THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE WORLD:
FORCE FOR GOOD OR SPENT FORCE?
- A REVIEW ESSAY –

June 2014

Marc Bentinck

Weatherhead Fellow 2013-2014

Table of Contents

Abstract

By all accounts, the euro crisis and challenges to the process of European integration have combined seriously to undermine Europe's stature in a rapidly changing world where rising powers are coming to the fore. Taking Europe's present-day 'crisis' as their point of departure, five believers in 'Europe' present their partly converging, partly diverging views on the uncertain prospects of the European project. Four of them do so by offering often wide-ranging considerations on the past, present and possible future of the European Union, while the fifth author locates a core weakness of European integration in the inner workings of the Union. In comparing their respective analyses, this review essay concentrates on the external aspects of 'Europe's crisis', using a thematic approach. Having taken stock of the authors' views on Europe's common foreign and security policies, it offers a number of concluding considerations as a counterpoint to a perhaps all too readily posited 'decline' of Europe.

Introduction: five publications, three themes

In all probability, the EU will end in a breakdown, but there are always retarding circumstances.

- Walter Laqueur, *After the Fall – The End of the European Dream And the Decline of a Continent,* 2011, p. 292.

This review essay takes as its point of departure what has now for some time been called *the crisis of the European Union*. As could be expected, this crisis has prompted an abundant literature, comprising both books and articles in journals dedicated to international and European affairs. Many of these began to appear in the wake of the global financial upheaval of 2007-2008, which successively created severe financial liquidity shortages; started destabilising major European banks; provoked a serious recession in the euro zone followed by a surge in government borrowing; and affected the ability of certain euro zone governments to service their debts – thus threatening the viability of the euro and suggesting, by implication, that the European integration project at large was under fire. This essay looks at a small but high-quality sample of the literature on offer .

In reviewing these publications, this essay will largely limit itself to the external dimension of the crisis which has shaken the European Union (EU). How do the authors in question assess the EU's diminishing stature in the world despite the steady build-up of its foreign policy ambitions and machinery since the 1991 Maastricht Treaty?

Publications for review

The following titles[1] have been selected for review:

- Christopher Bickerton, *European Integration – From Nation-States to Member States*;

- Jürgen Habermas, *The Crisis of the European Union – A Response*;

- Walter Laqueur, *After the Fall – The End of the European Dream and the Decline of a Continent*;

- David Marquand, *The End of the West – The Once and Future Europe*;

- Richard Youngs, *Europe's Decline and Fall – The Struggle Against Global Irrelevance.*

Admittedly, this selection of titles reflects little geographical spread: looking at the authors' origins, no less than three are British, while the two other ones are German and American. On the other hand, all five books seem prompted by their authors' genuine sympathy for Europe's integrationist project. At the risk of arbitrariness, the books have been chosen on account of their timely, insightful, original and at times passionate analyses of the EU's performance, which in the view of this writer make them stand out among various other publications on that same subject. The books also distinguish themselves by their broad-ranging approach. While differences of focus exist between them, all six publications show that Europe's internal and external destinies are heavily inter-connected. In sum: further integration is increasingly dictated by the dynamics of a fast

---

[11] Christopher J. Bickerton, *European Integration – From Nation-States to Member States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Jürgen Habermas, *The Crisis of the European Union – A Response* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012); Walter Laqueur, *After the Fall – The End of the European Dream and the Decline of a Continent* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2011); David Marquand, *The End of the West – The Once and Future Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Richard Youngs, *Europe's Decline and Fall – The Struggle Against Global Irrelevance* (London: Profile Books, 2011).

globalising world, just as much as a stronger and self-confident Union should be able to shape the forces of globalisation consistent with its values and interests. Against this common background, each of the authors explores different aspects of the European project, past present and future.

Christopher Bickerton delves into the engine rooms of the European integration process, offering new conceptual insights into the ways in which the EU member states have been interacting over the years to produce what is now known as the EU. Grand old man Walter Laqueur presents an American, and in his case admittedly gloomy, perspective on what he sees as a troubled continent facing an uncertain future. David Marquand offers a sweeping and erudite historical and contemporary analysis of the big issues – ethnicity, identity, territory, civilisation – shaping Europe's future or lack thereof. Jürgen Habermas, that other grand old man, sees the EU's financial crisis as the imperative signal for it to reconnect with its emancipatory potential – a potential geared to realise a cosmopolitan world order based on human rights and dignity. This is echoed by Richard Youngs, where he calls upon the EU to develop a new 'cosmopolitan strategy' designed to reverse Europe's decline on the world stage.

Out of these five authors, four pronounce themselves explicitly on EU foreign policy – Europe's Common Foreign and Security Policy and its Common Security and Defence Policy, abbreviated into the acronyms CFSP/CSDP. Bickerton and Youngs do so elaborately, devoting much space to the nature and the mechanics of Europe's external policies. Laqueur and Marquand discuss EU foreign policy as part of their respective, wider-ranging arguments. The fifth author, Habermas, hardly dwells on EU foreign policy as a distinct subject in this particular essay[2]. He has nevertheless been included in this review on account of his visionary – some would say utopian – call for a democratic world order. As he sees it, a EU chastened by its own financial crisis should help advance this order - presumably

---

[2] Habermas does, however, dwell, at length on foreign policy in relation to the EU in his *Ach, Europa. Kleine politische Schriften XI* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010).

by putting its foreign policy at the service of "global political coordination", in time leading to "global domestic politics"[3].

Three themes

As stand-alone analyses, the five books in question each make their case persuasively enough. But complementary as the various analyses and recommendations provided clearly are, they also could be put into a broader perspective by seeking to bring out some common underlying themes. Accordingly, this comparative review will be organised around the following three themes: *'un-strategic' Europe; identity-seeking Europe; declining Europe?*

These themes have been chosen because they conveniently capture and order the wealth of considerations put forward by our five authors. Certainly Laqueur, Marquand and Youngs frame their arguments in terms of these three themes. Following a different line of thought, Bickerton sheds his own light on 'strategicness' and 'identity'. Strategic purpose and identity are also very much present in Habermas' work, where he calls upon the EU's to live up to its emancipatory essence as a moral imperative. No attempt is made here to analyse how the three themes relate analytically to each other. Suffice it to observe that the absence of strategic purpose can be indicative of a wider identity problem, while both in turn may or may not be a manifestation of decline.

- **'Un-strategic' Europe**
  With the European project seemingly running out of steam, would Europe also have lost its sense of strategic direction – if it ever had one, in terms of a unifying determination in the service of shared political objectives? Europe's drift would be particularly apparent in the realms of foreign affairs, security and defence, where the EU and its member states face an international environment which is becoming decidedly harsher. Europe's resulting vulnerability is not for a lack of ' instruments' or even ' strategies'. One would argue that the Europeans have too many of those, judging by

---

[3] Jürgen Habermas, pp. 110, 56.

the uninterrupted flow of "ersatz documents"[4] generated by 'Brussels': 'vision documents', '(grand) strategies', 'speeches','programmes', 'projects', 'orientations'…The question would then be: (1) why does this impressive array of tools not deliver a purposefulness commensurate to Europe's intrinsic stature?; (2) can the CFSP/CSDP be turned around so that Europe no longer opts out of the global political fray and, instead, weighs in to help shape it? These questions are at the core of the arguments developed by Marquand, Laqueur and Youngs.

- **Identity-seeking Europe**
  For the European project to overcome its manifest fragility, it ultimately would have to come to life in the affections of the Europeans, thus becoming part and parcel of their identity. Does the CFSP/CSDP, as it presently functions, promote such an identity or does it detract from it? The question must be considered against a background of widespread scepticism concerning the EU's CFSP/CSDP. It would be a 'fair weather sailor', succeeding only superficially in projecting European values and policies into the world. Its performance would be weak - a weakness that essentially proceeds from its bureaucratic-artificial nature. The policy itself would be a laboriously constructed amalgam of often diverging national interests of the EU member states, in which the lowest common denominator would reign supreme. Should a high-end security crisis hit Europe, the CFSP/CSDP in all likelihood would prove ineffectual as a framework for committing troops to battle – the litmus test for any credible security and defence policy. In other words, there would be no readiness to 'die for Brussels'. In light of its obvious weaknesses, what identity-building role can still be expected of the CFSP/CSDP? While a definitive answer will probably remain elusive for some time to come, Bickerton, Habermas, Marquand and Youngs do shed light on the issue. Examining the mechanics of the CFSP/CSDP, Bickerton offers perceptive explanations for the CFSP/CSDP's manifest lack of resonance with European publics. Habermas,

---

[4] Jan Techau, 'The Strategic Europe Yardstick', in Jan Techau (ed.), *Strategic Europe* (Brussels: Carnegie Europe, 2012), p. 157.

5

on his part, re-affirms his belief in 'more Europe' in the face of the euro crisis – 'more Europe' meaning also an identity-building European foreign policy. But for 'more Europe' also to be the 'right Europe', the European project must be 'internalised' in the minds of the Europeans through the realisation of its democratic potential. A call to action of a different kind is offered by Marquand: if Europe is to catch up with the forces of globalisation, it should reconstruct its understanding both of itself and of its place in the world – and adapt its foreign policy accordingly. Youngs, on his part, sees the CFSP/CSDP lately making the wrong sort of contribution to a European identity badly in need of rekindled liberal values.

- **Declining Europe?**
  To what extent do calls for Europe's CFSP/CSDP to 'get strategic' and to pursue 'comprehensive approaches' amount to barking up the wrong tree, if one takes the measure of Europe's long decline ? According to the 'declinist' school of thought, Europe's loss of influence in the world did not begin with the euro crisis. It is essentially the continuation of a gradual fading-out arising out of two destructive world wars – a process which was only temporarily arrested after 1945 by a resurgent, democratic and prosperous Europe peacefully working at its unification under the benevolent protection of American power. However, with the unleashing of the forces of globalisation in the 1990s and, more recently, the manifest retrenchment of the United States after two costly engagements 'out-of-area', a divided Europe is discovering that it is more on its own than it would like in facing up to a definitely unfavourable global correlation of forces. This means, all other things being equal, that Europe's marginalisation can be expected to continue - perhaps even accelerate, depending on whether or not the Europeans manage to stage successful tactical retreats. The question then is: if decline there is, how can the Europeans best deploy their foreign policy? This question certainly matters to Youngs, who as convinced believer in the European project seeks to map out, against all odds, a positive future for the old continent. Laqueur, on his

part, takes a more sceptical view, consonant with his wider disenchantment with the European project.

