

EUROPE IN 2001: IDENTITY, ARCHITECTURE, AND COMMITMENT

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**Europe in 2001:
Identity, Architecture, and Commitment***

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1. Introduction

My subject today is Europe, from an American point of view. This means I shall draw on recent American sources. My aim is:

- to postulate where Europe is today,
- to sketch where Europe is heading,
- to note the abiding American interest in Europe, and
- to point to common challenges.

Since we are in a university setting, I want to draw you into the discussion, and to draw out your views.

2. Where Was Europe a Few Years Ago?

In 1995 I looked at the core countries of Europe and examined three assumptions that seemed to underlie much of the European discussion--and also the discussion of Europe in the United States--that seemed to me shakier than commonly believed.¹ These assumptions were that:

- A European identity exists and can be defined.
- European institutions give voice and shape to this identity.
- Mutual commitments among European states give substance to the European identity.

I concluded that:

- Redefining Europe will take time; moreover, the process will be egocentric.
- States, more than international organizations, will be the building blocs of Europe.
- Mutual European commitments will gain new substance only gradually.

*Speaking notes for presentation at the School of Diplomatic Studies, University of Trieste, Gorizia, Thursday, March 22, 2001. This paper benefited from a perceptive review by my RAND colleague Stuart Johnson.

¹Europe in 1995: Identity, Architecture, and Commitment, RAND, P-7900, 1995.

For the United States, the lesson was that even as American policy must creatively address the issue of relations with and within European organizations such as NATO and the EU, much of the American core business with Europe--trade relations excepted--would continue to have to be conducted on a bilateral basis.

3. Where Is Europe Now?

Much has happened in the past few years. NATO and the EU have taken on new members. The door to NATO enlargement remains open. The EU is now committed to take in new members. However, the same three assumptions still underlie much of the discussion, and their validity remains as questionable as before.

The definition of Europe remains the underlying problem.²

- Though Germany has eased the conditions for acquiring citizenship, and despite enlightened calls for a more positive attitude, public opinion in EU countries remains generally hostile to immigration.
- NATO and EU enlargement are creating a constantly changing mix of outlooks and aspirations, among governments and people alike.
- Despite elaborate standards for admission, the NATO enlargement process remains an essentially political choice.³
- While EU countries have also established agreed standards for admission to the EU, the process also is essentially political. Moreover, there is disagreement on how these standards should be applied to current members, as shown by the precipitous EU reaction to the success of Joerg Haider's Freedom Party in the last Austrian national elections.

The EU today is many things, but it gives neither voice nor shape to a European identity.

- The EU Council at Nice last December nearly forgot its main objective, namely to open the door to the process of enlarging the EU by six members by 2003, and more later. Instead, it showcased the practice of haggling about real or perceived national advantage. For months, it was not possible to get a definitive text on what was agreed; the English and French versions differed.
- While absorbing the defense functions of the Western European Union (WEU), the EU came close to throwing out the baby with the bath water. Slowly, and with difficulty, it is trying to build a working coordination with NATO, starting anew a process the WEU had tried to establish some time ago.

²Felipe Gonzalez, "European Union and Globalization," Foreign Policy, No. 115, Summer 1999, p. 28 at p. 37.

³Howard Wiarda, "European Integration: Who's In, Who's Out, Who Sits and Waits?" in EES (East European Studies) NEWS, The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C., p. 3, January-February 2001.

- Furthermore, the EU has yet to work out definitively which of its organizational parts--the Council, the Commissioner for External Relations, or the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy--speaks for Europe, and by what agreed procedures. Nice deferred many of these choices. Working out these questions will take more time. Another EU Summit is scheduled for 2004.

Finally, there are serious questions about commitment to the EU on the part of Europeans whose loyalty to the idea of a European Union may not be more than skin deep.

- There is strong support for the EU on the part of most European political leaders. Economic and monetary union and the Euro have strong business support.
- However, many EU citizens feel the Commission is not responsive; they eye the Brussels EU bureaucracy with suspicion more than with acceptance. Public support for the EU has oscillated. The Danes at first voted against the Maastricht treaty. Britons have yet to express themselves on the Euro. And in the heart of Europe, but outside the EU, Swiss voters have just reaffirmed their opposition to joining the EU.
- The Commission is viewed as not democratically accountable.
- The slow pace of enlargement has caused deep irritation on the part of countries that are scheduled to be members of the EU one day.

