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**The West Under Strain  
Europe's Small States in a Changing Environment**

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**Conceiving of strains as signs of opportunities in the transatlantic  
relationship: A Hungarian perception distilled from prime ministers'  
speeches  
-Draft-**

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## **Conceiving of strains as signs of opportunities in the transatlantic relationship A Hungarian perception distilled from prime ministers' speeches**

### **Introduction**

First a justification is needed why this restricted method of discourse analysis is followed. A more thorough strategy would imply the need to cast a much broader net and include first of all the speeches of ministers responsible for foreign policy, or one could go further and set the task of revising all written and spoken material on foreign policy. No doubt this would result in a more thorough analysis. I certainly would not debate that, and the present paper can be conceived in this light as only a first step or an invitation towards a more thorough analysis in the future.

There are more profound reasons, however, –next to the obvious ones pertaining to time constraints and the amount of material that piles up only from these speeches alone, which should not to be dismissed, that might justify such an approach. These reasons are partly theoretical; partly practical political, stemming from changes in European party structures influencing also Hungarian domestic politics. As to the first, theoretical reason, I think it is worth conceiving of these speeches, as speech acts, which presuppose an audience. The speeches themselves and their resonance in the audience –in this case the international or the domestic community, sometimes live a different life which itself can be a source of strain in foreign relations. For this reason, and as a first step, I would like to focus on the speeches alone- on the question what coherence –if any emerges in foreign policy from these speeches. Studying the resonance of the speeches would then be a second step of analysis, particularly, given that it is not always a straightforward one even in the case of their Hungarian reception. We have, however, to assume that any change in foreign policy is potentially a source of tension in all countries, let alone one made in connection with the emergence of a new world order. It is worth emphasizing that it is precisely the emergence of a new world order that has been unfolding in front of our eyes over the last 16 years. From this perspective, that we witness tensions in transatlantic relations should not surprise us. Rather we should expect tensions to emerge.

As to the second, domestic reason, two things are worth mentioning. The first is a general European tendency towards the redefinition of parties not as ideological but as centrist people's parties. This tendency can be seen in what could be described as the 'liberalization' of the left, partly in response to a competitive demand and the changes in the organization of the economy and of labor. The same is true of the right and the relationship between the two sides. The left-right divide has a special twist in Hungary, where we could say that many values traditionally associated with the Left or the Liberals are embraced today by the Right, from the goal of full employment, equal opportunity, to Roma representation in parliament or even, solidarity. This has to do with the complicated nature of the regime change<sup>1</sup>. As a result

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<sup>1</sup> *'There is no doubt that a phenomenon known in several Western-European countries manifests itself also in Hungary, namely that there exists a liberalism of the Central right which also attempts to integrate conservative values and a liberalism of the left, which we could call social liberalism. Fidesz attempts to string to the logic of liberal politics, the obvious values of other ideologies. In Hungary this is particularly timely. ... regime change brought not merely a political and an economic crisis. It is the ordinary way of life that has turned out of its corners. Some basic questions of life, such as the question of belonging somewhere, the interpretation of our roles in life and in the world, have become political questions and for answering we unavoidably need to assess such conservative values as the family or national identity. It is obvious that we need to integrate values associated with, although not necessarily belonging to- the left. One of them is the equality of opportunity, which amidst the present economic crisis, gives hope to the start of the talented but poor children. Taking this into*

of these changes, even if Hungary, as any other member state has the usual parties in the European Parliament, with their distinctive views on the future of Europe, since the values of the right, the left and of the liberals need to be recast or redefined within changing circumstances, Hungary finds herself in a not dissimilar situation than any other European party trying to define and cope with the changes that take place around us<sup>2</sup>.

The second tendency, not unrelated to the first, is the increasing role of prime ministers- and here we could think of the person of Tony Blair, in the formulation or at least the communication of foreign policy. This change in Hungary is related to the 'innovations' – often criticized- but associated with the political right<sup>3</sup>. (Körössényi ? interview: HVG)

If we assume that 'the present', starting with the end of the Cold War raised many particular questions about the future that needed and need answers- we can structure the argument focusing on the answers to these problems given by the two sides, generally referred to as the right and the left. We speak of two sides because, since the 2002 elections, the parliament is dominated by two main parties and two smaller satellite parties, which are around the 5 % threshold necessary for party representation in parliament. This is so much so that in this 2006 year's elections many analysts counted on the drop-out of the two smaller parties, which finally reached 6, 5% and 5% respectively. Analyzing the dominant parties responsible for foreign policy is justified on these terms. After this short introduction I attempt to answer the questions preoccupying politicians in Hungary since the end of the Cold War which explains the attention given to them by the organizers on the occasion of this conference. In the presentation paper, however, I only focus on the concept of the West for way of demonstration and offer a summary of the other six sections jumping directly to the conclusion. The remaining six sections deal with (1) identity, (2) foreign policy (3) tensions with Europe (4) the future of Europe (5) the constitutive role of Hungary in Europe and (6) the tensions in the Alliance according to the left and the right respectively.