The conclusion will offer a number of observations as a counterpoint to a perhaps too readily posited 'decline' of Europe. Essentially, three factors will be recalled which, together, would point towards a somewhat more positive outlook for the EU, and its international role in particular. First, the European project may recover (some of) its earlier dynamism. Second, any decline on the part of the EU would at least partly be offset by its membership in a wider, transatlantic community. Third, mindful of the conjectural nature of 'decline' as an explanatory concept, Europe's present travails may not necessarily signal an impending demise of the European project. All in all, its unique features would tend to lend a greater than expected resilience to the European project in today's fast moving and unpredictable world. In such a world, Europe's particular brand of diplomacy may have a more than functional role to play.

1. EU vocabulary

Our five authors recurrently refer to ***the European project; European foreign policy; member states policies; hard power, soft power***; and ***European crisis*** - terms which will also be used in reviewing their arguments. Taken together, they tend to contextualise many of the theses developed by the authors. Accordingly, a brief prior discussion of these terms may be conducive to our understanding of points made by the authors.

- ***The European project***: this notion refers to the process of European regional integration, as it has developed since the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. Over the years, there has been an abundance of theories seeking to fathom the deeper *ratio* of this process. Who are the driving forces behind European integration: non-state actors as the neo-functionalists argue, or nation-states as the intergovernmentalists would have it? More recently, this dichotomy has been supplemented, if not complicated, by alternative theories about the

EU[5]. Some of these theories have become well-known. By way of example and at the great risk of simplification, a few can be mentioned here. European regional integration (1) has in effect served to confirm the central role of the nation-state (Alan Milward)[6]; (2) is no more than the rational product of converging economic interests of the EU member states (Andrew Moravcsik)[7]; (3) has produced institutions the sole purpose of which is to perform regulatory tasks for the market (Giandomenico Majone)[8]; amounts to an expanding, and its complexity 'neo-medieval', system of governance involving overlapping jurisdictions and held together by market forces (Jan Zielonka)[9]. Without pronouncing judgment on their respective merits, these (and other) theories do raise the question as to how aspirational the European project really is. Is the EU primarily about process, i.e. the constant interaction between governments, market forces, and multi-level jurisdictions? Alternatively, does the European project not stand for generous objectives pursued by a federalist vanguard – directly and explicitly at first, more indirectly and implicitly at a later stage when the European nation-states reasserted themselves in the course of the 1950s? Are the supra-national features which the EU acquired along the way a functional by-product of an otherwise market-driven process or, instead, the scripted prelude to a true European federal state? Should the EU's supra-national elements be subjected to democratic accountability, or should the notion of democratising the EU be dismissed as alien to the essentially technocratic nature of the European project?[10] With all the new competences which it has acquired under the Lisbon Treaty, the European

---

[5] See Carsten Stroby Jensen, 'Neo-functionalism'; Michelle Cini, 'Intergovernmentalism'; Ben Rosamond, 'Theorizing the European Union after Integration Theory', in Michelle Cini & Nieves Perez-Solorzano Borragan, *European Union Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th edition, 2013), pp. 59-70; 71-84; 85-102.

[6] Alan S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1962).

[7] Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Purpose from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[8] Giandomenico Majone, *Regulating Europe* (London: Routledge Research in European Public Policy, 1996).

[9] Jan Zielonka, *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[10] Moravcsik, Majone, but also Leonard (see note 19) are of the latter view and reject the notion of a 'democratic deficit' on the part of a EU which would not interest voters anyway. Attempts to democratise the EU would only backfire – see Perry Anderson, *The New Old Europe* (London: Verso, 2009), pp. 62-64, 101-03, 117-18.

Parliament continues to be haunted by the somewhat cruel irony that parliamentary structures were built into a integrationist project in part inspired by distrust of the vagaries of popular, majoritarian democracy….Cutting across these considerations is the question as to whether the nation-state, as the fundamental unit organising our political existence, is condemned to wither away under the impact of globalisation or, instead, will be able to hold its own in tomorrow's world.

These intellectual debates generated by the European unification project could blossom in part thanks to the conjunction of auspicious circumstances which attended the first three decades of Europe's experiment in incremental regional integration. These circumstances were: dynamic national economies; a permissive domestic consensus in favour of a process which brought tangible economic benefits and which stayed out of 'high politics' and its associated emotions; the protection afforded by the American security umbrella against the Soviet threat; and 'Resterners'[11] which had not yet risen to challenge the West.

- ***European foreign policy*** will be taken to include: (1) the EU's CFSP; (2) as an integral part of the CFSP, the CSDP; and (3) the common institutions supporting the operation of the CFSP/CSDP. It should be recalled that the CSDP is not a defence policy in the classic sense: it does not involve the individual or collective defence of the EU member states – an objective which most member states realise in the framework of NATO. Rather, the CSDP is concerned with civilian and military crisis management missions and operations, which the Union undertakes beyond the territories of its member states in support of the objectives set out in the EU's Security Strategy (ESS, 2003, revised in 2008) entitled *A Secure Europe in a Better World.* The main objectives of the ESS include: building security around Europe; supporting the emergence of a viable and equitable international order; improving the EU's ability to meet old and new threats, including by

---

[11] The term 'Resterners' is derived from the subtitle – *The West and the Rest* – to British historian Niall Ferguson's book *Civilization* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

"developing a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and , when necessary, robust intervention"[12].

- A further point to be clarified is the relationship between *EU **member states foreign policies**, **European foreign policy** and the authorship of that European foreign policy*. The CFSP/CSDP does not have the monopoly of foreign policies emanating from the European continent. As sovereign entities, the EU member states continue to conduct their national foreign and defence policies, which are buttressed by 28 national security strategies displaying varying degrees of ambition and conceptual sophistication[13] in parallel to the CFSP/CSDP. Depending on their size and on the concrete issues at hand, EU member states may or may not decide to avail themselves of the framework provided by the CFSP/CSDP – a choice which generally is afforded to the bigger EU member states rather than to the smaller ones. Conversely, member states may find themselves implementing 'autonomous' CFSP/CSDP policies. Both cases result in a 'European' foreign policy, but that policy can therefore be originated by either member states or by the CFSP/CSDP institutions themselves. The question as to how 'autonomous' the CFSP/CSDP then is, has been called a 'chicken-and-egg' question: while the CFSP/CSDP is undoubtedly intergovernmental, it also has found its way into the European treaties and has since then achieved a high degree of institutionalisation through its own norms and procedures[14]. To date, national foreign policy remains an important vehicle for affirming national identity, while the CFSP/CSDP has yet to deliver on its promise of a unified European foreign policy. One important area where the CFSP/CSDP – hopefully buttressed, at long last, by a common, and functioning, European energy *policy* - must seek to project a cohesive European position rather urgently is that of energy

---

[12] European Council (2003), *A Secure Europe in a Better World* (Brussels, 12 December 2003), www.consilium.europa.eu/eudocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf.

[13] See Olivier de France and Nick Witney, *Europe's Strategic Cacophony,* Policy Brief (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, April 2013).

[14] Damian Chalmers, Gareth Davies & Giorgio Monti, *European Union Law* (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 665-66.

security, in response to Russia's divisive and coercive use of its energy exports.

- *Hard power* refers to a country's capacity to use its economic and/or military might to induce or coerce other countries into delivering a desired outcome. Hard power typically is associated with the 'Westphalian' world of sovereign, self-interested, and competing nation-states. Wishing to project a 'post-Westphalian' image of itself, the EU generally will not want to be seen as deliberately wielding hard power on the international scene. Nor would it be very able to do so, for that matter. As far as military power is concerned, both European declared policy intentions and actual European military capacities militate against the very notion of the EU using force in the 'Westphalian' mode. While it defers to NATO in matters of self-defence , the EU has destined whatever military capacity which it has built up to crisis-management interventions beyond Europe in support of a more secure world order. Pursuant to the so-called 'Petersberg tasks'[15], the Europeans have carried out some 16 military operations (completed and ongoing) since 2003, restricting themselves to the lower end of the conflict spectrum. Moreover, as the EU's financial travails have precipitated the post-Cold War decline of European national defence expenditures, shrinking capacities are further limiting the scope for any military power projection on the part of the EU and its member states. The outcome of the EU's most recent summit meeting devoted to security and defence has done little to reverse what has been called the steady 'demilitarisation' of Europe[16]. As a result, the CSDP has been likened to "armed social work"[17] –

---

[15] See the Petersberg Declaration, adopted by the the WEU Ministerial Council at Petersberg, near Bonn, on 19 June 1992. With the transfer of the WEU's operational tasks to the EU in 1999-2000, the Petersberg tasks were incorporated into the EU's common defence policy. The Petersberg tasks include 'humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking'. Article 42(1) of the Treaty of European Union expands this list with 'post-conflict stabilisation, military advice and assistance tasks, joint disarmament operations, and fighting terrorism'. See European Union Institute for Security Studies, 'From St-Malo to Nice. European defence: core documents', compiled by Maartje Rutten, *Chaillot Paper 47* (Paris: EUISS, May 2001).

[16] The EU Council discussed security and defence on 19-20 December 2013. European political leaders had not pronounced themselves on security and defence *in extenso* since 2006. See www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/140245.pdf.

which is not to say that military assets cannot be applied effectively in a soft power mode. As far as the other pillar of hard power is concerned, the EU does deploy on occasion its economic clout in pursuit of given political objectives, as illustrated most recently by the adoption of economic sanctions against Iran. Typically, the EU will, as matter of principle, consistently seek international legitimisation for any use of hard power, mainly in the form of resolutions of the UN Security Council.

