

New Global Challenges and European Security

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Nicole Gnesotto

Regardless of the list that we will draw up of global challenges, and of those directly related to European security, it seems that two cross-cutting issues arise. The first concerns globalization. For the first time, we are facing non-Western globalization. What implications does this data have in terms of international security, international governance and European power? Will we take notice of this non-Western globalization, or will we continue to view ourselves as the global driving force? Is it Westernization of the world or globalization of the West? The readings are very different and more or less conflicting.

The second issue: it focuses on the future of security issues affecting the European Union. The major challenge to European security may not come from the outside, but from within. Is the European Union up for grabs? Would a populist or even fascist European Union be preferable to no Union? A provocative question, but such developments are not entirely unthinkable.

Julian, you were the first European Commissioner for the Security Union, the Commission invented the position for you... And you may be the last European Commissioner for the United Kingdom, which puts you in a privileged position to tell us about the global challenges seen both from the UK and the European Union. Jean-Louis Bourlanges had a notable phrase about Brexit: "Before Brexit, Great Britain had one foot out and one foot in; after Brexit, it will be exactly the opposite."

Europe faced with a new world

Julian King

We face global international threats that often target the West, and often Europe and our values. To combat such threats, for example terrorist or

cyber, European cooperation between countries sharing the same values is crucial. If Europeans are asked to make a list of their concerns before the European elections, security, the fight against terrorism, against cyberthreats and fake news are at the top of the list.

We have made some progress in recent years in the fight against terrorism, by blocking access to arms and funding. We are developing our resilience to avoid the worst; we have strengthened our external borders; we are acting upstream to fight against radicalization that leads to violence. Online radicalization remains a big problem. France is quite advanced in this area and against this type of threat, but we must still work together. We have created an actual European security agency, which will work with national agencies to increase the level of cybersecurity of all our infrastructure, but also of connected objects that will be increasingly targeted.

We have also stepped up our fight against disinformation, in election times but also in everyday political life. The risk of disinformation before the European elections is huge, and that is why we have increased joint work between member states, with an election security network and a network against disinformation. We are working with civil society. Cooperation between the private and public sectors is essential. For the first time, we have also developed a code of good conduct intended to increase our cooperation to fight against this type of threat. Domestic security also depends on the situation outside of our borders, and we are bolstering cooperation in the area of defense.

The resilience of our critical digital infrastructure is a European issue. We have to change our way of approaching these problems: if each country makes unilateral decisions, we could end up one day with a single supplier for our entire continent, which undoubtedly would be a risk.

As for Brexit, I hope that we will remain partners, come what may, not only in combatting all these threats, but in managing environmental issues or globalization. We should try to find a way to cooperate on Iran, the Middle East and China even after a possible Brexit.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno

Europe has lost its ideological centrality. Universalists, the Europeans wanted to make the world a great Europe. Universalism is now turning against us: it's the world that will change Europe. This creates a lot of anxiety, for example with the issue of migrants. Europe has also lost its

strategic centrality. During the Cold War, there was no doubt that the strategic balance of the world was decided on European territory. Nowadays, Europe is a huge market, but nobody thinks that the world's strategic future is at play in the European theater, if only because no clash has been experienced between two ideologies.

Preserving European exception

So, the world is much more difficult for us to define. This creates a feeling of uneasiness and vulnerability in alliances – we talked about the Atlantic Alliance this morning. And perhaps the Trump administration is an anomaly, with its way of presenting the ideological side of things...

From a strategic perspective, Europe will never again have the role it had in the global geostrategic balance during the Cold War. Hence, the inevitable feeling of insecurity for the Alliance, which was supposed to last whatever happens. This feeling of insecurity affects societies themselves. It is linked to a loss of ideological reference points, that to a certain extent explains their great vulnerability to terrorism, and above all its psychological impact. The emotional impact of terrorism gives it a strategic dimension.

What can we do about it? When you live outside of Europe, Europe is a truism, with its relationships regulated by law, its balance between market and social protection, its respect for other values than money. But, when you arrive in Europe, you can see this evidence of Europe is hardly shared by Europeans.

