



Europe and the World

Giuseppe Sacco

The presence on the world scene of a political actor named “Europe” is hardly disputable. It is a political entity which shares with the nation-State, the allegiance and the expectations of a majority of West Europeans. From Europe the Western European peoples expect that a gradual passage from the national to the supra-national dimension will help provide a solution to their problems and improve their economic conditions. On the contrary, the attachment to national political tradition expresses the need for caution towards change and progress; a very comprehensible attitude on the part of peoples which are among the richest and the freest in the world, and have therefore much to lose.

That the European ideal has spread strong roots in the soul of European public opinion was discovered the hard way by General de Gaulle in 1969, and again by Mrs. Thatcher in 1990. Both had played the charming music of national pride to facilitate the introduction of deep changes in the habits and ways of their respective countries, and both had to learn that the French and the English (and especially their business communities) were willing to let the politicians seduce them with nationalism, but only to the extent that this did not negatively affect their main economic interests, which clearly lay with a united Europe.

Still, although Europe is an indisputable presence in the contemporary world, it certainly has difficulties in conducting a foreign policy of its own, i.e. in expressing its personality through the establishment of political relations with other international actors. Foreign policy remains indeed one of the fields in which the European nation-States are most reluctant to surrender their independence, and this in spite of the fact that this field is the very one in which the growing irrelevance of the individual European nation-State has been most visible for many decades. The reason for this reluctance—in sharp contrast with the relative ease with which some very crucial competences, for instance in the field of trade and agriculture, have been devolved to the EC—would deserve psychological analysis, and is probably related to the highly symbolic value of State-to-State relations.

A few preliminary questions are therefore necessary and legitimate if one wishes to tackle the problem of the international presence of a united Europe. Is a common European foreign policy condemned to remain a mere theoretical concept? Does it have to wait for the day when “political Europe” will be in place?

This does not seem to be the case, as European institutions are growingly involved in grand diplomacy, such as the yearly summit meeting of the seven major industrial countries, or the CSCE process. But this involvement, and the so-called European political co-operation¹, are clearly not enough for the public opinion of the Old World. The ordinary European citizen is demanding more every day from “Europe”, and more and more frequently criticises it for not playing a more active and more autonomous role in world politics. It seems thus evident that the existing institutions cannot, in spite of the rapid expansion of their international competence and activity, cope with this revolution of rising political expectations.

Meeting them, however, is no easy task, as the basic collective interests of Europe within the international framework of the post-Cold War era are yet to be clearly understood by European public opinion. This is comprehensible, given the scope of the changes in world order brought about by the collapse of Communism: a collapse which has not only put on a new basis East-West relations, but has also disrupted North-South equilibria.

The outer border issue

Moreover, not only has there been an upheaval of the international order such as we have known it at least since Postdam², but also the very reasons for uniting Europe have changed. Up to now these have been obvious geo-strategic reasons. And the emphasis that the Europeans gave to them was partly sincere, but partly was an excuse, as this permitted them not to mention that the peoples of Italy, France, Germany and the Benelux thought that they had in common a superior civilisation, which only by pulling together, they could enhance and protect from the theoretical risk of *Sovietisation* and the actual fact of *Americanisation*.

At present, the geo-strategic reasons for uniting western Europe have partly faded away, and even the frequently unspoken idea that equated “Europe” with the Western part of the continent (and not even all of it) has been taken over, in much more ambiguous way, by the so-called “common European house” proposal, which tends to encompass in a single large nebula the entire developed world (with the sole exception of Japan), badly watering down the wine of European cultural identity.

Politically, the reason for uniting Europe, was—in the Cold War years—mostly a passive, defensive one aimed at preserving the local tradition of individual and political freedom. Today, this is no longer the case. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the military threat from the East has practically disappeared, at least in the old form. The

nature of Europe's relationship to the ex-satellite countries has radically changed and is tendentially shifting from the area of "foreign" relations to the area of Europe's "domestic" politics. Indeed, as war is nothing but politics conducted with other means, defence can be considered a part—and an essential one—of foreign relations. But now, from the ex-satellite countries, from the Baltic States, from the Ukraine, and from Russia itself, the military treaty has frequently been replaced by the demand to be accepted in the EC, a pressure that inevitably raises the issue of where the outer borders of Europe are to be found, and ends up being felt in the "domestic" politics of Europe.

Never as now, has a "foreign" policy of whatever "united Europe" is in existence been so necessary, in order to provide an alternative arrangement to the pressure of countries such as Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia to join the EC. If indeed it is quite likely that the admission of the ex-satellites into the Community would have negative economic and social consequences for both the EC, and even more so for themselves, the slamming of Europe's door on the face of these countries would also be a disaster for the whole of Europe. It is in nobody's interest to have a Rio Grande in the hearth of Europe, with the lands East of this border abandoned to economic disaster and to their nationalist demons.

In other words, the establishment of a flexible European *Ostpolitik* is the only way to stem the East Europeans' justified fears of poverty and replace their inconsiderate pressure for admission with a more rational behaviour, while at the same time managing the survival of the *acquis européen* for the countries that are already in the EC. The development of a web of "foreign" political and economic relations between the EC and Eastern Europe is thus a response to the false dilemma between "widening" and "deepening" of the EC, as it makes the "widening" less necessary and the "deepening" less complicated. These two issues are not in themselves in contradiction. On the contrary,—as has been pointed out by some non-Thatcherite Britons³ the wider the community becomes, the harder it is to decide by consensus, and therefore the more necessary the strengthening of a central authority and the recourse to majority vote. Giving the EC the task of hammering out a common "foreign policy" line towards East European countries (as well as towards the EFTA countries) is certainly a form of "deepening". But to the extent it is an alternative to more admissions, it also reduces the urgency to deepen the union in many other, more critical areas

Even more significant of the increased importance of Europe's external relations is the fact that Europe is more and more frequently perceived as an actor in world affairs by the other actors. As far as the world commercial system is concerned, this is evident, for instance, in the recurrent allusions in Japan and in the United States to the construction of "fortress Europe", and the quasi-paranoia of US and Australian behaviour in the most recent GATT negotiations. Another more political example can be found in the new Soviet approach to world politics which has sharply marked the difference between the Gromyko era and the Shevardnadze era: one of the crucial

elements of the Soviet *novoye myslenie* was precisely the perception of EC as a single actor, and the abandonment of the Soviet practice of stubbornly limiting relations with Europe to bilateral State-to-State ones. Europe, in other words, is hence recognised by common consent as one of the most important protagonists characterising the post-Cold War order.

National character and institutions

It can be considered part of this perception of Europe as a well-defined socio-political entity and as a single international actor, that the Americans sometimes accuse the Europeans of some of the worst possible defects. Thus, at the end of 1990, America's allies on the eastern shore of the Atlantic have come under Rep. Gephard's heavy criticism for their "avarice" in contributing to the ever-escalating cost of the American expedition in the Persian Gulf⁴. And already by 1985, the Europeans had been named "cowards" for not having been fully convinced that the US bombing of Tripoli was the most heroic deed in history. Indeed, such an accusation (as ridiculous and meaningless as it may seem) implies that non-European international actors perceive the individuals, leaders and various other actors which can be classified under the label of "Europe", as a group endowed not only with common economic and political interests, but with an embryo of "national character" of their own. It is easy (although pointless) to object, in this respect, that the very concept of national character is an arguable one. Nevertheless, it is evident that even at the level of folkloristic perception, Europe is beginning to be seen as a cultural and behavioural unit.

Cowardice, as a "national" trait of the European "character", might not sound like something to be proud of, but this idea lends itself to an interesting comparison with another commonplace: "perfidious Albion", i.e. the idea that the British are, by historical record, unreliable and even treason-prone allies. It is interesting to note that a rather pro-American observer, US Senator Patrick Moynihan, is frequently reported to have expressed a similar concept regarding the United States, "Being hostile to the US is uncomfortable; but being friendly to the US is lethal".

Unreliability would thus be the most prominent feature of the Anglo-Saxon "national character"—a conclusion which can be accepted at best as a joke in poor taste. In fact this three-century-old commonplace merely refers to the difference between the political regime of Britain (parliamentarism) and that of continental Europe in the 18th century (absolute monarchy). Unlike countries which can be identified with one single leader, a parliamentary regime is faceless; it can reverse its stand and change its alliances even by secret ballot, so that no-one loses face in the process. In this way, the US Congress could do both: first arm Vietnam to its teeth in 1973 (when it became the third conventional military power in the world), then, in 1974, cut all military supply without any individual leader bearing the responsibility for such a *volte-face*. In other words, being "perfidious" (this supposedly essential feature of "national character") is in reality related to political regime, not to race, religion or culture.

“National character”, in other words, depends directly on institutions. It is therefore hardly surprising that, after half a century of labour during which, in the Old World, so much effort has been devoted to the construction of pan-European political institutions, a European “national character” is beginning to emerge, and to be seen in the interaction between “Europe” and other international actors. To an observer unaware of the fields in which the nation-States have (or have not) devolved competence to Brussels, this collective European personality could easily appear very conservative and petty, attached as it is to the preservation of agricultural life, and tenacious in protecting its interests in the commercial field. Moreover, on top of “avarice”, this collective personality demonstrates evident shortcomings in the field of international relations, namely an evident incapacity at making rapid decisions about where the collective international European interest lies, at taking risks and actually paying prices outright (i.e. it shows an apparent “cowardice”). But it is only too obvious that so much attention is devoted to agriculture and foreign trade, because these are the areas in which European construction is most advanced, while for its shortcomings in foreign and defense policies it is the lack of appropriate institutions, the fact that the institutional process is not yet complete, that is to be blamed.⁵

A “swing wing” actor

The international relations of a united Europe, in the framework of the new international system that is likely to characterise the 90s, will obviously depend on the characteristics that the actor named Europe will develop during the next stage of institutional development.

