



Worries about possible European Security Policy Frustrations After the US Congressional Elections

”American elections are largely driven by domestic concerns, but their outcomes have global ramifications... ...Europeans did not get a vote in this year’s US Congressional elections. But they have to live with the results. It could prove a frustrating experience.”

This is the summary of an analysis of the November 2010 elections in the United States which Bruce Stokes of the German Marshall Fund published under the title ”This Election Frustrates European Partners” in the German Marshall Funds newsletter series ”Transatlantic Take”.

In his paper Stokes covers several policy fields where European frustration may arise as a result of the Republican gains in the US Congress (and it might in this context be useful to point at the disclaimer at the end of his text: ”The views expressed here are the views of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the stance of the German Marshall Fund of the United States”).

I have taken the liberty of picking out those of his viewpoints which might have security policy implications and quoting them here as food for thought:

- ”Europeans, who largely support reducing the Western military presence in Afghanistan, are joined by only 22 percent of Republican voters in the United States who support such a policy, according to the recent German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends survey. When, and if, Obama begins an Afghan pullback, Congressional Republicans will only complicate allied cooperation on Afghanistan”
- The Obama administration, along with its European allies, wants to negotiate with Tehran about its nuclear weapons program. But American Republicans support a far more aggressive posture: one-in-five respondents of the Transatlantic Trends survey would take military action now to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and more than four-in-five would take such action if non-military efforts fail. Republican hawks on Capital Hill are likely to be sharply critical of any administration pursuit of a negotiated settlement to the Iranian stand-off.”
- ”There is also a widespread European desire to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. But only 12 percent of the Republicans approve of Obama’s handling of the Middle East. Obama’s ability to leverage the Israeli government to make concessions to the Palestinians is likely to meet opposition from Congressional Republicans supportive of an Israeli hard line.
- The reduction of American and Russian nuclear arsenals has long been a European goal. But the Obama administration was unable to corral the two-thirds majority

needed in the US Senate to pass its recently completed arms control treaty with Moscow. Passage will prove even more elusive next year.”

This is a pessimistic scenario, but might be well worth reflecting on.

Mats Åberg