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International Leadership in a Shrinking World

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Rue de la Loi:

The Global Ambition of the European Project

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With a reaction by Robert Cooper

This essay was prepared for the Stanley Foundation's Powers and Principles project. The contributors' affiliations are listed for identification purposes only.

About the Contributors

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About the Project

The aim of the Stanley Foundation's project on "Powers and Principles: International Leadership in a Shrinking World" is to identify plausible actions and trends for the next ten years by which the international community could become more unified. The foundation asked contributing authors to describe the paths by which 9 powerful nations, a regional union of 27 states, and a multinational corporation could all emerge as constructive stakeholders in a strengthened rules-based international order. For each case, the writers discuss how their given country might deal with the internal and external challenges posed by international norms for the global economy, domestic governance and society, and global and regional security.

Each essay in the series is an assessment of what is politically possible (and impossible), supported by a description of the associated pressures and incentives. Unlike other future-oriented projects, there were no calculations of probability; we were interested in a particular global future—an international community with broad respect and support for norms—and how it might take shape. Authors were expected to address the particular challenges, pressures both for change and continuity, as well as natural leadership roles pertinent to their actor's geostrategic position, economy, society, history, political system, and culture.

The project did not apply a checklist or rating system to the question of stakeholdership. A responsible stakeholder can be an upholder, critic, and shaper of the rules-based order all at the same time. But while stakeholdership is not a matter of accepting the entire set of norms, if a powerful nation opts out of too many rules, it will undermine rather than uphold the order. To provide a perspective from the inside and counterweight to each essay, a commentator from the given country (or another actor) was enlisted to provide a critical response.

The creation of the European Union (EU)—or what is often known as the "European project"—is a remarkable and ongoing experiment. It is the example par excellence of norm building at home and, increasingly, the projection of those norms abroad. At its heart, European integration was and remains a Wilsonian project designed to ban the possibility of conflict through the application of the rule of law and norm building on a transnational scale. The enforcement of such norms is the core of the EU's power. With its aim originally limited to making another war in Europe impossible—and above all in mending the relationship between France and Germany—the EU today has graduated to a much broader vision of both unifying the European continent and becoming a model and inspiration for a global order based on the rule of law and international norms.

Like the United States, the EU does not, and by virtue of its essential character cannot, have any kind of national or ethnic identity. It is an amalgamation of national identities, and one of its purposes is, over time, to transcend those identities. Thus, the only basis for a common European identity and action has to be rooted in values and norms. One of the many ongoing debates within the EU has focused on what those values and norms should be. The answer to that question goes to the heart of the European project and European power in the 21st century.

The EU, even more than the United States or any other state or contemporary actor, is a neo-Wilsonian experiment in the making. It is an attempt to ban and transcend international conflict through the rule of law and norm building. It is symbolic that the key European institutions dedicated to upholding the rule of law are located on the Rue de la Loi in Brussels. Like the United States, the EU today has universalist aspirations. It does not want to transform just Europe. It thinks and expects its norms and governing model to be applied at its periphery and then beyond. It hopes to inspire other regional integration efforts and to create the building blocks for a new norm-based international order.

The Road to Brussels

The path of European unification following the ruin of World War II was and remains one of the most original political achievements of the 20th and 21st centuries. We will not dwell on the history here, but even a review of the story's broad contours illustrates the magnitude of the accomplishment.

The American security guarantee for Western Europe through the NATO alliance provided not only protection from the external threat of the Soviet Union, but also an opportunity for Western Europe's war-weary nations to venture cooperation that did not come naturally in a charged postwar environment in which each state had to assess its external security not only in relation to a menacing revisionist superpower to the East but also in competition with one another. Today we often forget how central European unification was to America's early postwar vision, how Atlanticist the founders of the European unification movement were, and how crucial the American security umbrella was from the outset.

First steps at cooperation, such as toward the creation of the coal and steel community, were often taken warily and with more than a dose of realpolitik. Against a backdrop of seeming perpetual geopolitical rivalry and conflict, it took great courage for a country to tie its fate to a former enemy. There was, in general, no assumption of shared values and common aims among the parties. On the contrary, the founders of the European project were acting out of what they considered an existential need. One frank objective of French policy in the postwar period was to ensure that Germany would never again be able to reassert itself as a continental power. West

Germany's early postwar leaders understood that abandoning sovereignty in the classical sense was the only path to political rehabilitation following the disaster of the Third Reich. The states of Western Europe (and the United States and Canada) were allies, but they were not (yet) friends. Thus, European integration was both visionary and mundane—a mix of architecture and plumbing.

The pioneers of European integration were wise enough not to deny or dismiss this wariness, but rather to work with and through it, often in protracted negotiations. These sometimes tedious discussions, however, eventually yielded agreement on norms and rules of the game for a growing set of key European issues on which the participants expected mutual benefit. A painstaking approach sometimes produces the most robust result achievable, as differences down to the smallest detail each get an airing and a resolution. The goal was in a sense self-emasculation but also projection: countries wanted to neutralize each other's potential to wreak havoc while also creating the capacity to act jointly. By abandoning its national sovereignty for a collective capacity, a state could in theory gain in collective leverage and influence. This required overcoming suspicions and clashes of interest by agreeing to binding norms that would guide such a collective will.

To the extent that the project of European integration has been put in jeopardy from time to time, such situations have usually stemmed from impatience born of enthusiasm. The vision of an ever-closer union has been a seductive one, and enthusiasts of a common Europe can be forgiven for their wish to hasten it. But the creation of something essentially new under the sun—a group of nation-states that had long been locked in violent struggle creating a common marketplace, a transnational juridical union, and, increasingly, political competence and a common foreign policy as a result of pooled sovereignty—is a task of such complexity and innovation as to beggar the imagination. If Europeans today take their union for granted, as some do, especially the young, that is testimony to the success of those visionaries who painstakingly dedicated their careers to the task of persuading Europeans that there is simply no other way—that the past was prologue not to an endless cycle of war, devastation, reconstruction, and war again, but to the moment at which it became possible to change course once and for all.