As an international actor, Europe is in many ways quite different from the classical actors of world affairs, individual states. It is therefore impossible to imagine what its stand will be in the world of the coming decade, unless the current confusion about the very definition of Europe dissipates and the concept is clarified.

One simple example is enough to demonstrate the bad lack of clarity concerning the definition of “Europe”: the fact that no surprise was expressed in any quarter, either when the idea of a “Europe from San Francisco to Vladivostock” was first floated, or when five European nations—all the original founders of the EC but one—signed the Schengen agreement (and when they later showed their readiness to create, ones again the five of them, a full-fledged monetary union) without the participation of the other seven member States.

The reason why public opinion seems to find acceptable that two (and indeed many more) such diverging concepts co-exist, is that “Europe”, while no longer being merely a geographical expression, is not a State in the making either. Both of them would indeed imply precise borders. Rather, as Ralf Dahrendorf has written, Europe is a “strictly political concept”, as “it raises from the fact that small or relatively small countries try to determine their own destinies”⁶.

This is why Europe is not an actor of international relations comparable to the established ones; rather, it is a political idea—which inevitably generates “des projets à géométrie variable”, or “swing wing projects”—and therefore brings about, on different occasions, different institutional aggregations of nations and States. In turn, these institutional aggregations can establish relationships of all kinds and nuances with the rest of the world.

In spite of such uncertainty in the definition of its borders, “Europe” nonetheless has a personality and specific features, as well as unique foreign policy interests. These can be perceived by looking at this actor of international affairs from a historical, geographical and political angle.

The historical dimension

At the basis of the concept of a politically united Europe lies the idea of Franco-German reconciliation. Although the unity of Europe is perceived by all the western European countries as a guarantee that the terrible experience of the two fratricidal wars will never be repeated in the future, the position that the Paris-Bonn relationship has held in the construction of Europe is undeniably special. To perceive the uniqueness of the role and character of Franco-German relations in the construction of European unity, one ought to realise that the historical origin of the European idea is not only rooted in the two wars which, between 1914 and 1945, pitted the nations of the Old World against one another. It goes much further back in time; into several centuries of military and diplomatic struggle for European order.

Although in forms adapted to the political conceptions of the various times, the idea of uniting Europe has existed for several centuries. Skipping the period before the peace of Westphalia, the first attempt to unite Europe under French hegemony was conducted by the Bourbon monarchy. A second one followed early in the 19th century with Napoleon, and was characterised by ideological homogenisation of the societies under French military control. After Napoleon’s failure, and especially after Austria and later France were defeated by the Prussian armies, the ambition to unite the continent under the hegemony of one nation was undertaken by Germany which, early in this century, began to dream of displacing Britain as the centre of the world order. With World War I, the German Empire’s attempt was defeated, but the grand design of a “Germanised” Europe fell into the hands of an ideologue, Hitler, who also thought that the continent ought to be homogenised along with the social and political system of the hegemonic power.

It is worth pointing out that the third major European power, Great Britain, never tried to unite Europe under its primacy. Its traditional policy aimed at keeping continental Europe divided, and this aim was pursued by systematically supporting the weaker of the two would-be continental hegemonic powers, a tactic so deeply embedded within British political psychology that it is still conspicuous (and a source of inspiration)



France allied with the Swiss Cantons

today. This policy was evidently consistent with the rivalries of the continental powers, but in no way can be considered to bear the main responsibility of the repeated devastations of the continent.

This does not mean, however, that Britain was not one of the protagonists in the European drama, or that its interests were not at stake in this terrible struggle. On the contrary, it is precisely the clash between the French and the German nations which enabled Britain to establish itself as the master of the world for nearly a century, from Napoleon's defeat until World War I, and to establish a "Pax Britannica" that profoundly marked the world. Moreover, it was no longer just France, but also Britain and its world role that Wilhelm II's Germany was challenging, after Bismarck's Germany in 1870-71 had finally established itself as Europe's hegemonic power.

In this historical context, the post-World War II aspiration of uniting Europe was thus much more than the mere overcoming of the relatively brief German-British rivalry which had triggered the 1914-18 war, and the ensuing World War II. This is why the

treaties establishing first the European Coal and Steel Community, then the EEC and Euratom—i.e. the treaties which are universally considered the basis of whatever united Europe exists today—could be established without the participation of Britain.

In this historical perspective, after the disastrous failures of French and German repeated drives for continental hegemony, the Rome treaties amounted to nothing less than the end of the Franco-German struggle, many centuries old. Many centuries of rivalry between the two major continental powers, the two powers which had the ambition, the drive and the audacity to embark into such an imperial project, had proven inevitably bound to lead both of them to disaster, to the sole advantage of powers such as Russia and Britain, whose interests were largely outside of continental Europe. Thanks to the division and the internal struggles of continental Europe, the former had a free hand in creating a gigantic empire stretching over the whole landmass of Northern Asia, and at one point even over part of North America, the latter being free to establish global maritime dominance and political control over the newly settled continents.

Indisputably, at the origins of the European treaties of the fifties (of the successful ones but even more so of the unsuccessful European Defence Community treaty), there were also elements of German-Belgian, German-Dutch and Franco-Italian reconciliation, i.e. the overcoming of the various reasons for resentment as left by the two World Wars. But these reconciliations were not, in historical terms, comparable with the French and German abandonment of the idea that European unity had to be established through the subjugation and humiliation of one of the two nations by the other. On the contrary, the basic idea was that the possibilities of re-establishing Europe's position in the world lay in the pooling of forces and of destinies.

The geographical dimension

The strange animal called Europe, which we must get to know before we can speculate on what its future relations with the rest of the world will look like, is only slightly different from its mythical predecessor, the Hydra. The Hydra had one hundred heads, and in order to kill it, all of them had to be cut off at the same time. As long as one head was still alive, the others immediately regenerated and the monster remained intact. Europe is, in a way, similar: it has twelve heads—for the moment, at least—and if one or some of them were to be chopped off, were it Italy, Britain or all of Benelux countries, the animal would be wounded but still alive. France or Germany, however, are in a special position: if either of them steps out of the Treaty, there is no more united Europe and the Hydra is dead. This is a crucial element of the internal nature of the Community, an essential part of the structural relationship between its member States. Without taking this peculiarity into account, it would be impossible to understand how this multi-headed political animal places itself relative to the rest of the world, and indeed to understand that, if it is to survive, this animal is inescapably compelled to establish relations with the outside.

Even though diplomatic *pruderie* has always prevented from saying so aloud, the precondition for Franco-German reconciliation was the partition of Germany. There are several reasons for this. In demographic terms, the Germans have always been much more powerful than any other European nation, except the Russians, and only if deprived of the provinces East of the Elbe could a German state become a rough equivalent of France. From an economic point of view, Germany was of course weaker than France at the end of the conflict, but it could be expected (or feared?) that it would soon regain at least part of the ground lost. Thus, it was expected that the perpetuation of the Soviet occupation of most of Germany, and of the minority status in the military field in which the defeat had left the Federal Republic, added to the fact that France was at least in name a victorious power, would help compensate for future German economic superiority. The balanced and symmetrical system which was created first in the six-member Community (three "big" members of about sixty million inhabitants, and three minor ones) and then expanded when a fourth "big" country—Britain—joined in, was based on the assumption that Germany would stay divided for the foreseeable future. The reunification of Germany was of course never renounced in principle—on the contrary it was always officially demanded—but it could be foreseen only in the framework of an overcoming of the division of Europe, that is in the framework of a substantial redrawing of the world political map.

This has happened in 1990. The unification of Germany became possible because the wound that divided Europe seemed on the point of being healed, and Chancellor Kohl had the intuition and the courage to seize the opportunity. But this leads the European institutions into a very special phase of their lives. After over thirty years of consolidation in a world dominated by an East-West split that ran through German territory, united Europe has now to prove capable of surviving, adapting to German unification, and developing some new form of political equilibrium. With the collapse of the Wall, European unification has actually come to face its litmus test. Surviving German unification will be the proof that the so-called supranational process has indeed led to something different from a mere custom union or a traditional grouping of States. And this test is crucial not only in "domestic" European politics, but also in the relationship between the anomalous international actor named Europe and the whole international system.

Europe as a collective actor will also have to fill the power vacuum that the Soviet withdrawal has opened in East Central Europe, at least in order to prevent a collapse of the present border situation, that would open a Pandora's Box into which Germany would fatally be attracted⁷. Germany itself, the one among all member countries which most understands the necessity of keeping stability in the ex-Soviet *glacis* and of intervening heavily with economic means, is already discovering that it is more prudent to intervene collectively under the EC's umbrella.

The reasons for preferring collective diplomacy towards Eastern Europe are evident not only for the EC member-countries that border on the ex-satellites (such as

Germany and Italy) or for the Scandinavian countries, but for France and Britain as well. Even if the aim of Paris and London were that of competing with Germany or of bringing the Eastern neighbours of Europe's new giant into a system intended at "containing" German dynamism, (i.e. if the French and the British were to pursue purely national objectives), it would still be convenient for both of them to develop such strategy as part of collective EC action.