- The term **soft power** has been coined by Harvard scholar Joseph Nye. In his words, soft power "co-opts" other people "to want the outcomes that you want"[18]. While hard power may not be Europe's forte, its much vaunted *soft power* is still considered to make up for this. Using multilateral institutions as a vehicle for the dissemination of its soft power – 'effective multilateralism' - the EU has been able to position itself on the world stage. Europe's professed international profile - as set out in the EES - hinges on the range of civilian instruments which the Europeans, backed by a vast internal market, can bring to bear to help subject an increasingly interdependent world to a modicum of global governance. As has been recognised, the judicious application of Europe's soft power indeed can work towards changing societies from within – potentially a far more effective way of projecting power than the deployment of sheer military might[19]. Two good examples of the EU's soft power at work are the conditions imposed by the European Commission on candidate EU members and the EU's leading role in global environmental governance. With each of its successive enlargement rounds, the EU has become more directive/prescriptive towards candidate members – an illustration of the way in which soft power in effect can be coercive, thereby approaching the application of hard power. In the area of environmental policy, the EU - driven by its 'greening' domestic politics and building up its environmental

---

[17] Daniel Keohane, *Strategic priorities for EU defence policy*, Policy Brief no 146 (Madrid: FRIDE, February 2013), p. 5.
[18] Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power – The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), p. 5.
[19] Mark Leonard, *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century* (London: HarpersCollins Publishers, 2005).

competences domestically and in the relevant international fora – has succeeded in establishing its own environmental standards as the international norm. Gaining international legitimacy for its own environmental rules went hand in hand with a EU drive to 'green' world trade rules – in the interest of preserving European firms' competitive edge on international markets. While the EU's financial and economic crisis has somewhat dented its international leadership on the environment, to date it retains its agenda-setting role[20]. Other areas where the EU seeks to exert its soft power include development aid, democracy assistance and human rights. To this end, the EU deploys its civilian instruments, amongst others: generous aid funds; differentiated trade, cooperation and associations agreements; regional and strategic partnerships; human rights clauses; sanctions policies; civilian crisis management missions; 'neighbourhood' policies – with all of these being implemented by a European External Action Service gradually gaining in effectiveness. A good example of the EU's civilian power in action constitutes the agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, which the EU helped engineer in 2013. At the same time, this type of engagement largely rests on a panoply of 'fair weather' instruments, the effectiveness of which seems to be at the mercy of 'events' - be they internal to the EU such as the euro crisis or external. Concerning the latter, it is hard to see how Russian aggression in its 'near abroad' does not represent a test-case for the future of soft power. Russia's recent annexation of Crimea, its subsequent drive to undermine Ukraine, and its pressuring of Georgia, Armenia and Moldova have exposed the utter fragility of the EU's 'Eastern partnership'. Originally conceived as "enlargement-lite"[21], the Eastern partnership clearly cannot substitute for a credible European *foreign policy* towards Russia and the other successor states of the Soviet Union. Such a policy should be equipped with the necessary political-military and economic means, buttressed where needed by a cohesive Atlantic Alliance. Similarly, the EU's 'strategic partnerships'

---

[20] See R. Daniel Keleman, 'Globalizing European Union environmental policy', *Journal of European Public Policy* 17, no. 3 (2010), pp. 335-49.

[21] Mark Leonard, 'Europe's Multipolar Neighborhood', in Jan Techau (ed.), *Strategic Europe*, p. 71.

with other global players largely remain to be substantiated into effective vectors of EU international influence[22]. In effect, the EU does not derive political influence commensurate to its importance as a donor of financial aid.

- **Crises** are familiar to the EU. Common wisdom holds it that crises have in fact enabled the European project to progress from one stage to the next. Be this as it may, the EU's present crisis is, by all accounts, particularly serious, as it seems to affect the very raison d'être of the European project. This was not the case in the past – quite the contrary, in fact. Writing in 2005, Mark Leonard foresaw in his *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century*, that Europe, acting through its diversity and the transformative power of its societal model, would come to shape a new and better world order. As a force for good, Europe would be best placed to take the lead in spreading the rule-of-law, democracy and human rights. Drawing on the unique features of the European integration project, the Europeans' natural vocation would be to make globalisation responsive to human security needs. At the time of its publication, Leonard's manifesto[23] offered a refreshing counterpoint to the very recent shock provoked by the French and Dutch rejections of the EU's Constitutional Treaty in 2005. Only a few years later, however, the Europeans narrowly averted financial implosion – only to face economic stagnation and rising political tensions at home in the aftermath of the euro crisis. These not undramatic events have dented Leonard's high-minded vision of Europe's role in the world. Europe seems to have lost a good deal of its earlier forward momentum, thereby undermining the self-confidence that had been one of its greatest strengths throughout the past four decades. Instead, there is a widespread feeling that 'the crisis' is by no means over, despite agreement reached on a banking union and signs that the EU's policies of imposed austerity are succeeding in reducing national budget deficits. At the national societal

---

[22] The EU has ten such partnerships, with Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, and the US.
[23] See note 19.

14

level, the earlier 'permissive consensus' in support of the European project has been replaced by growing scepticism since at least the mi-1990s, turning into outright hostility as a result of the EU's response to the recent crisis. EU citizens question the wisdom of further integration which they feel is being imposed on them "by stealth"[24]. Clearly, the entire European project is going through a danger zone from which it may not emerge unscathed.

2. First theme: 'un-strategic' Europe

The three authors considered under this heading – Laqueur, Marquand and Youngs - proceed from the shared concern that to the extent that the EU had managed to build up its international image as a 'force for good', it now risks losing that influence quickly. They call upon Europe not to turn inward and, instead, to mobilise its still considerable strengths with a view to rising to the external challenges confronting it. All three authors clearly have Europe at heart. All three devote substantial attention to the EU's role in the world. And all three seem to agree that the days are gone when the Europeans could exert international influence without running much risk themselves. Finally, they seem to accept – perhaps too readily - the rise of Asia as a given. At the same time, the three authors arrive at these globally converging assessments via different routes.

Walter Laqueur
Walter Laqueur gives Europe's foreign, security and defence policies short thrift: they are at the same time over-ambitious and weak and therefore do not impress the outside world. To the extent that these policies proceed at all from a shared strategic sense of the world and of Europe's role therein, that sense proved to rest on wishful thinking. If the dynamics of economic integration hardly produced a undisputed moral order within the EU, they certainly failed to project such an order onto the outside world. The simple reason is that one cannot bypass politics

---

[24] George Ross, 'What do 'Europeans' Think? Analyses of the European Union's Current Crisis by European Elites', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 2 (2008), p. 410.

– power politics that is to say, which in large part still determine international relations[25]. Laqueur casts a highly sceptic view on the so-called post-modern world: as he sees it, most of the world is "pre-modern" or just "modern" [26]and therefore not very receptive, or outright hostile, to European visions of a negotiated global order in which the EU would always act as a compulsive 'force for good' (see also Laqueur on the theme of *Declining Europe?,* p. 26). When confronted with nations that indeed do not wish to conform to the post-modern mold, the Europeans find themselves forced to depart from their own professed 'multilateralist' principles and to fall back on "another set of rules" [27] involving the application of pressure - diplomatic, economic or military. Therein lies one fundamental lack of credibility of European external policies, according to Laqueur. Brandishing two sets of rules according to circumstance betrays a fundamental lack of strategic vision and direction. It is also self-serving, hypocritical and futile, given the Europeans' all too frequent lack of determination in applying whatever coercive measures which they themselves have adopted, often after much internal wrangling. And whenever the Europeans do seem to exhibit a shared sense of purpose, as was the case with the publication of the ESS, that strategy is left without the necessary military means to back it up[28]. Clearly, for Europe to refurbish its diminishing stature in the world it will have to display a more coherent and convincing sense of external purpose in projecting its values onto the international scene. But where can that sense of purpose be found? Laqueur still seems to believe in 'more Europe' as the best prescription for the failings of the EU's external policies. However, as a guiding overall strategy, 'more Europe' will now have to be rooted in a "new assessment, however painful, of the limits of European power" [29]. At the same time, Laqueur harbours no illusions about the effect of 'more Europe': it could make the difference between the EU's collapse and its "soft landing into the ranks of the world's minor powers"[30].

---

[25] Walter Laqueur, p. 53.
[26] Ibid, p. xiii.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid ., p. 55.
[29] Ibid., pp. 278-79.
[30] Ibid., pp. 293-94.

David Marquand

In his at times equally pessimistic book, David Marquand comes to a roughly similar conclusion: Europe should jettison outdated perceptions and reflexes of global Western power and, instead, should concentrate on the more modest task of growing "a European demos that can sustain a European federation, playing a worthy part in such a world"[31] – i.e. today's world, in which the West no longer holds sway. In his wide-ranging analyses, Marquand dwells extensively on Europe's role in the rough and tumble of international relations, past and present. In trying to dissect the factors underlying European external policies, he is quick to signal the absence of an overriding and unifying strategy as a means to put into effect the moral vision on which the European project undoubtedly rests. Marquand attributes this strategic void to the mistaken assumption on the part of Europe's founding fathers that Europe need not foster a common strategic culture. The dynamics of economic integration would create enough "facts on the ground – market freedom, economies of scale, rapid growth, rising living standards - …to embed the (European) project in the public culture"[32]. That assumption was proven wrong. The "low politics" of economic integration did not translate into integration at the level of "high politics"[33] – i.e. Europe's role in today's world and an ensuing grand strategy guiding European foreign, security and defence policies - where the EU member states continued to cling to their divergent, and outdated, national prerogatives. This schizophrenic situation lasted until the financial crisis. The fundamental issues which that crisis raised concerning the future of Europe, ushered in what Marquand aptly calls "the revenge of politics over economism"[34]. As long as the EU institutions are barred from moving into the 'high' political sphere, European external policies will continue to lack the compass which they so badly need. If there has been some sort of strategic drive behind the EU's external policies, it has been provided by the EU's enlargement policies, as Marquand recognises in the last chapter of his book. Correcting the patent historical injustice of a divided Europe by taking in the central and eastern European countries undoubtedly infused EU external policies

---

[31] David Marquand, p. 177.
[32] Ibid., pp. 106-08.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., p. 110.