4. What Europe Ahead?

Most of Europe in 2015 will be relatively peaceful and wealthy. Europeans will do extensive business with the rest of the world. Politically, however, it will be more inward-looking than is the case today. Europe's agenda will be to take advantage of globalization, to put into place the finishing components of EU integration, to sustain a strong information technology (IT) and science and technology (S&T) base to tackle changing demographics, and to wean the Balkans away from virulent nationalism.⁴

Europe must continue to cope with the issue of identity.

- Both NATO and the EU will add new members, but "it remains difficult to describe what might stand at the end of the process of European integration."⁵
- The notion of European identity will change further. There is neither enough space nor opportunity for the states of Europe to go it alone. "The nation was their past, and Europe must now be their future."⁶

⁴Global Trends 2015, A Dialogue About the Future With Nongovernment Experts, National Intelligence Council, Washington, D.C., NIC 2000-02, pp. 74-75, December 2000.

⁵Simon Serfaty, *Memories of Europe's Future*, CSIS, Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 5.

⁶Serfaty, p. 6.

- The conflicts ahead will be not so much between European states over boundaries, as within each state over what remains as its territorial sovereignty.⁷
- The EU will live by the core criteria it set for enlargement: stable, democratic institutions, a functioning market economy, and the capacity to compete within the Union.⁸
- But instabilities will continue to challenge the notion of European identity. These are not the consequences of the Cold War. Rather, they are the deferred consequences of pre- and post-World War II conditions that were badly handled in 1919 and became frozen in the ideological confrontation of 1945.⁹
- Finally, the issue of Russia's place in Europe will remain unsettled, and potentially unsettling. Between now and 2015, Moscow will be challenged to adjust its expectations for a European--indeed a global--role to its dramatically reduced resources. Most American experts regard as open the question whether Russia can make the transition of adjusting ends to means, as does the question of the character and quality of Russian governance.¹⁰ Moreover, the centrality of Moscow will continue to diminish, and by 2015 "Eurasia" will be a geographic term lacking a unifying political, economic, and cultural reality. Russia and the western Eurasian states will continue to orient themselves toward Europe, but will remain essentially outside of it.¹¹

As European institutions assume greater responsibilities for governance, they will also encounter growing obstacles.

- EU enlargement, institutional reform, and a common foreign, security and defense policy will evolve over the next 15 years, so that by 2015 the final contours of the European project are likely to be set. Having absorbed some ten additional members, the EU will have achieved its geographic and institutional limits.¹²
- As a consequence of long delays in gaining EU entry, and the aftereffects of actual membership, leaders in some Central and Eastern European countries will be susceptible to pressures from authoritarian, nationalist forces on both the left and the right. These forces will capitalize on public resentment about the effects of EU policy and globalization, including

⁷Serfaty, p. 6.

⁸Simon Serfaty, "United States and EU Enlargement: Bigger is Better," EURO-WATCH, CSIS, Issue Brief No. 1, p. 1, January 15, 2001.

⁹Serfaty, p. 17.

¹⁰Global Trends 2015, p. 17.

¹¹Global Trends 2015, p. 68; see also Gregory Treverton and Marten van Heuven, "Driving Forces of International Security," in *Toward the 21st Century: Trends in Post-Cold War International Security Policy*, Studies in Contemporary History and Security Policy, Vol. 4, Kurt R. Spillmann and Andreas Wenger, eds., Peter Lang, Bern, 1999, p. 107, at pp. 108-109.

¹²Global Trends 2015, p. 75.

unemployment, foreign ownership, immigration and cultural penetration.¹³

- The ongoing liberalization of finance and trade, and the opportunities created by information technology will give non-state actors greater resources and power. These groups will include the for-profit business sector, a nonprofit sector increasingly capable of designing and implementing policies, criminal networks, and traditional communal groups, both religious and ethnic-linguistic.¹⁴
- Moreover, the multiplicity of European institutions, special institutionalized arrangements (e.g., Permanent Joint Council, NATO-Ukraine Joint Commission) and regional groupings will blur lines of authority and action.

