



RUSSIAN 'TROJAN HORSES' AND FELLOW TRAVELERS: DESTABILIZATION IN GERMAN-SPEAKING AND EAST CENTRAL EUROPE (GS-ECE)

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“Beware Greeks bearing gifts.” – Laocoön’s Prophecy, *The Aeneid*, II, 49

“Useful idiots.” – V. I. Lenin (disputed attribution)

“We shall find such men, we shall find them in every country. We shall not need to bribe them. They will come of their own accord. Ambition and delusion, party squabbles and self-seeking arrogance will drive them. Peace will be negotiated before the war has begun. ... Mental confusion, contradiction of feeling, indecisiveness, panic: these are our weapons.” – Adolf Hitler in Hermann Rauschning’s *Hitler Speaks**

“Everyone has to sacrifice at the altar of stupidity from time to time... .” – Albert Einstein

(*I do not hereby violate “Godwin’s Law.” I assert no blanket neo-Nazi sentiment among European abettors of Russian geo-strategic goals, though they sometimes hold such views and though avowedly neo-Nazi groups exist. I merely assert the real possibility that witting or unwitting pro-Russian “fifth columnists,” as they used to be called, are at work in Europe. To the extent that they are, they would serve the same purpose as the men mentioned here.)

GERMAN-SPEAKING AND EAST CENTRAL EUROPE (GS-ECE)

THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES



THE VISEGRAD STATES



GERMAN-SPEAKING (GS)

EUROPE (SOURCE FOR FIGURES: CIA WORLD FACTBOOK 2017)

- Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein
- Aggregate GDP: \$4,812,092,000,000 (FRG's GDP alone is > \$4 trillion)
- Aggregate population: 98,217,107
- Aggregate area: 484,916 sq km
- Nota bene: "Wallonia" is incorrect.



VISEGRÁD GROUP OF STATES (ECE)

(SOURCE FOR FIGURES: CIA WORLD FACTBOOK 2017)

- Named after Congress of Visegrád (1335) between John I of Bohemia, Charles I of Hungary, and Casimir III of Poland
- Poland and Hungary (PH): dominant States of the Visegrád Group
- Aggregate GDP of PH: \$642 billion
- Aggregate population of PH: 48,327,114
- Aggregate area of PH: 405,713 sq km