17

with a righteous sense of purpose during the 1990s and in the early years of the previous decade. Inviting the Western Balkans nations to also join still falls under that same logic. Beyond that, however, EU enlargement seems to have exhausted itself as a foreign policy strategy for channeling the EU's soft power. Marquand feels that enlargement runs up against its physical and political limits. He marshals historical instead of geographical arguments, and castigates the irresponsibility with which EU elites waved away concerns about preserving effective governance and democratic legitimacy under a regime envisioning an endlessly expanding EU. One could add here that the EU derives even less strategic guidance from its neighbourhood policy, the watered down version of its enlargement policy, given the manifest objections which this policy seems to raise. Some of the neighbours will find the policy too prescriptive, while others will be disappointed by the absence of a clear perspective on future membership.

Richard Youngs
Of the three authors discussed under this theme, Richard Youngs dwells most extensively on strategy and the lack thereof. He does see efforts, more recently, at creating a "strategic Europe", but believes that these efforts are fundamentally misguided, based as they appear to be on old-fashioned balance-of-power thinking. He describes, often colourfully, how the EU almost routinely deploys a myriad of 'strategies' without having any overarching strategy to begin with. He describes the military operations and civilian missions which the EU has undertaken in the context of its CSDP as substitutes for a non-existent, strategically-inspired European foreign policy[35]. Confronted with its deteriorating position in the world, Europe does the wrong thing, according to Youngs. Instead of engaging the rising powers into new cooperative security frameworks inspired by the pursuit of a "more democratised multilateralism"[36], European policy-makers seem to engage in patchwork designed to provide reassurance that Europe is regaining some measure of geopolitical control. The patchwork in question entails a defensive "scramble for new alliances"[37], in the form of strategic partnerships scattered around the globe and a regression into balance-

---

[35] Richard Youngs, p. 63.
[36] Ibid., p. 57.
[37] Ibid., chapter 2 ("The scramble for new alliances"), pp. 26-59.

of-power considerations inspired by zero-sum thinking – all the while free-riding more than ever on the American security guarantee. Youngs sees a good example of these "reconstituted power politics" under the guise of "multilateralism"[38] in the way in which EU enlargement has been deployed as a security strategy vis-à-vis Russia without admitting so much. Young's prescient analysis of the EU's flawed approach to Ukraine now seems to be amply vindicated by the recent crisis pitting Russia against the West. Not only are the EU's external policies conceptually confused, but they also suffer from a lack of will and a paucity of means, as the futility of EU pronouncements on democracy and human rights all too often demonstrates – a point also made by Laqueur. As a fervent believer in Europe's contribution to a new world order, Youngs calls upon Europe not to renege on its liberal identity and, instead, to put that identity into the service of universal values. Only a cosmopolitan strategy capable, among other things, of reinvigorating EU support for democracy and human rights, will be able to provide the overall and inspired guidance which European diplomacy and security policy so badly need.

3. Second theme: identity-seeking Europe

The authors considered under this theme are Bickerton, Habermas, Marquand and Youngs. Bickerton looks at the inside of the EU's decision-making processes, enabling him to substantiate the proposition that the EU's foreign policy so far has failed to give rise to a distinctly European identity in the realm of foreign affairs. As noted above (p. 3), Habermas does not discuss EU foreign policy as such. But faithful to his belief that the EU certainly should cultivate foreign policy ambitions as a means to define its finality, Habermas does offer a vision which at least implicitly relates foreign policy, democracy and identity to each other. Marquand also tends to link identity and foreign policy in an implied way, given his sweeping discussion of Europe's problematic strategic outlook in a rapidly changing world. By contrast, Youngs' book is very much about foreign policy. Following different lines of argument, all three authors seem to arrive at roughly

---

[38] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

the same verdict, holding that the EU's foreign policy manifestly has not functioned as a vehicle for helping to develop a shared European destiny and identity.

Christopher Bickerton

Christopher Bickerton devotes a full chapter to the EU's foreign policy as one of two facets of European integration – the other facet which he discusses being European macro-economic integration. Bickerton sees the development of the EU's foreign policy as illustrative of his main thesis: European integration should be conceived as "a process of *state transformation* and not one that is either national or supranational", the result being "the present-day EU as a *union of member states*"(italics in original)[39]. Typically, EU "member statehood" entails the notion that domestic societies within the EU are governed through external frameworks of rule that bind the hands of national governments and parliaments. Resulting from the constant interaction of core national executives at the European level, political power is thus "exercised by national governments but in ways that appear external to and far removed from the national societies over whom these governments rule"[40]. Against the background of what Bickerton calls the "dismantling of state-society relations of post-war Keynesianism and the ensuing hollowing out of representative politics at the national level in Europe"[41], the dynamics of member statehood therefore appear as a recipe for popular alienation vis-à-vis the EU – the EU's 'democratic deficit', as it is politely called. No longer inhibited by the inhibitions of the Cold War, European foreign policy coordination slowly but steadily developed after 1989 and in full conformity with the main features of member statehood: driven by a restricted group of national officials and representatives insulated from domestic societies, focusing on technical issues to be decided upon in committees working in confidentiality. Owing to their inward focus, European Political Cooperation (EPC) and CFSP/CSDP as its successor tended to function as ends in and of themselves, refining and improving their working methods – Bickerton speaks of a "self-referential process

---

[39] Christopher Bickerton, p. 182.
[40] Ibid., p. 4.
[41] Ibid., p. 188.

of institutional adaptation"[42] . With its deeply engrained risk avoidance, CFSP/CSDP has not provided the tools enabling the EU to punch at its full weight in international power politics. Bickerton is not overly impressed by successive institutional innovations introduced by the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties, which in his eyes have not essentially altered European foreign policy as an internally driven, bureaucratic process unresponsive to the consciousness of EU domestic societies. Under these circumstances, CFSP/ESDP clearly has not favoured the development of a collective identity which the Europeans could credibly project onto the world stage. Quite the contrary seems to be the case, as Bickerton points out: immediate foreign policy challenges confronting the CFSP/CSDP "consistently open up deeper questions about its identity and purpose", such as: "does the EU exist independently of national foreign policies or is it simply a sum of its national parts?"[43]. Bickerton concludes that CFSP/CSDP in its present form – "run by national officials but concentrated in Brussels – will continue to entrench the divide between national governments and national populations that is a feature of member statehood"[44]. Connecting European foreign policy with national consciousness would require no less than a revival of representative democracy at the national level, is Bickerton's conviction[45].

Jürgen Habermas
In his essay, Jürgen Habermas does not dwell explicitly on the relation between Europe's search for an identity and its foreign policy. However, in his interview with the German newspaper *Die Zeit* appended to his essay Habermas does recall the expectations by "some" that a common European foreign policy would bring about a "cross-border awareness of a shared European destiny"[46]. This confirms a view which Habermas expressed elsewhere[47], namely that foreign policy can play an identity-forging role – if only that foreign policy would be a democratic one. But for now at least, Habermas does not harbour many illusions about the

---

[42] Ibid., p. 181.
[43] Ibid., p. 2.
[44] Ibid., p. 181.
[45] Ibid., p. 189.
[46] Jürgen Habermas, p. 127.
[47] See p. 3, note 2.

democratic quality of EU governance. He warns that the promise of the European project as "the first transnational democracy" now risks being inverted into the opposite of that promise, namely "pressure on the disempowered national parliaments to enforce non-transparent and informal agreements" arrived at by the European Council[48]. Habermas does not pronounce himself on where this leaves the EU's foreign policy at this moment in time. Is it affected by what he calls "post-democratic executive federalism"?[49] Or does the widely criticised grip which EU member states keep on the CFSP/CSDP continue to ensure at least some democratic accountability of EU foreign policy – be it at the national level? In either case, EU foreign policy in its present form does not seem to contribute much to a distinctly European identity, as Habermas would probably recognise.

David Marquand

True to his purpose to focus on the big issues underlying the fate of the European project, David Marquand devotes much attention to the notion of identity, which he does connect with Europe's foreign policy. Marquand recalls that the search for a common European identity constituted one of the driving motives behind the European project. As conceived by Europe's founding fathers – Jean Monnet in particular – that identity would reflect "common European values, a common European civilization, and a common commitment to the European project"[50]. In the realm of foreign policy, such a common identity would reveal itself in the Europeans "discovering an independent geopolitical vocation of their own"[51]. However, in Marquand's analysis, what started as an aspiration on the part of Europe's elites failed to connect with the feelings of the peoples of Europe – and therefore never materialised. Marquand attributes this to the various ambiguities which the European project neglected to clarify. Two such ambiguities were ethnicity and patriotism as sources of loyalty and identity, which Europe's founding fathers underestimated or chose to ignore altogether[52]. When after the end of the Cold War pre-modern ethnic tensions re-surfaced in the Balkans, or

---

[48] Ibid., p. 52.
[49] Ibid.
[50] David Marquand, p. 43.
[51] Ibid., p. 48.
[52] Ibid., pp. 52-55.

when the United States under President George W. Bush pressured its European allies in the matter of the Iraq war, there was no common European identity on which to base a unified position, let alone determined common action. The Europeans fell back on their national foreign policy reflexes, which at least could command the approval of national political and public opinions. In the face of what truly is an identity crisis, the EU member states now all too often exhibit what Marquand calls a "state of denial" – by "growing more assertive and rigid in their responses to their loss of capacity and legitimacy"[53]. Marquand would probably agree that foreign policy is one of the areas where this defensiveness on the part of the EU member states is most apparent, obviously to the direct detriment of the Europeans' CFSP/CSDP which to this day remains hostage to the determination of London, Paris and nowadays also Berlin to preserve French, British and German identities in the guise of posited national foreign policy interests.