### ***1. The changing concept of the West***

Speaking of the concept of the West, we need to go back to the beginning of the present world order and even beyond. The stability of the concept of the West on both sides of the divided Europe is associated with the Cold War. The general view is that the concept of the West was inextricably linked with the concept of freedom. It is therefore not surprising that, following the fall of the Berlin wall, countries of the region strived for EU and NATO membership.

A more thorough analysis, however, might question an automatic identification of 'West' and freedom on both sides of Europe. On the one hand, we have to remember that what happened in many of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe including Hungary was a peaceful regime change, which meant that former forces holding political power have consented to share power with newly formed political organizations. We tend to forget, however, and parties on the left push us to forget, that the former Communist parties did not want a regime

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*account, Fidesz undeniably differs from the other, more left-oriented liberal party, the SZDSZ, given that Fidesz builds its system of ideas on a coalition of values.'* (20.04.1995) and later (23.05.2004)

<sup>2</sup> Some of the answers are worth quoting. 'Although our party continues to consider itself to be liberal, there are a considerable number of people believing in other system of ideas. Fidesz has also left the period when Hungarian parties were organized according to the fault lines between traditional ideologies. Today it is not ideologies but visions about the future that compete, and thus it is not ideologies but images about the future that bring into the same party those who share similar thoughts.' (8.06.1996)

<sup>3</sup> It is perhaps worth mentioning too that between 1994 -98 Viktor Orbán has been head of the of the European integration committee of the Hungarian parliament.

change, but were forced to accept it by external and internal circumstances; externally the reforms initiated by Gorbachev and the changes these reforms caused internally which culminated in the so called round-table talks. The significance of this is underestimated today, but it is the clue to the understanding of many of the domestic conflicts in these countries, including Hungary.

The diverging political careers of the two prime ministers under analysis offer more than a symbolic expression of this situation. Ferenc Gyurcsány, since the last elections, the new head of the Hungarian Socialist Party, and our prime minister since 2004, has been affiliated with politics before the regime change within the confines of the Communist Youth Organization (KISZ). The regime change pushes him to found the Democratic Youth Organization (DEMISZ) in April, 1989 (Romsics, 2003:140) and to lobby unsuccessfully for the participation of this organization on the third side of the National Roundtable Talks. This third side consisted of the satellite organizations of the Communist regime; that we would tend to call civil society organizations in a democratic society. Most of these organizations (except some trade unions) have disappeared from the political scene after the first free elections. This applies to DEMISZ as well, which was not accepted to participate in the roundtable talks by the opposition. This broke the political career of Ferenc Gyurcsány for more than a decade, only to return to politics as an adviser of Prime Minister Medgyessy Péter following the 2002 elections. From 2004 he succeeds Medgyessy as a prime minister. Gyurcsány *described this failure as a blow which put him to the ground for 6 months*, when he was invited to work for a company. During these interim years he proves to be a successful business man, becomes a millionaire sometimes with dubious transactions, transactions he described recently to be *'acceptable in an emerging democracy'* (HVG interview, 2006)

By contrast, the regime change finds the present head of the most important opposition party, FIDESZ, and former Prime Minister (1998-2002), Viktor Orbán on a scholarship in Oxford, which he interrupts after 8 months (1989-1990) to go home and participate in the first free elections<sup>4</sup>. The participation of FIDESZ and the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions as independent organizations<sup>5</sup> are extricated from the Communist Party as one of the first successes and of the first sign of unity of the opposition forming the Opposition Round Table (EKA)<sup>6</sup>. The position of FIDESZ during this time is described as radically

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<sup>4</sup> Fidesz (the Association of Free Democrats) was founded in March 1988 at the Bibó István College by 37 young people. Originally participation was limited to those below 35 of age. This condition for participation was cancelled in 1993. The formation of parties at that time is not yet legal, which explains why they tend not to refer to themselves as parties. As late as in January 10-11, 1989, the parliamentary debate still postpones the acceptance of the law that would legalize parties for another six month. Underlying is the preference of the 'order party group' for a slow, two-step transition that would share power on the basis of 'supposed power relations' in 1990 to last until 1994 or 1995, the intended time for the first free elections (Romsics, 2003:126-7).