Europeans are not aware of the exception they represent in the world, and that they must preserve. First necessity: Europeans must care for themselves, not by retreating, but by realizing that they have something to defend. It seems to me that the priority is consolidating this Europe in its specificity. If we do not do this, it will weaken. We must consolidate what we are in order to protect ourselves from those who exploit our weaknesses. Outside companies that want to exploit the divisions will have more difficulty weakening a united Europe. Russia, for example, has clearly understood that it is cheaper to exploit weaknesses than to build up its strength.

One of the reasons for the current European crisis is that Europe remains retrospective. It needs to look further afield, to see China not as an enemy, but as an attractive model. With its mixture of strong growth and political stability, China is fairly attractive for countries that don't

want to open up too much, but want to emerge from poverty. We have to look at what is happening, to know how to offer viable models – and I am thinking here, of course, about Africa where the attempt should be made, sometimes in cooperation with China, sometimes in competition with it.

Europe should consider the question of legitimacy vis-à-vis the world. The world is in trouble, because it no longer knows where this legitimacy comes from. We can see it in France with the political representation crisis. If you look at the Middle East, which is of course a key area, it is undergoing a legitimacy crisis in practically all of its countries; a crisis aggravated by the positions of the United States, which is throwing the Security Council Resolutions (see for example Resolution 242) in the bin. The loss of reference points causes crises to worsen.

And we know that multilateralism is also in crisis. When the Europeans defend it, we may suspect them of defending a situation where they have a major part. Therefore, they must invent a means to work with all powers that do not accept multilateralism today.

Wolfgang Ischinger

I am not going to refer to the list of threats and challenges facing Europe. I would like to emphasize another point: in the years to come, when we talk about European and international security, technological issues will first be involved: cyber technology, artificial intelligence, etc.

Europe against the international “jungle”

An American friend published: *The Jungle Grows Back*.¹ But the European Union’s purpose is primarily to fight for the rule of law, multilateralism, for an international system that definitely does not resemble a jungle.

This morning, Igor Yurgens accused us of a certain spinelessness. What allows him to say that? First, the fact that the European Union is not united. It is divided and is not playing the role that it should be, namely that of an institution representing 500 million Europeans in confronting international major challenges. This is why the *status quo* is not acceptable. In Germany, however, it is customary to say that the *status quo* is not so bad: I think on the contrary that it is not acceptable. We need fundamental changes, and that is why I wanted to welcome President Macron to Munich, with his proposals to drive Europe forward.

1. R. Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2018.

What to do? The decision-making process in the European Union is clearly insufficient. I don't understand why we could not move from consensus to majority voting in the area of foreign affairs, as in other areas. If we cannot make a courageous decision, Europe will never be respected and will not be able to act in a world increasingly dominated by the rivalries of the great powers.

Second comment: what round-table discussion do we want to have, when we think about the Europe of the future? After Brexit, if it occurs in the coming months, we will need a renewed approach, and I don't think that the European Union can play any role supporting international security if the United Kingdom is not at the table. Chancellor Merkel raised the idea of a European Security Council some months ago, which could be a useful factor in this process of reflection. How can a non-member state be included in the EU's security policy?

A final word on multilateralism. How to value it? How to ensure that it moves beyond speeches and promises? How can the solidarity between EU member states and other close but non-member states (Canada and Australia) be reflected? If we want to promote multilateralism, we must invest more in institutions that already exist: the European Union, NATO, United Nations, OSCE, etc. A Europe playing its role in the world is a Europe that protects the rule of law, defends multilateralism, is a strong Europe defending the interests of 500 million Europeans.

Nicole Gnesotto

But can we defend Western multilateralism in globalization driven by non-Western countries? And there is a significant person missing from this debate: Donald Trump...

Nathalie Tocci

What is called the liberal international order in the world of think tanks no longer exists. Every order is the product of an era. The one we described as liberal international included the United Nations, international organizations, international law, the European Union, and different forms of regional integration. It was an order based on a configuration of power that established the United States as the hegemonic power of the Free World during the Cold War and of the entire world after the collapse of the Soviet empire. This configuration of power is being radically changed, with a transfer of Western powers to other actors, particularly China. Power itself is rapidly changing: it is spread differently, with globalization and the fourth industrial revolution.

