this former Soviet Azeri *Oblast*¹¹ population, have proclaimed their independence from Azerbaijan, and the Armenian part has won the war in 1994, Azerbaijan does not accept this state of things. Baku has made of the reconquest of the now auto-proclaimed republic of Nagorno-Karabakh a top priority and often threatens to resume the war. This situation of “no war-no peace” prevents any contact between the two

neighbours. This has made TRACECA and other projects of this kind extremely difficult to implement. The other significant programme is INOGATE: “an international co-operation programme aiming at promoting the regional integration of the pipeline systems and facilitating the transport of oil and gas both within the greater NIS region and towards the export markets of Europe, while at the same time acting as a catalyst for attracting private investors and international financial institutions to pipeline projects.”¹² It is considered a relative failure as the EU has not had much influence on the decision regarding the BTC project for example. As already mentioned, the Karabakh conflict made things difficult to put in place, and these programmes were not viewed with much enthusiasm by regional actors who were left aside (i.e. Russia, Iran, and Armenia).¹³ The efficiency of TACIS programmes has actually been criticised by the European commission itself.¹⁴

The new European Neighbourhood Policy

A few years ago, and following the logic according to which the EU shares a “common destiny” with its neighbouring countries (to use former European Commission President Romano Prodi’s words), the UE decided to coordinate its policy towards its neighbours with the European Neighbourhood Policy. After some hesitations, the three Transcaucasian countries were included into this ENP in 2004 (the first ENP Action Plan started in 2006). In

¹² INOGATE.org, *About INOGATE, What is INOGATE ?*, http://www.inogate.org/inogate/en/about/what_is.

¹³ Aldo Ferrari, *L’Unione europea e l’Asia centrale*, ISPI Working Paper n° 22, Settembre 2007, 19 pages, p. 4.

¹⁴ Damien Helly, “Europe and the South Caucasus”, Conference, Baku, June 11th, 2001, French Embassy in Azerbaijan.

⁹ Dov Lynch, “The EU: towards a strategy”, *Chaillot Papers*, art. cit., p. 175.

¹⁰ Damien Helly, « Les modes d’actions extérieures », art. cit., p. 263.

¹¹ Former Soviet autonomous region.

the meantime, in July 2003, the EU appointed a special representative for the region, Finnish Heikki Talvitie. She was replaced in 2006 by Swedish diplomat Peter Semneby. The ENP is “the established vehicle for cooperation with these countries across a wide policy spectrum.”¹⁵ The Action Plans in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, although specific to each country, generally focus on strengthening the democratic structures, rule of law, fighting corruption, strengthening human rights and freedoms, encouraging economic development, reducing poverty, contributing to peaceful resolutions of the conflicts, and improving regional cooperation.¹⁶ In terms of financing, estimated approximate 98.4 million euros will be allocated to the Action Plan in Armenia for the period 2007-2010¹⁷, 92 million to Azerbaijan¹⁸, and 120.4 million to Georgia¹⁹.

¹⁵ “A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy”, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 2007, 11 pages, p. 2, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_774_en.pdf.

¹⁶ European Neighbourhood Policy - Reference documents, “EU/Armenia Action Plan”, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/armenia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf, 40 pages, pp. 5 to 10; European Neighbourhood Policy - Reference documents, “EU/Azerbaijan Action Plan”, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/azerbaijan_enp_ap_final_en.pdf, 42 pages, pp. 3 to 9; European Neighbourhood Policy - Reference documents, “EU/Georgia Action Plan”, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/georgia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf, 41 pages, pp. 4 to 12.

¹⁷ European Commission assistance programming documents, “Armenia National Indicative Programme”, 2007-2010, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_nip_armenia_en.pdf, 16 pages, p. 4.

¹⁸ European Commission assistance programming documents, “Azerbaijan National Indicative Programme”, 2007-2010, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_nip_azerbaijan_en.pdf, 22 pages, p. 4.

¹⁹ European Commission assistance programming documents, “Georgia National Indicative Programme”, 2007-2010, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_nip_georgia_en.pdf, 17 pages, p. 4.

Outcome of the EU policies

So today, coordinated by the ENP and the EaP to come, we can say that there is a clear EU policy towards countries south of the Caucasus. However, some consider the financial resources allocated to implement these programs are not enough. Secondly, it is still quite hard to figure out what are the real and deep EU goals (if any). Indeed, a few years ago, one could assume that the EU ambition was to integrate, in the long run, the three countries into the Union. Today, with the two recent waves of enlargements and the diverse internal difficulties the EU is facing, any new integration seems unlikely in a foreseeable future. However, integration is and remains a declared wish and objective for countries south of the Caucasus and especially Georgia, which considers itself as European.²⁰ Even though some EU representatives explained clearly that the goal was not to integrate the three republics, some observers perceive the recent rapprochement through the ENP and the EaP as a preamble to integration. All the more so, there undeniably are a lot of elements of integration policy in the ENP. As a representative of the European Commission points out: “One could say that, in a sense, the ENP straddles both the foreign policy of the Union and its internal policies.”²¹ All this might

²⁰ As an anecdote, we can mention, former president of the Georgian Parliament Zurab Jvania’s famous declaration, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: “I am Georgian, therefore I am European.” Quoted in: Sylvia Serrano, “La Géorgie, un voisin distant”, in Jacques Rupnik (dir.), *Les Banlieues de l’Europe*, Les politiques de voisinage de l’Union européenne, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 2007, 203 pages, pp. 75 to 100, p. 76.

