

IMMIGRATION POLICY IN HUNGARY

INTERVIEW WITH GYÖRGY NÓGRÁDI, UNIVERSITY LECTURER, SECURITY POLICY EXPERT

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Migrant, immigrant, refugee. The media tends to confuse or use these concepts poorly and the inexact use of terminology can strengthen negative preconceptions in connection with the refugee crisis. Who are they exactly? What is the difference between the definitions?

I am not a lawyer therefore I will not interpret the definitions in legal terms. In my view predominantly economic migrants are arriving presently in Europe but the definition of economic migration is a matter of perspective. Like the definition of Arab world is not standardised either. According to the European Union the Arab world extends from Morocco to Shatt al-Arab. In the definition of the US administration, Turkey is also listed here.

What about the expression “migrant issue”?

The point is that thousands of people are coming from different directions toward Europe. In 2012 13,000 immigrants arrived in Italy which is manageable yet. In 2013 almost four times more, 43,000 people and in 2014 – again roughly four times more than in the previous year – 170,000. This year, only within the first 5-6 months 102,000 people have arrived. I think, that the numbers speak for themselves. In the case of Hungary the migrant issue has a quite different meaning than in most of the states of Western Europe. We don't have a colonial history so our historical responsibility is completely different than of Western European countries.

What causes the strong increase in migration flow? What are the most important origin countries and could any change be experienced regarding the most crisis-affected regions?

The migrants come from two different directions. One direction is the Libyan, the other is the Syrian. At the same time it doesn't mean that all the migrants are from Libya and Syria. During the registration 90 percent of the arriving people from Serbia to Hungary state that they were born on the 1st of January. Similarly, not everyone who comes from the direction of Libya is Libyan, many of them come from Sub-Saharan Africa, who were recruited there, in a town called Gao (Mali). There already, their money, which covers the travel expenses, is taken from them and the local police snatch the third of it. From that point on, the strategic aim of the police is that more and more people head to Europe since it's a source of money for them. But Europe is not prepared to receive migrants in such a great number. Despite that the intelligence indicated well in advance the danger of mass migration, European politics did not react.

Do you think it would have been able to do that? Or could the European Union act effectively in this matter now?

The fundamental strategic question of the European Union for over 20 years is that what we want: to deepen or to expand? The EU's response has always been the expansion. In

parentheses, I remark that the situation is the same in the case of NATO. In my judgement the countries that were taken up in the last 10-15 years either to NATO or the EU were unsuitable. Rather political than professional criteria were considered during the admission. The problem is that in the last decades Europe is no longer a dominant region in the world. Currently there are three global players. In order: the USA, China, and Russia. Europe is no longer a leading player in this game. In fact it couldn't solve a trivial matter in Yugoslavia without the help of the United States. Who is interested in a strong Europe? If we want to be honest, we have to say: no one.