Richard Youngs

Like Marquand, Richard Youngs dwells on identity-seeking aspects of EU foreign policy. But where Marquand mainly senses a lack of European identity, as reflected in often confused European diplomacy, Youngs depicts a foreign policy pervaded by an almost obsessive need to affirm Europe's own identity toward the rest of the world. In seeking to explain this "culturalism" as he terms it[54], Youngs points at an unspoken but widespread assumption among European policy-makers that their norms and institutions will naturally commend themselves to other countries . However, offering oneself as a model for the practice of democracy and the observance of human rights does not amount to the kind of proactive and flexible foreign policy which the EU will require if it is to provide effective support to local democratic aspirations[55]. Not only does EU foreign policy appear to be much less post-modern in practice than it claims to be, but it also has become outright defensive as a result of what Youngs calls "the

---

[53] Ibid., p. 82.
[54] Richard Youngs, p. 119.
[55] Ibid., pp. 194-95.

nexus between Islamic radicalism, migration and the flailing 'European identity'"[56]. Fear that their identity is being threatened by foreign influxes and Islamic terrorism has created a "siege mentality"[57]among many Europeans, resulting in rejection across Europe of earlier multicultural policies; the introduction of assimilation programmes; increased surveillance of 'foreigners'; and the reassertion of secular 'European' values. Recalling that the link between internal and external policies tends to be overlooked, Youngs explains how Europe's growing socio-cultural diversity has come to be seen by many as undermining Europe's standing abroad. The resulting attempts, under domestic populist pressures, to enlist Europe's external policies in the service of counter-radicalisation all too often seems to have narrowed down to a "security services-led foreign policy"[58]. In Youngs' view, far from re-injecting credibility into Europe's international standing, the securitisation of Europe's foreign policy has tended to convey a negative and counterproductive European identity to the outside world – one of cultural containment and defensive preservation. This is at odds with Europe's professed pursuit of universalism and cultural understanding – a discrepancy which foreign critics are increasingly quick at detecting and condemning. Instead of thus alienating countries in North Africa and the Middle East, European foreign policy should recapture the goodwill it needs to achieve its stated goals by projecting "an identity that rejects *an* identity"(italics in original), with "internal tolerance becoming the strongest pillar of a successful external identity"[59]. A foreign policy giving substance to Europe's identity as Youngs envisions it, will know how to incorporate change within Europe as a way of projecting external credibility and will "patiently and carefully"[60]encourage home-grown social, economic and political reform abroad - in the Muslim world in particular. In Youngs' view, this must be done by "systematically involving the Muslim minorities with the EU foreign policy machinery"[61]. With this daring proposal – one of the ten remedies which he offers for redressing Europe's

---

[56] Ibid., p. 92.
[57] Ibid., p. 93.
[58] Ibid., p. 109.
[59] Ibid., p. 119.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., pp. 204-05.

decline and one which, by the way, Laqueur resolutely dismisses as "dangerous"[62] – Youngs seeks to take the logic of a liberal, internationalist and therefore inclusive European `identity' to its furthest end.

4. Third theme: declining Europe?

As already noted, Habermas does not touch on foreign policy in his essay. However, brief mention should again be made of the interview appended to his essay, in which Habermas calls for 'more Europe' by way of "closer cooperation" – first in the field of economic policy and next in foreign policy[63]. Habermas manifestly feels that foreign policy must play an important role in re-launching the European project conceived as an essentially emancipatory and civilising process[64] . In his view, EU foreign policy can and should help reverse Europe's decline.

Walter Laqueur
The notion of decline, and the manifold questions which it raises, are central to Walter Laqueur's book. One main question pertains to the forms which decline may take, while another asks at which point decline actually sets in. Laqueur dwells extensively on these wide-ranging questions. In seeking to formulate answers to them – which of course must remain somewhat conjectural – he often draws in foreign policy considerations. Concerning the first question, Laqueur sees a weakened continent, suffering from "tiredness" and even "depression"as the main manifestations of European decline[65]. Collective self-doubt is at the root of Europe's dysfunctional foreign policy, according to Laqueur who, among other things, fustigates Europe's "insipid" condemnations of human rights violations

---

[62] Walter Laqueur, p. 278.
[63] Jürgen Habermas, p. 116.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Walter Laqueur, pp. xii-xiv.

25

elsewhere in the world which, apart from being largely ineffective, are probably not taken very seriously by the Europeans themselves[66]. As another manifestation of Europe's lack of will, Laqueur points at the fate of the 2003 Habermas-Derrida manifesto for a common European foreign policy, a much-publicised reaction against the American and British intervention in Iraq. The manifesto remained a dead letter, as Europeans governments did not dare to draw the consequences which launching a truly European foreign policy would entail for both transatlantic cooperation and their national interests[67]. As to decline's starting-point, Laqueur locates it – as noted above – at the outbreak of the First World War, i.e. long before the European project was initiated to put the old continent on a new footing[68]. But ironically enough, after what looked like a promising start, the European project in fact has seen an acceleration of that decline. Laqueur suggests that this acceleration was caused by, amongst other things, the collective delusions which, after the end of the Cold War, all too often accompanied the advent of that much-heralded 'new world order'[69]. More than anybody else, the Europeans engaged in wishful thinking, if not outright "fantasies"[70], when trying to deal with complex issues such as the Middle East peace process, the Arab Spring, as well as their relations with Russia and Turkey. Having lived through the devastations of two world wars and the subsequent anxieties of the East-West stalemate on their continent, the Europeans felt that they could now safely embrace the promise of a post-Westphalian, negotiated world order, replicating the EU's internal negotiated order[71]. As already noted above (pp. 15-16), Laqueur is no great believer in a post-modern world. Denying the reality that most of the world, and certainly its emerging powers, are by no means "post-modern" but just "modern" and sometimes even "pre-modern"[72], is now threatening to put Europe's foreign policy on the road towards international irrelevance, is Laqueur's scathing assessment in the three chapters which he devotes to Europe's international decline. Arresting, or at least slowing down,

---

[66] Ibid., pp. 49-53.
[67] Ibid., pp. 79-82.
[68] Ibid., pp. 148-50.
[69] Ibid., p. 157.
[70] Ibid., p. 41.
[71] Ibid., pp. 38, 157.
[72] Ibid., p. xiii.

that decline will require, on the part of the Europeans, an agonising reappraisal of the limits to civilian or soft power in today's world, in combination with "a revival of native political will"[73].

Richard Youngs

Like Laqueur, Richard Youngs sees much despondency about Europe's real and perceived decline. But he takes that decline as a point of departure for a radically different diagnosis: if only Europe could muster the vision to adapt its narrative to today's world, it should be able to find the "less travelled road out of relative decline"[74]. To this end, the European project must reconnect with its enlightened and progressive genes, which it now seems to be abjuring in a misguided attempt to reassure itself that it is regaining some measure of geopolitical control[75]. In making his case, Youngs draws extensively on recent trends in Europe's foreign policy. In Youngs' perception, Europe's foreign policy risks becoming part of the problem, if it not already is. He sees Europe retreating into retrograde balance-of-power thinking and zero-sum defensiveness, thereby only accentuating its disconnect from "the new international relations", in which "degree of influence can and will be decoupled from structural measures of power"[76]. Accordingly, Youngs does not share concerns that Europe's ongoing loss of hard military power will undermine its international position – concerns which he sees as belonging to "a departing era"[77]. In the same vein, he does not mince his words about Europe's attempts at hanging-on to its over-representation in international fora, which end up discrediting Europe's professed multilateralism and alienate the rising powers with whom Europe will need to work in the future[78]. The fact that Britain and France are losing the ability to project power in distant states, or that European diplomacy may no longer enjoy the comfort of assured preponderance

---

[73] Ibid., pp. 279, 161.
[74] Richard Youngs, p. 23.
[75] Ibid., pp. 26-27.
[76] Ibid., p. 24.
[77] Ibid., p. 207.
[78] Ibid., pp. 26-32.

27

in multilateral bodies, should be less urgent concerns than the need to use Europe's existing civilian and military capacities in an "enlightened milieu-shaping way" - a far better approach to "redressing decline"[79]. Youngs feels, in other words, that foreign policy can and should take Europe out of decline. He even offers a comprehensive road map to this end, consisting of five "guiding principles" and ten "policies" which cannot be discussed in detail here[80]. Suffice it to say that Youngs' prescriptions have, as their common denominator, the conviction that reorienting Europe's panoply of foreign policy reflexes, strategies and instruments (amongst others: 'speaking with one voice'; 'exporting Europe'; multilateralism) will reconnect it with the dynamics of a changing world in need of universal instead of European values. Or, put differently, remodeling European foreign policy along what basically are the core values of liberalism should help Europe adapt to, and also profit from, a reshaped international constellation – thus countering a decline which needs not be inevitable or irreversible. As Youngs recognises, this will require a proactive, longer-term reflection on Europe's global role and the shared will to act upon the outcome of that reflection, once the Europeans will have put their financial and economic house in sufficient order[81].

5. In a nutshell…

It is now time to try to pull together our authors' main strands of thought, as identified in this review. Measured against our three themes, and bringing in the transatlantic dimension as well as looking ahead, a resolutely critical picture emerges.

- **'Un-strategic' Europe**: EU foreign policy tends to be confused, caught as it manifestly is between on the one hand high but also self-serving ambitions for the world and, on the other, underpowered implementation. The resulting impression of weakness, combined with that of double standards, undermines the credibility of Europe's international stature. The authors do not seem

---

[79] Ibid., p. 69.
[80] Ibid., chapter 7 ("Conclusions: The road less travelled"), pp. 191-205.
[81] Ibid., p. 185.

28

overly impressed by the political-military structures with which the EU equipped itself in 1999-2000 to give substance, at the time, to its new-born ambitions as a functioning security actor on the international scene. To the extent that some of the authors mention these structures at all, it is to note that these structures (1) respond to internally driven bureaucratic continuity rather than to the pursuit of strategic ambitions (Bickerton); or (2) tend to function in the relative absence of the global policy which they are supposed to support (Youngs).

- **Identity-seeking Europe:** on a daily basis, EU foreign policy is mainly driven by inward-looking, bureaucratic preoccupations, thereby operating largely in isolation from European domestic societies. In crisis situations, EU foreign policy will regularly be held hostage to the often diverging interests of individual EU member states, instead of becoming the conduit through which collective European approaches can assert themselves.

