

The Balkans and German geopolitics in change

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Abstract

The changes that caused the elections in Germany, in many ways, have a common denominator which is a silent revolution.

In this essay, an important place will be devoted to the "rational German" position in the efforts to return Germany to the carpet of geopolitics, emphasizing its role in the Western Balkans.

In the "new concert of the great powers", which, unlike that of the 19th century, has already taken the planetary extension. Precisely, the withdrawal of the West from Afghanistan has proved emerging new disputed regional areas, which for, the superpowers of the time still have not reached full agreement on their division, as they once did in the Europe of the 19th-century. In this context of clashes, Southeast Europe for the EU is becoming a neuralgic point. In this course of events, the time is in favor of Germany to determine its true value as far as the Western Balkans and the future of the EU are concerned.

Keywords: German Geopolitics, Western Balkans, Serbia & Open Balkans, Kosova.
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Introduction

The recent parliamentary elections in Germany last week are one of the events that will mark a historic turning point in Europe. Prominent German political thinkers, geopolitologists and geoeconomists, not without legitimate concern and curiosity, ask the legitimate question: What direction will Berlin's foreign and security policy take in the post-Merkel era?

As curious as Germany's partners, allies, and competitors are, there exists an obvious dose of concern for the expected direction of Berlin. In terms of this, see the relative victory of the SPD (Social Democrats) and the historic defeat of the CDU/CSU (popular conservatives), which have been receiving full attention. Dozens, if not hundreds, of analyses and comments, have been published that make the course of the German ship in the turbulent sea of modern geopolitics more predictable.

At a price his team seems to have considered, Scholz is expected to soon become the next chancellor of the EU's most powerful state, at a price his team seems to have considered: giving key ministries to its partners. Coalition-liberals (FDP) and moderate left (Die Grünen).

With the background of preoccupation with this health crisis, especially after the warning of the new wave and the new variant of the virus already named OMICRON, the European public, as well as a good part of the politicians, are not even aware of what is happening in the already stormy geopolitical waters around the Western Balkans. In this analysis, I will try to point out the expected course and possible catastrophe if its main actors do not urgently find a minimum framework for cooperation and prompt intervention to prevent the outbreak of war in Bosnia and its effect on dominoes throughout the region.

The most urgent issues on the agenda of the incoming federal government

Germany has been in the hands of the Christian Democrat chancellor since 2005. Since then, the Social Democrats have either been in opposition or part of a broad coalition but have not been at the helm of government. From

2005, even the "Greens" were no longer part of the government. The FDP has been out of power all along, since 1998, with the exception of 4 years.

The most urgent issues on the agenda not only of the negotiators, but also of the incoming government, remain the domestic ones, but almost all of them also have pronounced dimensions of foreign policy. As it has been announced, this agenda includes the modernization of the physical, administrative, educational, and digital infrastructure of Germany, as well as the realization of a fair and green transition.

The next federal government is expected to begin work at a time of rapid and multidimensional international change. New threats, transnational risks, and a growing mix of external and internal developments will challenge governments' ability to act. Most countries, including Germany, are losing their creative power. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly important to be able to influence international developments to achieve the classic domestic political goals of security, prosperity, and political order.¹ Meanwhile, it is known that the new international order demands from Germany more responsibility for European security.

Eminent German political and economic experts advise the new federal government to take the so-called "smart sovereignty approach," which states that the German government should use increasingly limited energy resources with the goal of preventing "any further loss of creative activity and influence, but also to open new opportunities for action through cooperation."The aim is to prevent another strategic breakdown. Germany should not approve of the goals of others in key areas, but should be able to define and implement its own goals. Also, she should be able to support the goals of her partners if she considers this important.²

The analysis of this message by our governments, in Tirana and Pristina, would be enough to focus on the creation of a national strategy that aims to achieve goals in some of the key areas of economic development and security, which, first of all, are vital interests of the nation. Of course, all this should be in line with the interests and goals of our partners at the global level and those in the region.

Interdependence and sovereignty

Further, the voice of reason insists on maintaining the balance between the interdependence and sovereignty of the country. In this sense, German experts suggest the federal government consider achieving four objectives:

1. To define goals and solutions to political problems and be able to decide politically,
2. To develop structures and processes that facilitate the analysis of internal and external development problems and enable policy decisions and their implementation;
3. Provide resources, skills, and tools to help you achieve your goals;
4. To make offers of cooperation to partners in all three areas-namely in terms of goals, structures, and resources.³

Each of these four objectives is not accidental, they are very much in line with the strategic interests of our two republics and can easily be turned into official objectives of Tirana and Pristina.