²¹ Eneko Landaburu : « On pourrait dire que la PEV est en quelque sorte à cheval entre la politique extérieure de l’Union et ses politiques internes »,

give the feeling to the South Caucasian countries that they could hope for integration in the future. This possible though unlikely integration of the three republics, and first and foremost of Georgia, into the EU, makes things tougher and somewhat tricky for the actors concerned.

Finally, while defending economic interests of its member states is an important goal of EU foreign policy, it is to note that EU countries are not traditional major import partners. Russia and Turkey are often Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia's main import and export partners. Apart from the UK (involved only in Azerbaijan's economy), only Germany successfully exports to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Although some are present in other economic domains like direct investments, countries like France, Italy, Romania, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands etc. hardly appear in the import lists.²²

The US policy towards countries south of the Caucasus: state-to-state approach and a “pragmatic idealism”

The South Caucasus for the US: an affirmed strategic importance

The relation the US has tried to establish with countries south of the Caucasus through its foreign policy is very different than the EU one. The US does not have this special connection the EU has to these countries due to their

proximity.²³ This relative distance the US has to the South Caucasus allows it to plan and set up a more pragmatic and direct policy, that seems to be more efficient than the EU one. For Washington, the relative importance of this region comes from the energy resources of the Caspian Sea and its geo-strategic location, especially in the context of Global War on Terror. As explained by Matthew Bryza, former US deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs: “Throughout the Caucasus, we have three sets of strategic interests. These are valid in all three countries. [W]e have energy interests [...]. We have pure security interests, or traditional security interests -meaning fighting terrorism, fighting proliferation, avoiding military conflict, and restoring (or preserving, in some cases) the territorial integrity of the states of the region. What I really mean is, resolving the conflicts [...]. And then we have a third set of interests: in the internal reform of each country - democratic and market economic reform [...].”²⁴ In the meantime, even if it does not appear in Matthew Bryza's quotation, the importance of the region comes from the ties the Transcaucasian countries have with major regional actors such as Russia, Iran, or Turkey.

²³ However, it is to note that the significant Armenian-American diaspora has been instrumental in bringing the South Caucasus to the attention of Washington.

There is an estimated 1 to 1.5 millions Armenian Americans, including a significant number of Armenians coming from the Republic of Armenia. Most of this population lives in the Los Angeles and Boston areas, however non-negligible communities are to be found in large cities such as New York, Miami, San Francisco, Detroit etc. It is politically well organized thanks to its lobby composed of two main organisations, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), linked to the Dashnak ARF party, and the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA).

²⁴ “U.S. Says Aliyev, Kocharyan Must Show ‘Political Will’”, *RFE/RL*, June 23, 2006.

²² CIA World fact book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia.

It is clear, for example, that the US views the region in the broader scope of its “great game” with Russia. As explained in the summary of a 2007 Congressional Research Service Report: “The United States has fostered these states’ ties with the West in part to end the dependence of these states on Russia for trade, security, and other relations.”²⁵ In the same vein, the US does not hide that it uses the proximity of Azerbaijan to Iran to keep an eye on this country. For example, in January 2007, Under Secretary of State James Jeffrey clearly explained that the US uses Azerbaijan in the latent conflict that opposes them to Iran, thanks to the presence in Azerbaijan of personnel in charge of “following” Iran.²⁶

Setting up the policies: diversified means and efficient tools

Therefore, the US clearly leads a policy of penetration of the region, in order to establish a stronger foothold. Major tools in this policy have been the financial aid to countries (especially *via* USAID), security assistance, and an economic presence (with a special emphasis on energy). In terms of financial help, “[t]he United States is the largest bilateral aid donor by far to Armenia and Georgia, and the two states are among the five Eurasian states that each has received more than \$1 billion in U.S. aid FY1992-FY2005 between 1992 and 2005 (the others are Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, which have received

sizeable Comprehensive Threat Reduction funds).”²⁷ Georgia and Armenia have also been included in the Millennium Challenge Programme, launched by President G. W. Bush in 2002, and whose aim is to provide assistance to relatively low-income countries that are “ruling justly, investing in their people, and encouraging economic freedom.”²⁸ Regarding Azerbaijan, Washington has put much emphasis on its economic relations with Baku. According to the US State Department, “[t]he U.S. supports American investment in Azerbaijan. US companies are involved in three offshore oil development projects with Azerbaijan and have been exploring the emerging investment opportunities in Azerbaijan in other fields, such as telecommunication. [...] The U.S. and Azerbaijan have signed a bilateral trade agreement, which entered into force in April 1995 and confers to Azerbaijan the status of ‘most favored nation.’ The United States also has a bilateral investment treaty with Azerbaijan.”²⁹

Azerbaijan and Georgia also cooperate with the US in the security and military fields. The US is notably involved with Azerbaijan in the Caspian Maritime Security Cooperation, and has played an important role in training the Georgian army. The three countries are also members of NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP, commonly considered as the last stage

²⁵ Jim Nichol, “Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests”, CRS Report for Congress, Updated December 19, 2007, 33 pages.

