

FERENC GLATZ

Changes in Foreign Political Thinking, 2004–2006

In Place of a Foreword

The text below, attached to the first volume of the Centre for Balkan Studies as a substitute for a Foreword, was written in June 2004, after the Europe Forum held in Aachen and the Chinese-European cultural meeting in Beijing. I also presented it at the committee meeting of the National Strategic Programme of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 11 June 2004, where I argued for a 'Balkan Project' to be launched jointly and for a series of round-table discussions on the European Union to be broadcast by Duna Television. The television series was broadcast in ten parts as a monthly feature between June 2004 and May 2005, and the Balkan Project was launched afterwards, in October 2005. Now the text is attached to the volume on the Balkans as a *foreword*, for it was a functional antecedent of the series of conferences (and activities) on the Balkans, intending to call the attention of politicians, social scientists and economic experts to the Southeast European space and to the significance of thinking in terms of world politics. We felt and now, in December 2006, we are still of the view that artificially generated skirmishes in domestic politics occupy too big a place in Hungarian public thinking while a too limited space is allocated to world politics. And that too, at a time when every local activity is being increasingly determined by global factors...

I. 2004: Narrowing the Horizon of Politics

Changes are necessary in Hungarian foreign political thinking. It is necessary in the thinking of politicians as well as of entrepreneurs and intellectuals.

In 2004 Hungary became a member of the EU, and now the inhabitants of the country have to learn to think in terms of a territorial administrative unit of the size of half a continent instead of the borders of the nation state, they have to plan their mobility and the conditions of success within the boundaries of the EU.

The extension of the Union borders would continue, and that too, in a south-eastern direction. No matter what the pace of implementation will be, this is going to be one of the greatest enterprises of European

history in the coming decades. Hungary is to be located in the mainstream of European history. South-eastern enlargement may not only mean a consumer market for the West European products, it is not only a forced modernisation for the Balkan region, but it may contribute to the economic and cultural dynamism of the entire European continent. It may promote the competitiveness of the continent in global competition. The inland seas, for instance, of the region may become and presumably would become the new ports and trans-shipment points of the European-Asian trade, offering a broader market and mediating activities to the entire inner European space. It includes the Carpathian basin, too.

The benefits of the Carpathian basin on offer by the south-eastern enlargement of the Union can be summarised as follows: 1. mediating traffic between Western and South-Eastern Europe may pass through here, particularly if it is accompanied by an upturn of European-Asian trade. 2. The region developing now and to be developed, namely the Balkans, is contiguous, therefore it has an advantage of having knowledge to investments there about the locality, due to its historical, human and cultural relations. 3. It can have access to sea ports, for the first time after 1918, which does not facilitate access to the routes of world trade in general, but enables that local products, part of which is impossible to sell because of the lack of sea ports, reach the world market.

Intellectual Grumbles 1990–2004

The principles and practice of the foreign political direction of state administration after the change of the system should be reconsidered. Comparing the programmes of subsequent governments the principles respectably strive to pinpoint the place of the Hungarian state in world and regional policy. The three basic principles on the directions of state foreign policy still valid evolved by the mid-1990s. They are well known from political expositions, namely: 1. Euro-Atlantic integration, 2. development of a set of regional relations, 3. representing the interests of Hungarians living beyond the borders. No one challenges their importance. During the past one and a half decades, however, party programmes and the presentations of the prime ministers in Parliament as well as government programmes have not been discussed meaningfully either by academics or by the society. Foreign policy has a large number of 'experts' and 'commentators' including the author of these lines. But there are few among historians, political scientists and economists who have specialised in this field. It is a pity.