For both the incoming German federal government and our governments, the areas of action and problems, but also the solutions are interdependent and affect different spheres.

"Smart" solutions mean that the measures and actions taken should not only have a relatively high level of effectiveness in solving problems in various areas but also have low negative effects due to unintended consequences. This is a criterion that pays attention to energy efficiency. In this context, we should look at the two expected decisions of our two governments: the one related to the construction of Hec Skavica in the Drini i

1 See link: <https://dgap.org/de/forschung/publikationen/smarte-souveraenitaet>

2 ibidem

3 ibidem

Zi canyon (Peshkopi) and the decision of the Government of Kosova regarding the project for the pipeline, which de facto does not have to do at all with American gas or belonging to any other state, but for the infrastructure that would bring natural gas, the European strategy in this area and the cost.

The Government of Kosova, although it was for continuous cooperation with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which is a US development agency, remains waiting for the results of the initiated MCC study, which has to do with the pre-feasibility and then the feasibility of the construction of gas infrastructure in Kosova. dollars, which could be used to build this infrastructure. But since MCC would not fund the entire project, the consequences seem to be undesirable for our economy and especially for households in the near future. Consequently, according to the government's views, it seems unlikely that this project will pass. This decision, see this, could be called smart.

Eastern Partnership and German-Russian relations

The Green Democrats (Die Gruenen) and the Liberal Democrats (FDP) have already been clearly profiled as both pro-American and anti-Russian. As an obvious political fact, the two ministries that, in such cases, have traditionally taken over the Greens are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment. This fact easily enables the incoming Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, to continue the cooperation with Russia by concluding the symbolic projects of the German-Russian partnership, such as that of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, without even giving up the avoidance of deepening this partnership in other villages.

But as the key security partner-the United States-remains interested in minimizing Germany's and Europe's dependence on Russian gas in general, the Biden administration will put enough pressure on Schulz to include as many "Greens" or politicians close to their views as possible in the next German government. For this reason, rumors are spreading, particularly within business circles and influential in German policy for the establishment of the so-called Eastern Partnership, warning of a possible cooling of German-Russian relations and, as a result, of the risk that awaits German business, which has invested in the Russian market for years and has a strong presence throughout Russia. Despite these rumors, Moscow is reacting calmly and insisting on proving the importance of continuing stable Russian-German relations in two directions: for the stability of the whole of Europe and also for developments at the global level. But the escalation of the situation in and around Ukraine has overturned all possible forecasts in terms of German-Russian relations. Meanwhile, the situation in and around Ukraine has escalated dramatically. The extent of this radicalization, according to some Russian analysts, who these days openly say that if there is a war in the region, there will be a complete transformation of the current political situation, which heralds the creation of a new political map in Europe and the creation of a whole new world.⁴

Balkans the sphere of Western interest

In this plan, one must understand the context of why the US is sending the first class of diplomats to the Republic of Serbia and beyond—Gabriel Escobar and Christopher Hill. In this regard, the interesting judgments of Dr. Dubravka Stojanovi, professor at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade, are relevant.

The announcement and manifestation of the "Day of Serbian National Unity" was a clear message of Serbian and Russian policy in relation to Serbia's neighbors. The day of national unification and the national flag of Serbia declared that the state of Serbia sent an irredentist message to neighboring countries and at the same time to "their Serbs"--whereby they lived, to try to join the "homeland", as said Slobodan Milosevic, who constantly spoke of "the state in which all the Serbian people will live."

According to Stojanovic, since Dobrica Cosic's novel "Time of Death" in the early 1970s and through the great artistic-historical production of the 1980s, the consciousness of Serbs as the greatest victims has been formed (produced). The war of the 1990s was based on this self-victimization, which made it morally correct because in

4 See link: <https://www.geopolitika.lajme/analize/z-metër-vrima-e-zezë-ukrainase-thith-trishtuar-eu-dhe-rusia/>.

it the historical victim is protected from historical enemies, as the ruling narrative before and during the wars showed. The war was called preventive; it was said to prevent future Serb casualties.⁵

Meanwhile, Belgrade is following this course almost openly, preparing the ground for intervention with flash military operations in Bosnia and Kosova (north). And what is crucial to the understanding of the West in particular, is that such a war is necessarily interpreted as defensive, and therefore legitimate.