For Britain and France, co-operation with Eastern Central Europe is not as natural and inevitable as it is in the case of Germany, Italy or the Scandinavian countries. While the latter countries have an interest dictated by geography in establishing a co-operative relationship with the ex-satellites, Britain and France have to compensate for the inexistence of a geographical imperative with a political one. London and Paris always have to invent some political reason to justify co-operation with Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia. But whatever the official justification, this convergence of national political interest between powers to the West and to the East of the FRG is inevitably bound to look like the beginning of anti-German alliance, an element of the eternal "siege" of Germany that has so frequently in the past been at the origin of "German hysteria". It is then better, much better, for France and Britain to develop their ties with Eastern Europe via Brussels. And in this obvious interest shared by all the major EC partners to operate in Eastern Europe through the Community lies the promise of a great role played East of the Oder-Neiße border by united Europe as a single international actor.

The political dimension

Another characteristic related to the origin of the EC has to be taken into consideration in exploring its external relations in the future political environment: the ambition to create a peaceful world, after the tragedy in which European rivalries had precipitated all the civilized nations on earth. After World War II, it was quite obvious that a reciprocally friendly attitude of the French and German peoples was not sufficient in order to prevent a Third World War. Not only Germany, but France and Britain as well, had become too weak and too dependent on non-European powers to endanger world peace.

The reconstruction of Europe on the basis of economic complementarity in order to avoid the autarchic tendencies that had fed political nationalism, proved indeed extremely beneficial from an economic point of view, but was obviously insufficient to rule out the possibility that a local conflict would ignite the powders of a new global war. It is beyond doubt that, in the last forty-five years, there has not been even the faintest risk of a new Franco-German war. And even if it had existed, it would probably not have been more dangerous than the recurrent threat posed by the two other allies of the US—Greece and Turkey—which have permanently seemed on the brink of war. The menaces to peace, in the last half century, have come from other parts of the world: Korea, Indochina, Cuba and the Middle-East.

It is the bipolar balance of terror between Moscow and Washington, not the relations—peaceful at last—between France and Germany, that has kept the world at peace and the human race alive in the last forty-five years. The ambitious and noble project of the “ideologists” of Europe such as Monnet or Spinelli has brought about the extremely important—but much more down the earth—result of uniting the European economies in the EC, but has in itself failed, because the European countries had lost most of their capacity of deciding the destiny of mankind.

Today, however, things are changing, and the world system is again showing features similar to those of the pre-1914 years. The bipolar order is clearly coming to a close. The collapse of the communist bloc, the resurgence of nationalism in the ex-satellite countries, the centrifugal tendencies at work in the Soviet Union, and the chaos which predominates inside Russia itself, are all compounded by the reunification of Germany, the tremendous economic dynamism of both Germany and Japan, and the transformation in North-South relations that will follow the disappearance of the communist menace. All this is bringing the world back to a situation that, along with substantial differences, has some similarities with the situation in which the dream of the founders of Europe was conceived. This dream is thus acquiring a new realism, the realism it has lacked during the 45 years since the end of the “European civil war”. Making sure that France and Germany share the same interests, co-operate in an extremely large number of areas, and indeed pursue economic integration, once again becomes quite relevant to world peace.

For a variety of reasons, ideological⁸ but mainly demographic and economic, Germany today seems to be a very different political animal from what it used to be, for instance, when the Rhineland was re-militarised (the closest historical comparison one can make to the reunification of 1989-90). But one thing is certain: it is thanks to the European institutional construction and to the fact that the European economies were rebuilt on the base of free trade, complementarity, and refusal of economic nationalism, that the risk of renewed tensions that could endanger world peace is simply not thinkable in today's Europe. Our generation would not only consider it total madness, but would flatly refuse to comply, if the political elites were to create, by an absurd hypothesis, a situation through which the French, British and German youth had to die and kill as they did in the battle of Flanders.

This is not due to superior wisdom of the present generation. It is well known that all young generations tend to consider the previous ones stupid for having believed in the ideals of their time. And it is also an established fact that, with the passing of years, all young generations become old and tend to share the same values that had previously seemed totally extraneous to their mentality. In the case of our generation in Europe, however, the break with the previous one is a real one, not because we happen to be more intelligent than our fathers and grandfathers, but because we have grown up in an environment where the interest of each of our countries is structurally not contradictory or conflicting, but complementary to the interests of our European

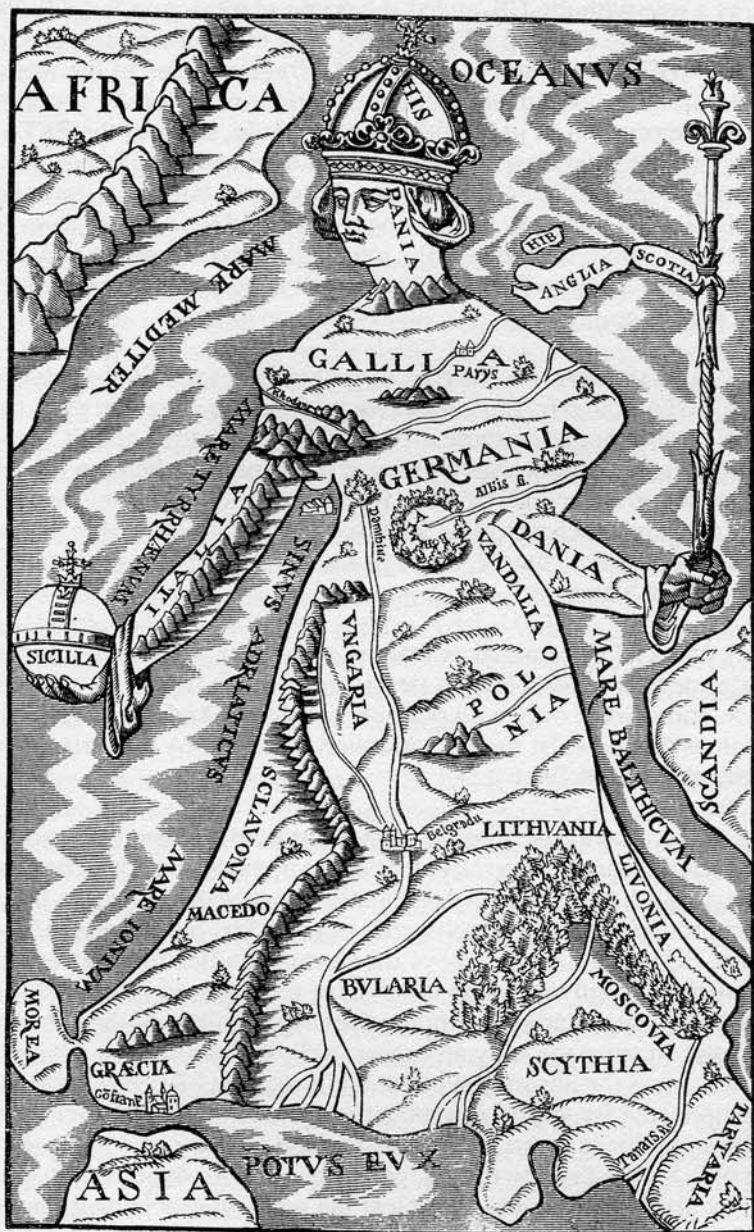
neighbours, and is perceived as such. The actual integration of European economies has played a crucial role in creating this different psychological attitude. Similarly, forty years of political struggle for, and institutional construction of, a united Western Europe encompassing most of Germany can also be deemed to have played an absolutely essential role.

These considerations bring us to a crucial point about the future of the external relations of a United Europe. Now that the bipolar order is dying because of the collapse of Communism (and of the ensuing decline of America's role as a guarantor of freedom for the countries which had escaped Soviet military conquest in World War II), the seeds of Franco-German reconciliation that were so carefully nourished in the last decades have to show that they have born their political fruit. This not only means that the EC has to prove its capacity of being the framework in which German dynamism can fully express itself in harmony with that of the other European peoples. Thanks to progress accomplished in European unity, the peoples which have been involved in the two World Wars, and have suffered because of the two attempts to unite Europe under the German hegemony, may now see German dynamism no longer as a menace, but as a stimulus and a complement to their own dynamism.

Periphery of the first degree

Some of the peoples which, although they had escaped communism, have not participated in the reconciliation process at the basis of the EC and which, following Britain in its attempt to counter the EC, have in the past created the EFTA, have eventually come to the conclusion that they have to get somehow involved in the European process. With them, the possibility of establishing a common European Economic Space (EES) is presently being discussed, although with scarce enthusiasm and success. If these negotiations were to lead to the establishment of such countries as a "periphery of the first degree" in a system of concentric circles around the EC (an approach that remains highly rational in spite of the criticism that has recently met) we could indeed consider them to be an important part of Europe's foreign relations. But as negotiations for the EES have been disturbed by the attempt of the EFTA to acquire some form of co-decisional power in EC matters, as well as by the Austrian application to join the Twelve—followed by the menace of a similar step by Sweden—the negotiation is actually touching on the most "domestic" and delicate possible issues, i.e. the issues of EC membership and institutional structure.

