

HOW DO GERMANS CHOOSE THEIR FIRST-LINE MEN

As nations progress, their revenues increase, so does their awareness of their economic potentials, all included in accurate and complex records, in which each and every plant and productive unit registers its capacity in detail.

However, there is a more important record than the foregoing, namely that of human capital, where all human capabilities and potentials, both in general and specialized fields, are denoted.

This helps keeping them vivid in the nation's memory, in order that it may have access to them, when the need calls. Furthermore, these records are constantly updated.

Probably, in choosing the university professor, Dr. Horst Köhler, as Head of the German Republic, there is much to be said about the ability of the democratic systems of a great state like Germany to choose the first-line men.

Horst Köhler was born on February 22, 1943 in a small village in Poland for German parents. With the breakout of the Second World War, the modest family moved to settle in a village, close to Leipzig, in the eastern part of Germany, which was separated into the well-known East Germany, after Germany's later defeat.

In 1953, the family managed to escape through West Berlin, before the erection of the wall that later divided Berlin, and settled in Ludwigsburg in West Germany.

Horst Köhler obtained his secondary certificate in 1963 and attended his military conscription for two years, ending his service as a standby lieutenant, after which he resumed his academic studies in economics, for which he paid out of his jobs, while being a student.

In 1969, Horst Köhler ended his studies at the University of Tübingen and was appointed as assistant at the Economic Research Department. He married Eva Bonart, in that same year, in the city of Ludwigsburg, where he was brought up.

In 1977, Horst Köhler obtained his PhD in Economics from Tübingen University, where his thesis was about "Relation between Technological Development & Unemployment".

Economist Dr. Horst Köhler started working in 1976 at the Ministry of Economy in Bonn, under the Minister of Economy Otto Lambsdorpf. Later, he joined the office of Prime Minister Gerhard Schröder, where he specialized in studying aspects of structural economic weakness in provinces of the North.

With the brilliance of the Economist Dr. Horst Köhler, he was selected by the Minister of Finance to be Office Manager of the latter in 1982.

To him was left the task of setting the tax reform policy for Germany, which was later adopted in 1985. After that, he was appointed Head of Department of Financing & Loans for International Monetary Affairs.

In 1990, Minister of Finance Theo Feigl chooses him to lay down the policy for a unified currency between the two halves of Germany, where his sense of affiliation to both halves, throughout his life, has rendered his task successful.

Once more, Counsellor Helmut Kohl did the right thing in choosing Dr. Horst Köhler to head the delegation that was to negotiate with the Soviet Union the evacuation of the Soviet forces from East Germany, in return for indemnities to be paid by Germany, for every evacuated soldier, in order to prepare an appropriate abode for him in the Soviet Union.

This financial equation had the biggest impact on expediting the evacuation of the Soviet troops in record time.

With the progress of the executive steps of the European unity, Counsellor Helmut Kohl chooses Dr. Horst Köhler to head the negotiating team on the “Maastricht Agreement”, concerning a unified European currency, and including seven countries.

The mission ended successfully and the agreement was signed in the International Summit Conference, which was held under the supervision of Dr. Horst Köhler in München in 1992, and which included the seven European states, founders of the EU.

In 1993, Dr. Köhler left the civil service and was elected Chairman of Federation of German Savings Funds. For five years, he contributed to promoting small- & medium-size business institutions.

The last task assigned by Counsellor Helmut Kohl to Dr. Horst Köhler, before the end of his term, was Chairman of European Development & Reconstruction Bank, where Köhler proved to be one of the most successful figures to occupy this post.

Strangely enough, the regime during the time of Counsellor Helmut Kohl, where the government was formed by the governing National Christian Democratic Party, has assigned Dr. Horst Köhler with such supreme strategic tasks, in spite of his non affiliation to any party.

The criterion here was his personal qualifications and his abstract specialized expertise.

More strangely yet is that with the victory of the Democratic Social Party, still the new German Counsellor Gerhard Schroeder chose Dr. Horst Köhler and with his own recommendation, Dr. Köhler became Head of IMF in Washington.

On May 4, 2004, three different German parties, namely CSU, FDP & CDU, all recommend Horst Köhler to the German "Bundestag" for the post of President of the Republic.

A ballot took place on May 23, 2004, where he scored a landslide victory, represented in 604 votes, and became President of the Republic on July 1, 2004.

In Egypt, we welcome the German President in his first visit to Egypt, as a leader of a friendly country that has been linked to Egypt with strong ties over the years and that has maintained these distinguished ties, in spite of political and economic upheavals, worldwide.

Today, we welcome this great German Economist and his concepts that have contributed to render the European unity successful, starting from organizing the financial and economic aspects, all the way up to supervising the

economic and financial reform policy of the Eastern countries, which are nominated to join the EU, through his work at the IMF.

Undoubtedly, Egypt has many topics of high priority that need be discussed with the German President and his highly specialized escorting delegation.