To observers both inside and out, European integration has often seemed to move at a glacial pace. EU officials often seem preoccupied with process and regularly on the verge of a crisis. But when results and agreements are reached, they have generally proven quite durable. In addition, the process of negotiating has itself had a "socializing" effect, drawing European leaders more firmly together in agreement on the process by which to resolve disagreement—at the negotiating table, and never again by military means.

Europe's Achievement and the Challenge of Extending It

Europeans often say that their top priority is a world of law. There is much truth and self-knowledge in this observation. But in some sense it actually makes too little of the European achievement and aspiration. It risks ignoring what comes before law: namely, a willingness to be bound by law. It also risks ignoring the importance of the process by which law is set: namely, agreement through negotiation. Finally, it risks ignoring the process by which law is given force: namely, its ratification by competent national governments according to their own democratic constitutional procedures. The *acquis communautaire* did not come from the heavens or from tradition or from a great wise man or a committee of philosopher-kings, but from a self-conscious deliberative process. Europeans can rightly take pride in the totality of this process.

Initially, the European aspiration for a world of law was focused on Europe. Today it extends well beyond the continent. Indeed, one might say that the European aspiration today is to extend

the European view of law (if not European law as such) globally. The aim here is both idealistic and practical. It is idealistic in the obvious sense that it envisions an entire world willing to be bound by law, willing to decide upon what the law should be in a deliberative process of negotiation, and willing to give the law force through ratification by national governments. Implicit in the European respect for such norm-setting documents as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter is an aspiration for every national government to be rights-regarding, liberal, and democratic in character—though there is a cautious element to this aspiration that stands in contrast to the stereotypically American view. From a European perspective, the movement of a country from rights-restricting to rights-regarding, from illiberal to liberal, from authoritarian to democratic ought to be internally driven rather externally imposed, and peaceful rather than convulsive and violent. It ought to be, precisely, European with regard to process as well as substantive outcome. One might well question whether the ideal world of law can ever be brought into being on a global scale—the more so if one adds the preference for its arrival by European means only.

But this in turn points toward the practical challenge of the European aspiration. It is that in a world not yet governed wholly by law, the EU itself must stand as a beacon of law and a benchmark for the assessment of progress toward such a world. Absent such a beacon and benchmark, as Europeans (and not only Europeans) rightly fear, the world may lose sight of the law and return to anarchy on a global scale. In this respect, a key element of the European project is to remind those not yet acting in accordance with a European view of law that there is a better way. Europe will remind others by example, by exhortation, and by withholding approval of or sanctioning acts that Europeans deem lawless.

A leading theorist of the European project, Robert Cooper has memorably described the situation: Europe has become "postmodern" in having overcome the state-on-state violent conflict characteristic of the modern world of sovereign state power. Yet Europe's postmodern condition does not exist in splendid isolation. The essential fact is that the postmodern European project must coexist with a world that is, in many important respects, determinedly "modern" in the Westphalian sense of sovereign nation-states clashing violently over national interests—and in many cases stubbornly "premodern," with weak or failed states that are unable to govern their own territory and leave themselves vulnerable to a struggle for supremacy among substate actors.

In this age of technology and the Internet, the authority of states is also being challenged by such networked transnational dangers as Al Qaeda. The expectation is that more of the same, if not worse, will follow in its wake, perhaps culminating in an unaccountable nongovernmental terrorist organization obtaining nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Such a hypermodern, and hyperdangerous, conjunction poses a threat to the whole global order.

The European preference for the European way of law has tried, not surprisingly, to assert itself upon the "modern" world, as well as upon the premodern and hypermodern worlds. This is true not least with regard to the United States, with which the EU has had a sometimes complicated relationship. As noted above, the United States was one of the early key supporters of the European project, but American support has ebbed and flowed over the years, as the EU has, in return, redefined its views of American power and its role in the world. The United States remains a distinctly modern state in the sense described here, but one with universalist aspirations of its own. America's own commitment to and debate over how to pursue international norms has itself been a factor shaping EU attitudes. Among the many causes of EU hostility toward the Bush administration, for example, has been the perception that Washington was walking away from its own historical commitment to norm building, thereby abandoning a mutual commitment to one of the EU's fundamental goals.

This fueled the recurring debate over whether the EU should view itself as a counterweight in a multipolar world. But this aspiration has not materialized, at least not in the sense of the emergence of European power of a kind that gives pause for reasons of *force majeure* to the exercise of US power. One reason for this is that the pursuit and exercise of such power on the European side would run counter to the very essence of the European project itself, the creation of a world (or at least a part of the world) in which law, not force, prevails. Another is that the other power centers in such a multipolar world may have even less of a commitment to norm building than the United States does, EU frustration with US policy notwithstanding. From an EU perspective, the United States remains at times a flawed partner but one that is indispensable nonetheless.

So the EU still needs the United States, not least of all because of the security umbrella the United States provides through NATO, which at some level remains a precondition for European integration. And given the size and power of the United States, cooperation with Washington is almost always needed to get things done—on issues ranging from climate change to Iran's nuclear ambitions. Sophisticated Europeans understand that the most effective way to "balance" the United States is through engagement, dialogue, and persuasion. To begin with, the United States is temperamentally inclined to pay attention to European views, on the grounds that the United States' and Europe's shared values far outweigh their differences, and that these values form the potential basis of common action toward common ends. Although the op-ed pages of European newspapers are dominated by criticism of the United States, the most telling criticism is grounded in an awareness that Europe's "postmodern" identity and project benefits from a powerful United States that remains unabashedly willing to engage the modern, premodern, and hypermodern worlds on their own terms, rather than the more highly aspirational terms of postmodern Europe. The forward-looking European task with regard to the United States is to keep nudging American power in the direction of law.

