Western Leaders Are Unable to Get Their Priorities Straight

Damned if they do and damned if they do not - according to European media, this is how Western leaders imagine the situation in the aftermath of the recent NATO summit in Wales in which Western leaders were able to play a round of golf (due to all of the lawns being occupied by security vehicles.)

"For the West," reports the newspaper Daily Telegraph, "this is the most difficult period since the end of the Cold War." The Guardian echoes this sentiment, writing, "The world around us has turned upside down."

The focus at the NATO summit was on the crisis erupting on the eastern borders of the EU in Ukraine, in a conflict extremely distasteful and annoying to all Europeans, as well as unexpectedly protracted. This crisis is distasteful and annoying due to the threat of real complications in gas supplies in the oncoming cold season. The conflict is also a source of irritation, as it forces Western leaders to bluff, duck and dive in the face of issues as human rights, as well as to kowtow to the Americans.

Then, as the Guardian reported on September 4, "in the midst of the Ukrainian crisis, a new jihadist movement came to the fore in the Middle East. After all, it was only until recently that the West had hoped to 'bring democratic change to the entire region.' Now, we cannot comprehend what to do about the whirlwind of changes and violence accompanying these changes." Indeed, the threat from "Islamic State" (ISIL) has come like a bolt from the blue. At present, there is a lack of clarity on how to resist ISIL effectively, since it is a mobile structure, ever-changing, taking action in spurts, the possibilities of which have been insufficiently studied, but which show clear potential. The most dangerous element of ISIL is its unpredictability.

Which is worse? Both, as claimed in a recent joint article by Barack Obama and David Cameron (a rare event in the past,) where they stated that the West must stand up to both Russia and "Islamic State."

Therefore, European leaders are torturously searching for an answer as to what actions to undertake and how, especially given the fact that the events in question have already slipped out of the control of the Americans. Fear reigns, depriving Western leaders of the capacity for foresight and memory gaps regarding the not-so-distant historical past of the twentieth century, with its wars and disasters.

In the Ukrainian crisis, Western leaders were unable to put forward any sensible and specific ideas or proposals, and only competed with each other in making accusations and malicious statements against Russia and its leadership. Winning the laurels is, of course, NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen, permanently obsessed by the "Russian threat." In close second place is Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, who suddenly turned on the Orthodox Church, claiming that it was nearly the No. 1 enemy of the West. As expected, British and American publications have been zealous in their attacks on Russia.

Naturally, it is no secret that, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West did everthing it could to hinder the revival of a strong Russian state, despite its fine words pledging cooperation. Similarly obvious was the desire to sow discord in relations between Moscow and Kiev, between two brotherly peoples, to rip away fertile, resource-rich Ukraine - the natural border buffer of the Russian state. This geostrategic challenge has, for many years, been an
explicit or latent element in the policies and actions of the West. After the collapse of the USSR, the possibility for its rebirth - through some form of association between Ukraine and the other former Soviet republics, constituted a hideous nightmare and threat for the West, so strong are the stereotypes of Cold War thinking. Furthermore, during the current Ukrainian crisis, the open Russophobia lying at the heart of the policies of a number of Western states has been laid utterly bare.

The sober voices of those who call for Europe to establish close relations with Russia for the sake of the security of its own future are drowned out in the ongoing anti-Russian campaign. This is a clear manifestation of what we call the "Grushnitsky Syndrome," named after a character from A Hero of Our Time. He assured everyone that he was of a romantic nature for so long that he believed it himself. It appears that some Europeans are themselves beginning to believe their own mantras regarding the Russian threat.

Meanwhile, the ominous shadow of the Islamic caliphate rises to the south. Apparently horrified, former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer went so far as to state that, "all of these problems are caused by the West's failure to intervene militarily in Syria."

Several senior American politicians have harshly criticized Barack Obama and his administration for inaction in relation to "Islamic State."

Republican Tom DeLay, former majority leader of the House of Representatives, said bluntly that the President is "paralyzed by the threat posed by ISIL because of his left-wing political ideology, together with his tolerance for Islam .... and he cannot be trusted to protect the country from the threat of Islamic terrorism."

It is clear to all that Europe is overloaded with its own severe problems: a protracted economic crisis affecting all strata of the population, unemployment, political discord, centrifugal tendencies in the European Union, the rise of separatist sentiments, and the alarming growth of migration from Africa and Muslim countries.

As the frequency of conflicts increases, so is the credibility of Western countries in the Third World states reduced, according to an article published this September 4 in Saudi Arabia's Arab News, entitled "The United States defeats itself." "American aid to Israel (the U.S. provides annual aid to Israel in the amount of $3.1 billion,) especially in light of dramatic recent casualties and destruction in Gaza, is an ever-greater irritant to public opinion in the Arab and Muslim countries. The United States loses more friends or creating ever more enemies, not only in Arab and Muslim communities, but throughout the Third World."

The United States and Western Europe do not want to admit that the global challenges and problems we face can only be solved through joint effort. A self-interested and narrowly selfish approach is incompatible with the requirements of our time. Perhaps, the West need to change its genetic code, in order to stand on "the right side of history."

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