

Balance of Competences (Enlargement) Report

Western Balkans and Enlargement Dept.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

King Charles Street

London SW1A 2AH

8th April 2014

Dear 'WBED',

I was given this address by our local MP, as I have 'strong views' on further enlargement of the EU.

Approximately: I think it's been OK so far, but I think we are quite near a serious very long-standing ^(*) cultural limit, particularly in regard to possible accession of Ukraine.

I refer you to a map in Samuel P. Huntington's "well-known" book "The Clash of Civilizations," written a long time before recent events and by a well-respected scholar. There probably really are quite genuine cultural and political differences in regard to the Eastern part of Ukraine, compared to the part of Ukraine to the West of Kiev (and probably Kiev itself).

In view of recent events, it may be relevant to also mention Carlton J. A. Hayes (Columbia University) "A Political and Social History of Modern Europe" (Macmillan 1924) who wrote —

(*) The past ~1,000 years according to what I think is the consensus among experts.

"Bolshevik Russia was isolated from the rest of the world -- against her, the Allies long enforced an economic blockade, and she was not admitted to world councils on terms of equality with other nations --" (p 836)

2 "The terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk have been indicated elsewhere -- Here it suffices to point out that by surrendering [essentially all the territories absorbed in the past 15 years by the EU, together with (in some sense) Ukraine] Russia ceased to be a heterogeneous empire and became essentially a national state inhabited almost solely by Russians and freed from the distracting problems of subject nationalities" (p 820)

The "problem" I could have with the following statement is that it is a lot easier to say or write than it is to actually make work as a reality:

(WWF)
"The Great War and the Peace of Paris marked the all but universal triumph of the principle of nationalism, the doctrine that peoples who speak the same language and share the same historic traditions shall live together under a common polity of their own making -- Nor did the peace-makers of 1919-1920 at Paris make the mistake of their predecessors at Vienna a century earlier by ignoring utterly the unmistakable popular longings for national self-determination, on the contrary, they -- wrote it into the public law of Europe --"

"In recognising the new nationalistic order, the diplomats tried to correct its intolerant tendencies by eliciting pledges from the new national states to preserve and respect religious, cultural and economic rights of dissident nationalities within their territories" (p 843-4)

Something easier to obtain verbal assent to than to preserve as a reality as

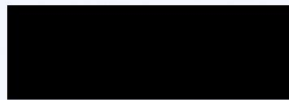
"In the passions and hysteria of the Great War, majorities [had] frequently proved themselves intolerant of minorities and impatient of the slow and ponderous workings of the usual engines of orderly political democracy." (p860)

[2 of the later "National Socialism" in Germany obviously]

In regard to the question "What Is To Be Done?" in regard to the current serious problems between Ukraine and Russia, I feel I should state my personal view that military action in regard to Crimea would be profoundly "unhelpful". Just as the Russians are (I think, though I could be proven wrong by events) probably genuinely reluctant to actually use the large numbers of their regular troops amassed near the border of Ukraine, so should we be in regard to even attempting to use the probable technological superiority of NATO in regard to Crimea — in both cases one can imagine (and may, alas, actually see) a military victory followed by profound and inimical later and wider developments. And in the case of Crimea, although their recent hasty referendum probably rather exaggerates opinions and feelings, I think it was probably sufficiently genuine that it should "give us pause" as to what sort of reactions we should expect were we to attempt to "storm in and sort it out".

I do think however that one should note the report a few days ago that the price of natural gas on world markets has recently nearly halved. This sort of thing is extremely significant (see Mr. Stuermer "Putin and the Rise [2 problems!] of Russia").

Yours faithfully,



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14th April 2014

Dear 'WBED',

Further to my recent letter mentioning what I thought were some interesting historical reflections and information regarding Russia and its "near neighbours", it seems to me appropriate to add the attached copy of most of a letter I'm sending (simultaneously with this letter to yourselves) to our local Member of Parliament.