Lofty Aspirations, Messy Realities

As for European engagement with the rest of the modern world, when the aspiration has been the recruitment of the modern world *tout court* to a postmodern, law-based future, the result has not infrequently disappointed Europeans. Many of the interlocutors with which Europe has engaged—from Slobodan Milosevic in the former Yugoslavia of the 1990s to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in today's Iran—have proven stubbornly resistant to the enticements dangled, preferring instead courses of action that seem based on a decidedly different view of the world and how it should work. The world of power is one with which Europeans must engage, but the terms of the engagement are not necessarily the same as the terms on which Europeans engage with each other (or with the United States). The experience of Central and Eastern Europe, in which newly independent or newly free states quickly looked westward for their destiny in response to Euro-Atlantic openness to them, was on one hand a spectacular success, but on the other a potentially misleading indicator about the eagerness of potential members to join a club whose rules they had no say in devising. It is not simply a matter of reaching out to and engaging with others by offering them European or Euro-Atlantic terms. Such an offer can be refused.

On security issues, many in Europe voice a preference for the arts of peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction—and indeed, such tasks fit neatly into the European model of rules-based integration. It is no accident therefore that public opinion polls find European publics more skeptical than the American public toward the use of armed force for combat, but more supportive than Americans of using the military for peacekeeping and reconstruction missions. To the extent such missions contribute high value to a world that will continue to have a need for peacekeeping and reconstruction for the foreseeable future, they are welcome—indeed, essential.

Unfortunately, peacekeeping and reconstruction alone do not meet the security demands of today's world in all their modern, premodern, and hypermodern configurations.

Afghanistan is the starkest illustration of this point. In contrast to Iraq, the war in Afghanistan is one Europeans deemed from the outset to be necessary and just. They committed themselves to it through NATO, perhaps with a premature view of an Afghanistan that would mainly need peacekeeping and reconstruction following the US military intervention to oust the former regime in Kabul, rather than combat forces ready to engage a resurgent Taliban. Yet a stubborn enemy and an ongoing war is what we have in Afghanistan. It is made all the more complex by the ability of insurgents to find safe haven across the border in northwest Pakistan, beyond the reach of the Pakistan government—problematic as it, too, continues to be. Afghanistan has been more than Europeans thought they were getting themselves into—proof that the tendency of hope to underpin policy decisions is ubiquitous. The question then becomes whether Europeans are willing to engage themselves fully in the law-deprived modern and premodern world of power and force, or whether they will recoil and seek instead to isolate themselves from it.

On the answer to this question, much depends. The EU, unlike many other states considered in this collection, is an astonishing success and a highly constructive member of the international community. But that can change if Europeans seek an early exit from the modern, premodern, and hypermodern worlds on grounds that engagement with the latter can only corrupt and endanger the European aspiration for a world of law. On the contrary: The European commitment to a world of law can only be effectual to the extent that Europeans are willing to engage in a world where geopolitical competition still exists, seeking to mute and transform it over time. This is the challenge of the next generation of European statesmen and thinkers: keeping the model alive as an aspiration and a beacon to which those of goodwill may repair, while doing the hard work of engaging with the world as it is in the belief that it can be made better.

Domestic Challenges

The EU's world of law, though in certain respects a work in progress, is in others strikingly complete. The *acquis communautaire* certainly remain open to modification and adaptation as circumstances change, but they are not likely ever to be subject to a wholesale repudiation—or if they ever were repudiated, that could only signal the emergence of an EU that had somehow shifted its aims from a world of law to something radically different. The *acquis* are intended to have an element of permanence—not in the manner of divine law, but as the fruit of reasonable deliberation. To pick an element of EU law at its most controversial throughout much of the modern world (particularly the United States), the absolute European ban on the death penalty is unlikely ever to be reversed—or again, any reversal would not spring from a mere reconsideration by deliberative process, but rather from the transformation of the EU into something very different from the EU of today.

There are of course elements of the law of the EU that might be improved upon. Likewise, as with all law, it is easy to point to elements that are arbitrary: decisions that could have gone another way without obvious harm, such as whether to drive on the left side of the road or the right. European papers are also full of examples of EU regulatory or legal overreach, regulating the size of vegetables or outlawing deep-rooted local cultural or culinary traditions. Subsidiarity often works better in theory than in practice. The conclusion does not follow however that, because some portion of law is fluid or arbitrary, all law is fluid and arbitrary. The law of the EU is, by and large, good law—and it should easily be able to stand the test of time.

Keeping Perspective

A few caveats must be noted, however, regarding the limits of law. A world of law, such as the EU itself represents and aspires to more broadly, is not a world of law soley any more than any other political and social order is ever solely a question of the law that governs it. Any attempt to codify legally all aspects of life would be inherently despotic or totalitarian. European publics would regard any state or transnational initiative mandating how many children parents can have, for example, to be dictatorial.

Likewise, the law is not well equipped to give people guidance on how much or which of life's many desirable things should be enough for any and all of them. Here, the law rules in many things as permissible and rules out others as off-limits—and it provides a framework for the fair pursuit of what is permitted as well as punishment for illicit pursuits. But a broad range of choice remains for individuals or families.

Third, the law is at best an incomplete source for self-definition. The question of identity usually draws more from genealogy, place, and decisions about what ultimately is good to pursue than about compliance with a legal code that claims jurisdiction over oneself.