Obviously, the problem created by these applications is related to the need not to introduce further complications (either by involving the EFTA in its life, or by just increasing the number of member countries) in the institutional life of the EC, at a delicate moment when it is expanding its competence to encompass new areas, and transforming its decision-making process. Even its agricultural policy, an area in which the competence of the EC is well established (and has entangled Brussels in a serious dispute with the rest of the world), would be affected negatively. The Common



Europe the Empress

Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been at the center of the difficulties in the GATT negotiations, of a row with the US, and at the origin of a reaction from Australia, which has even menaced creating a Far Eastern zone of commercial preference. In other words, the CAP is the origin of the risk of a fragmentation of the world economic system, and is consequently under pressure to downscale its policy of agricultural price support. And in the field of agriculture, some of the EFTA countries are much more protectionist than the EC. Some of them, such as Sweden or Switzerland, follow self-sufficiency strategies that cannot but recall the experience of the tragic 1930s. In any case, any concession in this field to EFTA or to any candidate for EC membership would lead the CAP a long and exactly opposite way away from where economic rationality and the general interests preserving world order recommend it should go.

Moreover, it is to be stressed that the type of problems at stake in the relation between the EC and the EFTA countries are very different from the ones that exist between the EC and the ex-communist countries. To the EFTA countries, the EC does not provide, as in the case of the ex-satellites (or at least some of them), a model of socio-economic organisation to be imitated. The EFTA countries are, from the point of view of social structures and mechanisms as well as political culture, fairly similar to EC society. Their position to the EC could in a way be compared to that of Canada relative to the United States.

This similarity of social system makes that the individual and corporate subject on both sides have extreme ease in establishing ties across borders, while the governments—in their official relation—deal only with political problems. And indeed, mainly political are the difficulties that do exist for the admission of the EFTA countries as new members in the club of the Twelve.

From the beginning, as we have already stressed, the entire European endeavour has been based on equilibrium between its component parts, and essentially between France and Germany. Today, the EC is infinitely stronger than it was in the 1950s, and the integration process, especially among the original Six, has advanced far enough to suggest that the EC might pass the test of the German unification. The equilibrium problem is nonetheless still there, and it will have to be solved in some inventive manner, probably through daring institutional transformations of the Community as a whole. As of now, in any case, only an excess of diplomatic caution prevents people from saying aloud that the absorption of the DDR into the FRG has made things a little more complicated for Austria's application.⁹ This does not of course mean that Austria does not qualify as a part of Europe. It could actually be considered the "heart" of Europe. It only means that the timing, conditions and modalities of its possible entry have to be discussed keeping very clear the political problems it involves.

Being political in nature, the task of hammering out a system of relations between the EFTA countries and the EC can be fully entrusted to the EC's political decision-

making organs and bureaucracy. With the East, on the contrary, there is a problem of transferring social values, patterns of economic organisation, and even cultural models of individual behaviour.

Our Rio Grande

In other words, the relations between the EC and the EFTA countries, can either be considered as EC domestic and institutional problems, or as typical state-to-state relations. On the contrary, in Europe's *Ostpolitik* towards the ex-communist countries there is an essential element of society-to-society relations, comparable, for some aspects, to the relationship between the US and Mexico and, for other aspects, to the one that existed in the early post-war years between the countries which had already discovered the virtues of believing in the keynesian gospel, on the one hand, and on the other the continental European countries which were still to be converted. This is why in spite of all the differences that exist between the post-war situation in Western Europe and the post-communist situation in the ex-Soviet Empire, the example of the Marshall Plan inevitably props up whenever Eastern Europe is in question.

Moreover, the whole of Europe (and especially its most fragile component, the ex-satellite countries) have today to be protected from other risks, from the menace coming from Russia, which is only at the beginning of its troubles, as well as from the menace coming from themselves. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact has reduced the ex-satellite countries to a "strategic vacuum" and only through the initiative and the support of the EC as a whole, can a collective security system encompassing the whole of Central, Danubian and Balkan Europe be created.

As it has become almost a commonplace in the last few months, we should not forget that if—in the two World Wars—the powder had accumulated along the two sides of the Rhine, the sparks that sent it off came from Serbia, in the First, and from Pomerania in the Second World War. Today the powder is differently distributed all over the planet, but the tensions which could set off the fateful spark are very much alive in the former satellite countries and in the Soviet Union itself.

Given the decline the Soviet Empire has undergone in the last five years, it is not to be expected—in the foreseeable future—that, in case of a crisis in Eastern Europe (for instance, in the case of a civil war in Yugoslavia) there would be a Soviet intervention, direct or by proxy (as regularly happened in Brezhnev's times, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and the Cubans "helped" Ethiopia). Nor is very likely (bar a reversal of the political process that has gone on in the Soviet Union in the last five years) that the great powers would embark in supporting or manoeuvring the Croats against the Serbs, or viceversa.

It is indeed likely that, in such a case, and even in the case of a Romanian-Hungarian war, the post-Cold War world would simply look on. And not only because of lack of

direct interest (who cares about the Kosovo or Transylvania in any case?), but also because, after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, no institutional channel for intervention is available (barring the UN, which can however be mobilised only when major interests are at stake, such as oil in the Gulf crisis). But this does not mean that a local conflict would not destabilise the rest of eastern Europe, nor pose serious problems to the EC. Even before an eruption of violence—hardly evitable if a Croat or Slovenian secession does take place—a major crisis in Yugoslavia would pose the EC with the dilemma whether to deal with these new “countries” or to maintain its ties with the federal government. The second option might be practically meaningless, as central authorities might be reduced to represent very little. But on the other hand, any opening or form of recognition to Slovenia or Croatia would inevitably encourage Slovak separatism as well as Transylvanian and Moldavian irredentism, thus finally raising the issue of the Ukrainian borders, i.e. raising the issue of the eastern borders of Poland. In short, it would open a can of worms, an endless chain of claims about more and more issues involving the rights of national minorities, issues for which no equitable solution is really possible: a chain which would end up with the problem of the German minority in western Poland, with all its implications, explosive for both Eastern and Western Europe.

One could of course think that these fears are excessive, and that they are just the result of intellectual laziness, of an acritical extrapolation into the future of our past experiences with Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, there are several reasons to believe that it is not so. Nationalism, which as a political illness has been fought successfully in Western Europe, is still alive in Eastern Europe. Nationalism, and even micro-nationalism (as seen in the Yugoslav example), seems to be an ideological poison extremely widespread in post-Communist societies. The result of several decades of Communism in the countries of Eastern Europe might well be a social formation particularly exposed to the dangers of a new wave of petty national and even Lebanese-style communitarian chauvinism. (Some “national minorities” recently discovered by the western press, not only the Guiguz Christian Turks in Moldavia and the Abkhaz in Georgia, but many Yugoslav “national” groups as well, are actually little more than tribes).

From the point of view of the EC, at a moment when these newly liberated countries are asking to be admitted into the reconciliated family of Western European nations, it is quite evident that a strategy for Eastern Europe is needed, based on a serious analysis of this worrisome nationalist phenomenon. Europe has nothing to gain from chaos east of the Oder-Neiße line, as the only design that could be helped by the fragmentation of the ex-satellites would be a semi-imperial one, aimed at satellising peoples which have just liberated themselves from the Soviet yoke. As a result of 45 years of divergent historical experiences, Eastern Europe is already much more heterogeneous than the Western half of the continent, and any further fragmentation would pulverise it to a practically unmanageable dispersion, to an area of instability where united Western Europe would be obliged to intervene in a way in which neither

the EC, nor NATO nor the WEU is structurally equipped to do, and which for obvious political reasons cannot be done by any single country, least of all the very country that has most to fear from political turmoil in this area—recently reunified Germany. On the other hand, what is needed, and needed immediately, is an EC policy which (along the line of the Marshall Plan) would subordinate western aid to a reciprocal attitude of cooperation, complementarity and integration, and that penalises political chauvinism and separatism, as well as economic nationalism and autarchic tendencies. In short, the EC has to make the ex-communist countries understand that their present populism—their obsession with national and communitary diversity—is flatly contradictory to their declared wish to create a free-market and politically open society. Capitalism, whose virtues these societies are discovering, is by its own nature transnational and intolerant of borders, so that all inward-looking, nationalistic (and, even worse, micro-nationalistic) attitudes make more difficult the integration with the West for which these societies are longing. In other words, the preservation of territorial unity in the ex-satellite countries is only one of the many aspects of the predicament of these countries that are of great interest to united Europe, and that a European *ostpolitik* should be aimed at influencing.

Ostpolitik

The difficulty of this task should not be underestimated, as what is in store for East-Central and Danubian Europe, after the collapse of the Soviet imperial system, has probably up to now been seen through excessively optimistic glasses. The accepted views about the possible future of this part of the world can be gathered under two main labels: the so-called “freezer” theory and the “purgatory” theory¹⁰.

According to the former, the melting away of the Soviet block is bringing back the ex-satellites to their pre-war political habits and traditions, as though time had been suspended. Such a restoration would thus “enrich” Europe with the same Hungary that largely took advantage of Munich to swallow a large section of Czechoslovakia, and the same Poland, which on that occasion helped itself with the Teschen area.

The coming of the central European countries onto the European scene would thus bring to post-war pacified European nations the unpleasant company of a number of pygmies behaving the way the giants did in the past, the way the great European powers, the “cold monsters”, behaved when they twice brought Europe to disaster. According to the latter theory, the sufferings the central European nations underwent during the war and the communist period have substantially changed them. Their models are still the great European nations, but in their present historical incarnation—an incarnation which has refused aggressiveness and replaced co-operation to rivalry.