This course seems better than anyone in Berlin, consequently the incoming government.

"The fight for the return of Kosova under the sovereignty of Serbia will be long-term and uncertain. It should and can be done, only through a strategy of cooperation and permanent struggle to develop an autonomous political awareness everywhere among the peoples of the Balkans of the need for their cooperation (reaffirmation of the strategic password "Balkans for the peoples of the Balkans" and "Europe for Europeans")."), Thus gaining a kind of hope for the Europe of the future and the world. Becoming an economically and culturally strong country, Serbia will regain its political reputation and ensure democratic reintegration into this geospace."⁶.

Therefore, the initiative, namely the project already coded as "Open Balkan," should be understood as a kind of strategic password of Serbia towards the "Serbian World."

It is not clear how it is said that at the core of the "Open Balkans" project is precisely this strategy developed by Serbian scientific institutions in the service of politics.

In this age of geopolitical alignments and alignments, both the winners and losers of the global geopolitical battle will be known quickly. It seems, quite logically, that in this rearrangement, Russia has a tremendous interest in destabilizing the Balkans, as it is far from its borders as a separate geostrategic area.

In these circumstances, it seems that Belgrade considers this the moment to realize some of its aspirations.

The Balkans will determine the strength of the EU

After the debacle suffered by the West in Afghanistan, a number of observers ⁷ We are already in the process of sketching the new multipolar world that is taking shape before our eyes.

In the "new concert of the great powers", which, unlike that of the 19th century, has already taken on a planetary reach, it is precisely the withdrawal of Perednim from Afghanistan that has proved that new disputed regional areas have emerged, for which the superpowers of the time are still not finding full agreement on their division, as they once did in Europe in the 19th century. In this context of clashes over spheres of influence, Southeast Europe for the EU, with an emphasis on the Western Balkans, is becoming an important point. The Balkans will consequently define the power of the EU in the new parquet of diplomacy and world power, respectively, in this sensitive race for domination and division of spheres of influence.

Sergei Lebedev, one of Russia's most prominent intellectuals, described the battle for Chechen subjugation, which had turned into a massacre of its kind, as "the black hole from which the current illegality in Russia arose." It seems to be exactly Kosova, the Serbian genocide that was applied here, the one that has created and continues to establish the "black hole" that after twenty years, has become a kind of Procrustes Bed for Serbian justice, and a

5 ibidem

6 Dr Ljubiša Mitrović:
https://npao.ni.ac.rs/files/584/01_Zbornik_Globalizacija_akulturacija_i_identiteti_na_Bal_5f571.pdf

7 Krahaso: Herfried Münkler, [Eine Weltordnung ohne Hüter: Afghanistan als globale Zäsur](#),
nē „Blätter“, 10/2021, S. 63-76.]

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A few days after the visit of the Serbian president to Moscow on December 2, 2021, the Russian state news agency "TASS" announced that Serbia would buy in Russia other complexes of missiles in the Russian anti-missile defense system "Pancir". This was announced by the Minister of Interior of Serbia, Aleksandar Vulin, after talks in Moscow with the Minister of Defense of Russia, Sergey Shoigu. Vulin stated in Moscow: "We took the Russian anti-tank missile complex, Kornet." "We bought tanks and armored vehicles and will buy other Russian Pancir missile systems."

What few understood then clearly was precisely the war in Kosova (1998/99), which marked the dividing line between West and East for this area and which will appear today as a turning point on the road to a multipolar world, towards a "concert of the great powers", as the German historian, Achim Engelberg, puts it.⁸

This dividing line was marked once again, even very clearly, during September of this year (2021), when the aggravation until the outbreak of war between Serbia and Kosova, did not catch fire to repeat the case of the assassination of the heir to the throne of Austria, Franz Ferdinand that Sunday 28 June 1914 together with his wife.

As it is already known, the murder was committed through an assassination organized by the well-known Serbian organization "Black Hand", which will become even more famous later,

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Even in September 2021, Serbia quickly found a trigger: it was the application of a decision that enforces reciprocity measures for vehicle license plates by the Kosova government, despite the fact that it was fully in line with an agreement reached between the two governments in Brussels in 2016.