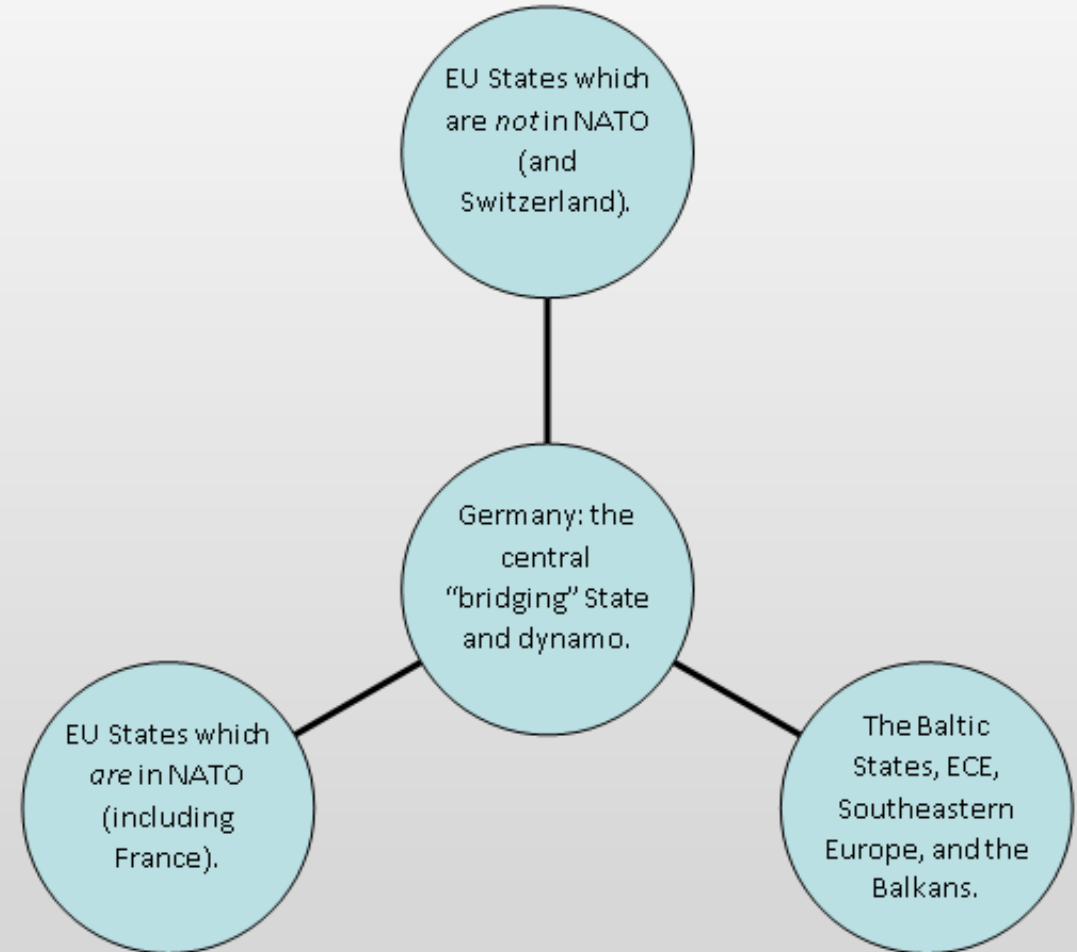


RATIONALE FOR U.S. COGNIZANCE OF RUSSIAN DESTABILIZATION OF GS-ECE:

- Germany is one of the 3 most important EU member-States. It had the world's 4th largest economy as of 2017. It is Europe's most powerful non-nuclear State and a critical member-State in NATO.
- Germany is a P5 + 1 signatory to the JCPOA with Iran of 2015. JCPOA's retention is a crucial European interest.
- Germany is Europe's principal interlocutor with Moscow regarding Ukraine and remains a major investor in, and object of, Russian economic coöperation. (> €41 billion in 2017 in oil, natural gas, machine tools, *etc.* [approx. \$50 billion]; lower due to post-Crimea sanctions).
- Alongside South Korea, Japan, and Australia, Germany is one of the world's 4 leading non-nuclear States and is the PRC's largest European bi-lateral trading partner (> €186.8 billion imports + exports in 2017 [approx. \$215 billion]).
- Germany is a major target of PRC investment ("Made in China 2025;" "New Silk Road") and China's principal European interlocutor (11 visits by Chancellor Merkel to date).
- Berlin is dominant in German-speaking Europe, among the Visegrád States, and in the Baltic States, but Germany must tread softly due to historic memories of WWI and WWII.
- Taken together, GS-ECE constitute a major non-nuclear group of States in the European Union.

GERMANY: BRIDGE AND ECONOMIC DYNAMO

THE UNITED STATES, RUSSIA, AND CHINA INTERACT WITH, BUT OPERATE OUTSIDE OF, THIS RADIAL ARRANGEMENT. INFLUENCING ANY ONE NODE CAN AFFECT ALL THE OTHERS. INFLUENCING GERMANY TENDS TO AFFECT ALL THE OTHERS MOST EFFECTIVELY. NOTA BENE: THIS SCHEMATIC DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OTHER EUROPEAN STATES' EFFORTS TO AFFECT THIS RELATIONSHIP OF POWER FOR THEIR OWN PARTICULAR NEEDS AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT.



RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY OF POSSIBLE RUSSIAN “TROJAN HORSES” AND FELLOW TRAVELERS...

1.) Though not necessarily linked to Russian cyber operations targeting European States individually or collectively, “Trojan Horses” presumably benefit from that element of Russian hybrid warfare.

2.) To the extent that they pursue pro-Russian policies, “Trojan Horses” (whether Left-wing or Right-wing) serve to disrupt, destabilize, and could conceivably disintegrate collective NATO/EU structures.

3.) Whether they are willing “Trojan Horses” or mere fellow travelers, these groups tend to benefit from, and stoke, the current resurgence of Left-wing and Right-wing populism and/or extremism in Europe.

PARTICULAR CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY...

1.) Epistemic: open-source data (IC concurrence?); “drinking from the fire hose;” ever-present threat of selection-bias.

2.) Political: to the extent that they pursue pro-Russian policies, “Trojan Horses” and fellow travelers may have goals that overlap with, and might shape, their governments’ legitimate interests (e.g. NS2 in Germany and the AfD).

3.) Evaluative: focusing solely on “Trojan Horses” risks overestimating their geo-strategic significance to the minimization of other legitimate factors.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES DERIVING FROM THE STUDY...

1.) Epistemic: contribution to increased understanding of an historic and complex phenomenon (populism/extremism) affecting intra-European and transatlantic relations.

2.) Geo-strategic: contribution to increased understanding of Russian efforts to weaken individual European States and NATO/EU collectively. *Nota bene: Putin 2024.*

3.) Calendric: Concatenation of electoral cycles in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Poland creates more-extensive open-source coverage of “Trojan Horses” and fellow travelers than occurs off-cycle.

SELECTED “TROJAN HORSES” AND FELLOW TRAVELERS IN THE STUDY INCLUDE...