- **Declining Europe:** beyond the routine of vigorous rethorical pronouncements – in particular on human rights and democracy as well as sanctions - EU foreign policy more often than not displays risk aversion and a lack of determination to see declared common policies through, thus conveying an overall impression of decreasing vigour and determination.

- **The transatlantic link:** The Lisbon Treaty provides explicitly that, as certain EU member states organise their common defence in the framework of NATO, the CSDP therefore will be compatible with the common security and defence policy established in that framework[82]. With NATO and EU memberships largely overlapping[83], the above treaty provision would be expected to loom large over our authors' discussion of the EU's CSDP and its foreign policy more in general. Instead, despite being a strategic reality the transatlantic link remains somewhat subsumed in the arguments developed by the authors.

---

[82] Article 42(2) of the 2009 Treaty on European Union.
[83] NATO Allies Albania, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Turkey and the US do not belong to the EU's 28 member states, while EU member states Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden do not belong to NATO's 28 Allies.

While four of them do refer to NATO, they tend to take a rather detached approach to the institution embodying the 65-years old security partnership linking Europe and North America . Thus, NATO is taken as a given, which somehow has survived the end of the Cold War (Bickerton, p. 178); has become weaker (Laqueur, p. 57); has lost much of its earlier, self-evident pre-eminence in today's globalised world (Marquand, p. 21); suffers from European strategic caution (Youngs, p. 64). These views are by themselves not surprising, given NATO's obviously diminished political centrality within the overall Western Alliance, with the EU and the US now factually functioning as its two main pillars[84]. It is perhaps a sign of the times that none of our authors elaborates on the implications of the EU's foreign policy woes for NATO and, more generally, for the quality of the transatlantic link. After all, the EU's inability and/or unwillingness to help shoulder global responsibilities also impinges on NATO, thus diminishing the stature which the Western multilateral security partnership once had in the eyes of American and European policymakers alike.

- **Looking ahead:** the five authors recognise the short-term imperative of definitively overcoming Europe's financial crisis and restoring its self-confidence through economic growth, if Europe's fortunes in the world are in any way going to be reversed. As they implicitly realise, in the absence of an economic upswing European political leaders will most probably continue to seek additional budgetary savings by further trimming spending on international affairs, defence and development aid – thus further debilitating already emasculated capabilities for projecting European influence into the world. Beyond that, however, they tend to entertain diverging expectations, if any, on the future of European foreign policy. Laqueur and Marquand do not offer any specific prescriptions for redeeming European foreign policy, which in their vision is essentially bound up with the overall fate of the old continent. But both seem to envision a European foreign policy which would be less declaratory and therefore more coherent, because it would have been brought

---

[84] Sven Bioscop, 'Odd Couple or Dynamic Duo? The EU and Strategy in Times of Crisis', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 14 (2009), p. 379.

into line with Europe's acceptance of a reduced role in the world. In relative contrast, Youngs not only sees scope for fixing European foreign policy, but he also offers a detailed 'to-do' list aimed at effectively re-launching the European project into the international arena. Sharing Youngs' can-do approach to the theme of Europe's crisis, Habermas can be assumed to support the notion of a 'different' European foreign policy, geared to pioneering the advent of the cosmopolitan community of states and world citizens which he envisions. Bickerton does not provide recommendations for improving European foreign policy either, his concern being a much wider one. In revealing the way in which the dynamics of European integration have come to reflect the pursuit of external constraints on national political life, he also seeks to stimulate thinking on how to revive the centrality of representative democracy – an ambitious undertaking into which the fate of European foreign policy presumably will be subsumed.

Concluding observations

The five authors reviewed above have, each in his own way, grappled with the complex issues posed by the interaction between Europe's shorter-term euro crisis and its longer-term relative decline, as applied to Europe's foreign policy among other things. The challenge which Europe faces here is to manage a "uniquely probing scenario of what might be termed 'crisis-upon-decline'", as Richard Youngs aptly puts it in a piece which he devoted to the foreign policy implications of Europe's crisis[85]. This review looked more specifically at how our authors envision Europe's foreign policy under such a 'crisis-upon-decline' regime. The views with which they leave us, as summarised above, may call for a number of concluding observations.

---

[85] Richard Youngs, *European foreign policy and the economic crisis: what impact and how to respond?,* Working Paper no. 111 (Madrid: FRIDE, November 2011), p. 1.

The European project resuscitated?

By most accounts, Europe's diminished international stature mainly stems from perceived weakness at Europe's centre: the euro crisis and its as of yet unsettling aftermath, as well as the widespread public disaffection which, at least since the stranding of the EU's Constitutional Treaty at the end of 2005, has been calling into question the credibility of the European project altogether. Clearly, should European political leaders prove unable to restore economic growth and public confidence in further European integration, Europe's relevance to global governance would almost certainly further erode – even if the euro were to limp on. But if the causality alluded to above obtains, the reverse scenario would apply as well – a scenario which our authors do not explore any further. Despite the talk of Europe's 'lost decade', the EU's centre generally has been holding its own so far. Although the odds are uncertain, it may come out reinforced – tentatively and unevenly at first - from its internal travails. An intrinsically still consequential Europe, its monetary self-confidence restored and its integration moving forward again, would in all likelihood recover at least some of its international stature and influence. In the shorter term, European foreign policy should be able to benefit from such a domestic upswing, which it would then seek to consolidate and translate into an enhanced diplomatic status enabling the European to co-shoulder future global responsibilities. Admittedly, none of this resolves the various constraints - old and new, internal and external - under which any EU diplomacy will have to operate in the future[86]. To recall these constraints: the disparate quality of the EU's external action; an uneven sense of shared strategic purpose; the still pre-eminent transatlantic partner to reckon with; continuing uncertainty over the EU's identity as an international actor ('post-Westphalian' or not?); the ambitions of the emerging, and definitely 'Westphalian', powers. Last but not least, the designs of 're-emerging' power Russia, seeking among other things to weaken the EU at its core by keeping the EU member states divided and holding out the temptation of 'bi-lateralism'. Nor is there clarity about the EU's

---

[86] See Michael Smith, 'Beyond the comfort zone: internal crisis and the external challenge in the European Union's response to rising powers', *International Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2013), pp. 653-71.

future constitutional make-up: if the Union, at present neither intergovernmental nor supranational, is to be strengthened through revisions to the Lisbon Treaty, will it as a result evolve in a confederal or a federal direction? The answer to this question clearly bears on Europe's future international weight and on the effectiveness of its diplomacy. Yet, uncertainty also affects the fortunes of the rising powers – a mixed, often quarrelsome, group of nations which themselves begin to undergo the centrifugal forces of globalisation. As for the Russian challenge, the EU can and should meet it: this is an imperative which, upon reflection, can be considered to rank in the same order of magnitude as overcoming the euro crisis. This should leave enough openings for a resurgent EU, projecting dynamism onto the international scene[87] and acting in coalition with the US (see below), to "adapt and profit from a reshaped world arena"[88]. As the world grows more chaotic, it needs rather more than less of Europe's *soft* yet eminently transformative power.

So much for the EU – but what about the wider West?

With much intellectual energy invested into examining the travails of the EU against the background of globalisation and rising powers, the future of the transatlantic link has tended to recede into a lesser preoccupation. Nowadays, we seem to need a serious crisis to be reminded of Europe's transatlantic moorings, as evidence by the flurry of NATO meetings in reaction to Russia's undermining of Ukraine through the annexation of Crimea (March 2014) and its subsequent destabilisation of the eastern part of the country. But the transatlantic link is of course not solely defined by its reserve function in times of crisis. Having sheltered the European experiment in its initial years, America and Canada's strategic association with the old continent, while less in evidence today, continues to hedge against any drastic deterioration of Europe's position in the world – thus refuting all too 'declinist' views which at least some of our authors seem to espouse. Despite of, or perhaps because of, the 'multipolar' confusion often attending today's international relations, Europe and North America together remain what the Germans call a 'community of fate'

---

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., p. 670.

(*Schicksalgemeinschaft*) dedicated to upholding, as much as possible, the liberal international order and delivering global public goods[89]. While the cumulative impact, on both sides of the Atlantic, of frustrating military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan and the financial and economic crisis seems to have discredited the cause of Western interventionism in recent years, (most of) the transatlantic allies can still be assumed to rise above their differences of the day and to close ranks when confronted with direct challenges to their security. After the deep-running European-American dissensions of the previous decade, transatlantic relations have on the whole improved. Robert Kagan's well-known "Mars-versus-Venus" metaphor to describe fundamental transatlantic divergences on the role of military power as he saw it[90], no longer pictures – if it ever did - the reality. If anything, the policy of military restraint pursued by the Obama administration resonates well in Europe, where the pursuit of military solutions to global security problems enjoys little support. Similarly, Washington has been gravitating towards European views on the need to engage constructively with a plural international system. Although some see a future danger in a perceived divergence between "Europe's multilateralist strategy and America's multipartner strategy"[91], for the time being Americans and Europeans generally find it easier to align themselves on each other's policies. The odds are that Americans and Europeans will seek to maintain this newly-found, collaborative approach in handling multiplying foreign policy and security challenges, as they both feel pushed into the defensive under the combined pressure of austerity at home and retrenchment abroad.

Admittedly, Russian revanchism in its 'near abroad' has come to undercut what looked like a pattern of transatlantic rapprochement. Ironically enough, while Russia's actions undoubtedly have reinvigorated the rationale for the transatlantic partnership, NATO's actual response has been outright feeble so far. On the eve

---

[89] For a spirited presentation of this thesis, see Richard Rosecrance, *The Resurgence of the West – How a Transatlantic Union Can Prevent War and Restore the United States and Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

[90] Robert Kagan, 'Power and Weakness', *Policy Review* 113 (June-July 2002), pp. 3-28.

