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The Brilliance of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg

From the booklet *A Strong German Leader Is Imminent*

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By Brad Macdonald

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg is a man we have watched for several years and repeatedly identified as a likely candidate to become the prophesied strongman of Europe.

In early 2011, Mr. Guttenberg, serving as Germany's defense minister, was the most popular politician in the nation by a wide margin. He and his glamorous, articulate wife, Stephanie, were hailed as Germany's power couple. The media within Germany and beyond viewed Guttenberg as "chancellor in reserve," the man who would inevitably replace Angela Merkel at Germany's helm.

But in March 2011, Guttenberg resigned from the Bundestag and as defense minister after it was discovered that he had plagiarized his doctoral thesis. The media bashed Guttenberg for months, even long after his title had been removed and he'd been exiled from politics. Although his crime was serious, the ferocity of the attack on the aristocratic superstar seemed especially intense and bizarre.

Guttenberg moved his family to Connecticut, where he joined the think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies under the title "distinguished statesman." He also became an adviser to Neelie Kroes, vice president of the European Commission, on the issue of Internet freedom. It's a lightweight job that doesn't seem to have consumed too much time. Many German pundits felt Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg's career as a major politician in Germany was over.

But could there be another way of looking at this? Was Guttenberg's untimely departure from Germany's political scene a blessing in disguise?

Guttenberg Vs. Merkel

The contrast between Karl-Theodore zu Guttenberg and Angela Merkel is marked. He is a devoted Roman Catholic; she a somewhat diffident Protestant. He hails from the Bavarian rightist Christian Socialist Union; she from the more centrist Christian Democrats. He is a titled aristocrat; she hails from the working classes of East Germany. He is known for his decisiveness, for taking a position and not backing down easily; she has employed a leadership style which, in the words of *Times* journalist Roger Boyes, "waited for issues to cluster, tribal rows to reach critical proportions and only then would she intervene." Added to this is what Boyes terms "a certain furtiveness" in her dealings. Such an approach does not give the impression of strength in times of crisis. Rather, it gives "the impression of weakness" as she has always appeared "slow to deliver an opinion or enter a debate."

Shelter From the Storm

Guttenberg left public office just as Greece's debt crisis was peaking and at the point of forcing Germany and Europe into some divisive, deeply personal discussions. He left before unemployment in Europe became the time bomb it is today, and before the financial crises that now besiege Spain, Italy, France and other European states really set in. He was gone before the war on Libya, before the Syrian crisis, and before the 2013 German election. No politician in Germany or Europe has come through all this tumult unscathed, reputation intact, political career secure and bright. There's no doubt the plagiarism scandal hurt Guttenberg, but it also probably saved him from being wounded, perhaps fatally, in the crossfire of the past eight years.

The plagiarism scandal is now a memory, and Guttenberg has occupied his "downtime" brilliantly. His supreme goal likely remains to become chancellor or obtain a high-level position in Berlin or Brussels that sets him on that path. It appears that in pursuit of this goal, he has employed a three-pronged strategy.

A Triple Play

First, Mr. Guttenberg is refusing every opportunity to play a major official role in German or EU politics—at least for now. Under the right circumstances this could change, but currently he is happy to sit on the bench. That seems counterintuitive, but in politics—especially for an ambitious young politician—you have to play the long game. If you're watching politics in Europe and Germany, you readily see that the place is a minefield.

Europe's debt crisis, in particular, is a career killer that is still taking casualties. Name a German or European politician right now who is *genuinely* liked by the public. Angela Merkel *isn't genuinely liked*. Merkel might have the most important job in Europe, but it's also the most dangerous. The Continent is experiencing a complex and historic crisis—one that threatens the financial and political underpinnings of the EU and postwar Europe—one that increasingly pits the German public (anti-German intervention) against the rest of Europe (desperate for German intervention)—and one that will get much worse before it gets better. Angela Merkel has the impossible task of fixing Europe, *and in a way that satisfies everyone*. Guttenberg probably ultimately wants that position, just not right now.

Second, though he's avoiding public office, Guttenberg is maintaining a public image. Not in an obnoxious, gratuitous way. He is avoiding silly antics and superficial attention. He promotes his personality and politics widely but subtly, through diligent effort, meaningful projects and quality works.

This means writing thoughtful, articulate articles on key issues, articles that expose the weaknesses of opponents and sell himself as an intelligent politician with serious solutions. Guttenberg has also weighed in on such issues as Germany's national elections, the Syrian crisis, the need for greater German leadership in the world, and U.S.-German relations. In every case, his thoughts are insightful, original and infused with strength of opinion and leadership rare in today's world.

Maintaining his public image also means making the evening news and the pages of *Bild* and other papers, but only occasionally and only in narratives that build the Guttenberg brand. It means attending major conferences, giving lectures and delivering public speeches. Not on frivolous subjects, but on important subjects that Germans care about or ought to care about: German politics, the war in Afghanistan, German foreign policy, Europe's financial crises. His goal is to be seen, *but only as the solution and never as the problem*.