It is also a pity that the *internal political skirmishes* of the system change, *the intensity of changing the guard in positions and in the economy*

(from 1990 on) have diverted attention from the importance of foreign policy. Just at a time when with the disintegration of the Soviet zone the mobility range of the state and of the citizens has expanded. And the attention of the press and of politicians was also diverted by domestic political fights from the *intellectual grumbles*: was it really in the interests of the nation to subordinate the Soviet-Russian relations to such an extent to anti-Soviet emotions with stupid and swaggering posters in 1990? One should only have the one "Tovarishi konec" (Comrades, /this is/ the end) in mind (and all this after the Government signed the agreement on the withdrawal of Soviet troops in March 1990!). Our view was retained only on the level of grumbling that the one-sided West European orientation, dominant in Hungarian history for four hundred years, should be supplemented. And that too, not only in the direction of the American continent, which took place rapidly after 1990, but also towards the Third World, towards China, India, Japan and Eastern Europe. It was not discussed either and only 'club-like grumbling' could be heard about the need for *a set of relations on a new basis with Eastern Europe, with South-Eastern Europe and with the Soviet-Russians*. We said that the one-sided orientation was justified in the 18th to 20th centuries, for answers to the vital issues of Hungarians were mostly given in the Western cities. Moreover, it was the Western Great Powers that had drawn the borders of nation states in our region. The post-1990 unfolding of globalisation, however, offers new opportunities, among others also in *societies outside the Euro-Atlantic space*. Paradoxically earlier, in the 1970s and 1980s, and with the passage of time the foreign affairs, party, administrative as well as commercial and cultural apparatus of the party-state could cleverly assert our national interests on the ripples of the political waters of the Soviet Union in that very Euro-Atlantic space. It is silly – we kept on saying – to constantly subordinate national interests to the current political dogmas of ideology. As it was done by the post-1949 administration and corrected with so much achievement by the post-1974 apparatus despite Soviet occupation. Now, in 2004, it should be added that we should recognise the *eastern and south-eastern opportunities available to us* at least at the time of the eastern enlargement of the European Union, and we *should give up* the one-sided Euro-Atlantic state foreign policy.

Wouldn't the government creating an Act on Minorities (1993) unique in Europe have to develop a concept in case the *rearrangement of state borders in Central-Eastern Europe took place*? And it did happen in 1992! Neither the assertion of the post-1938 solutions (Slovakia becoming independent and Yugoslavia disintegrating), nor the collapse of the post-1945 model (the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from this space)

provoked actions from the Hungarian government towards the international powers. We did not speak about a territorial revision but about safeguarding minority rights at least to the extent as they were evolved after the peace treaties of 1919 and 1920, which were not functioning after 1945 due to the Soviet presence. (Such a draft was drawn up in academic circles for the management of the minority issue: it was a code of international behaviour produced in the spring of 1992. It was forwarded to forums of the European Union. And we distributed it in several languages also in Western and Eastern Europe. The Government, though expressing its goodwill, did not link the legal regulation of the minority issue in Hungary /1993/ to demanding the proposed regulation in Central-Eastern Europe.) In the next period (1994–1995) pressing for an economic and political role to be taken up by Budapest also remained an *intellectual grumble*: the creation of a 'Central-East European Davos' was demanded (1994) that could have played a role in preparing the accession of the region to the Union and its 'EU capability'. The special issues of the space could have been exposed on that forum. The differences of interests from those of the societies of Western and Northern Europe could have been presented either in the field of the migration of labour, or of agricultural products and spatial development. (These were topics where our lack of preparation has, subsequently, caused great disadvantages. And this lack of preparation may even qualify as a political mistake.)

Today, when we are writing the first summaries of the history of the period, we are vigorously asking *how far state administration helped* the Hungarian society to *prepare itself for receiving the norms of the EU* and managing their effects between 1994 and 2004. Or, why at least the state specialist and self-government apparatus was not prepared for the local implementation of the Union norms? Why were they not prepared for discussions with the Union bureaucrats, or at least for asserting local interests? The historian of posterity is expected to express serious condemnation in this field, too.