<sup>5</sup> In fact, what the party seeks to achieve is to force both Fidesz and the Liga Trade Union to participate as a member of a larger body that would represent all the youth organizations and all the trade unions respectively, which would dissolve their position into comparable organizations under the supervision of the party (Romsics, 2003: 135).

<sup>6</sup> EKA was formed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1989 by nine organizations. They included political parties like the MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum), the SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats), the FKGP (Independent Small Holders Party), the MSZDP (Hungarian Social Democratic Party) Magyar Néppárt (Hungarian People's Party), and Fidesz, and other organizations like BZSEBT (Friendship Society of Bajcsy Zsilinszky Endre), Liga (Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions) with a and the Független Jogász Forum (Independent Lawyers Forum). KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) joined later. Among the seven of the parties, four MDF, SZDSZ, Fidesz and KDNP survived until the last elections in 2006, while the League survived as a trade union (Romsics 2003:135). The roundtable talks started on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 1989 and lasted until the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1989 (Bihari, 2005).

anticommunist. In one of his first speeches at Imre Nagy<sup>7</sup>'s funeral, one of the few occasions, where the Hungarian opposition has the opportunity to 'test' its power<sup>8</sup>, Orbán expresses himself with frightening frankness, calling for freedom, the departure of Russian tanks, the dismantling of the Warsaw Pact etc... As Romsics remarks his speech in the name of the younger generation stands out from the other five speeches, advanced by participants of the Revolution, by forcing his audience to take an unambiguous stance with respect to the communist period in two respects. He urges the immediate initiation of talks with the Russians for the total withdrawal of the Russian army and the uncompromising condemnation of Communist leaders:

*'We stand in incomprehension of the fact that the ones who not so long ago were humiliating the revolution and its prime minister in chorus, have today suddenly realized that they are the continuers of Imre Nagy's reform politics. We similarly do not understand that the party and state leaders who ordered to teach us from books that distort the revolution today so to speak scramble for touching these coffins, as if they were talismans bringing good luck.' ... We are not satisfied with the empty promises of communist politicians which mean nothing to them. What we need to achieve is that the party in power, even if it wanted to, could not use force against us. Only then can we avoid coffins and the delayed funerals, comparable to the one we are witnessing today.'*<sup>9</sup>

It is probable that those, who identified with the Communist regime, would have to disagree with Orbán's description of the dilemma of young people in the 1980s that *at the beginning of their adulthood they were put in the impossible situation to have to choose between freedom and their home and freedom and their family* (11.02.2002). The high rank officials of the party had in some sense more freedom than it was conceivable in a Western democracy. It is for this reason that most members of the Communist elite did not want a regime change, or the sharing of power. That the sharing of power took place and that Hungary had unconstrained and free elections as early as 1990 (Stark and Bruszt, 1992 [1991]), within a parliamentary as opposed to a presidential system preferred by the Party, was, next to Gorbachev's non intervention policy, the success of the opposition and the lessons it learnt from the earlier Polish Roundtable talks (Sajó, in Elster 1996: 69-98).

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<sup>7</sup> Imre Nagy (1895-1958), Prime Minister (1953-1955, 1956) after Stalin's death and Khrushchev's accession into power. In 1955 he is forced to resign, but the short-lived government following the 1956 Revolution reinstates him. When the Soviet tanks enter the country, he escapes to the Yugoslavian Embassy, from which he is ambushed, taken to Romania by the Soviets and handed to the Hungarian authorities. He is secretly tried, executed and buried namelessly, together with the five other convicted and sentenced to death in 1958 at an outlying, unkempt plot numbered 301 of the public cemetery in Rákoskeresztúr, i.e. Géza Losonczy, state minister, Pál Maléter, minister of defence, Miklós Gimes, journalist, and József Szilágyi, Imre Nagy's personal secretary. The bodies, found face down and wired together are exhumed and reburied on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1989. A sixth coffin stands in memory of the 300 other executed. János Kádár is aware of the reburial. He dies on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July, 1989 (Romsics, 2003: 150-2).

<sup>8</sup> Compared to the Polish Solidarity Movement, Hungarian opposition had relatively few occasions to test its power. The funeral was one of these occasions. Others were the anniversaries of former revolutions fought for the independence of the country, such as the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, a formal national holiday commemorating the 1848 Revolution and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, the outbreak of the 1956 Revolution, which was first recognized as a national holiday only in 1989.