We already know all this. The question to be addressed is that of the consequences. The realist thinker will be inclined to say that we will now live in a world where, for example, trade conflicts will increase, at the initiative of countries like the United States and China. The last year has highlighted what the technological dimension of such conflicts can be, and it is obvious that the specter of military conflict cannot be excluded. The liberal thinker will say that, for them, the organizations of international law have been weakened. International treaties are abandoned, with, for example, the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

A new Europe for a new multilateralism?

We are back to multilateralism. Does all this mean that it is impossible in this time of radically changing balance of power? No. It will probably be less stable and more disputed tomorrow; but the international system, which will be more inclusive, will no doubt have the capacity to adapt to the inevitable changes, and will therefore be more resilient.

The stakes are high for Europe. The very project, the *raison d'être* of the European Union is also radically changing. The role of the European project can no longer simply be to bring peace to the continent, or to create a single market. With the changing balance of power, the European Union's *raison d'être* is becoming global. In the new world, size counts much more than previously – and we Europeans, separated, are very small.

Therefore, we must move forward towards systematic integration in security and defense. Protecting our interests and values can only be done collectively. We can already see it in the commercial field or in the digital field. Furthermore, we must be aware that there is sometimes a “West” and sometimes not. Everything depends on the questions and challenges at the time in question. Each problem must be dealt with separately, examining what multilateral grouping may be useful for solving it. The grouping required to progress the Iranian issue is not the one that can work for Ukraine. We must therefore be more creative and find the most appropriate form of multilateralism each time.

Finally, flexibility and inclusiveness must be combined. It is clear that the multilateralism of the future will have to adapt to the speed and flexibility of political choices. Therefore, we must ensure that the groupings created are limited enough to be agile and flexible, but large enough to be representative, and that their links with the organizations involved

(European Union, United Nations, etc.) gives them the necessary legitimacy.

Nicole Gnesotto

Hubert Védrine, you invented “the American hyperpower” and “Fantasy Land Europe”. Is this pair of terms still relevant for thinking about the world?

Hubert Védrine

Regarding American hyperpower, when I described it this way in the 1990s, I was told it was exaggerated or even aggressive. When we now see the United States’ capacity – even regardless of Trump – to take hostage the entire digitalized, dollarized, deregulated, global economy through shocking extraterritorial laws, we can really talk about a hyperpower. As for “Fantasy Land Europe”, I would like to be leaving this behind. European civilization is in danger. If we cannot manage to organize the necessary leap, in 10, 15 or 20 years, Europe will no longer decide anything. Europe manages the decisions made by others: Americans, Chinese, Russians, Turks, Saudi Arabian Wahhabis, African traffickers, GAFAs, etc.

A displaced and endangered Europe

A long time ago, I said there was a real danger of Europe becoming the global village idiot – it was then more in relation to the commercial aspect, with our lack of industrial policy. I would like to be leaving this behind. When Ms Merkel said, after having met Trump, a year and a half ago: “We can’t really rely on them, we must organize ourselves”, there should have been an extraordinary European summit within the week. Sigmar Gabriel, former leader of the SPD, added: “We are geopolitical herbivores in a world of geopolitical carnivores, we will soon be vegans and then prey”. The risk is real, because all of the powers in the world – about 15 – consider Europe as nothing, or as an economic space, like a supermarket. When European regulations are a bit inconvenient, they get around them, and, if Europe persists, they break them.

Europe’s enemies don’t even need to target it as such, since the Europeans are divided on these international issues. The European project was originally under US protection with the Marshall Plan and NATO. It’s a single market. It’s only France that is holding hundreds of symposia on Euro-power. This Euro-power doesn’t exist.

Trump may still be in office for six years. The global right-mindedness of American Democrats, progressives, liberals, internationalists, and idealists is therefore not enough: Trump is here, he has results and he

impresses people; he even has the support of a few Democrats. He can get other results and, in the period that is opening up, the positions will be defined in relation to him. He may be right on some points, or be wrong, but we have to “deal with it”. Those who will be tempted to maintain global thinking separate from Trump will be few, particularly in Europe. And this is totally disintegrating for Europe.

What we are experiencing is the end of Western monopoly, and it’s complicated to manage. It’s hard and it will be even more so in the future. I don’t believe in the standard response of integration. I’m not against it, but the European elites have been highlighting it for many decades. The result is that anti-Europeans and skeptics are everywhere. The genuine conventional pro-Europeans are now in the minority. And I’m not even talking about the federalists, who only exist in think tanks and never among the population. Should we resign ourselves to admitting that Delors’ formula was right: a “federation of nation-States”?

