

Schroeder's New Position and a Futuristic Vision

A statesman's post-office work rarely raises a debate – the exception is former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's acceptance to be president of the Russian Gaz Brum's General Assembly.

According to the applicable system in European giant joint-stock companies, head of the general assembly is a main figure that is as weighty as a board chairman, so that the latter cannot take strategic decisions unilaterally to the detriment of the shareholders' interests, represented in the head of the general assembly. The German official and public reservation about the acceptance of this position may be ascribed to their feeling that this may have to do with a pivotal political personality that is considered by many as an artificial personality of the State's sovereignty.

They may also have reservations about a State's top management official turning into an employee, who gets a salary and bonuses from profits, no matter how high this income may be.

On the other hand, the German mentality is reserved about understanding the nature of the former Chancellor and his new post, which is not only an unofficial position outside the official governmental or partisan framework but it is a position in another country that has remained for a long time to be classified as a potential enemy.

The majority of the German people cannot forget that the current board chairman of Gas Brum was East Germany intelligence chief.

Due to the nature of his position, he made a deep friendship with current Russian President Vladimir Putin, when the latter was chief of KGB's East Germany sector for a long time.

Because of certain circumstances, I met some of those who are staunch opponents to this step – by the way, they are the majority – and some supporters, who are the minority.

Both trends are not familiar with the American traditions of giving full freedom to former officials to choose whatever field he/she wants to work in after the end of his term in office.

They said the same about the public opinion's weak influence in the nature of the former position a candidate holds before his term in office. For example, former US President Ronald Reagan was an unknown actor before he was elected as president of the United States, and actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who stopped acting to be the mayor of the biggest US state, California.

In my discussion with the different trends, I deliberately put up a futuristic vision of Schroeder's acceptance of this step.

I analyzed the situation through four axes in an undisputable approach, which is the interests of the key parties that have to do with this issue, namely the United States, Russia, EU and Germany.

The US supports the creation of the EU, on the grounds that its establishment is a confrontation with the principles on which former Soviet Union was based. This actually took place when the Soviet Union broke up and its countries became independent. This was the end of the Soviet Union.

Therefore, the US strategy in this respect welcomes what can be called the isolation of Russia from these countries, i.e. keeping it away under rains, weak and unable to achieve competitive aspirations with the US. The US support of the creation of the EU has also another aspect, which is the fear of a united EU turning into an economic bloc whose entity is large enough to compete with it.

The US decided to urge the EU to admit several East European countries to its membership without waiting for their economies to develop and meet the European financial standards. By so doing, the US could achieve two interests: first, weakening the EU by slowing down its economic growth rates; second, blocking the way before East European countries to return to the Soviet orbit, thus keeping Russia away from its former sources of strength.

At the Russian level, we see that Russia is a giant, which is rich potential oil and gas reserves yet weak in resources in the absence of capabilities.

This takes place at a time when Russia 's ideology declines to cooperate with the former enemy in extracting, manufacturing and marketing its oil and gas wealth in cooperation with US monopolies and giving up the lion's share in this process. Therefore, Russia wishes to depend on new partners representing much neutrality and keeping it away from old animosities that have had impacts on the mentality of the Russian people.

At the European level, there is no doubt that united Europe integrates many factors of economic strength, mainly including advanced technologies, manifested in the successful aviation field – Airbus, traditional weapons, Leopard tank, peaceful nuclear applications, and high-tech applications.

However, it is suffering from repetition of many regional aspects of successful supremacies in comparison to counterparts.

This slows down the process of bringing about technical leaps, which are highly needed. The EU is much concerned about lack of energy, namely oil and gas. This makes it dependent on the US monopoly to procure its needs.

Thus, the ideological and strategic distance of Russia's admission to the EU keeps it far-fetched, especially as in case of admission it has to pass through a minefield, represented in a confrontation with the American vulture.

To my mind, Schroeder's decision to assume this position was one of the most significant decisions, which do not represent in its reality and future an interest to the former Chancellor in the narrow sense. Rather, this will achieve a strategic interest not only to Germany but also to the EU in the broad sense of the concept.

Gas production from the reserve-rich Baltic Sea, laying German-made gas pipelines, and pumping it through German gas liquefaction plants in a new route that outdoes the existing one will be the project of the century from the economic point of view. That is to say, it will meet the EU needs from Germany, which will distribute it to many other countries.

If we add Europe's futuristic potentials of extracting oil, this will solve Europe's energy problem and Russia's oil and gas extraction and marketing problem both at the European and international levels.

Thus underground potentials may turn into financial flows, achieving prosperity and progress to it and its neighbors.

This economic cooperation, which will achieve Russia-EU economic interests, as well as Germany's interests as gas extractor, transporter and distributor, will have a great effect in bringing about a Russian-European rapprochement that may pave the way for Russia's admission to the EU as a main partner in this unity.

That is why Schroeder's step may achieve a German-Russian interest, thus achieving a European interest.

The American vulture should acquiesce in the developments, because the march of history does not wait for closed-door political decisions. History always takes its ideal track within the framework of agreement on constructive economic interests and joint understanding in order to make a better and joint future.