Then there are *intellectual questions probing into the 'lack of concept'*, – already from 1990. Was the *trimming of foreign political administration* and of foreign representations right that started already at the time of the system change, in 1989, under the title of 'deregulation', otherwise saving expenses? Deregulation had great merit in slimming down the internal administration of the state, but many of us hold that it was 'suicidal' in the field of 'foreign affairs' from 1989 on. It cut off those links that were developed practically in all parts of the world on the basis of bad or good considerations by foreign policy between 1974 and 1989. From 1989 and 1990 on the state at last became an open one, trade,

enterprise and the movement of persons became free, and was relieved of the limitations of the Cold War. And precisely then administration cut off links of representation, links that offered success and advancement to us, to the great sorrow of us, world wandering intellectuals, tradesmen and entrepreneurs. (Meanwhile, the internal administration of self-governments and the state specialist one was once again swelled on the basis of party political and ideological considerations after 1990.) *An introverted political thinking, unilaterally preferring domestic political power struggles had become dominant in Hungary, which failed to recognise that every single classroom, workplace and office was part of a global competition at the turn of the millennium. And it was not recognised that the existence of a small nation and state (a small community of taxpayers) is more dependent on global outlook than ever before. 'Foreign political' considerations should be given a larger place in political as well as economic thinking.*

Incidentally, does or did any of the administrations have a vision of what kind of community of Hungarian citizens and nation is envisaged for the 21st century? This question was put by us repeatedly during the past fifteen years. *We imagine a citizen open to the world and moving as an entrepreneur in it culturally and as an employee or investor as well. We imagine a person who may find it difficult to find his/her way in the hectic hustles of Budapest, and in the nerve-wrecking formal and informal jostles of the inner city, but would be able to feel at home in practically every corner of the world. And we have imagined (and still imagine) a state that helps its citizens to acquire global competitiveness. It would help them, among others, by maintaining a stronger-than-average administration of foreign affairs, and not only in the Ministry. Well, this has not happened. In 2004 we could add: at least now, as members of the Union, we should pay attention to world market challenges and opportunities, those of the economic and cultural market, and we should consider representations in world politics as a priority branch within the state administration.*

The Globalisation of Politics

The interpretation of 'state foreign policy' should also be revised. According to our experience it is being done also in the Member States of the EU. It can be observed that the foreign political administration of the 'Member States' of the EU is strained by three novel structural conflicts. 1. The globalisation of specialist administrations. 2. Harmony between following the common foreign policy of the EU and the representation of the interests of the nation state. 3. The unfolding of integration in global dimension taking place parallel to the Union and European inte-

gration, and representing the interests of the nation state within it. Let us see them item by item.

1. *The internationalisation of specialist policies.* Historians are fully aware of the fact that the foreign relations of the country are not limited to state administration in the modern age, but extend over the system of international companies and cultural and scientific institutions. And they also know that *international (inter-state) organisations have been formed by branches*, including global ones ever since the beginning of the century (in the field of trade and economy as well as of culture). Specialised policies are also being conducted on the international scene, following the globalisation of production, trade and cultural and scientific activities. This trend also requires the specialist portfolios of states to conduct active international (specialist foreign) policy. *Thus the 'foreign policy' of the state is not restricted to the foreign ministry even within state administration, as a specialist portfolio, but extends over other 'specialist policies', over the specialist portfolios within governance.* Hence one of the specificities of the history of European governmental administration after WWII has been the *establishment of 'foreign affairs' sections within the specialist portfolios.* Another of its specificities is the setting up of so-called inter-ministerial committees and organisations. A partial objective of it is to counter-balance over-specialisation hindering a proper survey of issues, with the aim of creating harmony between the international activities of branches and the foreign affairs apparatus of the state.