<sup>9</sup> In a recent interview *'Some wanted to use the occasion for a false national reconciliation, saying the moment of embracement has come, let us forget about the past. We wanted on the other hand to signal that we should not be thankful for letting us bury our dead after more than three decades.'* (25.03.2006)

Is the identification of the West with freedom supported by the historical record on the Western side of divided Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Orbán would answer negatively:

*'Under Soviet occupation we were used to think of the territories to the West of Hungary as free Europe as a matter of course. However, if You have a look at the 20<sup>th</sup> century, then we can see that Europe was not always free, and I could even say to You that when our true troubles for us Hungarians happened, this had much to do with the fact that Europe was not free, because one or another dictatorship ruled in it. Moreover these did not come only from the East, because there has been within the two World Wars on the area of Germany a dictatorship that has not been brought there from the East, but if You like has been the invention of the Western world. For this reason I would like to ask you, not to take it as self-evident that Europe is always organized according to the idea of freedom. ...What Europe will become, its quality within the European Union will, starting from the first of May, not only depend on the decisions of those living to the West of our country, but will equally depend on our decisions...*

*Let me also remind you of the fact that when the peace ending the Second World War, the Yalta Agreement was signed, there was in it no talk of a free Europe. The phrase that stood in the Agreement was: liberalized Europe. And we know all too well that being liberalized and being free are two different things. ... It is for this reason that I am saying that the first of May when we become members of the European Union, and the 13<sup>th</sup> of June when for the first time we can choose representatives into the European Parliament, would be the moment when a liberalized Europe becomes a free Europe.*

*I believe that we will build a Europe within which the military maps of sixty years before would lose their validity, the military successes of sixty years before on the basis of which Europe was divided and cut up into nations and vanquished will give its place to another Europe where the place of a man is not marked by defeats suffered and victories won, but is marked instead by each nation's inventiveness, diligence and work. We all are preparing into such a Europe.' (05.03.2004) for an earlier elaboration see (06.12.2003., 12.12.2003).*

In other words, the question of freedom in Europe is not, and was not automatically resolved with the end of the Cold War. In his response to the question of a potential threat of an extreme right wing turn in Hungary, Orbán answers thus:

*'The dilemma is as old as democracy. How democracy can guard itself against non-democratic forces? It is not in Brussels that the solution to this question lies, but in the constitution of member states. When it comes to the advance of populism today, this is the problem of Western- and not of Central Europe. ... Here it is freedom that is attractive.'* (17.06.2000)

### **8. Conclusion: consistency in foreign policy**

This paper asked two questions. On the one hand it sought to answer the question of the organizers of this conference about the consequences in identity terms for small states of a transatlantic rift. On the other, it sought to do so asking about the coherence in foreign policy of the positions adopted by the 'political right' and 'the left' respectively and, in the case of the identification of such coherence, whether this adds up to a coherent foreign policy followed by the country.

As to the first question, the starting point of this analysis was that, since the end of the Cold War meant the redefinition of world order, tensions were to be expected to emerge in transatlantic relations. There is debate whether this redefinition took place in the 1990s or whether it is still unfolding and will ultimately turn on the relationship between the US and Europe. Strains in the Alliance are a reflection precisely of this debate. In this respect we have to say that Hungary was not a passive actor in the emergence of this rift, but itself played a constitutive role in it. It not only contemplated but participated in supporting unilateral action by the United States. This constitutive role was possible because it happened in alliance with older and by no means small members of the European Union. In this case therefore the Old New division of member states does not apply which raises questions about the existence of a former European unity as well.

When, in a second step, we attempt to answer the question why new member states have decided to support the US, very clear answers follow, which have to do with the security concerns of these countries, namely that these countries probably, but Hungary surely identifies the guarantee for the security and peace of the region with an American presence in Europe. This is because it was the US who answered first to the security needs of Hungary by allowing Hungary's accession to NATO as early as 1999, compared to her, relatively late accession to the EU in 2004. Similarly the solution of the Balkan crisis is again attached to the United States and only secondly to the European Union. Thus efficiency problems as well as, we could say, doubts about the financial burdens of a Common Foreign and Security Policy might offer the explanations. In this latter respect, we should not forget that new member states have serious other financial burdens to fulfill if they want to catch up with the old members in terms of economic performance and wealth.

The second assumption was that part of the answer has to do with the decision to enlarge the European Union by ten members. Everyone knew that this means postponing deepening for widening and an efficient Common Foreign and Security Policy would certainly require the further deepening of integration.

