



**ON THE PRIMACY OF PROCESS: BRUSSELS & COPENHAGEN**

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In the 1950s the reading material of English schoolboys was largely determined by the politics of their parents. Children of right wing-families were encouraged to read biographies of great men in order to understand how leadership can shape the world. Children of left-wing families were encouraged to read books about how the system worked. Much of the debate about the evolution of the European Union at the end of this complex year has centred on personalities, particular attention being paid to Herman Van Rompuy and Baroness Ashton. Personalities make for good journalistic copy. However it is process rather than personalities which holds the key to understanding the European Union as it totters into a new world after the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. It will be some months yet before we can say with any certainty how the Union will function in its new Treaty garb, but a few trends are now established.

The self-marginalisation of the British is well advanced. The decay of the Brown Government is clearly perceived across the mainland. I find it amazing that the British media ever thought there was a possibility of Tony Blair becoming President of the European Council, regardless of whether the job was defined in generous or restricted terms. Not only have the Labour Governments of the last twelve years failed to live up to their initial European promise, but the whole rhetoric of Anglo-American capitalism and light-touch regulation has lost its lustre in the chaos of the last twelve months. The representation of the Labour Party in the Socialist Group in the European Parliament has been severely reduced. Normally in such circumstances there is an opposition party waiting in the wings to pick up a national baton. Sadly David Cameron's dance with the Eurosceptic lobby has led him to isolate himself from continental allies by his departure from the EPP. Far too much ink has already been spilled on the detail and personalities of the new European Conservative and Reformers Group to repeat the sad saga here. It is the consequences for process that we need to understand.

The European Peoples Party Group in the European Parliament, liberated from the restraining presence of British Conservatives, has reverted to type, revelling in cross-party coalition building and co-habitation with the Centre Left. We finish 2009 with a European Parliament strengthened by the ratification of Lisbon, preparing major administrative reforms to consolidate its inter-institutional clout and dominated by the reality of co-operation between the two big Groups. Here again, process is the key. Five years ago the victory of the Centre Right in European Parliamentary Elections was deemed sufficient to guarantee that the President of the Commission should come for the "political family" who "won" the European Elections. Barroso took office on this basis and constructed his first Administration with a Centre Right ideological flavour. This year Parliament argued that as it would be "electing" the President of the Commission under the Treaty of Lisbon if ratified, that it was entitled to withhold its approval of the second Barroso Administration until it had agreed a programme supported by a majority of the House. With the Member State Governments paralysed by uncertainty over the outcome of the Irish Referendum, Barroso was forced into a negotiation with Parliament on the policies and portfolios of Barroso II. It was this negotiation, rather than individual national lobbying, which has led to a much more interventionist and less free market feel to the new Commission. This is real parliamentary power, but power which undercuts the significance of election results. Unless future elections show a substantial reduction in Eurosceptic and protest parties, it is difficult to conceive of any European Election result that will lead to anything other than a negotiation with the three main Groups.

The big losers from six months of inter-institutional struggle are the Member States. The Swedish Presidency proved to be competent, and as we had predicted, good at relations with Parliament. However it failed to elicit either courage or clarity from the other twenty six members. In particular the big Member States had settled for a minimalist concept of the job of President of the European Council, not wishing to be overshadowed by some figure who would bestride the global scene, speaking on their behalf. Unforgivably much of the thinking on how the new European Council would relate to the other institutions had been frozen pending the Irish vote. The most ridiculous example is that of the failure regarding National Presidencies. Six month National Presidencies are very much still

with us. It is an inescapable reality that National Presidencies will continue to chair all the sectoral councils. Indeed a recent Foreign Affairs Council rebuffed even the suggestion that it should be chaired by the High Representative. The European Parliament is adapting its rules to recognise that listening to the President of the Council and the High Representative does not absolve it from the need to receive the Prime Minister of the country holding the Presidency at the beginning and end of its term. Paradoxically therefore Barroso has survived his autumn grilling to find himself incomparably more powerful than the new President of the Council. Indeed the Commission can play games with two versions of the Council, while its legal jurists work through the legal implications of ratification.