²⁶ « Les États-Unis doivent se ‘préparer à toute éventualité’ », *Le Figaro*, January 18, 2007. The exact sentence in French is: « Nous avons du personnel chargé de suivre l’Iran à Dubaï, à Londres, à Berlin, mais aussi en Azerbaïdjan, en Irak et en Afghanistan, pas encore en Turquie. »

²⁷ Jim Nichol, “Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia... op. cit., p. 25.

²⁸ Steve Radelet, “Will the Millennium Challenge Account Be Different?”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2003, 26:2 pp. 171 to 187.

²⁹ “Background Note: Azerbaijan”, US State Department, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, May 2008.

before full integration). Azerbaijan and particularly Georgia have clearly expressed their wish to fully integrate into the Atlantic Alliance, on the contrary of Armenia which considers its security under the Russian angle. It is also to note that the three republics cooperate with the US in the Global War on Terror. They opened their air space to US military planes and Georgia and Azerbaijan sent troops both in Afghanistan and Iraq. As for Armenia, it, quite reluctantly, sent 46 non-military personnel in Iraq.

This political, economic, and military cooperation symbolises the success of the US geopolitical penetration of the South Caucasus. It also confirms the strategic character of the region in Washington's eyes and reveals the coherence and adequacy between objectives and policies of the US in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Concluding Remarks

For more than a decade, the EU foreign policy in the South Caucasian region has seemed somewhat fuzzy and often tinted with much idealism. Today, although the ENP and the EaP seem to structure the policies better, it is still hard to figure out what are the real EU interests and ambitions in the South Caucasus. In other words, the Union has shown interest in the region but it has not precisely defined neither the reasons nor the level of importance of this involvement. On the contrary, the US, which is a singular state with a (supposedly) singular defined and precise foreign policy, has clear ambitions in that region. Washington wants to get strong leverages in the three countries, leverages that it could use, if necessary, against Russia, Iran, and perhaps

even Turkey. It also wants to keep a maximum of control over Caspian energy and its transportation roads towards the west. It finally aims at remaining close to these countries and people in the context of the difficult war on terrorism that it is leading in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In terms of policies implementations, it seems that the US is more efficient than the EU. More pragmatic, the US focuses on bilateral relations, whereas the EU operates in a framework of regional cooperation with less tangible results. Moreover, it is clear the EU has not invested as much as the US in countries south of the Caucasus, notably in terms of financial resources. Thus, the EU could not expect (and maybe did not expect) to get as much as the US.

In the end, this study tends to show that the EU, despite some interesting efforts and progresses, is not an actor as major as the US or Russia (or arguably Iran or Turkey) in the region. Is it problematic for the Union? Is it as good thing? The answer depends on what the EU really wants. Indeed, if its ultimate goal is to get some relative influence in the South Caucasus, the policy it has developed has reached this goal. However, if the goal is to defend its members' economic and political interests, and to play the first geopolitical role in the region, there is much work left.

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The role of the Gulf of Finland: A northern commercial node and the development of political Europe.

by Falko Blumenthal

The Treaty of Lisbon went into force on 1 December 2009, by which the European Union gained a set of tools for coherent governance and administration of the EU-Europe. To realize this project (started by the proposal for an EU "constitution" in 2001), the European elites were pushed to activate much political capital. Even the substantial increase of powers on behalf of the European Parliament, as well as the inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the Union's framework had not sufficed to answer to the fundamental critique coming from civil society – especially the labour unions and the Left. The treaty was framed as democratization of the EU. Published opinion discredited criticism as 'narrow-minded' and nation-state oriented.

The European actors succeeded to push through a supragovernmental framework by intergovernmental concert. Nevertheless, the European elite is aware that even the most perfect technocratic Union cannot unfold its potential, unless it is supported by a reinforcing political culture and awareness. Still, interest and enthusiasm for the European 'idea' is on the decline across member states, with years spend in the community as a (negative) indicator.

Firstly: Europe must become part of everyday reality. European identity is not established by campaigns. Cross-border and transnational commercial and social relations only, if attributed to a Europe, can give materiality to Europe. And, thus, be the basis for an interconnected political culture. To reach

their goal of a common Europe, the elites have to let the project out of their hands, in other words: Europe must become a democracy. Europeans and the organized civil society have to assume leadership and head towards a directly-elected European Congress which actually represents the polity of the Union. Secondly: The centre of Europe cannot be anymore somewhere between France and Germany, not even if it comes to be adjusted by some new members. For Europe to become tangible reality, the European periphery has to establish regional hubs (such as the Nordic Co-operation). Commercial relations, cultural exchange, and individual interactions between European neighbours are necessary. This is especially the case with the both new nation-states and new member states in Central and Eastern Europe. Regional hubs are essential economically in the Common Market, politically in relation to bigger neighbours and EU institutions, and culturally as a remedy against right-wing and nationalist drifts.

This article discusses the case of the Gulf of Finland. This region shares both Eastern and Western history. It is interesting as it links the Baltic, represented by Tallinn – and the Nordic countries, represented by Helsinki – and the Russian Federation, represented by St. Petersburg. Furthermore, the Gulf acts as a sea link connecting Europe to Russia.