Since the emphasis of an independent foreign policy comes out from speeches both on the right and on the left, -and the active and, therefore, constitutive role played in the creation of a transatlantic rift could be seen as an evidence of this-, we cannot speak of identity challenges. This suggests the existence of stable identities and a more richly textured conception of the West. Hungarian identity and relationship to the West is not anchored to an abstract conception but is derived from the interpretation of concrete historical encounters. It is attached to historical events, even if these events are defined by the two main sides of the political spectrum differently: these dates are the end of the Second World War, 1956 and 1989. Finally, although the ideals of freedom and democracy are associated with the West, the actual realization of these ideals in Western Europe is seen critically.

The Left in Hungary as in Europe prides itself to see 'Western Europe' critically by a long tradition. It is Ferenc Gyurcsány who, since the regime change, was able to give back this pride to the Socialist Party. For the above dates caused particularly a challenge not for the identity of the state but the identity of the left. The Right, on the other hand, derives her critique from the limited freedom of the West during the larger part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this interpretation, our recent miseries, (just like our older ones), i.e. the Cold War and 1956 are linked with the forced restriction of freedom and democracy to the Western part of Europe and to the unlucky coincidence of being liberalized not by the United States but the Soviet Union.

The above differentiated narratives of the West provide part of the answer as to why tensions in the transatlantic relationship and the consequent pluralisation of the concept of the West did not cause identity challenges for Hungary as a state. To the contrary, joining the European Union was attractive precisely because membership promised that this pluralisation will happen. In other words, Hungary consciously expected to play a constitutive role in Europe, and it derived this constitutive role from her distinct, but nevertheless European identity. Joining the European Union meant that her special problems could be brought to Europe, raising awareness on a European level, and where she could participate in the expression and the resolution of these problems on the basis of European democratic norms.

The second part of the evidence has to be derived from the question of the consistency of Hungarian foreign policy. The above speeches suggest the existence of ready made answers to the transatlantic rift, answers which were prepared much earlier. They follow logically from the experience of inefficiency of European foreign policy, compared to NATO, referred to earlier. This should allow us to speak of a coherent foreign policy. What follows is a qualification of this statement. How does this foreign policy emerge from the foreign policies of the Right and the Left? And what is this foreign policy about on the right and the left? What constitutive role Hungary wants to have in Europe? We decided to answer this question searching for consistency in prime ministers' speeches.

The identity challenge for Hungary stems less from the pluralisation of Europe, or the concept of the West, but stems primarily from the question of how to relate to the last forty years. This is a common problem for all Central European states. Nevertheless the nature of these regimes as well as the way these regimes collapsed have eased or made it more difficult to face the Communist past. This is not primarily a political question but a deeper question affecting the whole of society. Forty years of a regime is enough time to entrench the whole of a society. Generally speaking negotiated regime change offered less opportunity for a sincere closing of the past.

In Hungary both the nature of the Kádár regime, and the ending of it discouraged a sincere facing of the past. What was this regime like? When we try to answer this question we try to assess what distortions, fractures, erasures this regime caused in the texture and directly or indirectly, as a way of self-protection, in the memory of society. We could say that this is mere speculation, these things are not measurable. Contrary to this, I would say that it is possible to find data to the destructive influence of a regime on society. This is measurable with data related to the state of health of a society, including life expectancy, the incidence of alcoholism, and suicide, the nature of illnesses and the possible relationship of these to depression, i.e. data reflecting people's assessment of their own opportunities. They together add up to the 'quality of life' of a society. On the political side it is measurable by a comparison between states of an interest in public life, participation in elections, the answers people give for non-participation etc. Some of these data are worth quoting. In Hungary depression affects 30 percent of society. Depression is partly the reason that today 23% more men die under the age of sixty than in 1963. In the case of women of the same age, mortality is equally three times higher than the European average. Even in absolute terms, the mortality of men of 45-65 of age is higher today than it was during the 1930s. Other factors fare no better: Hungary is among the worse performing states in the above areas affecting the quality of life even on a world scale, including a decrease in population by 35-40 000 people/year. (Kopp, Mária and Erika M. Kovács, *The quality of life of the Hungarian population at the turn of the millennium*, Budapest: Semmelweis Kiadó, 2006)



The more positive evaluation of the Kádár regime in the West is not aware of these data. However, both the severe repression following 1956, as well as the strategy to allow some freedom on the purely individual level, to gradually increase consumption even at the price of foreign indebtedness has to do with the fear of the Communist elite of any organization or even contact between people. As a result, Hungary fares as one of the most atomistic and individualistic society in 1989 (Hankiss, )

