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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

European Union: A Massive Expansion of Top-down Powers

by Soeren Kern Gatestone Institute July 23, 2019



Former German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen, who has been narrowly confirmed as the next President of the European Commission, promises an ambitious left-leaning policy program on climate change, taxes, migration and the rule of law. (Photo by Sean Gallup/Getty Images)

Former German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen has been narrowly confirmed as the next President of the European Commission, the powerful administrative arm of the European Union.

In a secret ballot in the European Parliament on July 16, von der Leyen, a close ally of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, received 383 votes, only nine more than the 374 required — the lowest margin since the position of President was established in 1958. She will take over from Jean-Claude Juncker in November 2019 for a five-year term.

Before the vote, von der Leyen promised an ambitious left-leaning policy program on climate change, taxes, migration and the rule of law. Many of her pledges — which would require transferring yet more national sovereignty to unelected bureaucrats in Brussels — appeared aimed at enticing support for her candidacy from Greens and Socialists in the European Parliament.

In the final vote, however, the Socialists were divided in their support for von der Leyen and the Greens formally opposed her. Interestingly, von der Leyen won with the support of eurosceptics in Central and Eastern Europe after she publicly criticized the way the EU has treated them due to their opposition to mass migration.

In the past, von der Leyen has called for the creation of a European superstate: "My aim is the United States of Europe, on the model of federal states such as Switzerland, Germany or the United States," she said in an August 2011 interview with the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*. More recently, however, she appeared to scale back her ambitions: she said that her dream of a federalized EU had become "more mature and more realistic." In comments apparently aimed at appeasing Central and Eastern Europe, she added: "In the European Union, there is unity in diversity. That is different from federalism. I think that is the right way."

An examination of von der Leyen's policy proposals, however, reveals that she is calling for a massive expansion of top-down powers of the European Commission. Her proposals would substantially increase the role of Brussels in virtually all aspects of economic and social life in Europe — all at the expense of national sovereignty.

Following is a brief summary of von der Leyen's main proposals for the next five years, as outlined in a 24-page document titled, "My Agenda for Europe":

Climate Change

Von der Leyen called for the European Union to be "carbon neutral" by 2050. She pledged to propose a "European Green Deal" during her first 100 days in office. The deal would include the first "European Climate Law" to enshrine the 2050 climate neutrality target into law: "Carbon emissions must have a price. Every person and every sector will have to contribute."

She also pledged to introduce a "Carbon Border Tax" that would apply to non-European companies, to ensure that European companies "can compete on a level playing field." In addition, a "European Climate Pact" would "commit to a set of pledges to bring about a change in behavior, from the individual to the largest multinational."

Von der Leyen's social reengineering scheme would be paid for by European taxpayers: A "Sustainable Europe Investment Plan" would "support €1 trillion of climate investment over the next decade in every corner of the EU." She also vowed that the EU "will lead international negotiations to increase the level of ambition of other major emitters by 2021."

Economy, Society and Taxation

Von der Leyen vowed to prioritize the further deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union. She pledged to introduce a "Budgetary Instrument for Convergence and Competitiveness," a "European Deposit Insurance Scheme" and complete a "Banking Union." She also vowed to strengthen the international role of the euro.

She pledged to integrate European economic governance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Von der Leyen proposed a legal instrument to ensure a minimum wage for workers in all 28 EU member states. She also proposed a "European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme," a "European Child Guarantee," and a "Work-Life Balance Directive," to "encourage better sharing of responsibilities between women and men."

Von der Leyen also proposed a "European Gender Strategy" to ensure "equal pay for equal work," and pledged to introduce "binding pay-transparency measures." She vowed to set quotas for gender balance on company boards. She also promised a fully gender-equal European Commission: "By the end of my mandate, I will ensure we have full equality at all levels of Commission management. I will accept nothing less."

Von der Leyen vowed to overhaul the European taxation system: "One of the key foundations of our social market economy is that everybody pays their fair share. There can be no exceptions." She promised to prioritize taxation of big tech companies: "If by the end of 2020 there is still no global solution for a fair digital tax, the EU should act alone." She pledged to impose a common consolidated corporate tax base: "Differences in tax rules can be an obstacle to the deeper integration of the single market. It can hamper growth, particularly in the euro area where the economic ties are stronger. We need to be able to act." She warned that Brussels would overrule EU member states opposed to her tax overhaul: "I will make use of the clauses in the Treaties that allow proposals on taxation to be adopted by co-decision and decided by qualified majority voting in the Council. This will make us more efficient and better able to act fast when needed."