The most prominent instance for the latter is the Russian-German pipeline project Nord Stream. The joint venture of Russian Gazprom (51%), German E.ON, and BASF (20%

each), with holdings by Dutch Gasunie (9%), was brought together to build a pipeline carrying natural gas from Viborg (Leningrad Oblast, Russia) through the Baltic Sea to Greifswald (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany). By November 2009, all Baltic Sea rim-states granted permits for the construction to go ahead. The first gas transports are scheduled for late 2011. This venture owes much to high profile support through its chairman of the board, Gerhard Schröder (German chancellor, in office 1998-2005), one of its consultants, Paavo Lipponen (Finnish prime minister, in office 1995-2003), and endorsement by the European Union Energy Commission. The Commission's presence becomes justified when one becomes aware of the scale of the project: Nord Stream is expected to transport up to 55 bn m³ natural gas annually, which exceeds the consumption of France and Austria combined.

Nord Stream illustrates the political aspect of the Gulf of Finland region well. The region is of global strategic importance. At the same time, the actors of the region are struggling to play a role at all within its boundaries. The only participation granted was to jointly administer environmental controls through their respective territorial waters. Two main reasons can be discerned to explain the lack of regional cooperation. Firstly, there is a structural problem: The Nordic co-operation (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland, and Denmark with Greenland and Faroe Islands) is notably developed in several policy areas, but is determined to stay out of foreign policy, as the member states are divided on membership in NATO and EU. The same holds true for the Nordic-Baltic co-operation of the Nordic Council. The three Baltic countries do not share common institutions. With the exception of the Russian Federation all Gulf of Finland states are member of the European Union, but do not form any bloc or special cooperation within its

institutions. Secondly, a problem in strategic focus arises. Apparently coordination between public and private players, common with traditional international actors (Germany – Siemens), is not perceived as part of foreign policy. The original consortium for the building of Nord Stream, from 1998 to 2005, included the Finnish corporation Neste/Fortum. Found itself sandwiched between the (government-backed) giants of E.ON and Gazprom, Neste/Fortum sold its stock to Gazprom, citing a more local focus in its corporate strategy. The Finnish authorities did nothing to support Fortum here. This way losing any (indirect) say in any future dealings, and effective exclusion from one of the most important energy co-operations in the region.

The next example illustrates the commercial importance of the Gulf of Finland as a link between its neighbours. Helsinki and Tallinn are looking into building a railway tunnel to connect the two capitals. The project is still in the phase of initial study, as to assess its feasibility – but can here be used to identify additional actors and issues. Both countries suffer from a strong cleavage between the metropolitan area and the country side, a fact heightened by disproportionate shares of national GDP concentrated in the respective capital (Helsinki 30%; Tallinn 50%). Though it may be a question of prestige (upon completion, the tunnel would be the longest of its type, to be projected to be 80 km in length), as well as an alternative to sea and air travel (across the world's most polluted sea), the Finnish and Estonian national governments refuse support for the project. An application for funding the project to EU Interregio was even denied due to intervention of the Estonian government. Despite all this, Helsinki and Tallinn already merge factually to a common employment area with thousands of commuters daily.

The tunnel project, included in both cities' short-term strategy papers, would take ten years to completion. Additional to the shift of the existing road traffic to railways, the tunnel is aimed to complement the Rail Baltica (Berlin–St. Petersburg, completion by 2020). Rail Baltica is a priority project of EU's Trans-European Transport Networks. According to Helsinki's paper, the tunnel would also strengthen the link of the whole Southern Finland region with the Baltic (and Central Europe) and establish new possibilities for commerce between the Nordic and Baltic countries not covered by air and sea travel.

Two trends become evident. Especially outside the urban European core the metropolitan cities, mere municipal self-governments and not even included in all academic definition of the political system, regain economic and political importance, last seen perhaps in the times of their foundation, the era of the Hanseatic League. Foreign policies and foreign alliances are established by sub-state actors which take advantage of EU's framework and actualize their power potentials. This leads to the second point: The debate on national sovereignty and European integration is centered on Brussels' competences. Here we see, on the other hand, actors below the state level gaining independence of movement, who in turn develop agendas different from their national governments. Thus freed of enforced solidarity with the hinterland, metropolitan cities orient themselves towards their own development and not necessarily towards national development. This might prove a constitutional challenge to the nation-state being attacked from above and below. As well as a social challenge to rural regions being left out and kept alive artificially by EU funds. Related but very specific to the Gulf of Finland region is the last example. A fast cargo and passenger train connection between Helsinki and St. Petersburg is to be introduced by 2011.

At this moment, the train journey takes over five hours. That is exactly the speed Lenin's train took on the same distance in 1917. The new connection promises to nearly halve the time of travel. This project, already well under way, will - in Jussi Pajunen's (current mayor of Helsinki) opinion - shift the dominance over the Baltic Sea from Stockholm to Helsinki and St. Petersburg.

Fast connections to destinations outside the Union are, usually, not that remarkable. But the special relationship between Finland and the Russian Federation provides an interesting insight. As a neutral country with a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union 1947-1991, the USSR amounted to Finland's biggest trading partner. Russia nowadays is Finland's second biggest trading partner (after Germany), and the supplier accounted for 100% of Finland's natural gas consumption. Due to the shared history (dating back to 1809), and the economic interdependence, bilateral visa agreements are being negotiated. For a EU and Schengen member, even a member of the Eurozone, achieving special visa status with Russia would be precedent. And it would strengthen Finland's mediator-position between EU and Russian Federation greatly.