Seen in the light of the current developments in the former Soviet block—not to mention the exploding Soviet Union itself—both these theories can, however, be considered somewhat at odds with historical logic, and excessively optimistic. It is

indeed highly unlikely that half a century might have passed without introducing substantial changes in these societies, both because of their own natural dynamic and of the brutal experiments in social engineering that, at their expense, were made by the Nazis first and by the Communists later. It is beyond doubt that these countries have suffered a lot, as pointed out by the “purgatory” theory. But suffering does not always purify. More frequently, oppression and injustice corrupt the victim, and make it similar to the oppressor. It is highly likely that after living in a system based on police brutality, foreign occupation and social control organized through secret denunciation and “comrades’ justice”, the peoples of the ex-satellite countries have come to the conclusion that the world is ruled only by force and that the best way to survive is to

**Giuseppe Sacco is Professor of
International Relations and World Economic Systems
at the Free University of Rome
and also teaches at the
Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris.
Columnist on international affairs for *Il Giorno*,
a Milan daily newspaper, he edits
*The European Journal of International Affairs.***

bow to the oppressor and to take advantage of other people's weakness. All the more so, as all the traditional virtues to which human societies can make appeal to in order to improve individual and collective behaviour—respect for the individual, compassion, solidarity—have been largely used by the communist regimes as a rhetorical mask under which brutal reality was hidden, and are therefore discredited as pure hypocrisy.

In other words, it is highly likely that those countries which have for such a long time been enslaved by Communism are neither reverting to their pre-war conditions, nor reappearing purified of their old vices. On the contrary, they are coming back into the European system not only materially impoverished, but morally humiliated and corrupted. The socialist (and ex-socialist) worker's disaffection to work (a crucial factor at a stage when economies have to be reconstructed from scratch) is a very good example of this moral brutalization. It was, of all people, Lech Walesa himself who in the glorious days of early Solidarity declared that “as a worker I would like to work as little as possible.” The Danzig hero himself was thus proving to have been infected by the illness of the *homo sovieticus*—inability to draw any satisfaction from his activity.

A basic task of the *Ostpolitik* of United Europe has therefore to be that of introducing a new approach to work, entrepreneurship, and social relations. This cannot however be done only by "culturalising" the people, through the media, to basic western values. Such a generalisation of the role that western radios and TVs have played in counteracting and disproving official communist propaganda is probably an impossible task. The image of society that the media can convey, as well as their impact, immense as it has been, is indeed structurally limited by their commercial features, (features which automatically spread to public TVs and radios, when they have to compete for the viewing audience). What can be formed through TV is basically a western-style *consumer*, i.e. a human being who believes he can give a meaning to his life through the acquisition and the immediate destruction of poor quality material goods. On the contrary, certainly still to be invented (if at all possible) are mass-audience TV serials capable of conveying entrepreneurship, the work ethic, ambition, and permanent dissatisfaction with one's own condition, which all breed endeavour and innovation in society.

Social reconstruction

Even on the smaller scale for the firm, a transfer of personnel management techniques, of capital, and technologies will hardly be sufficient to repair the damage done by communism. Neither is it thinkable to commence new "social engineering" projects in countries which have already paid a tragic price to the communist attempt at creating a new society along an ideological paradigm. The moral healing of the ex-satellite countries requires the establishment of very intimate personal links between the western and eastern European societies. In other words, the European strategy for the economic reconstruction of the East has to foresee that a substantial fraction of the Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Yugoslav labour force will be employed in the West as *Gastarbeiter* for several years, in the hope of thus bringing about the cultural integration of the two halves of Europe. This is clearly in the interest of western Europe, as labour force from the ex-communist countries could provide an alternative to immigration from the Third World, an alternative that would not pose any serious problems of un-meltability and intercultural and inter-religious conflict, as it happens with human resources from the Third World. A policy based on East European labour force and on the concept of temporary immigration (the *Gastarbeiter* concept), is exactly the formula through which could be pursued the aim of spreading western views and values in the countries affected with the virus of the *homo sovieticus*.

The degradation of the Eastern European societies does not, however stop there. It goes far beyond that. In the ex-satellite countries, and even more so in the Soviet Union, the Communist system has almost destroyed all forms of social aggregation in its efforts to atomize society. The Communist power delirium was aimed at isolating every man or woman from every other, and at abolishing every form of social link, except that to the Party. In the totalitarian system, society had to become a kind of dust where every living atom had to respond directly and only

to a faceless bureaucratic power, and every link to any other human being was seen as the dangerous beginning of what could become an organised counterpower, and had therefore to be destroyed.

This perfect power logic was brought to its extreme in Cambodia, where families were disbanded, children were taught that there was no other social link except that with the leader, and were encouraged to kill everybody who was corrupted by having known some other form of society. This was an extreme case, but albeit to a lesser extent all Communist societies went along the same way, destroying all classes, groups and associations of every kind. They were, however, less successful with family, religious and national ties, and this in spite of an active atheistic campaign, deliberate action to transform the families' "sons" and "daughters" into the Party's "pioneers", and in spite of the promotion of "proletarian internationalism" (plus, in the USSR, a nationalities policy aimed at a total Russification of the other national groups).

When, in the Brezhnev years, the revolutionary creed lost whatever credibility it had ever had, the spontaneous tendency of the human race to establish social ties could find no other form except family, religious and national ones. These links, however, tend to be re-established in a degenerated manner, because the Communist ideological campaign, though it fell short of destroying family, nation and religious communities, at least succeeded in corrupting them. This is why it is a mockery of them that has spontaneously reappeared to fill the void left by the economic, political and religious links. Family ties have degenerated into nepotism and mafia-type relations have replaced business links, whilst national loyalties have degenerated into aggressive xenophobic violence, and religious pluralism into reciprocal (potentially Lebanese-style) confessional hostility. Resurgent anti-Semitism is only the most visible and vicious manifestation of this phenomenon, but it is by no means the only one.

All this is to be taken into due account in the projection of Western Europe towards the Soviet Union and the ex-Communist countries, especially in the Balkans, where fragmentation is potentially extreme, micro-nationalism is rampant again and coincides with religious divisions between Orthodox (Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians), Catholics (Croats and Slovenians) and Muslims (Bosniacs and Albanians). In the Soviet Union itself, the danger of a civil war cannot be ruled out. European *Ostpolitik* has to be extremely firm in discouraging these tendencies to social fragmentation. And it is worth pointing out that this fact was certainly taken into account in what can be considered the first diplomatic move of "informal" common Western European foreign policy towards the Soviet question: the joint Mitterrand-Kohl initiative on the Lithuanian declaration of independence.

But the "informal" variety of a common Western European foreign policy is not enough. A "formal" one is necessary, as all the fragments that are the sociological leftover of communist failure—the minorities, the clans, the mafias—are already trying to establish relations with different national governments and business communities

inside the EC, in the hope of playing their rivalries off to their own advantage. It is easy to explain this attitude with the observation that this is just part of their view of the world, a world in which history seems to have stopped, and everything looks the way it was in the 1940s. But this is no justification. On the contrary, it is one more reason to counteract it with a common European foreign policy, leaving neither alibis nor manoeuvring space to whatever temptation to respond to these opportunities might exist in the traditional national “chanceries” of the EC member States.

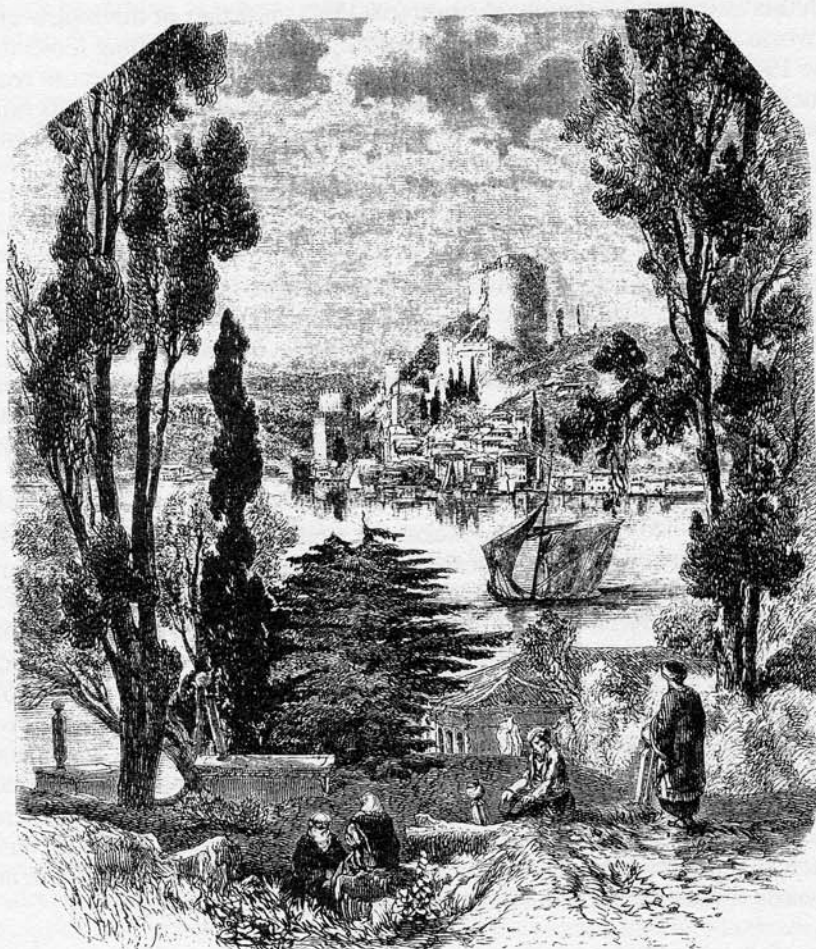
East of Poland

On the exchequer of Central, Eastern and Balkan Europe, United Europe has the means to conduct its diplomacy on its own. It can conduct a cultural diplomacy to spread there the ideas and habits of the reconciliated and democratic western half of Europe; it can develop with mutual economic advantage a very intense network of personal ties; it can finally exert enough economic leverage on the ex-satellite countries, (and possibly on the Soviet Union itself), to make its advice heard and respected, including on the crucial question of relations between different nationalities.