And so it is no criticism of the EU aspiration for a world of law, nor of its achievement in bringing about such a world in Europe, to note that there are a number of places the law doesn't go because it can't easily or properly go. Notwithstanding the success of the EU in tackling the subjects that are properly matters for the law, significant challenges for Europe remain on social concerns that are not readily susceptible to a legal resolution. Foremost among these challenges are: European demographic trends, the impact of prosperity, and the question of European identity.

It is important to keep these challenges in perspective. Russia and China confront far more alarming demographic trends than Europe does. In most parts of the world, the problems associated with prosperity are a distant aspiration, not the here and now. And the question of identity and what it means to find fulfillment as a whole person is universal, and in many places more up for grabs than in Europe. Most countries would gladly trade the challenges looming over their own horizons for the challenges facing Europe.

Nevertheless, the aspirations of Europe are quite high, and Europeans deserve the respect of an honest assessment of the difficulties their project faces both internally and externally. They are challenges well understood by Europeans themselves.

Demographics

While there are important regional differences, European birth rates have fallen well below replacement levels, with potentially dramatic consequences. The effects of even a generation or two of birth rates running 50 percent below replacement would likely be transformative. As successful as Europe has been in integrating Europeans, the ability to absorb and successfully integrate non-European immigrants has been far less stellar.

Some see low birth rates as a product of a crisis of civilizational morale in Europe and an existential threat to the region as we know it. Although it seems to us that these problems are prone to overstatement—and have certainly been seized upon by some Americans (and even some Europeans) who are basically hostile to the European project as proof of its "failure"— the issue is real.

As European birth rates have fallen, the population has aged. Fortunately, European prosperity makes the care of an aging population a manageable task, although a heat wave that recently claimed the lives of thousands of elderly Parisians ought to serve as a reminder that the affordability of health care does not automatically result in adequate levels of care.

The more striking demographic question is whether Europeans will look to additional immigration to make up for population decline, and if so, where the immigrants will come from and what effect their arrival in large numbers would have on European society. For the foreseeable future, there is an "eastern option" for immigration on a scale that would compensate for declining populations due to subreplacement birthrates. Yet, these countries to the east of the EU's current borders suffer from their own ticking demographic time bomb. Even the influx of "East Europeans" has the potential to cause social disruption and is already, to a considerable degree, a source of anxiety on the part of host populations. The notorious specter of the "Polish plumbers" arriving en masse and willing to work for less than the French or German plumber charges was on many minds as the EU enlarged.

Devising and implementing a legal regime for immigration is one of the most challenging problems any state faces, as the United States knows well—especially when the receiving state offers opportunities out of proportion to those available in the source countries. Add the social dimension and cultural dimension, including the question of identity (to which we will shortly turn), and the magnitude of the challenge becomes all the greater. Then there is, so to speak, the southern element of immigration, for the clearest complementary match for the EU's labor shortfall is the surplus in Turkey, Northern Africa, and the broader Middle East. Already, the EU is home to many Muslim immigrants, in proportions that vary from country to country. If European birthrates are in general below replacement, the birthrates of Muslims in Europe are much higher. The population characteristics of Europe are therefore, to varying degrees, already shifting significantly.

This fact, too, is one that critics have seized on in alarmist fashion, aided in certain respects by the sometimes expressed aspiration of radical clerics for the eventual adoption of *sharia* in Europe and even a European caliphate. Although such statements provide fodder for outraged polemics and lamentations of a world that is passing, in reality, the more perfervid visions on offer would require nothing less than a revolution in Europe.

But because Muslims represent a large and growing share of the European population, it is not unreasonable to ask what effect Islam will have on Europe—and what effect Europe will have on Islam. If it is true that Europeans (particularly at the level of the EU) have become largely post-Christian in orientation, abandoning churches and turning to secular sources as the ground of human rights and democracy, it also seems true that Muslims are not so ready to abandon the mosque.

Obviously, European governments and many European Muslims themselves will not tolerate radical efforts to subvert the European project or to undermine European governments. But the measures taken to counter such influences will always be controversial, and in some cases be in tension with European aspirations with regard to the rule of law—the European project being largely silent on the question of covert counterintelligence and counterterrorism policy.

One key question will be the extent to which a "European Islam" emerges, one that is in basic accord and sympathy with the European project while being regarded as religiously legitimate within the faith. It seems to us that such a possibility is within reach, though it will require careful nurturing across a range of policy choices and issues of identity. It is probably not an accident

that the most controversial and interesting debates on these issues today rage in countries like the Netherlands and Denmark—countries long seen as among the most tolerant and liberal in Europe. The fundamental issue that has arisen is whether the essence of a liberal norm-building society is to guarantee the freedom of the individuals to lives they want—even or especially if they choose to live in an illiberal manner—or whether the state must guarantee the basic liberal order by encouraging if not inculcating those values. This, too, is a test of norm building. Finding a calibrated and sustainable balance here is key.

Prosperity

The EU is an economic powerhouse, currently enjoying per capita incomes at all-time highs. The prosperous states of Western Europe have also developed elaborate social welfare protections. By most accounts, Europeans are largely satisfied with the social stability that has resulted. The newer members of the EU are in many cases providing an additional entrepreneurial spark to the EU economy as they seek to catch up with their wealthier fellow members.

One remaining question, however, is whether opportunities for personal advancement are sufficient to fill latent demand. This is a matter that applies at all levels. Is it possible for immigrants to get ahead? Will Europe offer the highly motivated and well-educated of the next generation adequate outlets for their entrepreneurial energy, or will such people seek their fortunes elsewhere, perhaps by emigrating to the United States? While the United States has certainly benefited from this brain drain, Europeans need to find ways of nurturing and keeping such local talent.