These conflicts became clear to many of us in the Hungarian state organisation (and also in the state organisation of the Union) when monitoring of the candidate countries for the European Union began in 1997 (at a time when Hungary still performed very well). Currently only critical grumbling is heard as yet, about the success in ensuring the efficiency of the 'foreign policy' (that is European Union) of some branches, such as agriculture, environment, education, science, etc. How far the administrators of the special fields, and first of all units of production and services could be prepared for the Union norms? Did *preparation for the EU excessively focused on the Foreign Ministry* function well? (In our view actually a governmental mistake was made. Shouldn't one pay attention to repeated 'grumbling' coming from the academic and intellectual spheres warning that EU-policy was not simply the business of the Foreign Ministry? Now it has turned to the detriment of the country that foreign affairs administration was politically too strong within the government after 2002 and expropriated 'European policy'.)

2. *The interests of the common EU foreign policy and the foreign policies of the individual Member States.* It is visible right now, in the summer of 2004, that the Lisbon ideas (2000) projecting the European Union as one

of the strongest spatial administrations of world economy by 2010 were rather wishful thinking only. Undoubtedly it is already seen that the EU failed to operate the available economic and labour potential with the required efficiency. Therefore it is not known how far specialist policies would become 'common Union policies', in other words, how successfully the EU could be evolved into a unit of common spatial administration and an economic-cultural community with the authorisations of nation states lifted to Union level. Or, would the British be right who would still prefer a Union as a federation of associate states in a looser linkage? The Iraq war has spectacularly shaken the unity of the EU in the field of foreign policy. It has become clear that the autonomous movement of interest alliances of nation states and of their administrations is far stronger than the European (and even European Union) links. In January 2001 Javier Solana presented still self-confidently the four principles of the common foreign policy of the EU at the Berlin Europe Forum, assessing Nice. In May 2004 we were only speaking about the 'illusion' of a common foreign policy at the Aachen Europe Forum. (At the same place a question was put by a researcher whether we had any comprehensive ideas about the extent of the shrinking of the staff of nation-state administrations with the emergence of the common administration of the EU. The question was received by appreciating and self-critical laughter breaking out spontaneously.) The preparedness of the special administration of the newly admitted countries for the implementation of the common harmonisations with the EU was discussed with the same doubts in May 2004 in Aachen. It should be admitted though that the foreign ministers and secretaries of state of the new Member States delivered speeches with the usual, 'obligatory' optimism and self-assurance (the representative of the Hungarian Government was not present). The contributions of the expert reporters, however, were full of figures testifying that the acceding countries were unable to present their preparedness for harmonisation, or a required knowledge of Europe and the adequate language skills. And to remain with the recent experiences of Aachen, a definite Euroscepticism was experienced in every country during the preparations for the elections to the European Parliament and 'disillusionment' because of 'haggling' around the constitution. The question is how far the foreign policy of nation states would be integrated on the level of traditional 'foreign affairs', of diplomacy, and how far it would be integrated on the level of specialist policies (education, agriculture, environment, etc.). According to my experience a major step forward may be the '*Europeanisation*' of the different specialist portfolios in the coming years, for it would force unrestrained integration in production, in trade, in environment protection and in

water and nature management. (In those fields of life that are more independent of party politics.) Naturally, this tendency would make the *re-consideration of the century-old division of labour between the various specialist portfolios and the foreign ministry* necessary within the state administration.

Today it is not yet seen exactly how the *continental and nation-state administrations* would be organically connected. There are uncertainties present in the administration of every Member State.

3. *Global-level and continental (European) integration have been progressing side by side.* Incidentally, in 1992, in the year of the birth of the European Union it could not be seen precisely what wave of integration would be brought about by information technology, by the scientific and technological revolution of our age in the second part of the 1990s. The revolution of the 'culture of communications' has profoundly reshaped the productive organisations, private communications, and the set of cultural and intellectual contacts within some brief decades. And it is going to reshape the administrative units, too. It would produce hitherto never seen global associations of specialisations and branches; it is already creating entirely new interest alliances in the different points of the world. To put it simply: *it is not at all sure that geographically close local communities are going to have common interests with their neighbours. The globalisation of market organisation would split up the interest communities of geographic and territorial integrations.* It is not at all sure that the EU Member States would have interest allies within the EU, and it is not known how far the EU would be able to subordinate 'local' interests to the 'continental ones'. Or to subordinate relationships that link the individual Member States or their smaller productive units to an integration emerging in another part of the world, or to nation states. It is beyond doubt that the foreign ministries as well as specialist ministries of the Union Member States would strive to assert the interests of their citizens in the world market even if it runs counter to continental interests.