But Western Europe does not have the means for an autonomous policy towards Russia. In spite of the present economic and institutional crisis, the Soviet Union remains a gigantic military power. And, whatever the destiny of the Union, its arms are not going to disappear overnight. Even in the worst case, in the case of a dissolution of the USSR, Russia is probably going to inherit enough military force (conventional, chemical and nuclear) to stay very dangerous for several decades, even if all military modernization were to stop tomorrow (which does not seem to be the case). The whole of Europe, East and West, has to be guaranteed relative to Russia’s military might and this cannot be done by Europe alone. A substantial link has to be kept for this purpose with the United States of America. If in Central, Eastern and Balkan Europe, the EC countries are rich enough to bribe minor potential troublemakers to refrain from taking dangerous initiatives, this approach cannot work with a resurgent Russian nation, so that any policy towards Russia has to be conducted jointly with the Americans.

This means maintaining the alliance with the US, keeping—as long as the American will be willing—American forces on European soil, and deepening and developing in new forms a strong set of transatlantic relations. A choice that seems only natural to Western Europeans, but a choice that creates such un-even correlation of forces in favour of the West now that the East-European *glacis* has gone (and even more so in the hypothesis of a break-up of the Soviet Union) as to bring about the problem of providing Russia, or whatever political entity encompassing Russia will be left of the Soviet Union, with minimum security guarantees.

Russia itself, however, is in serious trouble, and the possibility of a Russian civil war cannot be ruled out. Not only the possibility of a “national” war between the Russians and the non-Russians of the Empire, but a “social” war in Russia proper, a war among



Europe seen from the Bosphorus

social groups differently affected by the price that will have to be paid for any economic reform, and by the even higher price that will have to be paid if reform is blocked, or postponed too long. Without entering here into a sociological analysis of a post-classless society, it is quite obvious to any rational observer that Russian society is already split between those who, for one reason or another, have access (or can have access) to foreign currency, and those who are bound into the prison of the rouble economy, a prison that will last as long as the rouble is not a fully convertible currency. Moreover, the same rational observer would also draw, from the results of the late December 1990 meeting of the Congress of People's Deputies, that a bold

initiative on the economic front is not likely, as a weakened Gorbachev is actually leaning towards the forces that favour a very gradual opening of the Soviet economy, under tight control of the Communist bureaucracy.

A two-currency society is not a new phenomenon, nor are its social and political to be guessed. The "dollarisation" of Third World economies is very well known. Its economic consequence is a constant downward pressure on the local currency under an intense demand for foreign, freely convertible ones. Its social consequence is a radical split between the social "class" of capital exporters (as any foreign currency holder actually is) and the majority of the population, trapped into activities that produce goods and services appreciated in local currency. The formation of a "social class" of capital exporters is not a marginal phenomenon, as the access to foreign currency is not only limited to minor Moscow groups such as taxi-drivers, illegal money changers, prostitutes, and hotel staffs, or to groups that have regular contacts with foreigners, such as sailors, diplomats, managers of foreign trade, sport stars, opera singers and in general people active in the field of the performing arts.

With the opening up of the hitherto autarchic Soviet economy, the arrival *en masse* of foreign managers and traffickers in Moscow and in the other main urban centres, and the decentralization of foreign trade, have multiplied the opportunities for business contacts with the outside world, and have increased the dependence of foreign firm (and in general of economic actors allowed to operate in foreign currency) on Soviet bureaucrats, whose speed and efficiency can be greatly stimulated by bribing them. Finally, with the commercialization of hitherto "restricted" technologies and weapons, not only some top civil servants, but some military personnel as well are entering the dollar-related economy. Not, however, all top civil servants and top military officers—only some of them. And this is bound to create strong resentment and tensions among these groups.

The aspiration to enter the "hard currency section" of society is widespread among organized social groups as well as among individuals. It is quite meaningful in this respect, that striking coal miners have demanded not only better living conditions, but direct control by the mining company of the hard currency earned through coal exports. The oil-producing sector is has also moved along the same line.

Even more meaningful and worrisome is the proposal, seriously taken into consideration at a certain time by the Soviet authorities, to provide incentives to agriculture by paying for food products with the dollars which could thus be saved through a reduction of food imports. Should this attitude become generalized—as it is bound to become if the autarkic Soviet economy is opened up only *gradually* (i.e. involving only some selected groups at a time) to foreign investments and world markets—all the conditions will be reunited for a social war between different sections of the Russian people. And this social war could split and involve the army itself, as the rouble-dollar dividing line also runs inside the industrial-military establishment.

What a civil war among Russians could be, given the type of weapons available (nuclear and chemical as well as conventional) and the characteristics of the Russian territory, is hardly thinkable. All that can be said is that it would certainly be technically very different from a civil war such as the one in the Lebanon, where the tank and the bazooka seem to mark the upper limit in the destructive power of the arms that can be unleashed before the user is affected as much as the target. But the Soviet Union is not the Lebanon. On its immense and scarcely populated surface it is perfectly thinkable that warring factions of the Russian army might have recourse to chemical or nuclear weapons. Thus the idea of a civil war in Russia seems to give a renewed meaning to what Montesquieu had in mind when he wrote, in his *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decadence*, that “there is no other state that menaces the others so dangerously than that which is in the throngs of a civil war”.

The alliances of united Europe

Once again, Western Europe, although more directly menaced than any other country by an internal collapse in Russia, cannot possibly cope alone with this danger. If we had to prevent—with the deployment of an “interposition force” or in some other way—civil strife in Russia, and to restore order, if prevention were to prove fruitless, such an initiative should be taken in close association with the US, and possibly other powers. A total collapse of order in Russia is a possibility that cannot be ruled out, and its consequences could be so dramatic (and the menace to Europe so serious) as to require collective international police action. If the Iraqi challenge in the Gulf and Saudi society have proved too complex and delicate to be faced by the US alone, one could easily imagine how insufficient would be the diplomatic and military means of Europe to deal with chaos and civil strife in Russia. An international police action would in such a case be the only possibility, with Europe possibly playing a role of coordination, initiative, and financial support, along the line (*mutatis mutandis*) of the role played by the US in the initial stages of the Gulf crisis of 1990.

In fact, in the last decade of the twentieth century, this type of “global action” could provide the standard for the use of force not only in the Soviet Union, but in every possible area of crisis. Should the necessity arise in Eastern Europe or in Russia itself, Europe could, perhaps, take the initiative, provide a moral leadership, convince the US (and possibly Japan), but all this presupposes a strong political transatlantic alliance.

There are two main sets of reasons why the common foreign policy of united Europe cannot avoid this responsibility towards Russia, to be taken into consideration. First, as an entity at whose origins is an effort to prevent the conditions that have twice led to World War, United Europe as an international actor has a natural and vital role in preventing wars in Eastern Europe, in the Soviet Empire and in Russia itself. But this role cannot be performed, and this responsibility cannot be fulfilled, in isolation. Second, as an entity whose very origin is in the American idea that the post-World

War II economic order had to be reconstructed on the basis of free trade, in order to avoid the possibility of a new conflict in which America could be involved, Europe as an international actor is bound to keep strong and alive its special relationship with America. The awareness of this European interest is made only stronger by the fact that neo-isolationist tendencies do exist in the US, and are certainly going to be encouraged by the collapse of the Soviet menace and the growth of American paranoia about what is supposed to be the Japanese menace.

In principle, everybody—on both sides of the Atlantic—seems to consider just, and to take for granted, the continuation of a friendly Euro-American relationship. But reality is somewhat different. There is no guarantee of a easy transatlantic relationship in the foreseeable future and—even more dangerous—there is little awareness (especially in Europe) of the increasing reasons for tension that are straining our ties with the Washington administration, the US political class, and even the US public at large.

New Atlanticism

A glimpse into some of these tensions was possible at the solemn CSCE meeting in Paris. Yet in spite of the solemnity of the occasion, the vigorous diplomatic effort that was needed to reach an agreement on a common Euro-American declaration, showed that the extremely fast process of change that has marked the last eighteen months has not yet come to its conclusion. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, NATO's enemy has practically disappeared (whatever may happen in the Soviet Union, the *glacis* has gone for good). As a consequence, the main axis of Euro-American relations, the Atlantic Alliance, has seen its role and meaning dwindle. And it will altogether disappear if the US contingent (and the US nuclear guarantee to Europe) eventually withdrawn. And indeed, the fact that in the fall of 1990 the bulk of American armoured forces was transferred from Germany to Saudi Arabia to the total indifference of public opinion, both American and European, seems to show that on a psychological level the Atlantic Alliance has already been shelved.

Among the Europeans, only France and Italy seem aware of the fact that with the end of East-West tension, all the international institutions whose creation was a result of that failure of history (including NATO) are bound to lose their role and significance. This is why it there has been the suggestion to revive a purely European military structure, the West European Union, and to co-ordinate its function in the field of defence with the EC, which would thus see its competence widened to include the crucial field of security. There was no shortage of criticism to this proposal, both from the US, from the non-NATO EC members and from those who fear that transforming the EC into a military alliance would entail the risk of engaging Europe on the side of Greece in its eternal quarrel with Turkey.