This fact has, meanwhile, marked the presence of four world powers in the region. In addition to Russia and China, which are already present with armies and massive investments, Turkey as a regional power, along with some of the Arab states, is increasingly dropping anchor to mark their presence.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, according to Moscow, of course consciously, through the so-called idea of the project "Open Balkans" and the hybrid war against its neighbors, is also performing another important task:

8 See link: <https://www.blaetter.de/ausgabe/2021/november/brennpunkt-balkan-oder-schoene-neue-imperiale-welt>

preventing the unity of the EU in its foreign policy segment, which is crucial to its global geopolitical positioning. He is doing his best through Serbia's fierce confrontation with Kosova, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Germany, whether it wants to or not, because of historical and geopolitical interests, must act, showing the line. red Belgrade.

For this, of all the powers vying for dominance, only the EU considers this part of the old continent as an integral part of it, as the domain of its vital interests. But for the EU, the Western Balkans are both connected and disconnected.

This has been evidenced more clearly than anyone else by the incoming German government, which has clearly stated, even in its program agreed upon between the three political forces, that I made it up. Meanwhile, on December 2, this commitment was made public by Great Britain. With the appointment of Sir Stuart Peach as the UK Special Envoy for the Western Balkans, describing this act as a contribution to peace in the region and for Europe as a whole, for Germany and Great Britain, the Western Balkans are not only an integral part of Europe, but even more so, they remain the domain of vital Western interests.

It is at this time, when relations between Moscow and Belgrade have intensified, that we have the arrival of a new coalition at the helm of Germany.

At the same time, Biden sends his leading diplomats to the region, "bulldozers", especially Christopher Hill, who is coming to Belgrade, but also Gabriel Escobar, who, as an American envoy to the Western Balkans, is already active in the region, concluding that the arrival of both on the political scene in the region is a message to all. This fact will be imposed on the incoming German federal government, which will react in accordance with the interests of the West.

Thus, according to Sonja Biserko, head of the Helsinki Council for Serbia, these selections of personalities "declare the intention of the United States to finally resolve the situation in this part of Europe, presenting two main assumptions:

1. The Balkans is defined as a European or Western sphere of interest;
2. I doubt that America will allow its most successful mission in the last 20 years, in Bosnia and Kosova, to be called into question. "⁹

This determination, according to the American diplomat with many years of experience in the Balkans, Daniel Fried, speaks clearly in favor of our thesis that Washington is very aware of the dangers in the Western Balkans. But the incoming German government also seems to be aware of this danger.

Germany's geopolitical position is strongly linked to Europe. Such is the geopolitical position of our two republics and our national space in general.

Studying this position could be a good lesson for officials in Tirana and Pristina. It is the order and time to be on the side of the winners as a nation.

Conclusion

In the next four years, Germany will face the need to redefine the extent of German responsibility in world politics.

No government in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany has previously paid as much attention to the Western Balkans as the coalition between the SPD, the Greens, and the FDP. The objectives they want to achieve for the region were formulated in the coalition agreement.

⁹ See link: <https://www.geopolitika.news/analize/prestaje-li-zapad-hraniti-krokodila-mesom-nadajuci-se-da-ce-postati-vegetarijanac/>

The pre-signed treaty, which was presented in Berlin (November 24th), states: "We support the EU accession process of the six countries of the Western Balkans region and the reforms needed to meet all the Copenhagen criteria."

"In this context, we are strengthening civil society and supporting the further steps of pre-accession. The next step should be the opening of the first chapters of EU membership with Albania and Northern Macedonia, liberalization. Of visas with Kosova, while negotiations between Montenegro and Serbia should continue.

We support the EU-led normalization dialogue between Kosova and Serbia and the efforts to achieve lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on maintaining territorial integrity and overcoming ethnic divisions. In parallel with the accession negotiations, the EU needs to improve its absorption capacity. "

Germany must play a "leading role" not only within the EU but also in the process of resolving outstanding issues between Serbia and its neighbors in the Western Balkans. It must do so in a special way, in order to reduce Russia growing and destabilizing influence in the region. Of course, in this context, to accelerate the integration of the region into the EU.

The SPD can push this political agenda forward, giving a new tone to German geopolitics.

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