Rigidities in European labor markets and other disincentives to job creation have not just economic consequences, but also social repercussions. The matter of identity comes in once again—the extent to which upward mobility cultivates a sense of belonging. If Europe is to continue to prosper, it must keep from growing complacent in the face of prosperity. The preservation of the many desirable features of the European social model must be made compatible with the provision of sufficient opportunity for individuals.

Identity

Even a brief consideration of the demographic and economic challenges of the EU leads quickly, as we have seen, to the question of European identity—perhaps the paramount internal challenge that faces the EU. One component of this challenge is to acknowledge that postmodern Europe is no longer the crucible of world history that it was for centuries. The Napoleonic era is long past, as is the Hitler era. In fact, one could argue that the EU's essential success in eliminating the possibility of armed conflict among its members guaranteed that international attention and concern would focus elsewhere, to the benefit of Europe and the wider world. The EU's vision of a world of law, no less noble in its way than the long-gone courts of kings, should prove to be a more than adequate substitute for a more modern "political" role in the world. European identity in this respect seems secure.

But the problem of what it means to be European remains acute for many of the populations of Europe. This is true among certain national populations dubious about the value added by the EU to their lives. It is certainly true for the many groups for which their national governments provides little source of identity. It is a truism that one can come to the United States and become fully American almost at once, whereas one may move to Germany or Denmark and three generations later, one's descendants will still not be considered German or Danish. This would be true even for an American of Danish ancestry moving to Denmark. It is all the more true for those who come from very different ethnic backgrounds.

A key test of the internal success of the EU and the European project broadly construed will be the extent to which the problem of minorities' sense of marginalization in the states in which they live can be assuaged by a common and inclusive "European" identity that encompasses them and satisfies their need for belonging. Some hoped that such a sense of "Europeanness" would quickly follow on the arrival of a European flag in Brussels and national capitals. Among elites, there is indeed an increasing sense of "Europeanness." But such elites were not suffering an identity deficit to begin with; that they can now be proud Europeans is an added bonus on top of national, international, and transnational lives that were already quite rich. Such a sense of "Europeanness," though, has not quickly "trickled down" to those most in need of it. It now seems clear that such transnational European identity will not emerge automatically from the success of the European project. On the contrary, for those who currently feel themselves to be the most excluded, it will almost certainly require deliberate social construction.

Last but certainly not least, there is the EU's ongoing and seemingly perpetual struggle for legitimacy in the eyes of its own citizens. At one level, this is the ongoing attempt to define power relationships between the EU institutions and member states in a new and unprecedented political animal. But there are also deeper questions that are closely linked to the main subject of the present essay: from where does the EU derive the legitimacy to pursue its norm-building aspirations? It is probably fair to say that the EU is, in essence, far more neo-Wilsonian in its aspirations than many of its member states. And one does not have to spend much time in Brussels to understand that individual member states with short-term national agendas use their national powers and vetoes to seek advantages at fundamental odds with the EU's transformative aims and the conditionality the EU supposedly demands.

There is clearly a spectrum of views and degrees of national commitment to many of these goals. In recent years, this debate has been cast in terms of new versus old members of the EU—with the new members from Central and Eastern Europe presumably more committed to making democratic transformation a higher priority in EU policies, for example. But the lineup and political fault lines on these issues and norm building more generally are often much more complex and nuanced. The Nordics, for example, are probably the most committed to such transformation, as are other "old" Western European EU members like the Netherlands. Some Central and Eastern European members are clearly strongly committed to democratic norms, but others have quickly accommodated themselves to European traditions of realpolitik or join in the prevalent internal EU log-rolling.

Forging a consistent policy attempting to transform Europe's periphery and the world, while contending with divided national views among member states and managing the gap between elite and public views, is not easy. Nowhere are these tensions more apparent or acute than in Turkey, itself a candidate for EU membership. The EU today is committed to transforming Turkey and anchoring Ankara to the West. Indeed, there are few EU policies that, if successful, could match its far-reaching and positive ramifications for many of the EU's internal challenges discussed in this section—let alone the geopolitical advantages for Europe, the Middle East, and beyond. It is also a major test of the EU's neo-Wilsonian and transformative ambitions.

Yet it is precisely the case of Turkey that highlights the EU's greatest weaknesses: the internal rivalries and the divide among different member states and the gap between what the EU elite wants and what public opinion will support. The debate over Turkish membership in the EU is not just about religion or money. It is also about political power and who will run the EU in the future. It is about what kind of EU will exist in ten or twenty years, domestically and internationally. It is about managing a political split within Europe on this issue between right and left as well as between North and South. And it is about the legitimacy of an EU elite that sees

itself as a vanguard pursuing a noble goal—a goal that is all about norm building—about which segments of its publics are increasingly skeptical if not opposed. While European publics are generally very supportive of a common foreign policy, this does not mean they give their leaders a blank check when it comes to tough issues.

External Challenges

Europe confronts considerable internal challenges in its effort to remain true to its vision of a world of law. The external hurdles to the EU's playing an analogous role globally are also serious. They can be grouped into several categories.

The first is the EU's ability to pursue a consistent and effective policy that lives up to its own ethos and values. If the EU is the world's first Wilsonian experiment at home, to what extent can it pursue effective Wilsonianism in its foreign policy? How compatible are internal policies to sustain and expand peace on the European continent with harder-edged external policies in a more hostile world? Can the Kantian EU experiment survive in a Hobbesian world? Can the EU both recognize the nature and requirements of this more Hobbesian world, while sustaining transformational policies to make it more Kantian?

Related to this conceptual dilemma is the practical question of external effectiveness. The EU's ability to act strategically in some areas is real, in others quite limited. It was created as an instrument to render war within Europe impossible, not to pursue global strategy. It is trying to evolve into a political entity that pools sovereignty and strives for a common foreign and security policy that could eventually embrace common defense (at some ill-defined future point). The EU works reasonably well in those areas where the questions of will and organization have been worked through and resolved, and not in those where they have not. Effective policies coexist with ineffective ones. In areas like competition or trade policy, for instance, the EU can bring the most powerful American corporations to their knees and play on a par with the United States in global talks.