It is a fact, however, that the EC is the only organisation that is not related, either in its origin or in its objectives, to the Cold War. It is the only organisation not affected by

the end of the post-war period. Rather, its role can only be enhanced. A European contribution to the post-cold war world order can come only from the EC, from its capacity to establish a renewed relationship with its American partner.

Already during preparation of the CSCE, the Americans have been pushing for a “new Atlanticism” whose main purpose would be to enable NATO also to operate outside its traditional European area. What the Americans are practically asking from united Europe is to take the role of a great “status quo power” among the guarantors of international stability. It is not a very different approach from the one that was behind the creation of the UN after World War II—the idea that the international system can be kept stable and at peace only through an international institutional machinery based on *de facto* agreement of the major powers.

If the evolution of the Soviet Union is in the right direction, this idea, which proved impossible to implement in the four decades after World War II, might prove feasible today. And if in the new world economic and military framework neither Britain or France, but only Europe as a whole, can play the role of great “status quo power” it is because of the great transformations that have occurred in our continent since the signature of the Treaty of Rome. In the light of these transformations one can easily understand the logic behind the proposal to give to the EC a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

The Wealthy and the Mighty

The fact that we have devoted so much attention to the complex network of relations that Europe, as a single international actor, is establishing with its former enemies in the East, does not mean that the “foreign policy of Europe exhausts itself in its *Ostpolitik*. Indeed, not only Europe’s relationship with its traditional ally in the West remains, as we have stressed, absolutely crucial. Relations with Japan are also very important, marked as it is, on the world scene, by a similarity of positions that has until now received insufficient attention.

Indeed, Japan and Europe happen today to share the historically dangerous condition of being very strong from an economic point of view, and very weak from a military one. And this is an age when the two major military powers (Russia and America) are both in serious economic decline, and are probably both tempted—as might be inferred from US behaviour in the Persian Gulf crisis, but also from the opposition to *perestroika* which seems to be on the rise in the Soviet military leadership—to reassert the principle that, in spite of the end of the Cold War, military might remains the ultimate yardstick in maintaining the hierarchy of world powers and the structure of international order. The situation of Europe and Japan bears too strong a similarity with that of the rich and weak Italian States at the end of the Renaissance, just before the French invasion, not to be a subject for some worry, and not to call for some form of Euro-Japanese co-operation or at least to some systematic exchange of ideas.

In world affairs, however, Japan clearly does not have the same priorities as Europe and America. As became evident in the debate on the proposal of sending a non-combat unit to join the western forces in the Gulf, forty five years have not sufficed to heal the terrible Hiroshima wound, and to delete the consequences of the defeat, that still prevent Tokyo from taking any international responsibility, not only in the military, but in the political field as well. In practice, Japan international presence is limited to the manufacturing and commercial fields, where all its tremendous dynamism is discharged—a polarisation of interest that explains why Japan is so sensitive to all issues related to free trade and protectionism.

This exasperated sensitivity obvious renders Tokyo's relations with the Community much more contentious than with the individual member countries, whose competence in trade issues has been devolved to Brussels. This difficult relationship might however have entered into new phase since the late spring of 1990, when, at the first EC-Japanese meeting at ministerial level in more than three years, both sides showed more flexibility than expected. The EC obtained Tokyo's agreement to the establishment of a working group on bilateral trade issues—a very important point in the eyes of the Commission, because it is somewhat comparable to the "Structural Impediment Initiative" between Japan and the US. On the other hand, Brussels agreed to go beyond purely commercial issues and to give "political impetus" to EC-Japanese relations, and Tokyo's Foreign Minister spoke of "building a political partnership on a global basis" with the Community.

This should be considered just a first step, as reciprocal mistrust remains considerable in EC-Japanese relations. However, as most of the European worry over Japanese dynamism is related to trade, "the tensions are easing as the growth in Japan's trade surplus with the EC has slowed up since 1988"¹¹ The discriminatory treatment of Japanese cars on European markets is the most politically sensitive issue, and also the most divisive inside the EC. But now that substantial progress seems to have accomplished in this area, "by 1997, it is hoped, there will be more to Europe's relations with Japan than just trade".¹²

What this content will be, is too early to tell. But it is beyond doubt that the post-Cold War international order will gravitate around three poles, linked to each other by a growing variety of bilateral links. Of this "triangle", however, the Euro-Japanese side is far less developed than the Euro-American and US-Japanese ones, and unquestionably requires to be strengthened, as more intense Euro-Japanese relations are in the interest of both sides.

If one looks at the processes under way in the international system during this final decade of the century, the problems related to "triangular" relations among industrialised countries are pushed aside somewhat, the forefront being taken by North-South issues, such as migration from the Third World towards western Europe. The South could be considered the most important foreign policy question, although

on a par, as far as urgency is concerned, to that of Eastern Europe. Indeed, after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, we will probably witness, in the not-too-distant future, a drastic transformation of North-South relations, of which the Gulf crisis is probably going to mark the opening.

Back to normalcy

The position of the Third World in the post-World War II international order has indeed been influenced in a decisive manner by the rivalry between the USSR and Western democracies, which was at the origin of the open anti-colonialist attitude shown by the US after the conflict. In spite of the fact that Britain and France—the two major colonial powers—were America's natural allies, Washington never kept secret its intention to disband their overseas empires. Several reasons explain this attitude: first of all, the very tense political climate in these non-self-governing territories. The dissatisfaction of the local elites had been clearly visible during World War II, namely in the form of widespread sympathies for the Axis, as an enemy of the colonial powers.

At the end of the war, it was clear that the populations of Europe's colonial dependencies were ready to welcome whoever challenged the colonial powers and were offering extremely favourable ground to the spread of Communism. Mainly after the communist conquest of China, in 1949, when Stalin and Mao unleashed their guerrillas in British-controlled Malaysia and in French Indo-China, Communists were cutting into the hatred of the native populations against their colonial master as easily as into butter. To counter this trend, independence was granted to them as soon as possible. And in the 13 years between 1948 and 1961, the "winds of change" entirely sponged out the empires built up by the European powers during several centuries, and the leaders of these recently liberated countries discovered that they could play the USA and the USSR against each other, and thus obtain aid, arms and political influence in world affairs.¹³

In the post-World War II international order that is coming to an end today, North-South relations were thus structurally founded on the East-West rivalry, a rivalry that—in the impossibility of a direct military clash between their nuclear war-ready armies—made war by proxy the only possible form of confrontation. And so from Korea to Angola, from Vietnam to Nicaragua the proxy was able, in some cases, to gain a certain amount of control over the sponsor, and in several "local conflicts" it became difficult to say if it was the dog that was wagging the tail, or the tail wagging the dog.

This is no longer possible. The East-West relationship has changed so radically that the countries of the South have lost all the leverage they ever had; the proxies can no longer transform their sponsors into captives. Actually, there is now no real interest for the North in the political independence of the South, as the real reason for being kind

to the peoples of the South—the fear that they would turn communist—has faded away. The bankruptcy of communism inevitably affects the very pre-conditions of the North-South order, which can now go back to “normalcy”. As shown by the world reaction to the invasion of Kuwait, the time has passed when the South could exploit the rivalries of the North.

As to the characteristics of the new “order” which will replace the old one gone with the communist menace, it is too early to say. In any case, it is not without meaning that all sorts of countries, even Argentina and Czechoslovakia, have rushed to participate in the Gulf expedition, as if in the assumption that it will be a military parade where participants will gain entry to the privileged, winning side of the future North-South order.

Irrelevant, but frightening

It is unlikely, however, that at the end of the twentieth century the international community—as the European powers did in the previous century—will sit around a conference table and split up the world among the most powerful countries. On the stage of international politics, not only the very nature of the Northern actors has changed a great deal—because of their new political orientations, demographic potential and economic forces—but also and especially because the South and its resources do not have, as the North sees it, the importance they had in the past.

The theories of imperialism which, in a conscious or unconscious way, were at the basis of European expansionism in previous centuries have nowadays become largely obsolete. Namely, the Third World and its resources have become practically irrelevant for the global world economy, and in particular for the welfare and the economic development of the countries of the North. Several ideas which had provided the intellectual justification for colonial conquests have lost all credibility: not only the idea—wrong from the beginning—that colonial markets could solve the permanent overproduction problems of the industrial economies, but also the relatively new commonplace that the countries of the South have become—in Marxist terms—the proletariat of the world. This view held that the same Marxist and pseudo-Marxist forecasts that had failed with regard to the relations among classes in industrialised societies, might be proven true on an international scale, in relations between peoples of the North and peoples of the South.

There was here a basic misperception of world reality: in Marx’s view of class relations, the proletariat, although extremely poor, had a crucial economic role in the capitalist system, as its exploitation alone permitted the accumulation of a surplus. Conversely, this crucial economic role allowed the working class to acquire enormous political force, since they could make the system collapse simply by striking. But this is not the case for the so-called “proletarian nations”. With a few exceptions, none of the raw materials controlled by the South is really essential to the industrialized



The Peace of Westphalia, Oct. 24, 1648

economies, so that none of these countries can any longer blackmail the North just by menacing the security of supply. The tragedy of the South today is exactly in this point: in its total irrelevance to the continuing prosperity of the North.

Oil is the major exception to this rule. It is therefore not surprising that the first conflict between the North and South in the post-Cold War era has burst out just in the area, where most of the oil reserves are to be found. And it is not very daring to foresee that the Middle East will be an area where the North-South relationship will keep, in the future, its military connotation.