In 50 years, there will still be Germany, Finland, etc, but it will be the nations that have forged an unprecedented innovative relationship together. Delors also talked about subsidiarity, an old Christian theological term, which means that we don’t do at European level what we can do at a lower level. He said this to contain his troops, to restrict the excessive regulating machine that Juncker speaks of.

I think that the elites must stick with the European people. We must stop despising sovereignty and security. We must distinguish the real dangerous extremism, which is impossible to redeem, from populism, which is simply the by-product of a feeling of abandonment. If we can do this, we will get back all those who have become skeptical of the European idea. We must speak differently. And we have to identify a goal.

Using the multilateralism to preserve Europe

Multilateralism is a method. You cannot aim to be multilateralist. Furthermore, we have never been completely so. Only the countries that have given up power can really be multilateralist, the smallest countries that have no choice. The others, which are powers to some extent, play the multilateralism card, and then give up before the end. Clinton was quite sincere when he said: “Whenever there is a problem, we try to solve it with our friends, our allies, and if it doesn’t work, we act alone”. Some large European countries, which still exist, think in this way. Yes, it’s best to practice multilateralism, especially if you find people to practice it with you, but you cannot make it an end in itself.

For me, the purpose is to make it clear that it is a matter of preserving the autonomy and specificity of European civilization in 10, 20 or 30 years. And, consequently, identify the necessary roadmaps, point by point, technological, legal, etc. in relation to the United States, Russia, Turkey, China, Israel, Saudi Arabia, African migrant traffickers, GAFA. We are starting from very far back. The term “European sovereignty” that President Macron uses is an ambition that has almost no content today. It will have to be built step by step. How do that? We will need somewhat ruthless leaders; we will not do it without a crisis. We must create new ideas and not new procedures. The mission of the leaders in office is to get Europeans out of a kind of strategic lethargy, to shock them, to alarm them by proposing roadmaps. We need a mental awakening. We need therapists and not communicators.

Nicole Gnesotto

I would not say that 70 years of integration have created anti-European feeling; but 70 years of purely economic integration uncoupled from all political meaning, yes! Europe addressed consumers, and never European citizens, because the member states did not want to. This lack of political integration, of political meaning, is now creating the disavowal of a significant part of the population.

Julian King, with or without Brexit, could the developments in the world lead the UK to finally say that the formation of a continental power would be desirable for its own interests?

What subjects should Europe take action on?

Julian King

It is the member states that will remain at the forefront to ensure our citizens’ security. But there are things we can do together against the common threats. We can talk about “integration”, but sometimes it is better to use the term “enhanced cooperation”.

I am also not as pessimistic as Hubert Védrine about the idea of Euro-power. We are going to remain a normative, legal and political power. I would like us to remain a technological power. It is the Europeans who are setting standards applicable everywhere, to protect data around the world. Just like they are trying to respond, with regard to social media, to the need for transparency in the political field and to the need to control illicit and hateful content. On the issue of the security of critical digital infrastructure, the debate is most advanced in Europe. It is easy to say that you should not buy from China, but it is more difficult to achieve.

Admittedly, we need real debate on the security challenges, but the Europeans are often at the forefront of these debates.

I have only one single remark regarding Brexit: we must not think of it as Britain's sudden withdrawal from the European Union. I have even read articles criticizing the perspective on the other side of the Channel, of a rogue state, which outside of Europe might ally itself with Trump, the Chinese and the Russians against the European Union! This is ridiculous.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno

Europe must be a moral anchor in globalization. Europe was made by avoiding politics, because we tried politics and it was a failure. Therefore, for decades we have avoided the political issue. Nowadays, we can no longer avoid it. We must tackle it head on – and it is a difficult debate. The question of procedures can become an alibi. In reality, the Europeans must leave behind the idea that they can live in an enclave. They must be aware of the risks; that the world is not waiting for them either demographically or economically; and if they don't take charge they will gradually be marginalized. As they have a lot of capital, they will remain rich for a long time, as spectators of their destiny.

