

GERMAN ELECTIONS & FRIENDSHIP MARCH WITH EGYPT

Apparently, the month of September 2005 came charged with electoral tempests, where the Egyptian presidential elections coincided with the German partisan elections that qualify for the post of German Counsellor.

In spite of the difference in objective and type of electoral battles, as well as nature of partisan disputes in the two countries, yet there are some aspects of resemblance.

At the level of the electoral battle in Egypt, opening the door in front of free selection from among several partisan candidates – one from each party – to be settled through voters of free will, without any suspicion of interference or influence, this has come as a surprise to all parties, which were not ready for this step.

These parties neither had popular candidates, who could aptly compete with President Mubarak, nor had they a party programme, with which they could gain ground in national action and win votes, a matter that ultimately ended in favour of President Mubarak and the National Democratic Party.

At the German level, disparity between the two major opposing parties – the Socialist Democratic Party, headed by Shroeder, and the Christian Democratic Party, headed by Angela Merkel – according to electoral popularity, is not considered big.

Here, it has been the custom for electoral battles to be decided through votes that belong to neither party, but simply in enthusiasm for one programme over

the other, especially in matters concerning taxes, education and employment, all these being of paramount importance within German mentalities.

Finally, German elections, in their present phase, ended with a weak victory, not exceeding 3%, in favour of Merkel's CDU/CSU vis-à-vis Shroeder's SPD. This weak victory does not secure a real victory or loss to any of the two parties, concerning a cabinet formation and the selection of the German Counsellor.

This is because the German policy is accustomed to selecting the governmental coalition out of several parties, in order to acquire a parliamentary majority in this coalition that secures a majority in parliament that would support applying policies vis-à-vis Opposition.

This is exactly what has happened during the last to terms of Counsellor Shroeder, where a ministerial coalition was formed, including the CDU that is known as the Red Party, and the Green Party, as implied by its name.

There unfolded a group of scenarios, concerning elections, in the light of the strength of these two major parties. On one hand, some expected the two major parties to form a coalition, and consequently, win a landslide parliamentary majority.

On the other hand, since both Shroeder and his competitor Merkel were after the post of Counsellor, some expected that each of them would be counsellor for half term. However, this probability was discarded, as each had a totally different partisan programme.

This made it difficult to merge both programmes in a conciliatory one, without raising the disdain of voters, who advocated a particular trend.

Contacts are taking place, extensively, at the moment, between each of the two major parties and other smaller parties, in an attempt to form a parliamentary majority that would form a governmental coalition, in line with any of the two main programmes and parties in coalition with it.

Calculation-wise, should the Red Party form a coalition with the Green Party, as well as the Free German Party – Yellow Party, then this would turn into a strong coalition supported by a parliamentary majority that is enough to secure victory for Shroeder, making him Counsellor for a new term.

However, the Christian Democratic Party is well aware of this fact, which urges Mrs. Angela Merkel to try and polarize the FDP – Yellow Party. In this case, she would secure victory and become the first lady to occupy the post of Counsellor in the German government.

It is noteworthy that German elections have taken place in an atmosphere, where a profound political awareness prevailed among German citizens. Voters exceeded 70% of the total number, in comparison to 50% in previous elections.

This figure is considered one of the highest, not only in Germany, but throughout Europe.

Putting Politics Apart, as well as German elections, which are to be settled within the coming few weeks, we find that deeply-rooted Egyptian German relations are not expected to be disturbed or hampered, concerning friendship and mutual respect, as well as constructive cooperation in all domains, under any newly formed German government.

Tracing back this relation, ever since Germany has become an independent state of great economic weight, and throughout its different policy-makers from various counsellors, we find this relation growing stronger, perpetually.

In evidence of that, and amidst these elections, still, the German Conference for Technology is to be held in Cairo between the 2nd & 4th of October, an event to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister and attended by 150 heads of German enterprises and more than 350 Egyptian businessmen and industrialists, with four Egyptian ministers delivering speeches.

It is well known, in advance, that Europe has earmarked more than € 1 billion for Egypt, in which Germany participates with the lion's share. This sum is to be allocated for enhancing realms of industrial modernization, quality control, promotion of Egyptian exports, qualifying industrial cadres, transferring technology and joint scientific & applied researches in agriculture and environment, as well as clean and renewable wind and solar energy, all of which are realms of future industry in any contemporary state.

In spite of the fact that we consider the ship of Egyptian German Friendship the oldest and strongest in the sea of Egyptian German relations, yet we are confident that this ship will remain steadfast, in spite of any tempests or conflicts, because of the good care and nurture guaranteed by both Egypt and Germany, with full attention, comprehension and ability to interpret events.