In an European context the Gulf of Finland region would normally be characterized as at least semi-periphery. But as the border states of the European Union become commercial nodes to the outside, a power option opens for the actors of these regions. It might be a minor element of trade policies as with Greece's connection to Western Turkey. But in the case of Finland's link to the Leningrad Oblast and the Central Federal District (with Moscow's 20% of Russian GDP) the function as a link becomes a strategic issue for European Union's economy and foreign policy.

Three examples of on-going plans and projects in and through the Gulf of Finland

region allow for three conclusions. Commercial development and its needs are strong drives in politics and institutional innovation. This is nothing new - since the process of German and Italian unification during their industrialization. Often follow cultural and identity shifts. This can be observed in the case of Estonia's self-stylization as Nordic country and the positive re-assessment within Finnish academia of Finland's Russian history and heritage since the early 1990's. Identity will be on the move and may be open to a form of European identity. Old and new actors justify their agendas with pro-European vocabulary. Or at least, claim to be driven by Europeanization – as in the case of Helsinki-Tallinn cooperation. As this is directed towards competing actors as well as towards their own public, cross-border concepts will be associated by the discourse with Europe (regardless of normative direction). Employees, entrepreneurs, families, social networks operating on both sides of a border will then come to associate with that identity. Municipal administrations, maybe even regional trade and investment associations, become strong actors of cross-border regional development. Governments have to find forms of cooptation of the new players within their borders to ensure cohesive development. An analogy may be OECD's concept of the Innovation System. At the same time national governments outside the EU's core become a lone voice among many in the EU-27. Common interests have to be established and institutionalized within the Euregios and similar

organs, which in turn have to be actualized as actors regarding the European Commission.

The speed of development is the highest in the smaller nation-states. The drive to development is the highest in EU's new member states. Policies take here, in the so-called periphery, effect the fastest. Institutions, cultural and political identity is on the move. The metropolitan areas of the European periphery may become incubators for a political Europe. The Gulf of Finland – where political awareness, high levels of innovation, and small, agile states meet with commercial currents and economic drives – is a potential hub for European evolution. If allowed (and supported) to realize their logistical projects.

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Pillars in Concrete: Prospects of consociationalism in post-communist polities such as Romania

by Robert Balogh

In one of his well-known essays Claus Offe argued that what he termed “ethnic politics” is likely to become one of the central features of the post-communist world. Offe rejected the view that ethnically motivated political action is simply barbarous, primitive and thus doomed to disappear as the new age of enlightened democracy sets in. Often referring to the works of György Schöpflin, Offe convincingly showed that the Eastern European brand of political nationalism - tragically visible in the early 1990s - is far from irrational. On the contrary, once ethnic politics gains momentum, it is a nearly impossible task to reverse it. (Offe 1996)

Although Offe himself did not trust in institutional cures, below I will argue that de facto consensus oriented structures are not inconceivable in the ethnically mixed zones of East Central Europe. According to my thesis a system of consociational practices has been established in post-communist Romania between 1996 and 2008. First, I will attempt to define both consociationalism and post-communism and examine the aspects of theoretical overlap and areas where there are clear distinctions between the two. Then turning to the case of the Hungarian community living within the boundaries of Romania I will point out those features of the Romanian political structure that suggest that an underlying consociational logic is in place.

In the 1990s social scientists were likely to refer to countries of the region as polities in transition. In this interpretation, East Central

Europe would be on the way to Western political systems and living conditions. Regardless of whether this projection will eventually come true or not, post-communism has emerged as a long-lasting condition. In the political sphere I understand this concept as a series of features that form an unending, vicious circle limiting and often inhibiting the emergence of democratic structures including the lack of effective policy planning, governance and civil society in general. Venelin I. Ganev provides us with a concise definition regarding the essence post-Communism: “[state malfunctioning] is the outcome of a set of institutional and social processes that crucially – and negatively affected the organisational basis of effective governance.” (Venelin 2007:197)

The first stage is what Liliana Pop calls “principled conviction”. This implies that soon after the demise of the one-party state and following a short period of grand coalition, two political forces emerge (“former communists” vs. “revolutionaries”) that mutually consider and present each other as the moral vice. (Pop 2006) Deep distrust among the actors does not allow for strong institutions since the rules of the game – consensus and compromise - are seen as costly and immoral. Instead of following parliamentary procedures alternative modes of decision making are established that are often centred on a strong figure. The internal composition of these ad hoc bodies frequently changes. Besides the weak role of parliaments as political bodies, the party system is inherently unstable. The cost of

forming new parties or changing a party's position is relatively low since it is strong individuals linked to administrative resources who determine outcomes and not organisational logic. Intra-party competition quickly becomes hopeless for those who lose, therefore exit is preferred to voice. In this Hobbsian sphere, accumulation of resources is seen as vital to one's position.

As objectives are obscured by the lack of formal structures, public competition and systemic needs, these shortcomings of the political supply side lead to dysfunctional policy making or "bad governance". In turn, for undesired outcomes or mistakes the two major power centres blame each other, thus reinforcing their principled conviction. We may close our brief discussion on post-communism with the words of Ganev "...given the structural peculiarities of historical legacies, the selective destruction of institutional infrastructures is an almost natural development and a major social effort is needed to reverse it."