Technology

Von der Leyen pledged to develop joint EU standards for 5G networks, and to achieve "technological sovereignty" in critical technology areas: "We will jointly define standards for this new generation of technologies that will become the global norm." She added: "In my first 100 days in office, I will put forward legislation for a coordinated European approach on the human and ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence."

Meanwhile, a new EU "Digital Services Act" would "upgrade our liability and safety rules for digital platforms, services and products, and complete our 'Digital Single Market.'" A joint "Cyber Unit" would "speed up information sharing and better protect ourselves."

Von der Leyen also called for a "European Education Area" to "change the culture of education" and a "Digital Education Action Plan" to "rethink education."

Rule of Law, Migration and Internal Security

Von der Leyen called for a comprehensive "European Rule of Law Mechanism" to ensure the primacy of EU law over the national laws of EU member states. She warned that there would be financial consequences for member states that refuse to comply: "I intend to focus on tighter enforcement, using recent judgements of the Court of Justice showing the impact of rule-of-law breaches on EU law as a basis. I stand by the proposal to make the rule of law an integral part of the next Multiannual Financial Framework." She added: "The Commission will always be an independent guardian of the Treaties. Lady Justice is blind – she will defend the rule of law wherever and by whomever it is attacked."

Von der Leyen also called for a "New Pact on Migration and Asylum" in which a reinforced European Border and Coast Guard Agency would take over border control responsibilities from EU member states: "I want to see these [EU] border guards with the ability to act at the EU's external borders in place by 2024."

Meanwhile, a new "Common European Asylum System" would require all EU member states to offer asylum to migrants who request it: "We all need to help each other and contribute." In addition, the European Public Prosecutor's Office "should have more muscle and authority" and "be able to investigate and prosecute cross-border terrorism."

European Defense and Trade

Von der Leyen, who previously called for the creation of a European Army, pledged to take "further bold steps in the next five years towards a genuine European Defense Union." She added: "We need an integrated and comprehensive approach to our security."

She also said: "I believe Europe should have a stronger and more united voice in the world." She called for a change in rules so that the EU could act even without the unanimous consent of EU member states: "To be a global leader, the EU needs to be able to act fast: I will push for qualified majority voting to become the rule in this area. I will work closely with the High Representative/Vice-President to ensure a coordinated approach to all of our external action, from development aid to our Common Foreign and Security Policy."

In the area of trade, von der Leyen said that she would appoint a "Chief Trade Enforcement Officer" to improve compliance and enforcement of EU trade agreements. She also said that she would lead efforts to update and reform the World Trade Organization: "We must ensure that we can enforce our rights, including through the use of sanctions, if others block the resolution of a trade conflict."

Reactions

Von der Leyen's paper-thin endorsement by the European Parliament showed that she has as many

detractors as supporters. Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage may be her biggest critic. Addressing the European Parliament, he said: "What you've seen from Ursula von der Leyen today is an attempt by the EU to take control of every single aspect of our lives. She wants to build a centralized, undemocratic, updated form of Communism that will render [obsolete] nation state parliaments, where the state controls everything, where nation state parliaments will cease to have any relevance at all.

"I have to say from our perspective, in some ways, I'm really rather pleased, because you've just made Brexit a lot more popular in the United Kingdom. Thank God we're leaving!

"But it is in the aspect of defense that I think people's minds should be focused. She's a fanatic for building a European Army, but she's not alone. When it's completed, NATO will cease to exist or will not have any relevance in Europe at all."

Brexit Party MEP Matthew Patten, in an opinion article — "Fanatical Von der Leyen is the Final Nail in the Coffin for Shambolic EU 'Democracy'" — published by The Telegraph, wrote:

"Ursula von der Leyen, the controversial Defense Minister of the Bundeswehr, got the approval of the EU Parliament to become President of the EU Commission by just nine votes.... Here in the EU Parliament, where most deals are stitched up way before any vote, that's as close as it gets....

"It comes after days of intense wheeler-dealing, with Mrs. von der Leyen walking the corridors of Strasbourg and Brussels to lobby for the Presidency....