Ultimately, the commitment of European states and peoples to the notion of a common Europe cannot be assumed but will need to be proven over and over again.

- The idea of European unity will be weakened by the multiplicity of organizational arrangements, beset by bureaucratic procedures, hampered by a perceived lack of democratic responsiveness, and by historic apprehensions that would be accentuated by an economic downturn.
- Enlargement will be the yardstick for measuring Europe's commitment to the concept of European unity and for Europe's commitment to its share of global challenges. Failure to carry through on EU enlargement might renew instabilities within applicant states, restore a de facto sphere of Russian influence over some former Soviet republics and even former Warsaw Pact members, and widen the gulf between Europe and Islamic countries. Turkey poses a special challenge, given its strategic importance.
- The Grail of European unity will pose a dilemma. The move to enlarge the list of issues that can be decided by majority vote in the EU Council of Ministers is a sensible response to the need to get away from the stultifying requirement of unanimity. Yet it will enhance the prospect of an EU with differentiated structures and variable speeds. Flexible cooperation will mean in practice that some EU members will go ahead, while others do not.
- Within Europe generally, a process of differentiation among states according to membership in Europe's institutions, determined by national choice rather than institutional inclusion or exclusion may be the preferred model.¹⁵ However, given that the concept of a "peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe" has not been clearly defined, the issue of commitment to such a goal through a process of self-differentiation remains one for the future.

¹³Global Trends 2015, p. 75.

¹⁴Global Trends 2015, pp. 38-41.

¹⁵"Europe in the 21st Century," Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., November 7, 2000.

5. What American Role in Europe?

If I stop my remarks here, you might wonder why I came all the way to give you a picture that seems to point only to problems about Europe. But rather than stop at this point, as I did in 1995, I want to go on and comment on the American interest, and make my point: A strong sense of European identity, a sturdy European architecture, and a solid commitment to European integration are all in the American interest.

From an American point of view, Europe matters vitally, for two reasons. First, we want a Europe that is free, with democratic institutions, and a functioning market economy, as a basis for prosperity. When freedom was at stake in the last century, the U.S. committed itself repeatedly, in World War I, in World War II, and during the long period of the Cold War. Second, we face in the coming century new and difficult global challenges that neither the United States nor Europe can cope with by itself. We are each other's natural partners for the future, just as we have been in the past.

The reality of American interests in Europe is deep and their scope is wide. They flow from a relationship which involves:

- regional security interests shaped by two key states, Russia and Germany, each historically unsure of the other and traditionally viewed by their neighbors with apprehension
- the geopolitical interest of adding Europe's power to that of the United States, to address new global issues
- a full range of economic relationships going beyond commercial transactions
- societal interests and values that are not always common but that the U.S. and European democracies share more and more visibly with each other than with any other region.¹⁶

America must deal with Europe as it is. In 1995, that was the point of departure of my look at the three assumptions that seemed to drive thinking about Europe at the time. Today and tomorrow, the U.S. must also deal with Europe as it is.

But Europe is changing. And while the future of Europe is a matter for the Europeans, the United States plays an important role. And while the future of Europe is a matter for the Europeans, the United States has an important stake in how that future evolves.

Identity

Enlargement is transforming European identity. NATO has taken in as new members the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, countries which their people regard as the cradle of Europe. The United States has played a leading role in the enlargement of NATO. The door to new members remains open. The new administration in Washington will be called upon, particularly by aspirant members, to take the lead; it will have considerable influence in setting the agenda.

¹⁶Serfaty, pp. 16-17.

The EU has finally taken the decision to proceed in earnest with the challenge of taking in new members. This is a course successive administrations in Washington have consistently urged, as a matter of political necessity and as a safeguard for stability of the continent. As this process takes shape, feelings of belonging to a common culture, a common polity, and a common prosperity are forming the basis of unprecedented cooperation in Europe that is increasingly inclusive.