We can have discussions about procedures, try to progress things institutionally, but above all we need to take action on projects that affect citizens. We talked about artificial intelligence; here we must “do all we can”. The figures show Europe's extraordinary tardiness in this area.

We must take action in a number of areas, where a European dimension can make a difference. On security issues, we must think about capability and willingness. Europe will be made on crises that will cause Europeans to come together. If we want to make policy, we must act politically, reason and react to the political issues that concern citizens. We will not only unite Europeans around the fact that they are rich and protected. We must make them understand that they must react without panicking.

Europe is also a certain ethical vision of the world, and above all of countries that practice democracy. And yet, Europe teaching lessons to the rest of the world is not a good thing. Multilateralism generates norms that are first and foremost rules of international law, and that everyone, at one time or another, rejects with hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is certainly the tribute of vice to virtue, but nowadays this tribute is no longer paid. It is dangerous, because it means that the feeling of the very existence of limits disappears. Among Europeans, an element of hypocrisy and an element

of truth will survive; and they will have to continue fighting for a number of principles that have protected them overall, and that protect the world. They can forge alliances around this.

Many medium-sized countries are now seeing that the world cannot be dominated by just a few big sharks. They want a world of rules. In this regard, Europe can ally itself with them; we are already seeing it at the United Nations. A Europe that only thinks in terms of (false) *realpolitik*, ignoring international law, would not make friends. What the rest of the world expects from Europe is also that it is the advocate for institutions built in past decades, and that have served peace, despite their imperfections and their hypocrisies.

Nicole Gnesotto

Is this very French idea – since General de Gaulle – of an awakening of Europe that could take charge of its destiny, shared by the Germans? Is Germany ready to take on the idea that Europe must assume its political destiny to exist in future decades in the face of predators from all sides?

The European Union is not the problem but the solution

Wolfgang Ischinger

This will not happen in a few days. However, Chancellor Merkel herself publicly stated that the world was changing and we could not continue to believe that relying on the United States would be enough in the face of the next crisis. The shock required for awakening is not yet strong enough, therefore it will still take time...

As for the Trump phenomenon, it is important to understand that the United States is not only Trump. In Munich two months ago, we welcomed 53 US Congress members – including 15 senators, with the others being representatives – all of whom came to publicly affirm US support for NATO and transatlantic relations. It was a very strong demonstration, going beyond what we expect every day from the White House.

It is important that our citizens understand that the European Union is not the problem, but indeed is part of the solution. In the area of defense, we have the luxury of having 28 members with a total of 180 large weapon systems (planes, tanks, ships, etc). We are spending very inefficiently. If we bought together, in cooperation, we could expand our capacities without spending more. We must establish the idea that the European Union can protect its interests, its borders, and respect its obligations towards its partners.

Nathalie Tocci

The European Union cannot exist in an international system that may not be multilateral. And the European Union cannot become “fascist”. Moreover, the nationalists can admire each other, but they don’t seriously know how to cooperate: Matteo Salvini and Marine Le Pen, for example, are not agreed on how to manage immigration, or on fiscal policies, etc.

The European Union can be seen as the most radical form of multilateralism. And in this regard, the Iranian nuclear agreement is not only important, because it relates to non-proliferation, but because it is a multilateral agreement rooted in international law.

Hubert Védrine

The issue of data protection is a concrete demonstration of how we can give meaning to the concept of European sovereignty. This is an opportunity to specify that, when I talked about “excessive regulation”, I was not talking about the first 30 years (1957-1986). However, the federalists themselves dispute what happened after the European project: they did not imagine an over-regulating machine. It is the excessive standardization in the Single Market that has created dissatisfaction.

When we say that Europe is a way of working together in harmony, as we are more effective together, I say well done. However, Europe must not exist for us on the pretext that we would be “too small”. It is not true that we are too small; otherwise Israel or Singapore would have disappeared. We must not demotivate our peoples.

As Angela Merkel suggested a few years ago in her Bruges speech, both methods probably need to be combined. In any event, we must not give people the feeling that we are moving forward without them. If we talk about completely overhauling Schengen, like President Macron, it is obvious that we can only do this by combining European responsibility for the future and that of nation-states.

Finally, I obviously agree with the fact that, even if the UK leaves the Union, it must be kept in a European, strategic entity; for example in the framework of a Security Council, where it would be united with France, Germany and others.