

German Chairmanship Missed Crucial Issues

by Rainer Apel

If one needed more proof that Europe is virtually ungovernable, the just-concluded German presidency of the European Union during the first six months of this year provides ample evidence. Along with a good part of the German elites, Chancellor Angela Merkel decided not to take any notice of the changed situation after the U.S. midterm elections in November 2006, but to conduct her half-year presidency as if the neo-con agenda were still unshattered, and the elections had never taken place.

This implied going ahead with the ill-advised project of a “trans-Atlantic free trade area,” with an anti-Putin policy, by putting “emphasis on human rights and democracy in Russia,” with continued loyalty to the supra-nationalist Maastricht Treaty straitjacket of European budgetary austerity, and, worst of all, with the idea of rescuing and reviving core aspects of the very draft for a European Charter, which was already rejected in referenda in France and the Netherlands in 2005. The Charter as such is dead, because after two member states of the EU rejected it, it cannot be implemented.

The Merkel trick is to present some of the aspects of the Charter draft again, under the new name of the “European Treaty.” Since the voters already rejected the first draft, Merkel is opting for a formula that would be supported by the governments only, without the need for ratification by parliaments, or citizens in public referenda. Merkel was encouraged in this gambit by the just-resigned Prime Minister Tony Blair. There is a British hand in the uproar which this approach by Merkel provoked, especially in Europe’s eastern states.

The fear of the large state of Germany by the smaller states of eastern Europe, has been effectively played upon, by using a favorite British black propaganda tool against Germany, which is the charge that the reunified Germany is too powerful in Europe, and that it is on its way to becoming a “Fourth Reich.” This phony confrontation worked especially well with the extreme nationalists of Poland, who now form the government there.

The real issue here is, however, not Germany per se, but German economic relations with Russia, which are considered an obstacle to globalization by the ruling financial circles in London. And ironically, Merkel made herself spokeswoman for Polish complaints against Russia, at the recent EU-Russia summit, to an extent that, along with her polemics

against the alleged “suppression of human rights in Russia,” she risked a breakup of the summit. Yet, her service to the “Polish cause,” failed to earn her any favors from Polish nationalists, who fiercely attacked her at the June EU summit in Brussels.

That German-Polish struggle dominated the public debate and media coverage, before and during the EU summit, and because of that, not much attention was paid to the fact that some other things occurred at the EU, during that time period: With the 27 EU leaders approving the script for new voting rules in the community, the synarchist faction in the financial oligarchy moved one big step ahead in European affairs with their plan of world dictatorship.

The formula agreed to at Brussels abolishes the veto power of member-states, the last institutional resource of sovereign resistance against the policies of the European Commission bureaucracy; instead, a new “qualified majority” is to be implemented, which implies that once 55% of the EU’s member-states, or 65% of the total EU population, agree on a particular policy, it cannot be vetoed. This is one of the core components of the very European Charter that was rejected by the Netherlands and France in the Spring of 2005.

Another core component of the old draft, the establishment of a common high representative of the European Union, was agreed to at the Brussels summit as well, and it has not come as a surprise to insiders that none other than the newly unemployed Tony Blair has received strong backing from European leaders to be the first politician occupying that new post, effectively a kind of European prime minister, appointed by the EU Council of Ministers. This would amount to another big erosion of the sovereign rights of the European electorates. The new scheme will provoke new resistance throughout the European Union, thereby making Europe and its national governments even more ungovernable.

What the German presidency of the EU should have achieved, would have been a European initiative for the convening of an international government conference on the urgency of a reform of the global monetary-financial system. The weight of Germany as the biggest economic power in Europe could have been utilized, to get such an initiative going, and it would have had its maximum constructive impact, if coupled with a thrust for increased East-West cooperation along the lines of the proposals made by Lyndon LaRouche for the development of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, in close cooperation with Russia. That would have provided a grand design for EU policies, in which also the nations of Europe’s East, including Poland, could have defined a specific constructive role of their own in the framework of a greater mission.

Merkel, whose favorite slogan is “the policy of the many small steps,” has proven incapable of any such grand design; moreover, she has preferred confrontation with Russia, and with that, she missed a big chance for Europe, during her tenure as EU president.