Architecture

The United States has also contributed to the creation of new organizational forms of cooperation--new architecture--and to the strengthening of existing ones. The Transatlantic Agenda with the EU, the NATO Partnership for Peace, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, the NATO-Ukraine Commission, and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council all bear marks of major American initiatives. Moreover, the United States plays an active role in adapting these institutions to tomorrow's requirements.

While the U.S. has strong--not to say vital--interests in the EU, how that organization evolves is for Europeans to decide. So Americans are not directly involved in issues that have kept the EU Council occupied at Nice last December: composition of the Commission, voting formulas in the Council, the powers of the EU Parliament, or the issue of drafting a European constitution. But the United States has an important stake in the result. That is why successive U.S. administrations have consistently urged the EU to enlarge, and by doing so recognize both the claims of would-be members to rejoin "Europe," as well as the political significance of signaling clearly that the countries in Eastern Europe, which by the turn of history were left aside, have an opportunity to join what has been created to such obvious benefit by their neighbors in Western Europe.

Commitment

Finally, when it comes to commitment, the United States has been there all along. America has supported the idea of European integration since its inception. It has found that European economic and monetary union was also a benefit to the United States, since it vastly expanded transatlantic trade and investment. The Single Market turned out not to be a protectionist "Fortress Europe" but instead enhanced the prospect of a stronger Europe that Americans desired. The advent of the Euro has, with few exceptions, been welcomed by American business, analysts and government alike. The Bush administration has made clear it welcomes the creation of a European defense force to deal with contingencies when NATO decides not to be engaged.

Moreover, Europe wants America. In my last four years in government, I visited virtually every European capital. I encountered a pervasive sense that the American presence in Europe was a key factor for stability, peace, and prosperity. To be sure, here have always been voices that have called for Europe to organize itself as if in competition with the United States for a global role. They can be heard today. But even in France, the public prefers to see the new European

defense force as a part of rather than separate from NATO.¹⁷ Most Europeans seem to feel that the European house runs better with some Americans in residence.

6. The Way Ahead

The end of the Cold War division of Europe has required the adaptation and restructuring of the transatlantic relationship. A central theme has been how Europe should do more, and how the United States should share more of the decisionmaking.¹⁸ This process is under way.¹⁹

America will not easily modify the habits of leadership in Europe that it acquired over half a century, when it carried ultimate responsibility for Europe's security in the face of the Soviet threat. There are substantial segments of leadership opinion in Washington, especially on Capitol Hill and in the Defense Department, that see the European defense effort as inadequate and European commitments as more rhetoric than substance. European calls to become a global counterweight to the United States also do not fall on willing ears in Washington.

What the United States is looking for instead is a counterpart. A recent bipartisan report to the President-elect, issued by RAND, makes a number of recommendations that reflect current informed American opinion:²⁰

- Since--apart from the United States--Western Europe (and, with enlargement, increasingly all of Europe) is the repository of the world's greatest concentration of economic capacity, military strength, and ability to undertake efforts in other regions, the new administration should begin a strategic dialogue directly with the European Union, in addition to the central U.S. strategic engagement with the NATO allies.
- The new administration should support the development of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and press the Europeans to accelerate force modernization.
- The U.S. should stay engaged in the Balkans (though the panel divided on the degree of U.S. military involvement).
- America should pursue a policy of anchoring Russia in the West.

The challenge for Europe will be twofold:

- To pursue European integration, and

¹⁷"Opinion Analysis," Office of Research, Department of State, M-80-00, June 14, 2000.

¹⁸This was the theme of *America and Europe*, David C. Gompert and F. Stephen Larrabee, eds., Cambridge University Press, 1997.

¹⁹How a new division of labor might look under various future circumstances is explored in Marten van Heuven and Gregory F. Treverton, *Europe and America: How Will the United States Adjust to the New Partnership?* Issue Paper, RAND, IP-171, 1998.

²⁰Transition 2001, RAND, MR-1306-RC, 2000.

- To take on the challenges that will face European interests, even beyond the continent. And that can be the subject for discussion another time.

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