Third, he maintains intimate relations with political friends and allies in Germany and abroad. This means keeping abreast of all the major issues, keeping his finger on the pulse of German politics, and injecting himself into all the major conversations in Berlin. It means regular meetings, dinners and weekends with politicians, statesmen, journalists and businessmen from Berlin, Brussels and other world capitals.

One notable example of this third tactic was his meeting in Berlin in November 2013 with Angela Merkel. The meeting was unofficial and off the books; even the chancellor's closest allies were kept in the dark. It was an hour long—an eternity with someone of Merkel's stature—and its agenda was never formally disclosed. Although the talking points of this meeting remain secret, it showed that Guttenberg was no longer in Germany's political doghouse. In a way, it marked the return of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg to Germany's political fold.

Biding Time

By pursuing these three tactics, Guttenberg could be positioning himself to assume power when conditions are right. What will conditions have to be like for him to return? It's hard to say. It's not that the debt crisis would have to be over and Europe fixed. He would just have to see a clear and safe path toward his ultimate goal. So, whatever position he might accept, it would have to be significant, a guaranteed springboard into higher office, with minimal risk of tarnishing his reputation and handicapping his political aspirations.

But here's what may be the most brilliant part of his strategy: Executed right, it could even result in his being INVITED into a position of leadership!

Present conditions may be conducive to a major repent in Germany's public opinion on Guttenberg. Germans could see the man as repentant, having done penance for his mistakes and deserving of a second chance. Moreover, the need for his style of leadership is intensifying. Europe's domestic problems are growing. Vladimir Putin is ratcheting up efforts to revive the Russian empire. The Continent is demanding leadership from Merkel that she just doesn't have. Inside Germany, Merkel is seen to be holding the line, keeping problems at bay, *but not actually solving the issues*.

Political, financial and social conditions in Germany and Europe are creating a sharp demand for a strong, capable, inspiring, decisive dignitary who will actually lead Germany, and Europe, to a brighter, more hopeful place. Merkel's weaknesses are being increasingly exposed, which intensifies the calls for a leader of Guttenberg's heritage and caliber.

Daniel 8

The Bible prophesies that in the end time, immediately before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, a German-led, Catholic-inspired European superpower is going to appear. In Isaiah 10:5, for example, we read that God brandishes Germany as an instrument of correction upon the nations of Israel. "O Assyrian [modern-day Germany], the rod of mine anger," God says. Habakkuk also describes end-time events and specifically the resurrection of the "Chaldeans," a prophetic reference to the Holy Roman Empire. "For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs" (Habakkuk 1:6).

Daniel 7 and 8 provide further insight into this seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. In fact, these chapters describe specifically the appearance of an end-time antitype of Antiochus Epiphanes—the cunning, calloused Greek dictator responsible for inflicting terrible destruction on the Jews and Jerusalem in the second century B.C. Notice how the Bible describes this end-time Antiochus: "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of FIERCE COUNTERTENANCE, and UNDERSTANDING DARK SENTENCES, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many ..." (Daniel 8:23-25).

This man is discussed again in Daniel 11:21: "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he SHALL COME IN PEACEABLY, and OBTAIN THE KINGDOM BY FLATTERIES."

Notice how this man is characterized. He has a "fierce countenance," meaning he's mighty, powerful and cruel. He has an "understanding [of] dark sentences." As *Clarke's Commentary* says, he's "very learned and skillful in all things relating to government and its intrigues"—a skilled politician. He inherits the throne of Europe "peaceably," obtaining his kingdom by "flatteries." He's crafty and sly, with an engaging, attractive personality. The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary* says "the nation shall not, by a public act, confer the kingdom on him, but he shall obtain it by artifices, 'flattering.'" In other words, *a deceived public, or a group of European leaders, likely invites this man into power*.

We believe Baron Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg *could* be this prophesied end-time leader!

This man is young, highly intelligent, politically experienced, and a powerful orator with a movie-star appearance. He comes from Bavaria, a staunchly Catholic region, where he's long been an active and important member of the conservative Christian Social Union, sister party to Merkel's Christian Democratic Union. He and his wife have an intriguing and captivating family heritage. He belongs to a wealthy, aristocratic family whose bloodlines have been traced as far back as 1158. In 1700, Guttenberg's forefathers were conferred the title Baron of the Holy Roman Empire. Guttenberg is also related to the Habsburgs, another prominent royal dynasty that has a rich history with the Holy Roman Empire. Even today, he owns an impressive castle that sits high on a hill overlooking the village of Guttenberg, Bavaria. The lineage of his wife is equally impressive. Stephanie Gräfin von Bismarck-Schönhausen is the great-great-granddaughter of Otto von Bismarck, father of the modern German state and the first chancellor of modern Germany.

Continue to watch this man. Mr. Guttenberg might have been exiled from public office, but he hasn't frittered away his time since then, and hasn't left the public eye or escaped the public's curiosity. And don't assume his absence from German politics means his political star is waning. To the contrary, it's possible Guttenberg has employed a brilliant strategy that could well have put him in an ideal position for a political comeback.

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