In many ways, the power of the EU is rooted in the transformative possibility of the rule of law. It lies in a firm set of rules for doing business in and with Europe that compels other countries to go along as the price of admission. That is how the EU acts as an economic or trade superpower. In his 2005 book *Why Europe will Europe Run the 21st Century*, Mark Leonard argued that the EU would shape the international normative rules of the game more so than anyone else—and thus shape the future world order in spite of its lack of any meaningful hard power. The EU's power, he argued, was its ability to draw countries into its orbit, embed them in its legal and economic framework and change them from the inside out. US military power might be able to change regimes, but the EU can transform societies.

But is that kind of power by itself enough? And can the EU apply it to the hard cases? The same EU that can deal with Microsoft has thus far been unable to deal with Gazprom—largely because it cannot agree on how to apply regulations and competition law effectively to the realm of energy security. It is better at economics than politics and better at soft- than hard-power issues. On the former, it tends to have both the will and the mechanisms, whereas on the latter it does not. The same institution that can regulate American corporate giants can often barely manage to deploy a handful of civilian or military experts on foreign policy missions because of a lack of political will, disagreement among member states, or the inadequacy of its related machinery.

The EU's great external success has been its ability to transform its neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe through enlargement. When it comes to EU policies with the declared aim of

promoting democratic transformation in the southern Mediterranean, we again see that the EU's own lack of cohesion and consistency has depleted the leverage it has, in theory, amassed through considerable amounts of aid to the region. The same is often true even for countries that, themselves, may aspire to join the EU and transform themselves, such as Ukraine or Georgia, but where the EU is divided and has doubts as to whether it wants them. When it comes to the hard diplomatic cases, such as the efforts of the EU-3 (United Kingdom, France, and Germany) to engage Iran to convince it to change its behavior, the limits of the norm-based approach become apparent. And when it comes to the use of hard power, the EU's ability to act is of course even more limited.

The EU's new Africa strategy—which calls for extensive assistance to African states and the African Union to help build capacity—represents an ambitious and potentially important foray even further abroad. There is, in principle, strong potential for conditional transformative diplomacy. Here, the EU must ensure it is getting the results desired for the assistance on offer. Such EU initiatives need sufficient local support so as to constitute genuine partnerships rather than external impositions. That is the best route to effective implementation and sustainability. At the same time, the EU must make sure that its policies and conditionality are sufficiently firm so that partner African governments and institutions undertake necessary reforms. This is a formidable challenge for policymakers and diplomats alike.

The question of the adequacy of soft power becomes even more pertinent if one believes that we are entering a phase of history characterized by more rather than less geopolitical competition—an era less conducive to this historical experiment in Wilsonianism. How many true allies does the EU have when it comes to its longer-term norm-setting aspirations? Is the United States an ally in this quest? The EU is both dependent on, and ambivalent about, the American role. Historically, the EU would probably never have been ventured, or have succeeded, without strong American support in the 1950s. It could not have thrived throughout the Cold War without the US security umbrella provided through NATO. It could not have enlarged in the 1990s without NATO taking the lead in enlarging first and then defusing concerns about security guarantees.

Here again, we find the EU both dependent on and ambivalent about a country like the United States that it considers both an opportunity and a challenge. Dependency can breed different feelings. Many have believed that the American role and presence constrains rather than fosters European integration. Others have sought to define a new European identify in contradistinction to or as a counterweight to—as opposed to a partnership with—the United States. American attitudes have also fluctuated. There are undoubtedly many factors that went into the breakdown of transatlantic cooperation after the election of George W. Bush and the rise of a new wave of anti-Americanism in Europe. But one key factor that alienated Europe's elites was their perception that, with the unilateralism of the first Bush term, Washington had ceased to be a partner and indeed threatened to undercut the EU in its essentially Wilsonian project.

A third reason to raise the question of the adequacy of soft power is that, in addition to ambivalent allies, there are the real adversaries. The real threat to the EU's vision is not the United States but Russia. European leaders nervously recognize that the world is becoming a more dangerous place. The dream of a Kantian peace led by the EU and extending to the global scene has faded as sober Europeans eye the specter of nationalism, geopolitics, and rising powers on their borders. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of the apparent Russian attempt to rewrite many of the heretofore accepted norms upon which European security since the end of the Cold War was supposed to be built. As Ivan Krastev has written in *The American Interest*, the real clash of civilizations today is between a postmodern Wilsonian Europe that has eschewed power politics and is seeking to extend its vision of how the world should be run, and Putin's pre-

modern illiberal notion of sovereign democracy, complete with aggression across international borders. In its "A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations," the European Council on Foreign Relations—a think tank set up specifically to advocate and lobby for the EU's notion of a new world order—noted that Moscow is not only pursuing a policy of divide and conquer among the EU's member states, but also is "setting itself up as an ideological alternative to the EU, with a different approach to sovereignty, power and world order."

Nowhere is this challenge clearer than on Europe's border—in those countries referred to as wider (or, jokingly, wilder) Europe, where the EU's reformational and Moscow's counter-reformational impulses collide. And it is no accident that these are precisely the areas where the EU and Russia today are at loggerheads as both sides try to set, or rather reset, the rules of the game in the countries between Brussels and Moscow. Looking further afield, however, one must look far and wide before one finds major powers who share the EU's world view. Neither China nor India today appears to be in the EU's camp when it comes to such issues of world order. So with whom, how, and with what is the EU realistically going to pursue its vision?

