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The Terminator Effect

The political victory of Austrian born Arnold Schwarzenegger in the gubernatorial elections in California reminded me of the presidential election in Poland in 1990 where I was one of the contenders.

Arnold much like myself in 1990 was brutally attacked by his opponents with accusations of presumed abuse of women and his hidden sympathies to Hitler. However unlike native Poles the Californians are well used to dirty political trickery and negative, mud slinging political campaigns. At the end Arnold with 3.6 million votes became the governor of California.

This California election grabbed media attention around the world. The election was unique not only because of the ethnicity and popularity of the movies of Mr. Schwarzenegger but also in the fact that Californians were not satisfied with their previously elected governor and decided to vote him out of office in the midst of his term.

Now, this is something that would not happen in Poland where elections are rigged by the post communist parties with the aid of proportional election law. Once they get any political post there is no possibility of recall of any dumb or mean moron. Not only that, the election law discriminates against Polish citizens who do not have residency in Poland as post communists are much afraid of any competition from savvy and capable outsiders no matter how good they are.

There is no doubt that a former body builder and popular movie actor with a thick German accent does not have much political experience. But Californians have voted him in and have given him the mandate to assemble a team that will solve their problems, mostly those of taxation and freedom to do business. Much like his compatriots in Austria I wish him well as this charismatic and outspoken man can show the rest of the world that a political outsider can do much good given the chance by people who voted him in.

If he is successful it will give hope and determination to people in other countries like Poland to press for election changes that do not allow proportional voting that permit a politician who gets a mere 100 votes to sit on the bench next to one who got over 100,000. Direct election law that considers the majority of votes is the only way to go. The California example has also shown people in other countries the great importance of a political recall.

In my political experience people can have successful political representation only by a method of successive approximation, which has indicated a need for a quick change of

politicians. Real life does not like political cronyism and abuse of power. Now in the tighter world economy with deflation already in place there is a need for faster changes and new politicians to face the hard realities of the world. Most of all honest politicians who can be trusted by people!

As the present popularity of a Premier of Poland oscillates between 12 and 14 percent I am sure that most Poles would love to have him recalled along with his entire government. But as I know Leszek Miller he will stubbornly continue to be a Premier to the end of his term. Even a popular uprising or revolution will not remove him from his post as he has the powers to declare Marshall Law in any given district or in the entire country. This is why election law that permits a recall is important to return power to the people in a truly democratic country.

Getting back to Arnold, he has the formidable task of bringing about major reform in California to solve many problems and to satisfy his electorate and his opponents. If you think that elections are hard, believe me the hard work starts the first day when you come to a new office. We can only wish him well as his success is important to us all, no matter where we live. Hasta la vista baby!

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