On the other hand, the consociational structure is designed to channel potentially disastrous cleavages into a formula of rational consensus within democratic political systems. The main elements are a sense of proportional gains, elite compromise and the so-called pillarization of the respective "subcultures" or communities. Pillars are stable institutions (e.g. political parties surrounded by religious bodies, cultural associations, trade unions and other interest groups) that render the behaviour of the community predictable and allows its leaders to speak for the entire population they claim to represent. In a consociational system elites of both or all of the communities agree on specific rules that govern the distribution of offices and resources within the state. Such arrangements include the right of formal or informal veto as a safety belt. It was the Dutch political scientist, Arend Lijphart who

first coined the term consociational as one of the results of his ambitious comparative study on democratic political systems in the 1970s and 1980s (Lijphart 1984). Today the best known and exemplar (although less functioning) case is probably that of Belgium, while the Austrian Proporz is a (a declining) classic for an informal consociational structure (Luther 1999).

We have to note that consociational systems tend to lose their plight in the face post-modern politics. This is largely due to the demise or deformation of the original pillars. Bargaining behind closed doors is less acceptable if the outcome of these is no longer considered as delivery by the majority of citizens. The system of proportional consensus may in effect be presented as scandal by those political actors that see more potential in capitalising on (mediatised) conflict rather than on the old and increasingly unpopular compromise. This was exactly the case in Austria after 1986 when the FPÖ broke apart from the consensual logic in favour of radical right wing populism under the charismatic leadership of the late Jörg Haider (see e.g. Pelinka 2005, Plasser-Ulram 1999, Höbelt 2003, Luther 2003).

Before turning to the Romanian case we have to look for those features that might overlap between the consociational and the post-communist "ideal type". First, we may point to the similarity between the role of elites. We find powerful leaders at the centre of post-communist systems and it is elites endowed with bargaining power that are capable of creating the system of consociational consensus. Second, we find the politicization of a deep (ethnic, religious or linguistic) cleavage at the bottom of both abstractions. In their study of corruption within the post-communist zone William Miller, Ase Grödeland and Tatyana Koschekina emphasize that ethnic minorities feel

discriminated vis a vis state offices and have consequently adopted strategies involving direct corruption or implicit transactions of reciprocity to overcome the perceived discrimination. This applies to nearly each community except gypsies. The latter group is so drastically marginalized that they resorted to exit rather than voice strategies. (Miller-Grödeland-Koschechkina 2001) From the analysis it follows that besides that fact that regular and internalised corruption further decreases the efficacy of state administration, there is a point when ethnic based discrimination cannot be sustained if the state is there to stay. The third corner stone of the consociational system, pillarisation remains in question. Typically, post-communist societies lack well-defined interest groups and associations. However, ethnic politics often urges political association and the formation of ethnic parties.

The roles of RMDSZ within the Romanian political system

Increasing pressures certainly played an important role in the creation of the Union of Hungarian Democrats in Romania (better known after the short form RMDSZ in Hungarian and UDMR in Romanian. The latter format was often used by the Hungarian Civic Party to indicate that the party is not truly Hungarian, therefore we will use RMDSZ for disambiguation in the text) that has quickly evolved into a major institution for Hungarians living in Romania since 1990.

According to the widely shared consensus among observers and social scientists writing for the English speaking world, the Iliescu-regime of 1990-1996 was nothing more than a neo-communist flood of corruption, national chauvinism and nomenclature infight. Therefore, it could be blamed for lying down

the foundations of much of the wrongs and backwardness the Romanian reality presents us with today. According to this interpretation, Romania will find the real way to reforms and normality only when the democratic opposition strengthened by grass root movements finally organises itself and cleans the country of the influence of the former communists.

We believe that in order to enter the black box of Romanian politics we need to deconstruct this scheme. In this process we may build on the observations and data collected by the above mentioned experts. It is important to separate the practices of clientelism so typical of Romanian politics (Carey 2004, Mungiu-Pippidi 2005) both from the illusion of the "original Romanian democracy" which was so much cherished by Iliescu (Wysong 2005) and from official and quasi constitutional nationalism (Gallagher 2005).

If we want to decipher the first phenomenon we need to pay attention to the particular political culture of the elite. 'Principled conviction', mentioned earlier, is the belief that the "other" is made up of a group of traitors and cheaters and therefore co-operation is a "must not", and a driving force in the birth of post-communist political culture. This attitude dominated developments until 2000 on the political scene. Therefore, the cycle of post-communism could fully develop in Romania. In summary, the current state of the Romanian political system represents the extreme case of how the internal logic of post-communist condition might inhibit good governance. The constant instability and uncertainty of this nearly perfect Hobbesian world is not necessarily readymade for its tyrant or new sultan however. It is not impossible to switch to normal politics from politics as usual. Nationalism played a crucial role in the political systems of 20th Century Romania. However, Romanian nationalism cannot be seen as a monolithic force. Applying the categories