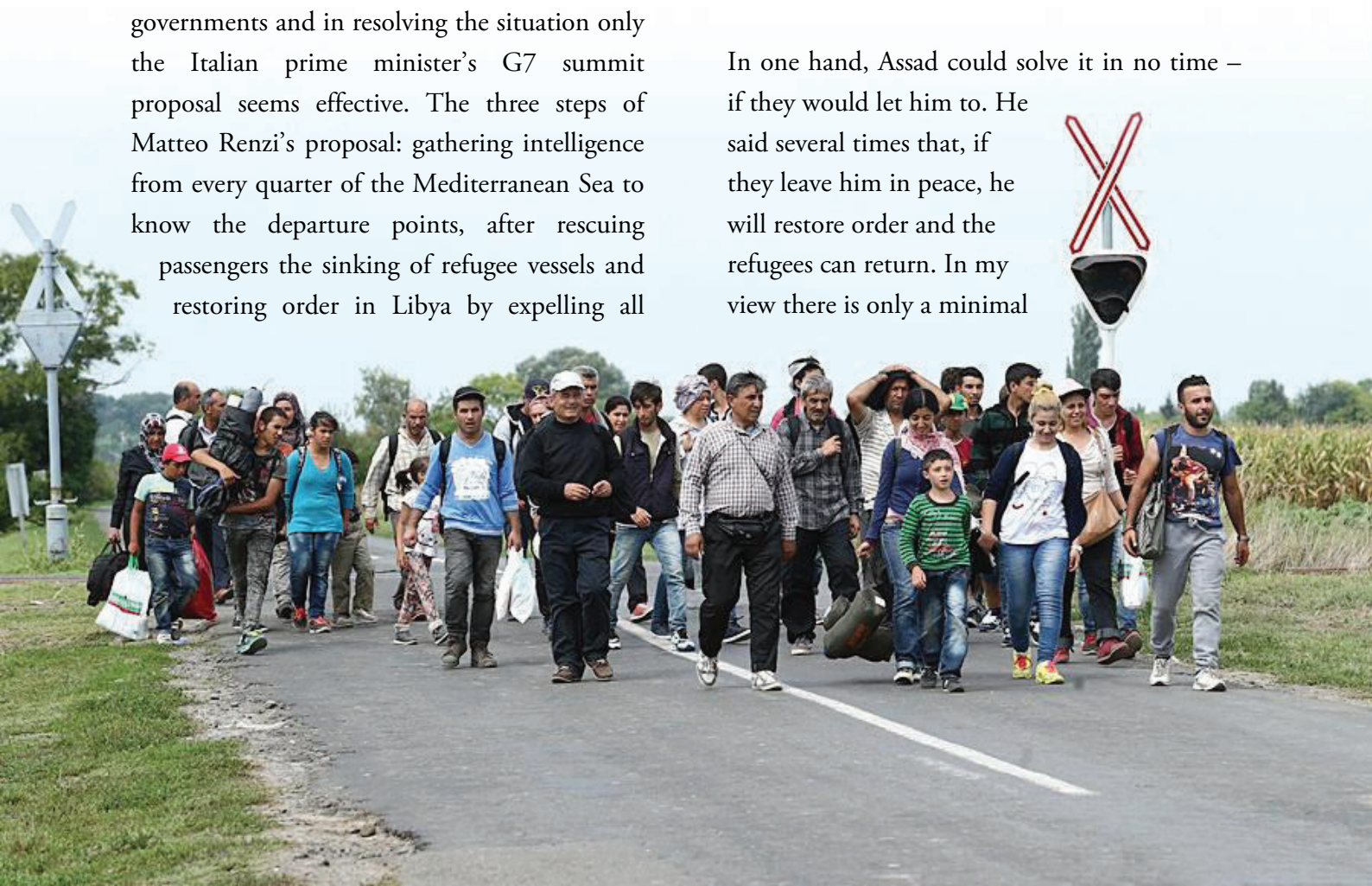
In fact should order be restored in Libya and Syria in order to curb the flow of refugees?

Without doubt Gaddafi held a number of speeches in which he was well aware of the rising tide of migrants in the case of his overthrow. Libya currently has three governments and in resolving the situation only the Italian prime minister's G7 summit proposal seems effective. The three steps of Matteo Renzi's proposal: gathering intelligence from every quarter of the Mediterranean Sea to know the departure points, after rescuing passengers the sinking of refugee vessels and restoring order in Libya by expelling all

three governments. At the moment no one undertakes this. Syria is different. The country – beside Iraq, Iran and the Hezbollah – belongs to the Shi'a Crescent whose power and influence is contrary to the interest of the West and the Sunnis. Syria proved to be the weakest link in this system. Syria's population is estimated to be around 20-22 million, the majority of them are Sunnis. Contrarily, the administration of Bashar al-Assad represents the 6-8 percent of the population, the Alawites (a religious group, the local Shi'a counterparts). Thus, even more political powers aim to break Assad's regime. Turkey would like a Sunni, Turkish-friendly government while the West wants the rise to power of a pro-Western democratic system. The problem with that is the lack of a social base. Only a few hundred people sympathises with this.