If we want to find the common thread that motivates Hungarian foreign and domestic policy on the right is to work towards changing this mental state of society. Remarkably many speeches testify to this. In particular those which give a diagnosis of the state of Hungarian society have not been quoted here (26.03.2002; 27.03.2002; 02.04.2002; 12.04.2002; 15.05.2002; 27.07.2002; 18.10.2002; 11.11.2002; 20.12.2002; 25.01.2003; 23.05.2003; 19.10.2003). The most harmful heritage, according to Fidesz is a weak national identity:

*‘A strong identity would be important precisely for avoiding failure in the most important, national strategic questions irrespective of a change of government.*

*...the most serious problems related to national consciousness are not that Hungarians inside the country do not feel themselves attached enough to the communities beyond the borders. The problem is more serious than that. Hungarians of Hungary do not know their own national interests either, or are much more frequently uncertain about them than any other state within the Carpathian Basin. The enforcement of national self-interest, as the primary guiding line of internal and external politics, the search, the determination and the pursuit of Hungarian interests is not an evidence either in Hungarian foreign policy or domestic politics, the way it is in the Carpathian Basin or in the case of the neighboring countries.*

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*In fact national interest is comparable to language. National interest similarly to one’s mother tongue is not a question of knowledge. One’s mother tongue is also a life instinct, it is not learnt. A life instinct either works or it does not work. Either there are obstacles to its realization which block, or overshadow it, or this instinct is able to push its way. Today the national instinct in Hungary is not strong enough.’*

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*We would like the expression ‘national side’ to lose its present meaning over time and that the distinction emphasizing the stronger representation of national interests would not be a distinctive feature of the political right and the explicit representation of national interests became general in Hungarian internal politics.’ (23.07.2005)*

This would require among other things a national turn of the political left, according to the same speech. In a great deal due to the influence of the right and also as a result of the failure of the 2004 December 5<sup>th</sup> referendum<sup>10</sup> on the extension of a limited form of citizenship to the surrounding Hungarian communities, the national turn of the political left seems to be taking place at least on the rhetorical level, according to the speeches above. In other words, the

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<sup>10</sup> The organization of a referendum was initiated by a civil organization of intellectuals (members of the World Alliance of Hungarians) following the Medgyessy government’s policy of annihilation of the status law. As a second best solution to the problem of Hungarian minorities, (second best, because of its homogenous and undifferentiated answer to the problem (...)) Fidesz supported it, while MSZP fiercely campaigned against it. Although the yes votes were in a slight majority, the referendum was invalid due to low participation. This resulted in a rather strained relationship between the Hungarian Socialist government and the Hungarian communities outside Hungary. The government promised to find an alternative solution.

political right can be credited for helping overcome the identity crisis of the left, by forcing it to react to and formulate a position vis a vis an active foreign and domestic policy represented by the political right.

The individual steps taken by Fidesz add up to coherent politics, from the raising of the minimal wage from 19 500ft to 50 000; to making the family the unit of taxpaying only from this starting point. How do they link to its foreign policy? Coherency is understood here in two senses of the word. First, it is understood in the sense of the consistent representation of the same policy over time. In a second sense the question is whether the different elements of foreign policy, under analysis here add up to a coherent whole. In the case of Fidesz, the long presence of Viktor Orbán as a key figure of the party offers ample material to study the question of coherence. We can conclude that in both of these aspects, we have here a coherent foreign policy consistently pursued. It is a coherent foreign policy because it derives logically from identity. This identity, in turn, is inextricably linked to the liberal and democratic values of the West, which explains the friction over our 'late' accession to the EU, conceived not as the enlargement but the reunification of Europe. The three elements of Hungarian identity are related to her European identity: 1) Hungary is a stabilizing factor in the region both in terms of her internal and external politics. 2) Hungary is a state with huge minorities in the neighboring countries, but these minorities act also as stabilizers of the region, supporting the democratic forces of these states. 3) Finally, Hungary is state with a Central European identity. The three pillars of Hungarian foreign policy can be derived from the three elements of Hungarian identity. Hungary has a Western orientation towards NATO and the European Union. But next to this Western orientation it is working towards a Central European construction, seeing in a broad definition of the Central European region, the area of growth in the next twenty years in an enlarging Europe. For the full realization of this potential, Hungary is interested in the long term peace and stability of Central and Eastern Europe (including the Balkans) and as a guarantee to this, in bringing this region to NATO and the European Union. For the same reason, Hungary is interested in the European presence of the United States. Until the realization of this goal, Hungary wants to pursue an active foreign policy for the extension of the benefits of her NATO and EU membership to Hungarians living beyond the borders of Hungary. The status law was meant to achieve this goal. The three elements of Hungarian identity and her special situation in space and time, her EU identity and membership, which embodies the aspiration of the reunification of the Hungarian nation without the modification of existing borders and the aspiration to participate in the emergence of a prospering Central European region are mutually supportive elements of this foreign policy that attempts to turn this special situation into an advantage. As stability and peace are in our interest not only politically but equally economically, so too the status law has an economic dimension, to the extent that, over the longer run, it can help resolve the biggest challenge to the Hungarian development: i.e. her serious demographic problems and her need for workforce. With a wise economic policy the capital exports of Hungarian firms to the Central European regions can meet with an educated workforce of a similar cultural background which can give work to members of the local Hungarian communities. In line with these goals, the Orbán government insisted to have special relations with Central European countries, like Austria, Serbia and Croatia, even when these countries were isolated by the European Union. It also insisted that it wants to have a constitutive role in Europe in the creation of an Eastern dimension to the European Union as well as in minority protection. Three elements of the future vision of Europe follow from this policy are: 1) a vision of Europe as a Europe of nations, 2) a Europe of regional autonomies, based on the principle of subsidiarity and 3) a Europe with new forms of democracy. While this latter problem follows partly from the disintegration of the 'unity of the state, the territory and the citizen within the