invented by Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and more specifically by Thomas Gallagher and Miklós Bakk, we can point to significant differences that exist between the constitutional period of the interwar years, wartime extremism and the so called national Stalinism developed in the course of 1960s. While the interwar constitution formally provided for equality in legal terms, the state apparatus began to apply covert methods of repression (limiting access to resources and offices as far as possible) vis a vis the Hungarian population. The latter lived (and continue to live) in diverse environments but united in seeing the Romanian rule as accidental and temporary. Peaceful integration was made impossible by mutual distrust between majority and minority as well as between the Hungarian and Romanian state that both slipped into fascism during the years of the Second World War. The period of 1940-44 is represented as an important period of liberation in the historical consciousness of Hungarians. For Romanians, 1940 meant sensitive and permanent loss of territories to the Soviet Union and temporarily to Hungary. In the first post-war decades, Hungarians living in a largely homogenous block in the traditionally székely counties of Southeastern Transylvania enjoyed a territorial autonomy that allowed them considerable freedom regarding the use of language and education, especially in comparison to minority Hungarians living elsewhere in the newly constructed Socialist Romania. The struggle for myths and history intensified during the years of Ceausescu's rise into power. Hungarians did not only bear the burden of the irrational and unsustainable autarchy of the 1970s and 1980s, they also faced an outright repression aimed at destroying their identity.

Although the days of revolution united Hungarians and Romanians for some months,

interethnic violence broke out in March 1990. The National Salvation Front (NSF) withdrew from the agreement made earlier with the Hungarian Alliance. In the first half of the 1990s the nationalist card was often played out both by Romanian chauvinist formations such as PMR (Partidul Romania Mare, Great Romania Party), the National Party or by the formally social democratic PSDR dominated by President Iliescu. RMDSZ sided with the Democratic Alliance and entered into government in 1996. This move was opposed by the protestant bishop Tókéş who led the nationalist wing tolerated within RMDSZ. The activities and symbolic rhetoric of the latter group opposing cooperation was instrumental in widening the gap between székely and other minority Hungarians and keeping anti-Hungarian sentiment on the agenda. At the same time this divide reflects diversity in the realities experienced by minority Hungarians. From the current literature on RMDSZ we can conclude that virtually all prominent political scientists coming from the Hungarian community are share the opinion that although RMDSZ must be credited with the role of efficient organiser during the difficult first period after the revolution, it has failed to deliver on its promises. These critics argue that while the Alliance focuses excessively on influence and power both within the community and in governmental circles, centralisation and office seeking has neither produced more favourable legislation (regarding autonomy) nor has it resolved the symbolic conflicts around educational institutions. More radical voices claim that RMDSZ acts as a party-state within the Hungarian community and call for new formations in defence of real democracy and real interest of the Hungarian people. Put differently, alleged monopolisation of resources and office seeking strategy just reflect the position of RMDSZ as a pillar within

the Hungarian community. Moreover, a glance at the political history of the last decade also provides us with much evidence. RMDSZ took part in the coalition forming the government of Romania during the Constantinescu era during 1996-2000 and again from 2004 to 2008. It also supported the social democratic Nastase-government through the so called series of "protocols" that listed the conditions under which the parties were willing to cooperate in the Parliament. These protocols were much criticised within the Hungarian political sphere for Nastase was head of the PSDR, the party that used to be explicitly hostile towards the Hungarians during the time of Iliescu. In this light the new policy of the RMDSZ was presented as excessively pragmatic and office oriented.

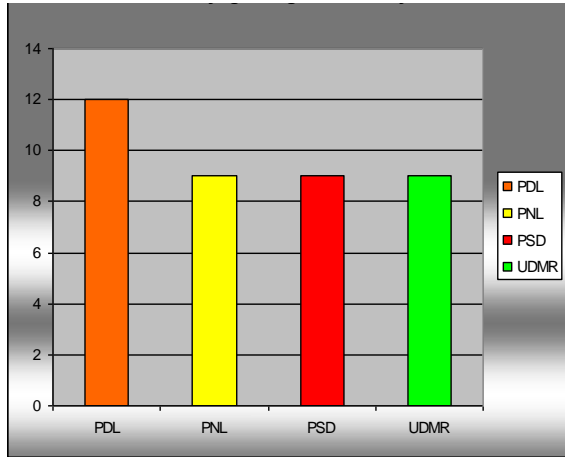
For nearly two years, between 2007 and 2009 RMDSZ was the junior partner of the minority government that managed to stay in office after the split between the PdL of President Basescu and the National Liberals led by Prime Minister Tariceanu.

In spite of the failure to ratify a new act on the rights of minorities and continued dispute over the status of the Babes-Bolyai University and regarding property that formally belonged to the Protestant Church, the position of RMDSZ was strong enough to prevent anti-Hungarian legislation repeatedly proposed by the Great Romania Party of Vadim Tudor. The social democrats, renamed as PDS, had to resist temptations to adopt a more chauvinist outlook even as PMR received 20% of the vote in 2000.