With such conflicting interest how and most importantly in how much time could be the situation solved?

In one hand, Assad could solve it in no time – if they would let him to. He said several times that, if they leave him in peace, he will restore order and the refugees can return. In my view there is only a minimal



chance that Assad will be displaced. If this would happen, the new system – without a social base – would still be weak. The so-called pro-Western Syrian democrats are simple puppets who are not even accepted by the Sunni majority. In my opinion the local conflicts should be solved first of all. The problem is that Europe is unable to do so. So it will be resolved by the US or no one. Like it or not, without the United States this problem can't be solved. The US dictates the rules for the Middle East, anyways.



Since you have spoken about the United States, do you expect changes from the upcoming presidential elections? Obviously the resigning Obama will not swing into an international action to solve the situation. What to expect of the new president?

My opinion is that the vast majority of American presidents are mediocre. Obama was not what was expected of him. The first four years were mediocre and the second four were even slightly worse. He simply could not live – not even in eight years – with the presidential leverage. Of course this leverage is controlled by the US military, economic and political realities. The new president will be decisive if only in the case of the new establishment. Lots of changes can be expected in the Department of State, there will be personal changes in

Ambassadorial positions, and the security approach could also change. We will see who will win. The current leader of Republican list is a disaster but he grants satisfaction to the public demand.

Let's talk a bit about the Islamic State!

The Islamic State subordinated several terrorist groups, just think of the Boko Haram. Today they have cells everywhere around the world. I think it could be beaten only by deployed western troops however the US will not undertake this only one year before the election. The United States would step up with three different forces against the IS. The Iraqi army, which even the US Defence Secretary has criticised for their lack of courage a couple of weeks ago. The second are the Kurds in Turkey who fight with 30-40 year old weapons in their own war against the Turks. The third power would be the Syrian democrats existing only on paper. Meanwhile the Islamic State rolls on the floor laughing.

So there is no capacity for successful action against them? Let's say on a European level without the USA?

No, because there is no European army.

Rudimentary.

Not even a rudimentary. There is a Danish-German-Polish cooperation but there is no European army. In order to create a European army we should take a stand against the USA what we cannot do. Furthermore we should maintain a global intelligence for which there is neither ability nor money.

You suggested in an interview that a fence should be built in Turkey.

The fence already exists but only serves Turkish interests. The Turkish policy today is very relative. No one dares to say, that after the fall of the Soviet Union there is no need for Turkey in the NATO. Turkey is in conflict with all of its neighbours today. I have said that if Turkey would close the Syrian border – which of course will not happen – the mass migration would end. But first, the order must be restored in Syria.

You said that the USA intervention would be the solution in Syria. Don't you think that it would further complicate the situation?

Rather the coalition led by the USA. The Syrian government controls only approximately 40 percent of the country's territory, the remaining part is under the influence of the Islamic State. The only way to restore order is to eliminate the Islamic State and appoint a new leader. The West doesn't want Assad but Syrians don't want to accept the pro-Western Syrian democrats. So if we want the democrats to rise to power in Syria we should support that government with significant Western troops in the same way as we did in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Regarding Libya you also mentioned that if it wasn't for Western intervention, the situation would be better.

That's right.

But why not leave the decision in the hands of the local people?

Are they able to decide while three governments exist? There is no country where the Arab Spring would have won. Only Tunisia has achieved partial success, and of course the Western experts declared that the American style democracy finally won. Did it really win anywhere? No. Then what are we talking about?

Many draw a parallel between immigration and terrorism. Do we have anything to be afraid of? How serious are the security risks?