It is on the home front that the entire group of industrialized countries have a serious North-South problem. Seen from the US, this "domestic North-South problem" takes the form of mass semi-illegal migration from Spanish speaking countries, namely Mexico, and of a flow of drugs towards the American market. Seen from Europe and from the Soviet Union it looks substantially different, more far reaching and complicated. While, on both sides of the Atlantic, the Northern countries are experiencing a demographic decline, an uncontrollable boom is taking place in the South. But North America is only exposed to the pressure due the physical law of communicating vases. Europe, on the other hand, is confronted not only with a demographic explosion, but also with a strong cultural and religious revival.

In this respect, the position of Europe is much more similar to that of the Soviet Union than to that of the US. With one aggravating factor, however, that while in the Soviet Union it is roughly possible to redraw borders in such a way as to divide Christians from Muslims (and the present civil strife and refugee flow is actually simplifying this task), peaceful immigration into Western Europe is creating permanently settled Islamic communities which cannot be melted, and do not want to be melted, into European society.

What is actually being created is a Muslim diaspora in Europe and, as a consequence, the possibility for outside political actors to acquire leverage within the domestic social and political life of the European countries. Thus, although Turkey is not (and is not likely to become) part of Europe, its government already has a role in German domestic affairs, as it can exert an important measure of control on the political activities of Turkish workers and immigrants in Germany, and to a certain extent also on the Islamic organisation that are active among them. The same could be said for the authorities of the Maghreb countries with respect to France, where several million Muslims from North Africa have settled, and where the process of assimilation is clearly not working.

In one occasion already, the so-called "Islamic veil crisis", the intervention of the Moroccan authorities played a crucial role in solving (or at least postponing) a domestic political problem which had led France, and the ideological basis on which its institutions rest, to the brink of a serious crisis. The King of Morocco, with his

intervention, was able to assess how strong a leverage (and blackmail power) he had acquired over the former colonial masters of Morocco. Thus there is little doubt we will hear more about him in the future. As well as—after the Rushdie case—about the influence of Islamic leaders in Britain, namely on the crucial question of Europe's engagement to the security of Israel, its natural and structural ally in the Middle East.

The "home front" of the North/South question is therefore absolutely crucial in Europe. Its behaviour in this important chapter of international relations (the most important, in fact, at the end of the century) cannot be understood if the immigration factor is neglected. Not Southern Europe alone, but the whole of Western Europe has the permanent problem of finding a way of living peacefully with its Arab neighbours and with the Islamic revival, a phenomenon that is not going to subside in any foreseeable future. More and more, in the coming years, we will see European leaders come up with proposals for a "Helsinki of the Mediterranean" or other similar proposals to defuse tensions in the Middle East. And the difference in the European and American interests and perception of this problem (and in general of all North/South issues) is bound to both multiply the disagreements across the Atlantic and stress the identity of interests among the Europeans.

Une politique tous azimuts

From this quick glimpse at the most immediate priorities for Europe's foreign relations, two features are immediately clear. First, Europe is engaged on a large number of different fronts, and the various sets of relations established between the EC and the other actors of world affairs are extremely diversified in nature. Second, with the growth of the EC as a subject of international actions, the relations among the European nation-states are shifting further and further from the domain of "international" affairs towards that of "transnational" relations.

That the nature of the ties established between Europe and the other international actors is different case by case has already been demonstrated by the examples we have put forward. What they seem to demonstrate is that the nature of the problems that are to be faced is different according to the partner. For instance, with the Western European countries which are not EC members, the EFTA countries, the question that is being discussed—their *insitutional ties* with the Community—cannot really be considered a "foreign affairs" issue, but rather a "domestic" EC question. Conversely, with the ex-satellite countries of the "Mitteleuropa belt" (Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) the relations are aimed at a *transformation* of their economic systems and at the *cultural assimilation* of their societies to that of the EC. In case of success of this political project, that can be carried out only through the establishment of a network of society-to-society relations, the position of this part of Eastern Europe relative to the EC might in a decade or two become similar to that of the EFTA countries today: societies fully homogeneous to EC society, with the political problem of defining their political relations with neighbouring giants. Then, and only then,

will the *Ostpolitik* of united Europe start considering—in a global environment which will inevitably be very different from the present one—the type of hypotheses (a common economic space? association? full membership?) that the EC has to deal with today in relation with EFTA Europe.

Very different are the cards that are on the table with the USSR. There the question is about *guaranteeing the security* of Western Europe during the present phase of transformation and redefinition of the US world role and, largely for the same purpose, about *stabilising* the domestic Soviet situation, by helping solve its dramatic economic and nationalities problems. The strategies to be implemented and the tools to be employed will probably be the same as for the “Mitteleuropa belt”, but with the difference that the aim of economic and social homogeneity with Western Europe does not seem attainable in the politically foreseeable future.

Transatlantic relations are of yet another nature. In part, they will be *strategic ties* (the so-called *New Atlanticism*) dictated by the need of guaranteeing Europe against whatever military might will survive east of Poland. But in part, US-European relation will be about world order, i.e. about *hierarchies* in world power and relative roles in world economic (and namely monetary) system, as well as about a *police role* in the world.

The scope of EC-Japanese relations is at present limited by some specific commercial contentions, that will take time and efforts to solve. But the two actors have an obvious convergence of interests in guaranteeing what the Japanese call *harmony in the world system*, i.e. the possibility of keeping the present trends of economic and technological growth undisturbed for as long as possible in the future. This task involves the preservation of a balance of economic power which is under bad pressure due to the divergent evolution of three variables: the demographic boom in the Third World, the continuing economic growth of Europe and Japan, the reluctance of the US and the USSR to dismantle their powerful military machinery.

With the South, Europe relations are much more intimate and much more complicated. Indeed, the main issue in the EC policy towards these countries (that of inventing a way of scaling down to a mere *manpower* problem the mass transfer of people that is creating an *immigration* problem) can only be faced through new “domestic” EC regulations. In other words, the Third World has established too large a bridgehead inside Europe for the problem to be dealt with only with the tools and the techniques of international relations.

This great variety in nature of Europe's relations to the rest of the world represents in itself an explanation of why Europe has become such an important international actor, engaged, as the French would say, *tous azimuts* -in all possible directions. An actor whose behaviour affects so many counterparts and problems that a case by case approach is no longer conceivable. The EC is engaged on too many fronts of

international relations to be able to conduct its action without constant co-ordination of its behaviour towards each of them, and without a common coherent purpose. In short, the external relations of the EC have already reached the point where they are automatically becoming a European foreign policy. Whatever the original treaties might say, whatever the caution of intergovernmental conferences not to offend nationalistic sensibilities of the EC's most marginal and irrelevant members, the *de facto* Constitution of Europe has already witnessed a downgrading of member-to-member relations into the domain of private subject-to-private subject *transnational relations*, while the "noble" domain of foreign politics and grand diplomacy is unstoppably shifting towards Brussels.

References

- 1 - In Europeanese, *PoCo*, which in Latin languages happens to mean "very little".
- 2 - It is also perfectly arguable that the post-1989 international system is actually a comeback to the equilibria and conditions prevailing before World War I. A major difference with those conditions, is however the existence of nuclear weapons.
- 3 - Vernon Bogdanor "Iron drawnbridge between Britain and Europe" in *Financial Times*, Nov. 28th, 1990.
- 4 - It would be too easy to point out that some of the decisions that have brought about this escalation of costs have been taken by the US government without consulting, indeed without even informing, America's European allies.
- 5 - See, "Pygmy Roars", in *The Economist*, n. 7686/7687, vol. 317, Dec 22nd, 1990, p. 66.
- 6 - Sir Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflection on the Revolution in Europe. In a letter intended to have been sent to a gentleman in Warsaw*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1990.
- 7 - A similar reasoning applies to the question of the German minority in Poland, a case about which is spoken only with great caution. The Ridley case has already demonstrated that political hysteria is possible also in a supposedly "pragmatic" country such as Britain. If, by a sequence of uncontrolled nationalistic explosions in Eastern Europe, the problem of the German-Polish border were to be posed, such an hysteria could easily spread to France, and this would probably mark the end of Franco-German reconciliation, that is of the very base of European unity. See, Giuseppe Sacco, "Si sfarina ai confini italiani lo Stato di Tito", in *Il Giorno*, Dec. 29, 1990.
- 8 - For a cautious and extremely penetrating analysis of the political features of Germany in today's world, see Emil L. Fackenheim, "Germany's Worst Enemy", in *Commentary*, vol. 90, n. 4, Oct. 1990, p.31.
- 9 - The debate about the impact of German reunification on Austria's position and self-perception is very alive in Austria itself. See, among others, Gerhard Botz, "Die atemberaubende Vereinigung. Nach der deutschen die österreichische Frage", in *Austria Today*, February 1990. Also of great interest, on German predominance in the Austrian economy, see, Margit Scherb and Inge Morawetz, *In deutscher Hand. Zu den Beziehungen Oesterreich-BRD*, Vienna, Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1990, and the reply by Günter Nanning, "Schlukt uns Kohl?" (Is Kohl swallowing us?), in *Profil*, April 17, 1990.
- 10 - See, Jacques Rupnik, "Perestroika and the Empire", in *The European Journal of International Affairs*, n. 1, Summer 1988.
- 11 - David Buchan, "Tokyo 'bridge' to Brussels", in *Financial Times*, July 2nd, 1990, page III.
- 12 - *Ibidem*
- 13 - See, Giuseppe Sacco, "The Scramble for the Middle East", in *The European Journal of International Affairs*, n.9, 3/1990.