



A LOVE LETTER TO ALEKSANDR LUKASHENKO

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From a recent conversation with a (European) friend I gleaned a telling insight – The North Korea of Europe, he said referring to Belarus. It belied a characteristic failure of the modern European – that Last Man of Nietzschean provenance – to grasp the nettle he's being offered.

Just as Comrade Kim Jong Un was born to his father's favourite concubine, Comrade Lukashenko had already clocked in years as a Communist Party Member in the Byelorossiyan Soviet Socialist Republic. Many quiet summers in Switzerland still awaited one of these leaders in the years to come, while the other would have to survive through the collapse of the scrap heap of a hierarchy he belonged to – coming out of that chaos the leader of his people, whether they want him or not.

Becoming a true Soviet Man, Lukashenko gained election to the Belarusian legislature just in time to be in position for the descent into precisely the sort of chaos KGB agents would always set off when trying to install a communist regime somewhere. He knew exactly how to play this fluid political situation, having studied at the Party School how Stalin's squad of spooks flipped Eastern Europe for the Proletarian Revolution – before meeting Col. Franco's reaction in Spain. Shortly after, the world dropped the pretense of these clandestine, irregular hybrid warfare actions and set off World War II. Stalin soon dropped the pretense as well, sending the tanks into Hungary in 1952, a tacit admission that "exporting the revolution" was not as organic as Lenin had promised. Lukashenko's life had prepared him for the moment he found himself in – he knew the 1990's were a time ripe for pretense. He won the Belarusian presidency on an anti-corruption ticket, after all!

Languishing for a moment on my European friends: How could they not appreciate to be faced with such a foe? Brussels would have to invent Lukashenko if he didn't exist. The Belarusian Boss's latest gambit – synthesizing out of whole cloth a remix on Fidel Castro's and Muammar Gaddafi's weaponizing of migrant flows – has provided the latest spur to European integration. FRONTEX, a European Border force summoned into existence at the insistence of countries like Malta, Greece and Italy at the height of the migrant crisis (set off by, variously, Gaddafi's heir-apparent(s), Bashar Al-Assad and the Sultan of Ankara himself) now finds another European Frontier to protect. This is a major victory for one side of an important argument, and for the existence of an institution that struggled to be born just a few years ago. But most of all, it is a throwing down of a gauntlet by a sparring partner whose very existence remains a test of every value the EU is supposed to immanentize into this earth through norms and good government.

Garnish and dwell on these personages of such varied color we must – but only to underline a point [I've had to make a lot recently](#): There is a meaningful difference between Lukashenko, who has the actual, unreconstructed KGB going strong in Belarus to this day, and, say, a duly-elected Brazilian congressman who was also duly-elected to his presidency, over and above [being stabbed in public by](#) a communist agent-provocateur. The duly elected President of Turkey did engage in a bit of refugee diplomacy back when the Mediterranean was belching up toddler's corpses at beach resorts in Greece, but the story of the power struggle in Brussels that time is for another day. Suffice it to say that I send my thanks in advance to Minsk for consolidating the axis of Intermarium nations through to the southern European Border states on the issue that most naturally unites them. I couldn't have asked for better help against the euro-reds. To see him [calling the BBC fake news](#) (a quite mainstream position among my comrades-in-arms in the British Tory party) was a real delight.

Brussels, which talks a big game of having won the Cold War on its own and which is sometimes capable of taking credit for defeating fascism too, has in Lukashenko everything they could possibly wish for. Lukashenko was trained by the Rooskie spooks who had themselves been trained by the finest surviving Nazi spooks after WWII. He is the Stasi spook from [The Lives of Others](#), live-recording the inside of your apartment and screwing your girlfriend with blackmail. Lukashenko benefited from the full glory of [the last great improvement](#) in surveillance technology (the telephone) and is present to witness this next great boom in [cop shit](#) we're living through. Lukashenko will doubtless keep providing unique insight to his fellow autocrats on how to use all the newfangled gear for the same old-school aims: sowing fear, spreading lies and ruining lives. As per usual, it's a matter of time before any new techniques reach American soil.

A ritual defeat of Lukashenko seems a necessary part of the EU's destiny, but he's come too far to just hand over. He's going to make them work for it, and that's the best possible thing he could do – Make Europe exercise its "External action" muscle until it looks like it's lifted something in its life. Can one assume a narrative based on taking down Nazism and Communism would find it useful to see itself in the mirror of Minsk? It is too early to tell, but all indications point to, once again, the member states doing all the heavy lifting. The European Commission's similarities to the Politburo might even find Aleksandr feeling on home turf!

It is of course the height of the European tragedy that such a moment be wasted on Josep Borrel and Ursula Von der Leyen – a Catalanian communist and an aristocrat from the landed gentry, respectively – when Brussels could have anti-communist heroes from (variously) the Baltics, the V4, former

Yugoslavia or even (!) East Germany. The fish rots from the head down, and so the careerists in charge will try to claim victory in solving this problem the way Brussels always deals with migrant crises – [Paying Erdogan](#) to solve it for them. Indeed, per the BBC interview it seems Lukashenko had reason to believe he might be cut into Erdogan's racket of hosting refugees in exchange for cold, hard cash.

Contributions to “global public goods” like running Internally Displaced People camps in Syria is all well and good for undemocratic but legitimate (in the eyes of the West) regimes such as Jordan and whoever it is running Lebanon this week. Lukashenko's attempt to deliver an in-kind emulation of Turkey's strategy (democratic but only debatably illegitimate), saw lines drawn along its NATO membership and heavy lifting – around 4m refugees on the Turkish side, and another 2m in IDP camps in the security corridor inside Syria. It is an open question whether this attempt by Belarus can be construed as a good faith attempt to ride the wave of sympathy for, say, afghans running away from the (undemocratic and illegitimate) Taliban regime, or if the intention really was to update the Mariel boatlift playbook, with low-cost airlines as geopolitical weapon.

An instructive bit of whataboutism Lukashenko wielded in the BBC interview – comparing police brutality in post-election protests to police brutality in the USA – should serve to remind that many of the anti-American slogans of today originated in KGB spin rooms dedicated to dividing America against itself, especially by racializing political conversation. An extended riff over the NGOs Lukashenko closed after the protests (“We'll massacre all the scum you have been financing”) shows where the battle lines are drawn in these 4th generation warfare schemes, culminating in an incisive comparison between [Macron's weaponizing](#) of migrants against London. Touché, said the body language of the interviewer, as well as the [27 drowned](#) in the English Channel this week. Whataboutism? What about it?

Teasing out these contradictions in our own paradigms is essential work, and we owe Minsk that much at least. Denying Lukashenko the same deal Erdogan gets is a tacit endorsement of Ankara's legitimacy, especially for those of us keeping score (surviving a coup is very good for ratings, you see). By way of revealed preference, it does serve to rank President Lukashenko, ordinally indexed on relevant normative distinctions, just above Nicolás Maduro (undemocratic, illegitimate and with a western-recognized government-in-exile).

A rough taxonomy, to be sure – but even Kim Jong-Un doesn't have a parallel president running around speaking for his State.

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The [featured image](#) shows a painting of Aleksandr Lukashenko by Garyck Arntzen; painted in 2021.