The triumph of process over personality is again apparent in the vexed question of the appointment of the High Representative. It was the EPP and S&D Groups acting as proxies for the multi-national political parties that they represent, who set the ground rules that the Presidency of the Council should go to a Centre Right figure from a small country and that the High Representative should go to the Centre Left from a large country. At a stroke, this agreement excluded most of the seriously competent candidates for the High Representative. While this has not been an edifying sight for those who feel that important jobs should go to those best able to serve Europe, it need not be bad news in the medium term. Van Rompuy should be able to craft a serious job as President of the Council that may go some way to overcoming its enlargement-induced paralysis. His appointment cannot be good news for [M de Boissieu](#), even if his title is now Secretary General of the Council rather than Deputy Secretary General! Both Commission and Parliament have stumbled towards coherence post enlargement. The Council cannot expect to be a serious player until it too finds a way to overcome the tyranny of numbers.

While London as a whole may feel bruised by the developments of the last twelve months, the technicians of the Foreign Office must believe that Christmas has come early. They have a British High Representative with no experience of foreign affairs, who must inevitably be open to FCO guidance on the establishment and style of the External Action Service. I suspect that there are those in the Quai d'Orsay who would have loved to have spent the next five years imprinting French style on the future foreign policy of Europe. 2009 has proved to be the first year of the new multi-polarity. Europe is not alone in the re-invention of foreign policy to meet this new reality. After five years of practising under Mr Solana, I believe that it will develop the resilience to deliver effectively in the future. It would help if we could forget Mr Kissinger's telephone. Foreign policy does not depend, if it ever did, solely on person-to-person hotlines. Europeans may have Mr Obama's telephone number, but who should they call in Congress? Similar ambiguity can be found in Beijing, Tokyo, New Delhi and Brasilia. Telephone lines are so twentieth century! Perhaps we should look for foreign policy models in the new social media?

The whole sorry saga of the "Constitution" has definitively killed off Europe's appetite for treaty change other than to admit new members. Whatever the laudable intent of those who sought to make Europe more electorate-friendly, the whole exercise has engendered little more than a suspicious yawn from the electors of Europe. It has to be good news for David Cameron that we are entering a new period of pragmatism in which the battle cries of Federalists versus Nationalists will thankfully command less attention. The key justification for today's European Union is an ability to defend Europe's interest in a complex world. Of course the previous stories of dealing with our internal demons and re-uniting the Continent still have resonance, but it is the ability to deliver for Europeans on climate, energy security and trade which will command continuing public support.

Some good Christmas reading for Europe's foreign policy elites would start with a publication from the European Council on Foreign Relations by Jeremy Shapiro & Nick Witney. Their November report entitled "Towards a Post-American Europe: A Power Audit of EU-US Relations" goes a long way to explaining how the Europeans found themselves marginalised in Copenhagen. The authors point out that the United States under Obama is working vigorously to preserve its influence in a world where power is shifting South and East. It plans a network of partnerships with itself at the core. Having talked to policy elites in all twenty seven states in the EU, the Report conclusively demonstrates that Europeans have not made a similar shift. Until Obama's Nobel speech, they thought they were dealing with a 'Europeanised' American. They continue, each in their own way, to play the games which were felt appropriate during the Cold War. They 'fetishise' the relationship with the US; argue that ganging up on Washington would be improper; and each boasts about the 'specialness' of its own relationship with the USA. This produces exactly the kind of ally that the United States does not need and which it finds merely irritating. They argue, I think convincingly, that Europe can best contribute to its own

influence and to re-building a meaningful alliance across the Atlantic, by recognising that we are now entering a post-American world where Europe will only be taken seriously if it stands up robustly for its own foreign policy issues.

Having internalised this fairly simple message, Europe's foreign policy elites might like to pick up Cleo Paskal's "Global Warring: How Environmental Economic and Political Crises will redraw the world map". Cleo is a Canadian academic and journalist, based at Chatham House in London, married to a Dane, who spends a substantial time each year in India. She writes with the power of a journalist underpinned by the research habits of an academic. She has for years contributed learned articles on how rising sea levels may change international borders with major implications. Her latest book arrives with the clarity and importance of the crack of doom. Her first message, that I would want every European policy maker to understand, undercuts the comfortable belief that disasters caused by environmental change happen to poor people, in poor countries far away and that our main involvement is to offer gracious aid to the under-privileged. She shows conclusively that the reality for the developed world is closer to Katrina on steroids. Our obsession with short term profit and technological complexity means that we are going to be there in the front line when the yoghurt hits the fan. Katrina was a man-made disaster brought about by the corruption of the relationship between the US Army Corps of Engineers and Congress ever keen to create pork-barrel employment projects, regardless of their environmental consequences. She points out that the great heat wave of 2003 killed 30,000 people in Europe. Many of the oil and natural gas pipelines on which Europe depends run across Russian permafrost which is melting. We persist in building long term infrastructure without regard to climate change. The French now regularly have to turn off their nuclear power stations in hot weather for lack of cooling water. Europe is only beginning to come to terms with the amount of infrastructure re-design that will be necessary to keep its civilisation habitable. In essence her message is that climate change, as a sub-set of environmental change, has the whole of humanity wrapped in its coils.

