Installing Maidan in Warsaw?

Anyone observing current events taking place in Poland could have the impression that we are dealing with an almost unprecedented violation of human rights and the introduction of a totalitarian regime by the newly chosen government, led by the Law and Justice party (PiS) who, against substantial populist resistance, have decided to introduce something akin to Victor Orban's policies. The sense of Poland sinking into totalitarianism can also be seen in the propaganda deliberately introduced into public circulation by media channels such as CNN. In addition, part of the so-called opposition, removed from power in recent democratic elections, is calling for the initiation of Maidan-style protests in Warsaw and trying to challenge the democratically elected government. The whole thing could, of course, be received with an ironic smile - on the face of it, it is looking like the ousted political, business and media establishment are getting out of their luxury cars and going into the streets to call for a repeat of Maidan. Doing this, of course, under the alleged banner of 'restoring democracy', can be read as an attempt to bring themselves back into power. These calls for the creation of Maidan in Poland and EU intervention in order to 'restore democracy' are sown on very fertile ground when it comes to the EU and Germany. To get a better picture of all of the above subjects, I spoke with award-winning investigative journalist and former head of TVP, Witold Gadowski.

In one of your texts you say that this government should end by May, that they were searching for the clone of Donald Tusk and they found Ryszard Petru of the Nowoczesna (Modern) party - a product carefully selected by some shadowy figures. What do you mean exactly?

If a few months before parliamentary elections a force appears which has access to huge money and great media support, then there can be two interpretations - we are dealing with some genius who has found a way to instantly create an incredible political career in Poland, or else they have support from people hidden behind the scenes. In Poland today we have to deal with an alliance between special services and oligarchs who have access to large capital. We are dealing with the sudden appearance of a leader who does not come from the banking community by chance. If we accept the systems introduced during the historic Round Table Talks, then PiS is the anti-system force that wants to defend the decisions made round that round table. And now, all of a sudden, there is a new force that is gaining momentum, there is a new man who was not previously involved in the foreground of political battles. This force immediately receives support from business and media, and immediately comes to parliament. Hence, it seems to me that Mr Ryszard Petru of the Modern Party is a very carefully selected figure.

However, this so-called 'protecting democracy' movement in some way has unified a part of the public. How is this happening?

When analyzing this type of phenomena, it is important to ask who is the group driving the events. Also, the number of frustrated people ready to go out into the streets is always high, and willing to march under any banner. These people are simply unhappy. Such a disordered rebellion can, however, head in the right direction if a group that will drive this momentum forward is found. This is not about this or that leader, but about a group who become the beneficiaries of such influence for the next twenty-five years. This motor group operates under great stress, because if we implemented checks of what took place in the last eight years, a lot of pathology would come to light and these pathologies correspond to real people. People who have a lot to fear, hence they are willing to spend a lot of money...
to organize protests which are trying to overthrow the new government. Today, we can see that these attempts to swing the public mood and get people on the streets have gone as far as trying to organize some form of international blackmail against the Polish authorities. It is shamelessly being done by the same people who lost power recently. The whole axis turns because of the conflict between the beneficiaries of the current system and those who already were second-class citizens, because they had no relevant political connections.

These people understand democracy in a very caricatured way – according to them, democracy is when they govern, and if they lose in democratic elections then they call for foreign support to come in and save their careers. Who do they want to take measures against? The Poles who chose a different government than before? In that case, who are these people? If the current government has enemies among people such as George Soros, I’d rather be on the side of those who are being attacked. This government has only ruled for thirty days and has not done all that much. Therefore, there is no reason to raise such a clamor in Europe and in the world. The people who today shout about ‘threats to democracy’, what are they really afraid of? They fear the consequences of the changes this new government is going to make.

The Polish government has begun to be vilified in the media in ways only Russia and Hungary has been vilified thus far. The former Belgian Prime Minister and head of the liberals in the European parliament, Guy Maurice Marie Louise Verhofstad, said that the PiS government ‘are Nazis’ and Jaroslaw Kaczyński, together with Orban and Putin, is ‘destroying European unity and the rule of law’. He also stated that ‘Taking into consideration the determination of Vladimir Putin in attempts to destroy European unity and the rule of law, the current Polish government is doing the job for him’. George Soros, in turn, believes that the danger in Eastern Europe is a wave of xenophobia. In an interview with the newspaper Wirtschaftswoche, he mentioned that Jaroslaw Kaczyński, whose party won the recent elections in Poland, labelled so-called refugees as “the devil incarnate”. Can these internal and external pressures lead to a repetition of Maidan and the Kiev scenario in Warsaw?

It’s hard to listen to the teachings of a representative of a country which has legalised euthanasia for children, the representative of a country that cannot cope alone with the antagonisms that are growing between the Flemish and the Walloons. Somehow, nobody is calling for EU intervention in Belgium, where the Flemish Front is making ever louder quasi-fascist statements. I am also waiting for Mark Dutroux to start lecturing us about the quality of democracy in Poland. Let me remind you that Mark Dutroux is the central figure in one of the biggest pedophilia scandals in the world, which still extends to the whole of the Belgian political environment. As we saw in the Ukrainian Maidan, the involvement of big money in triggering certain social crises has an effect. If huge amounts of money begin flowing into Poland from abroad, it may actually lead to social unrest. It is a matter of maturity and responsibility of Polish society whether it allows this to happen or not.

We are a big country on a European scale, and we can use the attributes that scale gives us in the ways in which we operate. We must, however, do it skillfully. First of all, we cannot enter into open conflict with the EU, because we are too weak at the moment to find an alternative way to construct our politics. However, in the EU there is enough slack to settle some business. First, the Polish government should accept that Poland will take in refugees, because we cannot become the whipping boy for the whole European community. However, this declaration should be followed by specific requests: Polish authorities should decide who accepts and who not to accept, and the obvious solution is that we only take in Christians. We accept the people close to us culturally, so as not to create social problems that may arise from the adoption of a large group of Muslim refugees. We will accept refugees, but on our conditions. We are a Christian and a Catholic country, and we intend to help our neighbor because we are required to do so, but we intend to help to those who do not bring us problems, including those who refuse to assimilate into our society.

I think that those who want Maidan-style protests in Poland face the same dilemma as those in other parts of the world who went from living in totalitarian regimes to democratic conditions. For example, General Franco’s people in Spain had to learn to live in a democratic country, and somehow these processes of adaptation happened there quite peacefully. Let transformational Spain be an example for us. These people are accustomed to using totalitarian benefits and indeed, over the last twenty-five years, Poland was run as a sort of soft totalitarianism, because political correctness ruled and those who refused to be politically correct were second-class citizens, exiled to the margins of society. So people who became accustomed to totalitarian tendencies can now spout platitudes about democracy and about how Warsaw needs its own Maidan. What these people need is to simply learn to live in a democracy, but a real and not declarative democracy.

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