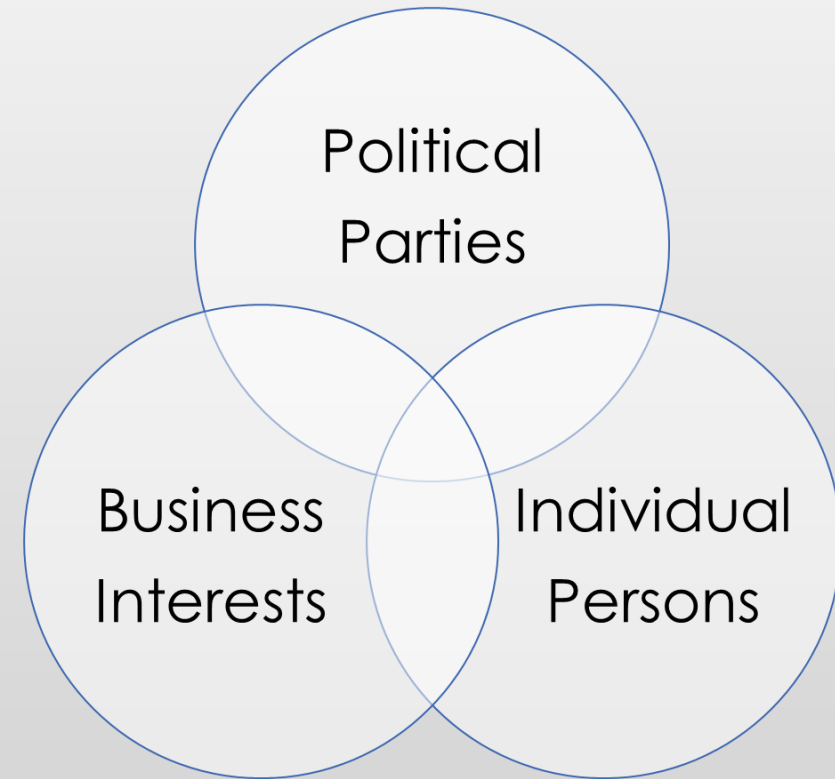
1.) Political Parties: AfD, AdP, Die LINKE, FPÖ, FIDESZ, EKRE, *et cetera*.

2.) Economic actors/investment: NS2, Turkstream, Ost-Ausschuss - Osteuropaverein der Deutschen Wirtschaft (OAOEV), *et cetera*.

3.) Prominent Individuals: Gerhard Schröder, Heinz-Christian Strache, Karin Kneissel, Viktor Órban, *et cetera*.

STRATEGIC “SWEET SPOT” FOR RUSSIA LIES IN THE CENTRAL JUNCTURE

Nord Stream II and Turkstream serve as textbook examples of the operational seam: in these cases one sees an overlapping zone of national energy-security, party-political, and individual interests. “Fog” prevents easy public detection of and countermeasures against Russian pressure.



TAKE-AWAY (1): WHAT KIND OF EUROPE IS BETTER FOR U.S. IN THE LAST 200 YEARS?

Consider:

- 1812 – U.S. drawn into a European war due to a hegemon's actions (France).
- 1917 – Ditto (Germany).
- 1941 – Ditto (Germany).
- Cold War – Ditto (USSR).
- 2020 and beyond...? (Russia and other authoritarians?).

Therefore:

- A Europe both stable and at peace.
- A Europe of *wehrhaft* democracies *vis-à-vis* “Trojan Horses” of both the radical Right and the radical Left.
- A Europe open to trade with the U.S. (but also a U.S. open to trade with Europe).
- A Europe defending free democratic institutions in league with the U.S. (See Art. 2 of the NATO Treaty)

TAKE-AWAY (2): WHAT KIND OF EUROPE IS WORSE FOR U.S. IN THE LAST 200 YEARS? WHAT QUESTIONS MUST BE ASKED?

Consider:

- A Europe threatened by hegemony. War often resulted and drew in U.S. (1812, etc.).
- A Europe not open to U.S. trade. U.S. exports and jobs suffered. (1930, H.S. Tariff).
- A Europe not open to political cooperation with the U.S. by virtue of European reluctance or U.S. isolationism. The U.S. lost or, worse, abdicated its ability to influence events directly. (1918 – 1939).

Therefore:

- What of the threat of Russian hegemony if GS-ECE/EU or NATO weakens in 3/5/10 years?
- What of Chinese economic penetration in 3/5/10 years?
- Can U.S.-NATO ties survive if U.S.-European economic and political ties collapse? After 70 years, can the former continue without the latter?
- Can Washington and Berlin create a *modus vivendi*?

TAKE-AWAY (3): IS TODAY DIFFERENT?

Consider:

- 1966: French w/d from NATO causes transatlantic division.
- 1968 – 1975: Vietnam, domestic issues, *agitprop* cause transatlantic division.
- 1980 – 1984: Pershing II, “Star Wars,” *agitprop* cause transatlantic division.
- 2003 – 2008: Iraq causes transatlantic division.

But:

- **Heretofore never any fundamental transatlantic divide over alliances, free trade, democratic norms, and the reliability and value of U.S. leadership. There now appears to be such a divide.**
- **All intensely aggravated by spreading, and sometimes pro-Russian, authoritarianism in Europe and elsewhere.**

MEMORY AS MOTIVATION...

“Memory is the mother of all wisdom.” Aeschylus (c. 525 - c. 456 BCE) *Prometheus Bound*