It may be that many people draw a parallel but I never do. So far, there was not a single case in which it was proven that there is a terrorist among migrants. It could happen but it is not proven. On the other hand if we take a look at the terrorist acts committed in Europe, we can tell that there isn't a case where a terrorist



arrived recently. The perpetrators were mainly second, third, fourth generation immigrants. There is no evidence that there would be a terrorist among the immigrants

who arrive in Italy or Greece. Imaginable but it is not proven. The Islamic State says that you can kill anyone you want, with any weapon of your choice. You can choose the place and the target. I don't tell you anything, just do something. Because of this the European intelligence services are in a quite complicated situation. Where to intervene? Against who? My answer is to the question that after 9/11 despite the strengthening of intelligence cooperation everywhere an attack can occur

anytime, anywhere. I'm always saying that it never gets publicity if the intelligence prevents 99 outrages from a hundred, but after the hundredth heads would doubtless roll. Egon Bahr the doyen of the German Security Policy says: "Security is absolute in the past, relative in the present and incalculable in the future."

Let's turn back to the migration crisis in Hungary. Greece and Italy have been struggling with the problem which was not seen in Hungary before. How organised is this? So I understood from your words that this is an organised process and that primarily not the poor war refugees are coming to Europe?

I always like to find out what's exactly happening. One night I went over to Serbia to see what was going on at the Hungarian border. I saw this: the migrants are coming from Macedonia to Magyarkanizsa on luxury coaches. The vast majority of passengers – after getting off the bus – goes to the bank and takes out a band of Euros. That clearly shows that not the poor are coming but it is better not to generalise. What I can say is that now the middle class is on the road. However these people are hustled. There is a man in Magyarkanizsa who – after becoming the local chief of the smugglers – suddenly became a millionaire, bought the nicest house in the neighbourhood and two luxury cars. According to certain sources there are 40,000 smugglers in Europe, many of them are Albanian. Albanians sent illegally one million Albanian to Western Europe in the last 10 years. Meanwhile the news talk about 900 captured smugglers across Europe. But who they are? Truck drivers, bus drivers, insignificant people. They can't reach the main line or the heads of human trafficking.

What do you think about the responsibility of the countries in the Middle East region? There is no war, the religion and culture is the same. But the final destination of migration is still Europe.

Indeed. While Europe must address the problems caused by the migration flow, the rich Arab states will not accept anybody. As the US and Australia either. Why? They simply do not need these people. In contrast, Europe is trying to accommodate the newcomers, especially young people. A German government document literally says: it has begun the fight for the best brains.



What do you think, how successful can the integration be into a Christian European society in the case of people who are coming from a completely different culture, religious traditions, and have a radically different value system?

It is clear, that the integration policy has already failed in Western Europe. There is a lack of skilled labour but the families of second, third, fourth generations simply cannot or do not want to integrate. Nevertheless there are serious internal problems. For instance, in France the main questions are: housing, employment and education. In Germany the proportion of school-leavers among the second, third and fourth generation migrant children is 2.1:1

compared to children of German families. The proportion is the same in the case of unemployment 2:1. For the second, third, fourth generation migrant families the proportion of people with high-school graduation is 22%. Among Germans 62%. But we could mention marriages, too. 10-20 years ago the marriage between a Christian and a Muslim was completely ordinary. Now, it is practically non-existent, only 0.5% of the marriages.

Let's sum up! What could stop this process and what are the prospects for the future? How long can we sustain the current situation? How long could the wave of immigration continue? Will there be a joint European settlement plan?

The way I see it, the later comes the solution the worse the situation. The more migrants

arrive the more radicalised both sides become. And that is dangerous. Meanwhile 20,000 Europeans fight for the Islamic State.

Mostly Germans, right?

Germans, Belgians and many other nationalities. It has been around a hundred Germans dead fighting in Iraq or Syria. Not all of them were Muslims. In many cases disappointed Christians join the IS. If Europe cannot solve the issue it will face serious difficulties and leaves room for national solutions. For example the Estonians already built a fence along the Russian border on paper against the migrants but rather against the Russians. There is a fence on the Turkish-Syrian border, on the Turkish-Greek border, around the Spanish enclave in North-Africa. This will lead to a disaster.