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FOR CEEP REPORT MR. ELMAR BROK, MEP, TALKS TO MAREK ORZECHOWSKI

Today, Energy is stronger than Military Power



Elmar BROK

Marek Orzechowski (MO): How important is energy for the foreign policy of the European Union?

Elmar Brok (EB): When we speak today about energy, we speak, in fact, about energy security. There is no more important element of foreign policy in the world than energy. This is now the crucial component behind policy-making. Secure access to resources played, of course, an important role in the past, but today, energy is much stronger than military power. Therefore, I am sure that the foreign policy of the Union is duty-bound to mitigate the visible differences, and also ensure the reduction of our dependence on external energy suppliers. This can be achieved through the expansion of renewable energy sources and wise energy strategy, which should figure as an important component of the foreign and security policy of the EU.

MO: We, in Europe, are very dependent on outside suppliers – does this have an effect on the power position of the EU?

EB: We do not have enough resources - that is true; so, this has for us two consequences. Our foreign partners try to play us off against each

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other, which sometimes works, sometimes not. Secondly, it is obvious that we need more co-operation and co-ordination between Member States. There must not be any competitive battles between Member States, because the security of energy is in our common interests, and this must be a priority for all. We must not forget that our friend, the USA, soon loses its focus on those regions in which it previously had vested interests. The United States will no longer be dependent on oil and gas imports, and this fact will mark serious changes in the field of energy. The shale gas revolution in the USA, in fact, the energy revolution, will have a profound impact on geostrategic conditions. These changes directly affect our security interests, and Europe's future energy policy. The message is clear: the US shale gas revolution clearly holds, for the EU, security-related consequences. The second message is 'crystal clear' – we really need a common position, a common energy policy.

MO: Some will say that we do not need to look to the Middle-East for gas, when, on our doorsteps, we already have Gazprom. How we can reduce the present dependence on Gazprom?

EB: It must be clear that the European Commission conducts fairly joint energy projects, and that they are also supported. Intervention, when common interests are violated, may well be

necessary. Energy used as a political tool is out of the question, and we reject this: we have the free market. However, our companies must not forget that they, too, are obliged to respect our common energy security and political interests. In this context, the European Commission also must ensure that there is no competition for the 'favours' of Gazprom between Member States. It is also clear that the expansion of renewable energy will make us more independent. We must not lose sight of the consumer in all of this.

MO: Of course, but isn't the Union's present policy on shale gas counter-productive?

EB: We are not the United States. Europe will never be completely independent. Look at any map. Towns next to cities, thousands of villages, a network of connecting paths, a sea of infrastructure, densely-populated regions, etc. Shale gas extraction initially means fracking, in such urbanised areas. So, it is very difficult for us to use the available technology. As long as we have fracking, then certain problems will exist: therefore, we must be careful.

MO: Is climate change now playing a role in shaping the foreign policy of the Union?

EB: Climate change is, in fact, a security risk. The long-term ef-

fects on climate change, or other threats to the environment, are clearly geostrategic questions. The architecture of energy security also needed to include an international treaty limiting CO₂ emissions worldwide. These are absolutely new aspects in today's world. It is not only just about energy security; it is also about ensuring the peaceful development of the world.

MO: 'Energiewende' in Germany – is it a good model for others to follow?

EB: This is a very complicated undertaking. From my point of view, we should, in Germany, discuss the questions connected to 'Energiewende', more from the aspect of energy security. The 'Energiewende' is seen in Germany, above all, as a purely eco-political measure, and not enough consideration is given to the equally relevant economic and industrial policy aspects. Yet, these are the most important factors. ☺

Elmar BROK

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