[91] Mark Leonard and Hans Kundnani, 'Obama and Europe: Beneath Affinity, a Growing Gulf', *World Politics Review,* 8 January 2013*,* available at: http://www.worlpoliticsreview.com/articles/12608/obama-and-europe-beneath-affinity-a-growing-gulf

of the commemorations surrounding the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, the transatlantic allies clearly do not muster the cohesiveness which Russian aggression – overt and covert – should have triggered. Probably things will have to get worse before they get better – the latter meaning essentially that the West European members of NATO will, at long last, pull themselves together sufficiently in order to enable NATO to perform its basic function of projecting security in and around Alliance territory.

But more structural repair work will be needed for Europeans and Americans to re-cement their bonds. Thus, much energy will have to be invested in bringing about a transatlantic trade and investment partnership, which lately has been running into opposition on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States, on its part, will have to re-constitute a bi-partisan consensus at home, as a precondition for renewing American leadership of the Western Alliance. In the face of the rise of either autocracy or anarchy across Europe's borders and beyond, that leadership remains indispensable. As far as the EU's part is concerned, European political leaders first must succeed in putting the euro crisis behind them. Second, they will have to rise above their divergent interests and perceptions if they are to put their CFSP/CSDP on a more secure footing. Some of the concrete actions which the EU and its member states should take to this end are sufficiently known by now: hammering out, at long last, a common and functioning European energy policy; re-thinking the Eastern partnership; rebuilding severely depleted *national* defence capabilities as a precondition for building up a meaningful European defence; last but not least, facing down incoherent anti-Americanism on the part of the populists. These steps – which together may amount to a European re-investment into the transatlantic alliance - would signal to the rising powers of the G20 that Europe is, and will remain, part of a wider Western community, the enduring strengths of which continue to count for much in today's world. Re-affirming Europe's transatlantic credentials should, in other words, help to mitigate – possibly temporary - losses in international prestige which Europe may have incurred from the travails of an obviously ongoing integration process. Some will want to see this as yet another manifestation of European acquiescence in the role of junior partner to the United States, with European aspirations to strike

out on its own as a force for good in the world shelved, or at least cut down to size. To this, it could be observed that, mindful of transatlantic burden-sharing, the Europeans up to a certain point have it in their own power to determine how 'junior' they want to be vis-à-vis the United States. Tangible European efforts to shake off "post-Cold War complacency"[92] can diminish the relevance of transatlantic differences in power. So do shared retrenchment, if not relative decline, and the rise of autocratic new powers. Objections against continued European deference to America's preponderance will seem pusillanimous in the face of the common challenges which North Americans and Europeans alike must weather in the 21st century. All of the above assumes, of course, that as American and European societies evolve, each in its own way, overall Western confidence and solidarity will nevertheless be preserved. Seen in this light, Americans cannot but closely watch how the EU is wrestling its way out of its present internal crises[93].

Decline?

Linking, as our authors have done, the euro crisis and Europe's diminished stature in the world is not altogether unplausible. After all, financial crises have been seen to accelerate the end of great nations and empires and therefore constitute a well-known element of declinist scenarios. But whatever longer-term effects the euro crisis may have set in motion, it is yet too early to assess these reliably. Meanwhile, and more generally, the notion of decline remains fraught with uncertainties when applied to the EU as we know it. First and most obviously, EU foreign policy as such can hardly be designated as an explanation for the "decline of a continent" (Laqueur). Doing so clearly would be assigning too much importance to what so far has essentially been a semi-intergovernmental, semi-communitarian side-show compared to the much bigger issues at stake when it comes to the EU's internal policies. This leaves, of course, the wider explanations for Europe's decline. Decline there is, in the sense that the European states no

---

[92] Dana H. Allin and Erik Jones, *Weary Policeman – American Power in an Age of Austerity* (London: IISS, 2012), p. 187.
[93] See David P. Calleo, 'Europe and America in a New Century', *Survival* 55, no. 5 (October-November 2013) and 'The Economic Schism of the West', *Survival* 55, no. 6 (December 2013 – January 2014).

longer seem to be willing, let alone able, to shape the world as they did over the past centuries. Similarly, the European project – which in fact was conceived as an escape from acute decline after two devastating world wars – at times seems to have exhausted itself. Yet, while useful as a descriptive tool, 'decline' as an explanatory concept remains conjectural – as, more generally, theories on the rise, reign, decline, and fall of civilisations are. Unwillingness to shape the world may not necessarily signal decline: it could also stem from a loss of faith in the power of the established, political and military institutions of nation-states to uphold the international liberal order, as *New York Times* columnist David Brooks argues[94]. While his analysis was written with the American public and the agencies of American power in mind, it does seem applicable to the Europeans and to the EU institutions more in particular. On both sides of the Atlantic, the earlier felt imperative of doing one's internationalist duty – most pregnantly by sending out troops - now runs up against a growing belief that "events emerge spontaneously from the ground up"[95] and therefore are inherently difficult to control. The European project was conceived after the Second World War, in an age where the optimistic faith in the organising power of "big units"[96] dominated. What the EU stands for may no longer correspond to the evolving foreign policy values of Europeans – a shift which not only applies to the European man in the street but extends to European politicians and policymakers. While the resulting disconnect may translate itself, internationally, in an immediate perception of weakness, it does not necessarily mean that Europe's global appeal is on the wane in the longer term. The notion of European decline is largely predicated on the 'Westphalian' competition between clearly defined nation-states and groupings of nation-states. However, today's nation-states are under pressure from, among other things, the worldwide growth of decentralised, grass-root movements; the internet revolution; global markets; and climate change. Taken together, these developments suggest that the Westphalian order need not be immutable. If the EU "is a sin against Westphalianism" as it has been called[97], then that sin might

---

[94] David Brooks, 'The leaderless doctrine', *International New York Times,* 12 March 2014.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] George Ross, 'What do 'Europeans' Think? Analyses of the European Union's Current Crisis by European Elites', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 2 (2008), p. 405.

turn out to be more far-sighted than is perhaps realised now. As the EU seeks, through its external policies, to project onto the world the kind of multi-level governance which it practices at home, it takes the risk of being penalised for being ahead of its time. But today's European decline may well be tomorrow's European ascendancy, as the so-called rising powers repeatedly demonstrate their deficient grasp of the global challenges which have already started confronting them as well. Thus, while 'decline' has the merit of focusing the mind to the point of creating a sense of urgency, it may well not be the final word on the EU's fate nor, for that matter, on Western-led globalisation.

Summing up

As a counterpoint to our authors' rather pessimistic assessments, we have recalled the strengthened international position which a domestic economic upswing in the EU member states can bring about; the enduring, stabilising virtues of the transatlantic relationship; and the inherently speculative nature of decline as an explanatory concept. The first two factors can act as a brake on, or even help reverse, Europe's international decline, real or perceived. The third factor can, if well understood, serve as a welcome antidote to self-defeating pessimism. Perhaps, then, the outlook for Europe's place in the world is not so bad as it seems? Do the very serious financial difficulties and the associated political dilemmas which the EU member states had to experience under the regime of monetary union in fact not demonstrate how profoundly interdependent they have become? Does this remarkable achievement in itself not underline the significance of the EU as the most successful transnational polity in recent history? Indeed, in the light of such reflections it could seem at least premature to pronounce the European project dead. Instead, and thinking pragmatically, we could determine that 'we are where we are'. In that line of thought, the European project, and Europe's place in the world as part of that project, manifestly are the provisional outcome of a 60 years-old intra-European gestation process, many triumphs and tribulations of which could have been scripted beforehand. Bringing together, in successive enlargement rounds, 28 nation-states – two nuclear powers and permanent members of the UN Security

Council amongst them - which for better or for worse remain attached to core aspects of their respective identities, would almost necessarily result in the kind of hybrid construct with which we are landed now. The EU's disparate make-up would certainly apply to its foreign policy which, given all the contradictory influences to which it manifestly must be subjected, could hardly come out much differently than the CFSP/CSDP as we know it at present. Be it Europe's elusive 'common strategic culture', the self-serving ambiguities of its 'effective multilateralism', or its risk averseness on the international scene: they would be, by and large, the hard-to-avoid manifestations of a permanent, and often highly complex, intra-European adjustment process involving at various levels national and collective perceptions and interests as well as shifting external pressures. If anything, our authors' considerations have served to remind us of how sui generis European foreign policy essentially is and, in all probability, will remain. It is in that light that remedies offered to improve its effectiveness ultimately would have to be judged, whatever the merits which such remedies may have otherwise. In other words, Europe's foreign policy would not stand to be transfigured by calls for radical change. Rather, it would remain cautious by necessity and evolutionary by choice, as illustrated by Europe's struggling yet quietly improving diplomatic service. Interestingly, EU foreign policy would not appear to suffer from the public disaffection with affects other areas of European integration: according to polls, most European citizens consistently would recognise that today's globalising world indeed does require unified responses on the part of the Europeans[98].

However, challenging this pragmatic 'we-are-where-we-are' approach, there is an emerging and more pessimistic view according to which Europe's present woes are also the symptom of a deeper crisis affecting both American and European societies. As *New York Times* columnist Roger Cohen puts it, American and European societies have in effect come to resemble each other in the inward-looking, selfish and narrow-minded turn which they have been taking in recent years[99]. According to political scientist Peter Mair, both citizens and political elites are withdrawing from the conventional political arena, the former "towards

---

[98] Stefan Lehne, 'The Ambition Deficit: Why the EU Still Punches Below its Weight', *Commentary* (Brussels: Carnegie Europe, 26 October 2011), p. 3.
[99] Roger Cohen, 'Poor angry magnetic Europe', *International New York Times*, 23 May 2014.

a more privatized or individualized world" and the latter "into an official world – a world of public offices"[100]. While Mair's concern is with domestic political processes, his analysis may well hold implications for foreign policy as well. If indeed participants in the democratic process disengage from each other, it should become harder to sustain the perhaps ill-defined but broadly-felt permissive consensus which active Western outreach to the world requires. As that consensus steadily erodes, Western electorates would become averse to making sacrifices in defence of values which no longer command their support and loyalty. Western governments, on their part, would feel justified in following suit - avoiding international exposure and instead seeking to cloak any abdication of responsibility in, for instance, the wishful view that commercial interests drive geo-strategy. And indeed, the West's unconvincing reactions to old-fashioned power politics such as practiced by Russia and China[101]of lately does lend some credence to this view. While Western governments cannot conceal their desire to revert to business as usual, American and European societies seem to remain largely indifferent to any resulting deterioration of the West's global strategic position. If confirmed, these trends could indicate decline after all – decline writ large that is to say, as it would encompass not only Europe but the wider West.