The Indispensable Stakeholder

The European project is an ambitious undertaking. While recognizing its flaws and weaknesses, one must neither lose sight of the magnitude of the EU's achievement, nor of its potential. For any effort to bring about a more norm-based international order, the EU's authority, power, and success are key ingredients. Anyone who aspires to live in a world governed more by norms than by raw political power in pursuit of advantage should be a friend of the European project.

The EU has considerable resources at its disposal to pursue its neo-Wilsonian vision. The EU is a rich and, in its way, a powerful actor with substantial room for maneuver that few nations in the modern world enjoy. Already a responsible stakeholder in the international community, the EU has much to contribute in helping others become fully responsible stakeholders. The world toward which the EU points lays plausible claim to the title of "best of all possible worlds"—one in which norms are generally accepted and universally upheld; disputes between states are subject to peaceful resolution through a voluntary, deliberative process; and ample space remains for people to pursue the ends they desire so long as those ends are compatible with the law.

Yet the EU remains an incomplete institution. Its members are still struggling over the question of its basic architecture, and there have been setbacks aplenty along the way, some of which are a product of the gaps between the aspirations of law and the underlying social order. Perhaps more important, the EU aspiration for a world of law does not neatly overlap the world in which we seem destined to live for some time to come. Norms are, in the long run, self-perpetuating—having been undergirded by broad agreement about what they are and how to live in accordance with them. But in the shorter term, they can slip into platitudes in the absence of the power to enforce and defend them against indifference or active opposition. The EU remains deeply ambivalent about power in a way that may yet jeopardize the European project as a whole.

Though the EU has not adequately addressed these internal and external challenges, surely it is in the interest of the United States for the European project to succeed. Indeed, the failure of the EU would have devastating consequences for the emergence of a norm-based world order. One would have to start again almost from the beginning. More likely, at least for a time the world and the powerful countries remaining in it would revel in their freedom from the sort of accountability a norm-based order brings—with grave consequences for human rights, political participation, deliberative processes, and material prosperity.

Whether the European project succeeds is up to Europeans themselves. They conceived it; they have brought it along this far; only they can see it through. But many outsiders are coming to appreciate how great a stake they, too, have in the outcome.

Robert Cooper's Reaction

Perhaps it takes Americans to understand Europe, just as it took Americans to invent it. Without the policies of Marshall and Truman, there would have been no EU. NATO created the security conditions for a cooperative Europe, but before that the Marshall Plan had begun to create the political conditions. It was the method as much as the money that mattered; this was money used in the most intelligent and political fashion that a state has ever imagined (strangely those who followed Marshall and launched aid programs throughout the Third World forgot this and imagined instead that it was possible to transform countries by economic intervention alone).

As just one instance of his foresight, George Kennan wrote in an early strategy paper that the European recovery program "should be designed to encourage and contribute to some form of regional association." And indeed this was what it did: the Europeans were obliged to work collectively to develop the initial proposals for the program; and the results included institutions such as the European Payments Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, together with reductions in trade barriers among European countries. These were not so much forerunners of the EU as a part of the environment that made it possible. Jean Monnet himself had extensive contacts with the authors of the Marshall Plan.

Asmus and Lindberg are as sympathetic toward the EU as any European could wish, both in their appreciation of its achievements and their awareness of the obstacles. If they err at all, it is in overoptimism—but that is a useful American offset to chronic Euro-pessimism.

Perhaps one has to be American to imagine a European ambition to transform the world. It is true that there are ambitious Europeans who believe that Europe can—even must—contribute to a better, more secure world. And there are idealist Europeans who commit themselves to the cause of justice or of ending poverty. But these worthy sentiments do not have the same force as the ruthless self-confidence that once sent Europeans abroad to build empires, or the patriotism that drove Japan to prove itself the equal of the West, or that now drives China to return to its rightful place among nations. Nor do these calm European passions compare with the mobilization that gripped America after 9/11. This kind of popular fervor is visible neither when Europe's citizens contemplate the achievement of the EU itself (toward which most of them are indifferent), nor when they look outside their borders. There is little to be seen of a desire to spread civilization or democracy, or even to protect their way of life—which most do not view as under threat, unless it is from immigration or high prices.

Fear and greed, the driving forces of mankind, are not much in evidence. The greed for glory died with the empires. It had turned out to be the tawdry glory of the stage set—flashy from a distance, false close up. Fear has gone because of the success of Europe itself. When you have lived through a thousand years of invading armies, the sudden arrival of regional harmony undermines the position of those concerned about threats as they fight the battle for budgets. What is the point of the Belgian army today? It is not to defend Belgium, since no one is going to attack it. Rather it is to demonstrate a sufficient commitment to "the West" that friends and allies, above all the United States, will be there if Belgium should ever need help. Conceived on a national level, there are not many threats to European countries: if we are going to be serious about defense we

have now to think on a larger scale, either European or Atlantic. There is no reason why we should not have both. In foreign policy, postwar Europe has grown up with both an Atlantic and a European identity. Pluralism and the ability to operate in different formations according to political circumstances is a Western strength.

But that is not the whole story. It may be that popular fervor is in scarce supply, but Europe was always partly a project of elites; and elites have their own kind of evangelism. Asmus and Lindberg are right to see the spread of law as the essence of the European project. The EU is above all a community of law—a framework of rules and norms to resolve conflict and avoid violence among nations. And law outside Europe? How else can peaceful countries join in a civil order except through a system of rules?

A community of law must also be a community of compromise. Laws are made by agreement; and the unwritten rule that underpins the EU is the commandment, "Thou shalt negotiate." It is not good enough to block something and rely on a veto right; if there is a common will to move forward, you must offer an alternative way. And thou shalt negotiate in a cooperative spirit and be ready to compromise. For this to work, there must be the sense of a common enterprise and a spirit both of solidarity and of give and take.