European Union, as well as the transformation of modern political parties and of democracy itself; thinking into this direction is further motivated by a left domination of the media in Hungary.

This directs us to the nature and the question of coherence of the foreign policy of the political left. Contrary to the approach of the right, almost no mentioning of the concept of the West appears in the speeches. There is little talk of the identity of the state and mostly speeches mentioning identity deal with the identity crisis of the left. Overcoming this identity crisis means identifying the Hungarian Socialist Party with reform communism and, thereby linking to the progressive European tradition of the left. Another strategy is to de-link the Hungarian left from its historical past, including the moment of regime change in the name of starting a new politics, devoid of the conflicts of this change. Finally, one could say that the last element of the identity of the left emerges from an influence of an interaction with Fidesz. It manifests itself in the use of words, introduced by Fidesz, like bourgeois/civilian. The emergence of these words in the self-identification and discourse of the left either follow from the strategy to explicitly copy the elements deemed successful of the opposition or follow from the attempt of the Hungarian left to reconcile its left identity with the bourgeois basis of democracy. The two most important goals of (foreign) policy following from the progressive identity of the left in Hungary are competition and solidarity. The two other key concepts are stability and responsibility with respect to three foreign policy making units, the independent foreign policy of Hungary, EU foreign policy and global foreign policy in alliance with NATO. These concepts are linked by the assumption that stability is ultimately created through progress and prosperity. The long-term interests of the EU here meet the long term interests of states aspiring for EU membership. Enlargement can ensure the prosperity of the European Union through increased competition while solidarity towards newly entering member-states promises the quick modernization of these states within the EU imagined on the basis of the idea of a social market economy. An independent foreign policy is, however, needed for Hungary to avoid 'to be locked into the European Union'. The more dynamic economic growth of the country depends on finding new markets for her products in the developing dynamic markets of Russia and South Eastern Asia. Finally, an independent foreign policy is required in our regional politics where the two goals of stability and responsibility translate themselves in maintaining the political stability of the region and Hungary, while acting responsibly towards Hungarian minorities. In other words, stability here appears as a goal of regional foreign policy rather than an element of identity. As has been said earlier, the minority solution of the Gyurcsány government is formulated as an alternative to the solution of offering a form of Hungarian citizenship to Hungarian minorities<sup>11</sup>. This referendum arguably disrupted a formerly existing consensus. In view of a formerly existing consensus it is difficult to understand why the status law had to be changed. The new solution claims to offer more stability than the status law. It arguably favors the prosperity of Hungarians beyond borders in their homeland, although it is not obvious that the status law does not the same. The five elements of this policy are a homeland program, a national visa, the easing of the procedures of repatriation, the support of autonomy in international and bilateral relations and the examination of the possibility of offering some kind of constitutional status. Here the possibility of the redefinition of citizenship within the EU, towards a political citizenship at the EU and the local level of residence and its separation from national citizenship is also contemplated over the longer run. However, the content of national citizenship seems thereby be emptied of any content. We could conclude that the minority policy of the Gyurcsány government is more difficult to derive from the progressive

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<sup>11</sup> See footnote 10

self-identity of the Hungarian left. Gyurcsány somewhat admits that when he says that all this looks incomprehensible in Western Europe (16.02.2005). Nor is it sure that this policy achieves its goal to create more stability. Despite the underlying attempt to avoid conflict with the EU, the neighboring states and Hungarian communities, the gestures it attempts to make - for example by formally acknowledging a right to autonomy- might turn out to be too much for these states and too little for Hungarians. This also means that while the left is able to formulate a clear vision of the future of Europe through emphasizing its competitive and social dimension, the constitutive steps derivable from these goals are less clear, and therefore it is difficult to know how exactly this government seeks to shape Europe.