The points of consideration could be listed further by us or by others, prominent authors on foreign affairs literature filling libraries or active foreign politicians that could be taken into account when shaping a new strategy of foreign affairs. We are sure only in one thing, namely that Hungary of little revenue income and few citizens needs a strategy of foreign policy. It is made necessary by changes taking place in the Union as well as in world economy and policy. And it is made necessary by world competition unfolding on the level of the individual, too. *The time is soon to come when the citizen appraises the achievement of local (state) administration as to how far it serves his and his offspring's global competitiveness.* And not against the extent how far it serves its impulses, emotions and aversions, as it does today.

Widening of the Individual's Radius of Action

We have been speaking about the necessary changes in foreign political thinking, about *changes* not only in state foreign policy, but in the *thinking of the society as a whole*. And first of all we are speaking about changes in the *thinking of entrepreneurs and investors, and of the intellectuals*. There is a need for change in their way of daily thinking, when they design their everyday aims in life, their vocation and occupation, the education of their children, or just their enterprising investments. Integration of planetary dimensions as well as within the EU, and its Southeast European enlargement would offer a framework of life the size of which is impossible to comprehend as yet. And it also offers a new set of tools, a new, digitalised set of communication to it. The *radius of thinking and life* has never before *widened so suddenly and embracing such space* in the five thousand years of modern human history. All those opportunities that are offered by this expansion of the radius in the field of investments, the creation of new production systems and the enrichment of knowledge primarily offer space to the middle classes of entrepreneurs and intellectuals. These are challenges for their daily activities. And these opportunities may be realised as the result of their daily activities, they are for the 'production' of a better quality of life, for the spread and experiencing of more universal norms of life. Even in geographic regions like Black Africa, South America, or the regions of Central Asia where the desired level of the quality of life is just the creation of a bare physical minimum of existence, it could be relief from hunger and massive epidemics, just to offer some noble aim also to the civilisation of the white man so cleverly 'globalising' in arms trade and placing goods and capital. It is these middle classes that would have to demand state administration to operate a school system, research bases and a diplomacy out of the taxpayer's money that help them utilise the new technical possibilities of integration.

How far are these middle strata preparing for the new age of integration? We are just beginning to issue the first research topics to our students that may assess this 'preparedness for the world'. We have information in some areas, but they are quite discouraging. One can hardly find teaching of European skills in our universities, such as our faculties of arts. And there are even fewer where this kind of learning is pursued in foreign languages. The knowledge of foreign languages of our students may be adequate on paper, but as practicing teachers, and this is the unanimous experience of professors in the capital city, we find that their actual operational knowledge of foreign languages is not any better than it was in the second half of the 1980s. (And what is even sadder the

level of their understanding of literature related to their subject has definitely declined even in their mother tongue.) The *presence of the knowledge of world history has not improved* in the university and college education, and strangely enough, *interest in these topics has also decreased*. When talking about these phenomena our teacher colleagues sadly say that the proportion of knowledge in world economy and culture has become weaker in the media and primarily in television than it used to be prior to the system change. (Was it the degradation of the 'Hungarian bases' of foreign culture and economy that has been faster in state administration, or has the proportion of global knowledge decreased more drastically in television programmes since the change of the system?) Everything is suppressed by party political cock-fighting and scatter-brains as well as by the cult of criminal violence.

No matter how much we are arguing with the 'achievement politicians' of optimistic face, presenting polished series of statistical data about our system of education and further education, we do not get far. Hence instead of debates we rather urge for the mobilisation of civil society and the joining of the forces of the private and public spheres.

