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von

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Präsident der Tschechischen Republik

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- es gilt das gesprochene Wort -

Excellences, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

a part of political leaders from post communistic countries, included myself, speak only in their domestic languages, with some sort of English pronunciation. Such a broken English has many, many advantages, at first, it is very short, at second, you are forced to avoid the colourful and empty phrases and fuzzy expressions, where there is no real content. Let me start my lecture in my favourite broken English, which is fully understandable even for native speakers, by some remarks concerning European dream.

I do not want to replay Martin Luther King, because he does not speak about European dream, which I do. Anyway there are two types of politicians. The first type has a dream and I must admit that such a politician is a very dangerous person, because not all dreams are positive, of course, but there are a few of politicians without a dream, if you wish vision, if you wish project, program, concept... So I'm a politician with European dream, but I must warn you, maybe my dream is very dangerous for Europe and for European Union. So, what is my dream? Czech Republic is a member of European Union and we have accepted one way ticket and there is for my country no real alternative. But we have the full right to criticize European Union, but we must realize that such a criticism is self-criticism in fact. During my very short remarks, I mention some reasons for my criticism. So, I would like to express my view about three possible pillars of European Union; one of them is of course common foreign policy, the second one common defence policy and the third one common economic policy. I do not want to mention common social or ecological policy, because it would be a lecture for three hours and I'm no Fidel Castro.

Anyway, I will start with the common foreign policy. I always remember the ironic question of Henry Kissinger, what is the phone number of Europe. If you have 27 foreign ministers; you have no one and you're not the partner for the States, for the Russia, for China and so on and so on. I am for unified foreign policy of European Union and now there will be the first self-criticism in this area. I criticize the present European Union for the so called soft policy, which reminds me the repetition of appeasement in the thirties of the last century. Why? The main task for foreign policy is the fight against international terrorism, which is, I guess, the main danger for the 21st. century. You all remember the dispute between Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington, this dispute is over and Fukuyama has been completely defeated. There is no end of history and there is no last man. The history is continuum and is continuing in a very dangerous world. Because the word terrorism, which is sometimes based on religious fundamentalism, might have nuclear weapons at its disposal in very, very near future and in such a case, it is illusion to negotiate with the terrorists. But any negotiation leads to the fact that the terrorists are stronger and stronger. We know that from the appeasement history Hitler, Mussolini and Goebbels were stronger and stronger after every negotiation.

This is the first remark, the second one – European Union needs also common defence policy and again, if you have 27 armies you have practically nearly, nearly no reasonable force, if those are far incompatible and they haven't any common leadership. Of course, there are first roots of battle group of European Union and thanks God for it, but do not forget the bad experience in former Yugoslavia, there were American troops which were forced to operate on the territory of Bosnia even if, if I am informed, Bosnia is still a part of Europe, not the part of the States. It was the shame for European defence policy and that is why, I am sure, we need common European army. Good heaven, not common European police, police has to be in hands of national government and national parliament.

And now the third and last remark on economic policy, which is important for me, because being a former economist, is professional deformation. I fully support, as it was mentioned, the banking union, common fiscal policy, even common taxation. I am against dumping in the taxation, because we must compete by productivity of labour and not by debts?. But and but again, the directives of European Union are concerned toward saving-light bulbs, to what will be the name of the cheeses. Please, let us try to avoid the common European cheese and if you wish common European beer, I recommend to Pilsner. Anyway, the devil is hidden in detail and unfortunately, and again it is self-criticism, not criticism from outside. If European Union is oriented to bulbs or cheese, it loses the time and energy to solve the more important problems like just common economic policy.

And now at the end I will be very, very cruel, I think that main reason or main source of present economic crisis, which is not worldwide, but only Euro-Americanwide, is underinvestment of European economy, included Germany, included the Czech Republic, and included all European countries. What does it mean? I am a Keynesian, and let me quote Milton Friedman, who at the beginning of the economic crisis said: „Now we are all Keynesians. “ And such a quotation from the voice of main opponent of Keynesian theory is very pleasant for me. In Keynesian terms there are two propensities; propensity to consume and propensity to invest. All Europe has extremely high propensity to consume, all Europe, with some regional differences, of course, has extremely low propensity to invest, and the consequence is not only the growing state debt, but also and mainly declining the competition. There are political reasons for that attitude, standard politicians like promises. You may promise lower taxes, you may promise higher social expenditure, but investment has no voting right and it will not support your plans and your program. And I even think that this is just presidential topic, main in the case where the president has been elected by direct votes and is not so dependent on the parliament, unpopular presidential topic, which is the support of investment and mainly investment with highest multiplier effect, which are investment in housing, in infrastructure, in education, in health service, and so on and so on.

Ladies and gentlemen, I express this cruel attitude by one sentence only - we consume too much apples and we do not plant apple trees enough, but being on German territory, let me conclude my speech by quoting Martin Luther: If I knew there will be the last day tomorrow I shall go just today and I will plant an apple tree.

Thank you so much for your attention.