

KURT SCHELTER

“The United States of America after the Elections - Challenges, Threats, Dangers Or Chances For the Transatlantic Relations?”

Some historians noted it and the media recorded it: This result of the election in the US, published on 11/9/16 is said to be an event which has shaken the United States of America similar to 9/11/2001.

Comparisons are always dangerous and problematic. This applies in particular to this one: On 9/11/2001 a terrorist attack has taken place. On 11/9/2001 the voters in the US went to bed or woke up with some surprise and incredulous amazement: The “underdog” won a democratic election. This is quite a difference.

The new President will have to deal with a Nation, a State and its citizens, which are in trouble: The society of the United States is deeply divided: There is a diverse antagonism between Rich and Poor, West Coast, East Coast and Midwest, the Cities and rural areas, between White and Colored, old and new jobs, Educated and Uneducated, Employed and Unemployed, between self responsibility, social welfare and social security.

This torn society feels threatened by problems, like the following (according to *Gallup*, December 2-6, 2015 Poll):

- Terrorism (16%)
- Dissatisfaction with Government (13%)
- Economy in general (9%)
- Gun control (7%)
- Unemployment/Jobs (6%)
- Ethics/Moral/Religious decline (6%)
- Crime/Violence (6%)
- Situation in Iraq (6%)
- Legal and illegal migration (5%)
- National security (5%)
- Poverty/Hunger/Homelessness (4%)
- Race relations/Racism (4%)

The new President and its team will be confronted with Europe and a European Union which faces an “*Existential crisis, at least in parts*”¹:

¹ Jean-Claude *Juncker*, President of the European Commission, State of the Union, 9/14/16.

There is said to be

- *“Not enough Europe, not enough union in this Union”*²,
- A lack of solidarity (f. i. uptake and distribution of refugees),
- Domestic problems in the foreground,
- Fading common ground,
- National populism growing,
- *“Much fragmentation, little commonality”*³,
- Increasing Number of “Eurosceptics” is increasing and
- Lack of strong leadership.

And there are, without any doubt, many unsolved problems:

- The refugee crisis (limiting the numbers, integration and repatriation),
- The future of the Schengen System,
- The protection the fundamental freedoms (especially free movement of citizens) and completion of the internal market,
- The handling of the Brexit,
- An incomplete Banking Union (lessons learnt from financial crisis?),
- High unemployment especially amongst young people,
- Public debt in several Member States,
- Security threats (especially countering terrorism),
- The Fight against discrimination and racism and
- Resurgent Russia.

The Challenges:

- The winner performed successfully as the “mouthpiece of all naysayers” in the US (citizens and populists in politics). “No” to
 - Political Elite in Washington
 - “Political Correctness”
 - Globalization
 - Free Trade
 - TTIP
 - NAFTA according to the current rules
 - Migrants
 - NATO according to the current burden sharing
 - Military involvement in Syria
 - Iran Nuclear Deal

² Juncker, footnote 1.

³ Juncker, footnote 1.

- Et cetera...
- The winner acted as “Focal Point” on the fields of
 - Less social security (“Obama Care”)
 - Xenophobia (Mexicans, Muslims)
 - Racism
 - Questioning climate change
 - Denying the renaissance of Russian imperialism (Ukraine, Crimea, Syria)
 - Neglecting gender issues
 - Tolerating sexism
 - Et cetera...
- Against this background we need to design a common policy based on our common values, enshrined in the Constitution of the US, Constitutions of most of the European States, the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe) and the Lisbon Treaty (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU).

The Threats:

- The style of the political confrontation in the US and its surprising success could remarkably strengthen nationalist-oriented populists in Europe and their political demands:
 - Less integration on EU level
 - Precedence of national interests
 - High obstacles to migration
 - Re-establishment of permanent border controls even amongst Member States of the Schengen Area
 - Narrowing of globalization
 - “No” to Free Trade Agreements (CETA, TTIP)
- The campaign has shown
 - A lack of
 - Experience
 - Political “screen play”
 - Reason
 - Prudence
 - Discipline
 - Control and

- An enormous extent of
 - Volatility
 - Arbitrariness of the objectives and arguments
 - Urge to the mere change.

The Risks:

- Such a common transatlantic populist approach might cause following political trends:
 - Isolation
 - Discharge of Solidarity
 - Lack of
 - Communication
 - Information
 - Cooperation
 - Accountability
 - Mutual trust and
 - Reliability
 - Transatlantic political vacuum
 - Loss of political influence of the US and Europe in global issues, f. e. Climate Change, the Arctic, Migration, Peace Keeping
 - “Flying blind” in important political issues.

The Dangers:

- If the partners on both sides of the Atlantic do not get under control those risks, we will have to face the danger of
 - A “Trade War” between the partners with a global impact
 - Decline in global economic growth
 - Loss of jobs
 - Crises on the fields of
 - Economy
 - Global financial system and
 - Currencies

- Struggle for the resources (Arctic, Africa)
- Weakening in the war on terror
- Weakening of NATO and its ability of deterrence (Art. 5) and even
- Military conflicts in Europe.

The Chances:

- On an indispensable basis of mutual trust, respect and fairness – more
 - European self responsibility
 - Partnership in Leadership
 - Courage to defend the values
 - Realism and Pragmatism in the definition of common interests (“reality test”)are possible to be achieved.

- We should not hesitate to seize this opportunity. We will not get a second chance!