"Starting with 'we have to do it the European way' and 'the world needs more Europe' her proposals included an EU minimum wage, a capital markets union, a European unemployment insurance scheme, and most controversially, the abandonment of the national veto on foreign policy, another step towards a European Army and handing over the decision to go to war to the EU.

"She also promised the deepening of Europe's economic and monetary union, a common consolidated corporate tax base, to be sympathetic towards an approach from Britain for further delay of Brexit.

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Things are heating up between Israel and Hezbollah in the Golan

The past week alone saw two deadly attacks against Iranian proxies in southern Syria attributed to Israel. By Anna Ahronheim July 25 jpost.co.il



An old military vehicle can be seen positioned on the Israeli side of the border with Syria, near the Druze village of Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights. (photo credit: AMMAR AWAD/REUTERS)

It's been a hot summer in the Golan. And it's not only the weather.

The past week alone saw two deadly attacks against Iranian proxies in southern Syria attributed to Israel. Earlier this week an explosion killed Hezbollah operative Mashour Zidan in southern Syria and a few days later a rocket struck the

strategic Tel Haraa site not far from where Zidan was killed.

Israel has remained mum on the attacks, but the Jewish State has made it clear that it won't accept Hezbollah's growing presence in the Syrian Golan.

But Assad, along with Iranian backed troops, retook the Golan last summer, so what's changed?

According to Phillip Smyth, the Soref Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the buildup of local forces by Iran and Hezbollah is a major aspect that has been overlooked.

"Hezbollah doesn't want to have to execute an entire war on its own in southern Syria. It's much easier to apply plausible deniability and harder to bust a Hezbollah cell if they are locals," he told The Jerusalem Post, adding that they have taken a slightly different approach and being very pragmatic in terms of who they recruit.

Zidan, a Druze resident from the village of Hadar, is believed to have been a senior Hezbollah operative responsible for recruiting volunteers from villages near the border with Israel as part of Hezbollah's Golan File.

Senior intelligence officers in the IDF's Northern Command said that Hezbollah's Golan Project began last summer following the reconquering of the Syrian Golan by regime troops. Operatives involved in the clandestine file have weaponry available from the civil war and if needed, will receive additional weaponry from Lebanon or existing arsenals kept by Hezbollah and Iran.

"Hezbollah knows that Israel is watching, so they are being much more covert than in the past," Smyth said, adding that they are using more local forces rather than sending brigades of Lebanese fighters to the area.

Military success in Syria has also allowed Hezbollah to redeploy senior operatives and troops to the area as well as southern Lebanon. The group's leader Hassan Nasrallah has said as much himself in a speech in mid-July.

"We are present in every area that we used to be. We are still there, but we don't need to be there in large numbers as long as there is no practical need," he said, adding that "if there was a need to return, all those who were there would go back."

According to David Daoud, a research analyst on Hezbollah and Lebanon at United Against Nuclear Iran, the uptick in Israeli strikes in the area is because "there has been increased Hezbollah presence."

In mid-March US President Donald Trump announced the formal recognition of the Golan as sovereign Israeli territory, handing Hezbollah a present for their recruitment in the area.

"Recognition of the Golan creates common ground for different factions to agree upon - the same applies to the embassy move, and the 'deal of the century,'" Daoud said, adding that "Different regional groups or axes that might not otherwise agree now have something in common."

Smyth told The Post that while "Trump's statement has sent some signals to Iran," Tehran has "upped the ante because of the situation on the ground, not because of Trump's statement. They know that their goals will outlast the Trump administration. But if it rallies the troops, they will use it. They are very pragmatic."

While the "Iranians have been following the same program in southern Syria for years, now they're trying

to secure and resecure their gains," Smyth said. "There's a lot more opportunity, it's a net gain no matter how you look at it."

The attack on Tel Haara on Wednesday was not the first.

The site has been used by the Syrian army for years to observe Israeli movement, and since the Assad regime re-took the area from rebels last summer, there have been several strikes on the site blamed on Israel.

While the base, which has electronic surveillance capabilities, was supposed to be manned solely by regime troops, pro-Iranian militias including Hezbollah are known to be stationed in it.

According to Smyth, Hezbollah and Iran "have been at the forefront of using electronic means to counter their foes, its existed for decades and it wouldn't shock me if they were testing the waters there."