The entire situation currently seems to be quite disturbing and developing in ways that are not particularly advantageous to ourselves. I agree that it is not very credible that there is no aspect of "centralised planning" involved in what is currently happening.

I hope the attached photocopies will be of some relevance in regard to thoughts and actions about how we should respond to recent - and possible further - developments

Something I forgot to mention earlier, but definitely should mention now. I found "Café Europa (Life After Communism)" by Oke (Croatian) journalist Slavenska Drakulić extremely readable and interesting.

Yours faithfully,

I have had a quick look at BBC News (11am). It seems that the Ukrainian President has said he (^{presumably} the Ukrainian government) is "not against" the idea of "greater autonomy" in the eastern region(s).

I think this is probably preferable to any attempt at large-scale "strong arm" tactics, which was what we seemed to be heading for last night. But I am quite "ambivalent" in this regard, as I think everyone needs to be seriously wary of being "taken for a ride".

People who "don't want to be slaves of the EU" may end up being exploited by Moscow. The same complaints about the eastern regions of Ukraine make in regard to Kiev are complaints that I have heard at other times in regard to Moscow.

① This turned out later to be a call for a national referendum (impartially supervised) re greater regional autonomy.

Please do not interpret what follows as "defeatist". I merely think that what has happened in regard to Crimea is probably best "left alone" as such and will need to be addressed in relation to Ukraine, "indebtedness", even simply in regard to Crimea itself.

More widely, this afternoon (14.4.14), the BBC showed a conversation with a "Russian-speaking" resident of one of the Eastern Ukraine towns where government buildings have been seized, who estimated that about 20% in his region would vote for greater regional autonomy in a "free and fair" referendum, but many others (the great majority) would vote for Ukrainian cohesion. (Just one spokesperson, but an interesting opinion).

In the rest of events, some aspects even of what has already happened (Crimea) have not been addressed at all, in any public way at least.

The main one being: Russia claims a huge debt is owed to them by Ukraine. This may well be true, but greatly increased by fines for non-payment. What I have not heard discussed at all is how allocation of responsibility for debt should be allocated within even a context of secession by Crimea.

Possibly this would have been one of the main topics discussed at the "tripartite" meeting of EU, Ukrainian and Russian officials (possibly with some USA participation) that was due to take place (The leasing of Sevastopol also seems relevant).

Obviously there is a danger of "being defeatist" in raising it as an issue, and accepting wider secessions when one needs it. Even so, it seems to me an issue that will seriously need to be negotiated at some time.

I think it is also true that the people of eastern Ukraine need to be told honestly what their obligations would be to the Russian Federation were they to ~~secede~~ secede from it. (By "honestly" I mean based as far as possible on previous relevant historical actual experiences, rather than any vague set of promises.)

A certain amount of silence in regard to the actual experiences of the "kubans" in Ukraine in the 20th century could be expected. } (on the part of Russia, that is)

It would be a mistake to over-estimate the amount of my viewing of "RT" or to assume that my viewing should be of an "analytical" nature.

I say this because there was a truly astonishing remark made on "RT" a day or so ago in regard to the gas pipeline through Ukraine. The claim was that Ukraine could "siphon off" gas without ^(Russia) their knowing - that there is some sort of radical deficiency in the metering.

Is this true? Partially true? If so, why? (possibly it was omitted to save money, but if so this seems to have been a truly false economy).² What "if anything" can be done about it? And if true where on earth have they got their numbers for the huge debt owed by Ukraine from??

I remember years ago a rather distinguished linguist ^(behaviourism) deriding certain psychological methodologies as being "like claiming physics is the science of meter readings".

Well, I wouldn't say meter readings are sufficient to establish a science, but certainly in regard to issues like that they are surely necessary.

I find it absolutely astounding that this has even arisen as an issue.

I have written already to the division of the Foreign Office you mentioned. I won't make a habit of writing to them, but it seems relevant to add a copy of this particular letter to what I sent them earlier.

(I'll omit copying the first few paragraphs which are purely personal)
(I'll omit your name etcetera)

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]