

Another “Western Betrayal”? Biden-Putin and the Polish Question

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Have Polish politicians come from imposing on the World a vision of Poland as a relentless victim of “Russian aggression” – into a phase of despair and desperation? This is how Polish statements on eastern matters are starting to look like, in particular as far as the issue of Nord Stream 2 and the Joe Biden-Vladimir Putin summit concerned.

Shere Khan abandoned Tabaqui?

By linking all their geopolitical hopes only with Donald Trump’s victory – even the leaders of Polish ruling party, the Law and Justice (PiS) are probably already aware that they have put Poland in a situation with no way out. Our state is not only waging an incessant propaganda war against Russia, not only has it been involved in a pitifully unsuccessful coup attempt in Belarus – but has also been in conflicts with practically all neighbours, even those described as “*strategic allies*”. So, the last chance for political Warsaw was the American Democratic War Hawks, usually no less anti-Russian than the Republican right. And again, however, the disastrous Polish understanding of American politics made itself felt. Poland played blindly to continue or even tighten sanctions on Nord Stream2, to increase NATO’s presence in Ukraine, and to complete the coup in Belarus. Meanwhile, none of these scenarios is currently being implemented, and Poland, with its anti-Russian campaign, has been left alone, like a... still inciting jackal, surprised by the escape of its tiger boss.

Forgotten word normalization

Of course, any independent state, even the worst governed – would have understood long ago that such a policy leads nowhere, only increasing the costs and losses on the Polish side. We are not even talking about any great geopolitical change, there is no statesman of the appropriate format for such a manoeuvre among the Polish political elite. Self-imposing, however, would be at least to calm down the atmosphere, mute the anti-Belarusian campaign and withdraw from the most absurd anti-Russian declarations and actions. Even if the Polish Government did it insincerely and against itself – it could at least be a signal that at least some of the reasons for Poland’s disastrous international position were understood. And although Minsk and Moscow have no reasons for treating such a hypothetical change other than with distrust, it would be a first, completely basic step to normalization.

And if no one in Warsaw can think in such strategic terms, they could at least understand the tactical idea: the shadow of suggesting to Western capitals that Poles can also figure out something and are not prisoners of their own phobias and imposed propaganda. Sure – in the West hardly anyone would believe that Poles are smart enough to do it, but again, a seed of doubt could grow over time. And it would be all the easier to do, and also to sell it to the Polish public, as our compatriots, if they remembered anything more or less correctly from recent history – this is the slogan of “the West Betrayal”.

This concept has a long tradition in Polish consciousness. That is how was called the indifference of Western capitals to the partitions of Poland in the 18th century and the 123-year occupation of our country by Germany, Russia and Austria. For Poles classical example of the West Betrayal was especially the Phoney War in 1939, when for several weeks we stood alone against Hitler. And finally, leaving post-war Poland in the Soviet bloc is considered an *allied betrayal* as well. That is why Poland loves the West with a hopeless love, but at the same time full of regret and distrust. We are a nation of mental children and ruling women, who take offense when someone chooses their own interests instead of giving Poland gifts.

And this motive should be played now, explaining the change of accents. The more so as Law and Justice does everything it does, also in international politics – only in terms of being attractive in the eyes of its own electorate. And the Polish Government is pretty sure that cannot change anything in Polish diplomacy, because voters will never buy it. But Polish leader Jarosław Kaczyński can be absolutely wrong with that if only he plays smart with the complexes and resentments still alive among Poles. Instead of hating Russia, he should recall Poland’s distrust of the West, all unfulfilled Polish hopes and dreams related to the desire for Western acceptance of Poland and turning it all into a noticeable improvement in the international situation of Poland, now strongly resents the West again. Unfortunately, nor Jarosław Kaczynski, neither any other Polish mainstream politician is independently thinking and acting enough to do this.

Resistant to the hate campaign?

And we should be sorry of that, because maybe Polish nation ready for such a change. After all, according to the March WCIOM poll, the majority of surveyed Poles and Russians believe that both countries should treat each other as an ally (42 percent of Poles, 40 percent of Russians) or even a friend (22 and 28 percent respectively). Moreover, the results of similar surveys have remained at this surprisingly high level for years – despite the invariably (for a decade) intensity of the aggressive Russophobic campaign in Poland. Meanwhile, a large part of Polish society, even repeating the same political or historical clichés, reluctant to Russia, sees no reasons why relations with the contemporary Russian state should not be simply NORMAL.

Of course, every statistic Pole is bombarded every day with hundreds of news about further examples of “*Russian aggression*”, about the “*terrible possessiveness of the Kremlin*”, about dozens of Moscow spies on every corner etc. But it can also be assumed that there is an effect of tiredness, and also negative verification of this propaganda. The anti-Russian campaign in Poland was intensified together with the coup in Ukraine in 2014 with the goal to increase Polish support for the Westernization processes in Kiev. That was the moment when the hunt for the *Russian spies* began, with intention to silent all circles supporting simply normal Polish-Russian relations, as well as those demanding a more decisive attitude

towards the revival of banderites Nazism in Ukraine. But even blind people can see now that seven years have passed, and this terrible Putin still has not attacked us!

Sure, Poles are told that it is thanks to our great governments and even better alliances that terrify the Moscow satrap so terribly. But even dumbfounded a typical Pole he has his own Slavic cleverness, saying him: Well, if the Russians are not THAT scary after all – why not make a deal with them on our own, discretionally? And if they really are SO terrible – it is an even better argument for agreement!

However, we should not fall into false optimism – these positive instincts of Poles have no relations to any election decisions so far. Poles generally have a problem with articulating and expressing their political or even socio-economic expectations with the help of ballot papers. On the contrary, they expect ready-made recipes served by the chosen ones, and then take them as they are, without paying attention to details. And foreign policy, despite its fundamental economic implications, remains a detail for the majority of Polish voters, not to mention an even more negative attitude to international affairs on the part of the non-voting majority. It does not differ from the typical attitude also in other media-democratic countries.

The principle of Polish geopolitics

Therefore, Polish leaders do not have to worry about the opinions of voters, focusing on carrying out previously received, even no longer valid orders. So, when we hear and read the official expectations of the government or the so-called opposition in Poland about the Geneva meeting of World leaders will not be met if Joe Biden does not at least shoot, beat, or severely insult and spit on Vladimir Putin, taking away Crimea, Belarus and whatever else he would dream about. The level of media-propaganda aberration in Poland is so high that everything below will be considered *capitulation and another Western betrayal*. And in parallel – of course, self-control mechanisms will work. Whatever happens, whatever the leaders decide – it will be presented in the Polish media as *a Russian defeat, proof of Russia's weakness* and of course *Putin's collapse*. It simply cannot be otherwise.

The Poles will not find out what the two presidents really agreed or what the consequences for Poland will be. Only after some time, when the subordinate colonies will receive clear guidelines from the relevant embassies – some changes of accents will be expected, maybe attacking some other enemies as well, maybe some new argues with the neighbours, just to distract Polish attention.

And yet it is also a fundamental principle of Polish geopolitics that as for centuries our relations with all other countries and nations could only be a function of our relations with Russia and Germany and their references to other areas of the world – this is by analogy how Poland's situation between America and Russia looks today. And even known German economic domination over Poland does not change it, as it is being carried out (still) thanks to the American mandate and acceptance. Therefore, Poland cannot have a foreign policy other than policy towards the USA and policy towards the Russian Federation. And other external (?) economic policy, except the policy towards Germany. Everything else is secondary. And Poland does not have any of these three.

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