June 2004

II. 2005–2006: The Balkan Project

The groups of researchers and professors have been formed already during the National Strategic Research Programme, launched by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1996. They have allied to explore the alternatives opening up before the Hungarian state and Hungarians at the turn of the millennium. The programmes included were assessing the level of water management, agriculture, transport, our system of spatial administration, the culture of a small language, our social care system, the harmonisation of our institutions with the European Union, energy management, the protection of nature, etc. In June 2005, when we undertook the announcement and beginning of a Balkan programme, we tried to concentrate those forces into a 'team'. We decided on launching a series of conferences discussing the consequences and opportunities of the south-eastern enlargement of the EU, with the participation of academic experts and the entrepreneurial sphere, as well as governmental and civil organisations. We decided upon the creation of a homepage and its operation as an electronic periodical to be updated monthly. (In Hungarian, for the time being, but also in English from the second half of 2007.) The homepage contains the texts of presentations and contributions to those conferences. The edited texts are also to be published in Hungarian and in English.

The Balkan Project was launched in October 2005. The Programme Committee has members from Hungarian institutes of the HAS, of universities as well as representatives of foreign institutions (Austria, Slovakia, and Romania) besides the initiator Europe Institute Budapest. The idea was supported by the then Foreign Minister Mr Ferenc Somogyi, who kindly accepted to give the first talk at the opening conference. Between November 2005 and October 2006 we held conferences (altogether six) on the following issues: What human rights conflicts would be strengthened in the Union by the accession of the Balkan region and the gradual admission of its states into the European Union? How could the European spatial integration programmes (the INTERREGs) promote the integration of the Balkan region into the Central-East European systems of production and transport? What prospects Hungary and the states of the Carpathian basin have at the building of the new European transport corridors? What role the Danube may play as a European transport corridor (the seventh) and the Carpathian basin in general in the water management of South-Eastern Europe? What common problems may be caused by the intercontinental changes of climate in the Carpathian basin and in the Balkan region? Into what new world economic environment would the Balkan region be included and what kind of opportunities open up for Hungary during the enlargement of the EU? Would the Balkan states and those of the Carpathian basin be competitors or regions of co-operation in food production?

Now the readers may receive the *edited variant of the presentations of these conferences*, and they are recommended to click on homepage www.balkancenter.hu that publishes our current news of the Balkans as a result of the work of the editorial office under the management of József Juhász and Andrea Antal.

We are glad to see that our modest initiative has been only one of those actions that encourage state policy since our accession to the EU in 2004 to develop a more marked concept of foreign policy. Moreover, they are challenging even the foreign political preferences of the previous years. (Such comprehensive and critical analyses can be read in the volume of papers entitled "Hungarian Foreign Policy in the 20th Century", and our readers' attention is called to this publication, especially to papers criticising the present situation by László Kiss J., Péter Tólas, László Póti, and Zsuzsa Szilágyi discussing our Balkan policy. The volume was edited by Ferenc Gazdag and László J. Kiss.)

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We are of the view that every institution and every individual should perform 'his own task' with whatever modest means are at his/her dis-

posal. How would the result of our effort manifest itself is unknown. But we have already met a professor of noble thinking “enriched by his intelligence” who has deposited a sum not insignificant even in international dimensions for the study of the Danube valley and the gateway to the Balkans. He is one of the founders of the Europe Institute who has advanced finances for several years for the expenses of our location in the university. And we have won assistance at the strategic tender of the HAS for our homepage and conferences, for the edition of our publications, and we were invited to report on the aims of the Balkan Project and its public benefit at the Prime Minister’s Office to the invited guests of governmental administration.

Meanwhile we are not only grumbling, not only simply criticising, but are making recommendations. We wish to promote thinking about our place in the world, in Europe and in Central-Eastern Europe.

December 2006.

Ferenc Glatz