Golf and Politics

BY PETER VALK
Epoch Times Staff

For the past three days, two things have drawn my attention: the formation of a new Dutch government, and the world’s most prestigious golf tournament, the Ryder Cup, played in Wales. Whereas the first intrigued me in every possible sort of way, the second brought entertainment and a solution to the first. From now on I will proudly consider myself a European.

It took Dutch politicians about four months to form a new government after the elections in June. The Liberal VVD Party and the Christian Democrats CDA finally managed to form a so-called minority coalition that relies on parliamentary support of Geert Wilders’ anti-Islam Party (PVV). This unsuccessful construction was necessary because the parties that form the coalition government need to have a majority of votes in parliament.

This situation has put Geert Wilders, the most controversial politician in the Netherlands, in a very special position: he could pitch in into the coalition agreement in exchange for his support. Furthermore, he will be exempt from bearing the true responsibility, which governing entails because he won’t technically be part of the coalition government. He will have the freedom to mislead people as usual and if the government performs well, the credits will be his; if disaster occurs, which I expect, then Wilders’ hands are clean.

After the presentation of the new-coalition agreement, Wilders triumphantly estimated that there will be 40 percent fewer non-Western immigrants as a result of the tightened immigration policy, a huge step forward in his view. According to Wilders, there will be “unprecedented” measures to curb the migration flow of asylum seekers and those seeking to join the family. It sounds better.

An infamous immigration policy was the incorporation given to Wilders in order to form a government coalition. To me this says that people don’t care that much, or maybe they don’t realize what it really means, but I do. Practically, it means for me that it will become twice as hard to reconcile with my Chinese wife. Never mind that I am fully able to support my wife, have never asked for a penny from the state, and if disaster occurs, which I expect, then Wilders’ hands are clean.

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