The opportunity was there for the taking.

The retaking of the Syrian Golan by Assad also forced Israel to end Operation Good Neighbor, where Israel provided humanitarian and, according to foreign reports, military aid to rebels in the Syrian Golan.

Israel also treated thousands of Syrians who arrived at the border, both combatants and civilians. According to officials some 70% of the wounded treated by Israel were men of fighting age while the other 30% were women and children.

A year later, "times have changed," Smyth told the Post. "Not everyone has switched over but if your stuck in Syria and you have no options...and you can't run into Israel...you have to back the strongest horse."

And that's Hezbollah.

1984 On Steroids: CA To Launch Cradle To Career Data Tracking



<http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/images/recent/babybarcodejuly262019.jpg>

Just in case we haven't provided you with enough creepy dystopian news lately, the nation's leader in Creepy Dystopia, California, has a brand new program. The "Cradle to Career Data System" will study and document everything about a child born in the state.

But don't worry, it's for your children's own good.

What the heck is the "Cradle to Career Data System"?

Beginning at birth and stalking the child until he or she joins the workforce, California wants to keep an eye on all sorts of demographics and variables. They'll do this by collecting information from "partner entities." They'll use this information, according to the Pasadena Star, to "provide appropriate interventions and

supports to address disparities in opportunities and improve outcomes for all students."

Who are these partner entities, you ask?

The "partner entities" include (but are not limited to) "state entities responsible for elementary and secondary education data, entities responsible for early learning data, segments of public higher education, private colleges and universities, state entities responsible for student financial aid, childcare providers, state labor and workforce development agencies, and state departments administering health and human services programs."

So, your kid's teachers, principals, professors, babysitters, and the purveyors of any state services you happen to use will all cough up every detail of your child's life.

Of course, California just wants to help.

This to me has hints of communist countries who pluck the brightest students from their home and educate them to work for the state. However, the admitted goal is data collection for the folks who make the rules.

Easily the creepiest thing to come out of California since "The Silence of the Lambs" was released into theaters, the "Cradle to Career Data System" aims to collect the ethnic, economic and educational records of every child in the state, track their grades and their progress into early adulthood, and make some form of the data available to policy makers, analysts and activists.

This isn't a maybe. It's already passed as a trailer bill (so it didn't go through the usual legislative process) and has been funded with a budget of \$10 million.

The governor's Office of Planning and Research is now authorized to enter into contracts with "planning facilitators" who will convene advisory groups "comprised of representatives of students, parents, labor, business and industry, equity and social justice organizations, researchers, privacy experts, early education experts, school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education."

Californians, your children's privacy is at stake here. They are going to become part of a pile of data that will be used to enact future laws to assure "equity." But at any time, these records will be there, the life of your child, every time they got sent to the principal's office, who stands up to authority, who has special skills or talents, what the child's parents are like.

That person's entire life in one handy file. And pardon me if I don't believe the data collection will stop once they get a job. Data is king right now, so why give up on a good thing?

We're already tracked everywhere we go once we're old enough to have a cellphone or use the internet. But this starts right, as the title of the program points out, at the cradle.

Why are they doing this?

It's all about "social justice." Think quotas on steroids.

"Advocates have been demanding data for the people in the Golden State for years," the Equity Alert explains, to "answer key questions about whether and how our state schools, colleges, universities, and workforce systems are closing racial equity gaps and serving Californians."

It sounds as if the goal is to go beyond laws that ban discrimination and beyond affirmative action into a

brave new world, one in which government bureaucrats tally the economic success of each racial and ethnic group and sub-group and award government funding in an effort to reach "equity."

Of course, we all know that things like this are actually not equitable, at least not to kids from groups who are not considered to be "at risk."

There's no word yet on whether or not parents will be able to opt out on behalf of their offspring.

This certainly normalizes being surveilled.

We've written a great deal on this site about the social credit system and the surveillance state in which we live. To me, a program like this seems like just another nail in the coffin of privacy. Don't think that this will stop at the border of California.

These kids will, from their first moment of awareness, be concerned about their permanent record. That's an awfully big burden to put on someone who still eats with his fingers and wears pull-ups to bed.

These children will spend their entire lives under a microscope, for better or for worse, while some data entry person types their every action of note into their record.

If you want to have a social credit system like the one in China, I guess you've got to start early.