She is equally good on the real implications for the developing world. Forced environmental migration is going to be a South South problem, not one that can be realistically framed in terms of the West's historic responsibility. If forty million Bangladeshis flee from cataclysmic flooding in their homeland, they are going to be a problem for India and Burma. There is no way that Europe, America or Japan are going to accept that number of refugees. The same logic applies to environmental migration from Africa or the Middle East. Cleo and I agree on the significance of climate change and the military, particularly in the context of the melting of the Himalayan glaciers which could end up with the loss of glacial summer melt water in the great rivers of Asia simultaneously destabilising Pakistan, India and China. Some issues are so big that nobody wants to talk about them. At least we made a start in Copenhagen with the Military Advisory Council of senior officers of nine countries warning about the dangers which the global military foresaw if the climate community failed to deliver a robust climate stabilisation policy.

Cleo spoke on a panel which I chaired on the Thursday of the second week in Copenhagen on "Delivering Climate Security". Even by that date Copenhagen had the smell of death about it. It was unseasonably cold. The Danes had inexplicably lost the ability for civilised and reliable administration which they had perfected over the previous fifty years. Delegates had been left standing in the snow, queuing for their passes for up to six hours. Some kind of destructive energy had taken over the whole process. Much of civil society had replaced careful analysis with hammy appeals for climate justice. Even serious NGOs, who should have known better, connived at the procedural waste of time initiated by some Small Island States, of attempting to replace a two degree Centigrade target with a one point five degree Centigrade target, even though anyone who was still thinking knows that we will be very lucky to get away with three degree warming. The addition of a hundred prime ministers and presidents was proving to be a disastrous innovation. Libya, Venezuela and Cuba banged tired Marxist drums. The Group of 77 had as its spokesman Sudan, a genocidal regime that then proceeded to make tasteless and anti-Semitic remarks about the Holocaust. The process was all wrong. Those who understood the dossiers lost control of events. Not since a European Council in the 1986 attempted to settle the size of a fisheries box in the North Atlantic has there been such a mismatch of process and project. At its root lay the old quasi-mystical belief that the 'kings' could fix it. This fallacy led directly to the farce of the leaders of India, China, Brazil and South Africa sitting round a table with a blank sheet of paper sketching hand-written ideas for a Copenhagen Accord, only to be surprised by the arrival of President Obama who had to push his way into the circle and find an extra chair. In the

words of John McEnroe an equally expert climate change analyst of an earlier generation, “You Can Not Be Serious!”.

I will be returning to the questions of both Europe and climate change in January, but for those who cannot relax over the holidays I strongly recommend “Hitting Re-boot: Where next for climate after Copenhagen?” by Alex Evans and David Steven at Managing Global Insecurity. Their new report, published by Brookings, makes an intelligent and reasoned case for curing the process deficit in a pragmatic and honest way. There is one aspect that should be commanding the attention of the public affairs community. There are some very sophisticated public affairs being practised to discredit the climate change process. The theft and careful editing of emails from the University of East Anglia was an immaculately timed and technically expert enterprise. It seems that the cream of Russian hackers were used. In the interests of transparency it would be interesting to know which countries or companies, which trade associations, think tanks and consultancies are involved in this impressive effort. For some reason, that almost escapes me, those public affairs people involved in this great and sophisticated effort never seem to put themselves forward for prizes in public affairs excellence. The European Commission professes itself interested in the ability of money to buy influence in international policy. Perhaps the new Commissioner responsible for the European Transparency Initiative would like to initiate a joint investigation with the European Parliament to bring light to these dark and murky waters. Where do the client meetings take place? What does the brief to the agencies look like? It is high time that the climate sceptics were stopped from posing as a few high minded noble individuals standing up against a corrupt consensus. We would be happy to pass on any information received to the relevant authorities.



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