Post-script: the European elections of May 2014

Between 22 and 25 May 2014, 380 million Europeans had the chance to elect a new European Parliament (EP). As had been anticipated, both the low turnout (43,09 %) and the outcome confirmed popular disillusion with the European Union, with anti-European parties seizing close to 30% of the 751 seats. This outcome seems to confirm some of the declinist ruminations put forward by Laqueur and Marquand. It also is in line with Bickerton's analysis, where he sees 'member statehood' breeding mutual alienation between disembodied political parties and disenfranchised core social constituencies[102]. Some see here the symptoms of a wider, Western popular disaffection with democratic governments,

---

[100] Peter Mair, *Ruling the Void – The Hollowing of Western Democracy* (London: Verso, 2013), p. 97.

[101] Vali R. Nasr, 'A great-power outage', *International New York Times,* 24-25 May 2014*.*

[102] Christopher Bickerton, pp. 69-70.

which are being seen as unresponsive, remote, and dysfunctional[103]. In the case of Europe, the permissive consensus which had sustained the European project earlier on now at any rate seems history. It has been replaced by resentment on the part of many European voters, who have come to identify the EU with economic hardship instead of social advancement and with 'elitist' disregard of national democratic processes. At the time of writing, it is unclear how Europe's political leaders will choose to react to the threefold challenge flowing from the elections: (1) re-establishing, in the public mind, the EU as the agent of growth and prosperity as it was once perceived; (2) reconnecting with European public opinion; (3) injecting sufficiently credible doses of democratic accountability into decision making affecting the daily lives of European electorates. On the one hand, heeding the powerful message delivered by the voters in key member states of the Union risks putting the European project on hold at a time when securing Europe's future economic and financial stability seems to require further integration. On the other hand, facing down a 'populist' challenge which remains highly fractious and does not muster more than an - albeit vocal - minority in the European Parliament, is bound to reinforce the widely held view that European elites are impervious to dissent[104]. This in turn could further polarise an already tense public atmosphere and let a political crisis superimpose itself on a hardly overcome financial-economic crisis. Will Europe's leaders rise above themselves, compensating the absence of a political Europe – a European *demos,* as called for by Marquand - by steadfast and united statesmanship? Or will they not know any better than to resort to short-term political expedients? Where, more in particular, will Germany stand?

Meanwhile, the election results should not directly affect the EU's foreign policy, which remains the preserve of the 28 member states governments. They may, however, inhibit initiatives to bolster the CSDP. Such initiatives could take advantage of the forthcoming leadership changes in Brussels, which notably include the appointment of a new European foreign policy chief. But they would require the active support, if not the authorship, of the UK and France, which

---

[103] David Brooks, 'The big debate', *International New York Times*, 21 May 2014.
[104] Paul Krugman, 'Crisis of the eurocrats', *International New York Times*, 24-25 May 2014.

unfortunately happen to be the two member states where europhobia seems to be making the greatest strides.

Arguably, the EU's political drift would reflect, in a more pronounced form, a wider alienation from technocracy allied to unaccountability – the prevailing form of governance in today's Western democracies[105]? Meanwhile, the more immediate concern of preventing the European project from getting bogged down will require marrying clarity of vision to political courage - qualities which seem to be in short supply among Europe's current crop of leaders. The Jean Monnets are no longer among us, and if they were they probably would not thrive in today's claustrophobic political cultures…Should we then, as Perry Anderson seems to suggest in his *The New Old World*, leave it to the "impetus to "dynamic disequilibrium" genetically engineered" into the European project from its very beginning to show the way, acting through the law of "unintended consequences"[106]? Letting the dialectics of change take their course, hopefully for the better but perhaps also for worse, would perhaps seem more sensible than trying, with the best of intentions, to force through a step change here and now. But can we still afford that more leisurely approach, in the face of the problems which today's interdependent, fast-paced, and volatile world is placing on Europe's doorstep? Clearly not, Europe finds itself too far out of its "comfort zone"[107] to indulge in further drift. Now, drift – which is not necessarily the same thing as 'decline' – could be termed as ' vulnerability born out of teleological disorientation'. We thus end up with the perennial problem of Europe's missing moral and political 'finality'. "Determined to lay the foundations of an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe…", as the Preambles to the 1957 Treaties of Rome and the 1991 Maastricht Treaty proclaim, may be rhetorically satisfying, but as a vision it remains too undetermined to provide grand-strategic guidance to the Union's internal and external policies. "Without clarity of ends there can be no clarity of means either", as Perry Anderson observes[108]. *Horror vacui…?* Europe's current predicament could have the salutary effect of turning the

---

[105] See Peter Mair, note 100.
[106] Perry Anderson, pp. 86-87, 547.
[107] See note 86.
[108] Perry Anderson, p. 547.

'finality' issue from a largely academic preoccupation into a theme which, if taken up by Europe's political leaders in an intelligent and honest way, may help bridge the widening gap between Europe's politicians and their electorates before mutual alienation reaches the point of rupture[109]. This would require a "continent-wide conversation", as David Marquand terms it[110], in the course of which the issue of Europe's finality would, for the first time, be put to the people instead of being left to scholars to ponder. Such a 'European conversation' would have to be genuine enough for it to serve its purpose: it should not be stage-managed so as to privilege a disembodied pro-European discourse, as was the case during the 2002 Future of Europe Convention. Nor should it be allowed to degenerate into a free-for-all, in which participants are primarily bent on settling domestic political scores. Both pro-European technocrats and anti-European populists of all stripes may balk at the idea, but the actual seriousness of the situation does warrant an extraordinary process. On its present course, the European project in the end risks uprooting the social contract between European governments and their populations, severely discrediting European democracy in the process.

Acknowledgments

Bibliography

Allin, Dana H. and Jones, Erik (2012), Weary Policeman – American Power in an Age of Austerity (London: IISS).

Anderson, Perry (2009), *The New Old World* (London: Verso).

---

[109] The danger of mass revolt against the EU is mentioned by Perry Anderson, in his discussion (pp. 118-123) of Larry Siedentop's *Democracy in Europe* (London: Allen Lane-The Penguin Press, 2000). Siedentop foresees (pp. 144-145) that the Europeans might rise against the French-inspired EU bureaucracy in the same way as the French themselves have repeatedly revolted against their own rulers since 1789.
[110] David Marquand, p. 106.

Bickerton, Christopher J. (2012), *European Integration – From Nation-States to Member States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Bioscop, Sven (2009), 'Odd Couple or Dynamic Duo? The EU and Strategy in Times of Crisis', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 14, pp. 367-84.

Calleo, David P. (2013), 'Europe and America in a New Century', *Survival* 55, no. 5 (October-November).

------(2013-2014), 'The Economic Schism of the West', *Survival* 55, no. 6 (December-January).

Chalmers, Damian, Davies,Gareth and Monti, Giorgio (2010), *European Union Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Cini, Michelle Cini and Perez-Solorzano Borragan, Nieves (2013), *European Union Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th edition).

Cohen, Roger (2014), 'Poor angry magnetic Europe', *International New York Times,* 23 May 2014.

European Council (2003), *A Secure Europe in a Better World* (Brussels, 12 December), www.consilium.europa.eu/eudocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf

------(2013), *Conclusions* (Brussels, 19-20 December), www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/140245.pdf.

European Union Institute for Security Studies (May 2001), 'From St-Malo to Nice. European defence: core documents', compiled by Maartje Rutten, *Chaillot Paper 47* (Paris: EUISS).

De France, Olivier and Witney, Nick (2013), *Europe's Strategic Cacophony*, Policy Brief (April), (London: European Council on Foreign Relations).

Habermas, Jürgen (2010), *Ach, Europa. Kleine politische Schriften XI* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag).

------ (2012), *The Crisis of the European Union – A Response* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Kagan, Robert (2002), 'Power and Weakness', *Policy Review* 113 *(*June-July), pp. 3-28.

Keleman, R. Daniel (2010), 'Globalizing European Union environmental policy', *Journal of European Public Policy* 17, no. 3, pp. 335-49.

Keohane, Daniel (2013), *Strategic priorities for EU defence policy*, Policy Brief no 146 (Madrid: FRIDE).

Laqueur, Walter (2011), *After the Fall – The End of the European Union and the Decline of a Continent* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books).

Lehne, Stefan (2011), 'The Ambition Deficit: Why the EU Still Punches Below its Weight', *Commentary* (Brussels: Carnegie Europe).

Leonard, Mark (2005), *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century* (London: HarpersCollins Publishers).

Mair, Peter (2013), *Ruling the Void – The Hollowing of Western Democracy* (London: Verso).

Majone, Giandomenico (1996), *Regulating Europe* (London: Routledge Research in European Public Policy).

Marquand, David (2010), *The End of the West – The Once and Future Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

Milward, Alan S. (1962), *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge).

Moravcsik, Andrew (1998), *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Purpose from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

Nye, Jr., Joseph S. (2004), *Soft Power – The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs).

Richard Rosecrance (2013), *The Resurgence of the West – How a Transatlantic Union Can Prevent War and Restore the United States and Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

Ross, George (2008), 'What Do 'Europeans' Think? Analyses of the European Union's Current Crisis by European Elites', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 2, pp. 389-412.

Siedentop, Larry (2000), *Democracy in Europe* (London: Allen Lane-The Penguin Press).

45

Smith, Michael (2013), 'Beyond the comfort zone: internal crisis and the external challenges in the European Union's response to rising powers', *International Affairs* 89, no. 3, pp. 653-71*.*

Techau, Jan (2012), 'The Strategic Europe Yardstick', in: Jan Techau (ed.), *Strategic Europe* (Brussels: Carnegie Europe).

Youngs, Richard (2011), *Europe's Decline and Fall – The Struggle Against Global Irrelevance* (London: Profile Books).

Zielonka, Jan (2006), *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).