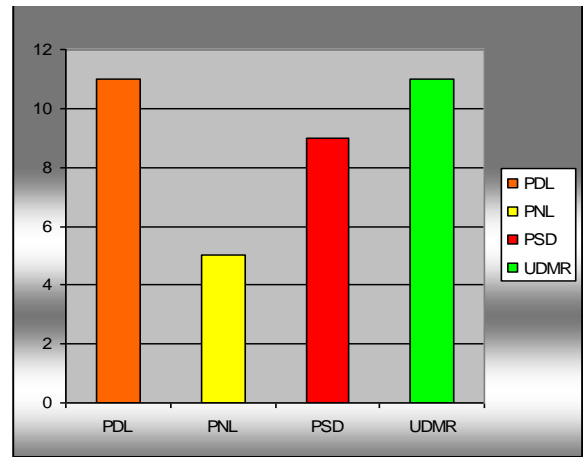
The fact that PMR fell out of parliament in 2008 may also be accounted for as an indirect result of the active and long participation of RMDSZ in government. It is likely that just as the study of Kollai et al.

showed in the case of Slovakia, anti-Hungarian votes and sentiment are fuelled not by historical memory, but by fears that that Hungarians want to break apart and thus represent a fifth column for the nation state (Kollai 2008). If the party representing the Hungarian minority shares in the responsibilities of government and takes up not specifically "Hungarian" issues, the appeal of belligerent chauvinism is likely to diminish. However, we have to consider whether the asymmetric size of the two ethnic groups might impede the emergence of a durable consociational system. Although Hungarians constitute only approximately 5% of the population of Romania, a closer look at the political structure reveals a more complex reality.

In Romania the law no. 35 of 2008 introduced a curious electoral system that mixes the features of a plurality voting system on the basis of uni-member districts and the proportional principle in an usual way. Those candidates that win the majority of votes automatically win a seat in the parliament, however, the rest of the 316 seats in the lower chamber and 137 in the senate are divided among the parties according to the Hare-quota. The latter phase takes place on district level; party lists are unknown in this system. The new regulation also introduces an alternative threshold. If a party does not receive 5% of the vote, it may still get representation in the parliament by winning six of the 316 districts and three senate districts. This clause, depending on the geographical position of the districts (gerrymandering) may serve as a virtual safety belt for RMDSZ. The new law thus provides us with evidence for our thesis about the consociational logic behind the Romanian political system.



Seats gained from Nord Vest region 2008



Seats gained from Centru region 2008

However, as we can see from the diagrams above, the alternative threshold is not the only relevant aspect of the new electoral system as far as the role of RMDSZ is concerned. Looking at the geographical distribution of the number of seats won we have to recognise that the party became a relevant one in the districts of two Romanian development regions. In the Nord Vest development region consisting of the counties of Bihor (Bihar), Satu Mare (Szatmár), Cluj (Kolozs), Salaj (Szilágy), Bistrita-Nasaud (Beszterce-Naszód) and Maramures (Máramaros) RMDSZ won nine seats. This means that in the counties bordering Hungary, where Hungarians do not make up the majority of population and often live in scattered small centres and villages, only Pdl gained more seats. From the Centru region - that among others includes historical székely counties such as Mures (Maros) Harghita (Hargita) and Covasna (Kovászna) - 11 candidates of RMDSZ became representatives. In this region none of the other parties gained more seats. In summary RMDSZ proved to be the second largest party in 2008 across two regions. In recent years both the political weight of individual districts and need for regional level decision making are increasing, so the relative strength of RMDSZ must be taken into account at the national level.

Conclusion

I have identified several features of the Romanian political system that suggest that a de facto consociational logic influences developments. Most importantly, RMDSZ gained recognition as a relevant political force and partner that may be included in the government. The party has broken out from isolation and its weight increased significantly in the years between 1996 and 2008. At the same time RMDSZ has managed to keep its position as a pillar within the Hungarian community. In this period explicit anti-Hungarian legislation has been tempered down, although disputes over education and Church property are still relevant aspects of interethnic relations. We also listed office seeking strategy and the alleged monopolisation of resources as evidence for an emerging consociational system. Moreover, since this structure is fully dependent on sustainable compromise, the pragmatist outlook is an inherent feature of consociationalism.

What remains puzzling is the longevity of this course. When the major incentives for compromise disappear the ethnic pillar may again be excluded from national government. How far can we count on the moment of inertia of working structures? In fact, despite

its reasonable performance at the 2008 legislative election, RMDSZ fell out of government and a short-lived PdL-PSD grand coalition took the place of the minority government. At the time of writing, it is still uncertain whether snap elections have to be called in 2010. What we can infer from the last 10 months is that the new government attempted to recall officers appointed earlier by RMDSZ and this move consequently outraged RMDSZ rank-and-file both at national and local level. The fight over resources and offices, however, the parties refrained from questioning the legitimacy of each other. RMDSZ did not triumph over the fall of the Boc-government, they would have preferred it to stay until the presidential election that is to be held in late November.

The second uncertain variable is the role of president. Traian Basescu's (first) term showed how a president following a populist logic may render the whole system unpredictable in the Romanian version of semi-presidential power sharing model.

A third variable we have to take into account is Hungary itself. Since 1998 the populist-inclined party, Fidesz has made

several attempts both to bring RMDSZ under control and play the Trianon-card. These practices are likely to dominate the relationship between Romania and Hungary as Fidesz will likely to get an absolute majority in parliament in the upcoming legislative election. By re-introducing ethnic politics, this strategy might make it preferable for the new Romanian government and/or for the president to opt for it too, thus abandoning the prevailing structure.

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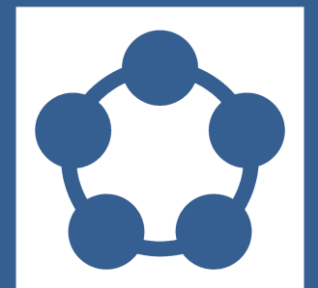
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