President Wilson's European Heirs

We are indeed a Wilsonian project: not just that European countries are national states liberated from empire (either as its masters or its victims), but also as a community of democracies. The EU has always been much firmer on this criterion than NATO, partly for the reason that a reliable administration of the rule of law is a functional necessity for any country to be acceptable as a member. The EU is also the realization of the third part of the Wilsonian package, the idea of an organization of states who would maintain security among themselves by negotiation and by the fact—oft repeated by the League's advocates—that public opinion would never allow them to go to war with each other. Finally the EU enjoys what the League never had: the benevolent support of the United States.

We underestimate the extent to which we already live in a rule-governed world. If you make a journey by plane, you are within the security and safety rules that govern international aviation; you are flying in a machine that has received an international airworthiness certificate, and its every component must meet some internationally accepted industrial standard. While in the air, your safety will be in the hands of an international system of air traffic controllers. This experience of living within a state-run international system is replicated, unnoticed, in a thousand ways every day.

The spread of these rules is the spread of civilization. But it comes about by negotiation, not by conquest. The idea of a world of rules is hardly something that inspires vision or ambition. But it is bothersome when others do not follow the same rules as you do, whether this is in accounting standards or airport security; and this imperative of cost inclines us to seek common rules. In Europe the habit of cooperation and negotiation has led to a naive expectation of what can be done by persuasion and good will. So we persist in believing in negotiation when more rational actors might give up. But then, what great work was ever accomplished without some element of irrationality?

Ultimately, though, these qualities of patience and bureaucratic persistence may be quite valuable. The problems of tomorrow—proliferation, terrorism, and global warming—will be surmounted only through cooperative efforts of North and South. This will need a new

environment of collegiality, a willingness to listen and to compromise, a new style of leadership even. Perhaps a group of countries not driven primarily by ambition for glory, nations with habits and techniques of compromise honed over long dull years of working together, may indeed have something to contribute.

How Will Europe Compete?

Among the many interesting questions Asmus and Lindberg pose, two stand out as critical for Europe's future. The first is whether we are moving into an era of growing geopolitical competition. If they are right—and these are not the only commentators to predict this—what form will the competition take? In an era of heightened military competition, Europe will not be a major force, and certainly not a winner. But then nobody will be a winner. So far, post-Cold War military interventions have not brought great success for the interveners—the best have been in the cause of peace, as in the Balkans, or in reply to another's bid for glory, as in the Gulf War of 1991. And they have been in marginal areas. It is hard to imagine direct military competition between great powers bringing anything but ruin. Stupidity is, however, always an option—and a future of tension, threat, and proxy wars thus remains a possibility. If so, the EU will be ill-equipped, and NATO will again become the primary locus of international politics in Europe.

But there is another possibility. Questions of law and regulation could become the main competitive arena. That sounds dull, but the great struggles of history have always been about who would rule whom, and how. Asmus and Lindberg's point that the EU has so far proved better at dealing with Microsoft than Gazprom illustrates how far Europe still has to go in this area. Even so, this is terrain where Europe could—indeed must—succeed.

If this emerges as the battle ground, the decisive question will be where China positions itself. Of the so called "BRICs" (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) the dynamic factor is China. It is China that has brought the raw material boom to Brazil and Russia, and has spurred India into competition. A decision by China that a rule-governed world is in its interest would do more to make such a world possible than any other development. This question is thus more important for us and for our future than whether and when China adopts democracy—though in the end democracy is probably the best way of ensuring the rule of law domestically. Europe may therefore be right and even perhaps more hard-headed than the United States in emphasizing the rule of law rather than democracy. Yet this too is in keeping with the European preference for technical rather than political concepts. Asmus and Lindberg say that neither China nor India seems to be in the EU's camp on issues of world order. It is too early, though, to make such a judgment. It is at least encouraging that China, for good reason, has taken to the World Trade Organization like the proverbial duck to water. Besides, there is another world out there—the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, and the countries of Latin America—all of whom would like to follow the European route.

The European approach of endless negotiation and technical solutions for political problems, however, can work only where the basic geopolitical questions are resolved. That is why no amount of aid or talk has so far been able to bring decisive progress in areas such as Palestine or North Africa where bad political relations prevent normal trade and other exchanges. The spread of law must be complemented and facilitated by an effort to solve political problems and to spread a culture of compromise. The genius of the Marshall Plan was that its economic and political dimensions were mutually reinforcing.

A Matter of Identity

The second question that the authors raise, also decisive for Europe and even more difficult to answer, is that of identity. For Europe's internal development, the ability to integrate immigrant populations will be critical. Different European states are struggling with this question in different ways and according to their own traditions. It is vital that one of them finds an answer as convincing as that of the United States so that the rest can copy. Is it possible that the EU could somehow offer help, providing a wider identity for new arrivals, rather as the Empire became a source of British identity for Scots who still felt foreign in England? It is a nice idea, but the reality is that identity in Europe is primarily national.

The purpose of the EU is not to replace the nation-state, but to enable it to function better. It does not seek to replace national identity either (nor could it succeed if it tried). We must not expect, therefore, that European action in the world will be based on a widespread identification with a project viewed essentially as European. But perhaps, even if a popular European identity is neither possible nor desirable, we may be able to create a sense of common purpose among those dealing directly with foreign affairs. That is one of the big potential benefits from the European External Action Service proposed in the Lisbon Treaty—not a competitor for the national services, but a network joining them in a common enterprise.

All of this makes the EU different from the United States. No intelligent person would dream of the EU as a competitor. Where we have had success—always a rarity in foreign policy—it has been together, as in the Balkans. The EU does not want to return to a world of great power competition; it was created precisely to bring this to an end. If the United States is the indispensable nation, Europe's ambition is to be its indispensable partner.

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