What do these two sides' foreign policies add up to? We have seen that the identification of European security with an American presence led to a coherent foreign policy in the area of transatlantic relations. This also means a shared view between the right and the left that Europe should work for her security, first of all, through enlargement and the economic integration of an enlarged Europe and only over the longer run, through the creation of an independent foreign and security policy. Thus Hungary would like to play a constitutive role in Europe-making on the level of priorities. In the second sense it could want to do so; it is through directing attention to the minority problem. Here, however, the views of left and right do not add up to a coherent foreign policy. The left would not like to make this an issue in Europe but proposes instead to solve it within the framework of existing European norms. From inside Hungary this might appear as a consequence of the weakness of state identity, but we could also consider the possibility that indecision might reflect the difficulty of the problem itself. Indecision should follow, if we see, -as the political right does-, in the special situation of Hungary, the materialization of the big question for Europe: How to imagine the relationship between states and nations in a future Europe? Within such circumstances divergent answers reflected by the two sides are not surprising even if this means indecision in foreign policy, to the extent that these questions are not so far definitely solved in Europe as well. They reflect present debates about the future. In these debates it is certain that the position of the right is a distinct and coherent answer, one that does contain interesting and even original ideas to the problems of Hungary, but answers that transcend the Hungarian problem and offer thoughtful ideas to a European future as well.

It is in that sense that we should conceive of strains as signs of opportunities rather than merely the incidence of conflicts. Nor should countries of Western Europe take the critiques from new member states personally. After all Europe is a 'human construct', with imperfections that certainly can be improved and the present period calls particularly for new ideas. Regime change offered the challenge to Hungary and to the countries of the region to do politics under very difficult circumstances, at a time when the European Union could no longer offer stable models and when former European politics itself was challenged. That within such circumstances Hungary, but I am certain other countries as well, can offer coherent and original answers supports the argument of those who saw in enlargement not merely a burden, but the enrichment of Europe. These are difficult problems that even on a theoretical level are not easily solved, let alone on the level of politics, where they touch upon sensitivities far more. These ideas did not grow out from nowhere. At the end of the paper, it might be worth mentioning, even if sketchily where they come from.

***Post-script: The theoretical forerunners to present political practices.***

As we have seen the theoretical forerunner of Ferenc Gyurcsány is Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck, whose ideas are well known in all parts of Europe. Can we name anyone at all,

as the theoretical forerunner of the most important party on the political right? Ole Waever comes to my mind. He argued convincingly that the future of Europe depends on the sense of security in societies (societal security) and the integration of national communities vis a vis the disintegration of borders and the weakening of the states. He also says that the future of Europe crucially depends on some form of minority protection. It is safe to say that the political right did not take these ideas from Ole Waever. But its ideas have been influenced by the views of a Hungarian thinker, István Bibó, a 20<sup>th</sup> thinker, whose authority is recognized on both sides of the political spectrum<sup>12</sup>. The founding members of FIDESZ were lawyers studying together in the prestigious Bibó István Szakkollégium.

Bibó embodies the best traditions of Hungarian liberalism. He is further one among the very few, whose political authority is recognized by all the parties. In 1956 he is Minister of State in Imre Nagy's government, and the Soviet invasion on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November finds him in the building of the Hungarian parliament, formulating a proclamation for the free governments of the West.

For way of a conclusion, we might, therefore, agree that the two policies of the prime ministers' under analysis represent two types of liberalisms: a conservative vs. a cosmopolitan liberalism. Both political forces are striving to occupy the center. In the course of this struggle, the self-definition of the parties does not happen in isolation from- but in reaction to one another's moves. This results, at least in Hungary, in the strange situation that the distinction 'left' and 'right' we have used in the article is formal, inappropriate if not altogether meaningless, to the extent that the steps taken by the two parties in government are not typical of the left or of the right in other European countries. The demonstration of this, however, would require evidence that is worth another paper.

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<sup>12</sup> I have attempted to argue for the 'farsightedness' of Bibó's ideas, offering a comparison with Waever's views about the future of Europe, in another paper, ('Failed States or Failed Diplomacy? Nationalism, International Society and the Future of Europe'), hopefully forthcoming soon.