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GLOBAL AND OPERATIONAL: A NEW STRATEGY FOR EU FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Strategists of Europe, rejoice! The June 2015 European Council mandated High Representative Federica Mogherini to prepare "an EU global strategy on foreign and security policy" by June 2016. Fully twelve years after the adoption of the European Security Strategy (ESS), the chance to revisit the EU's grand strategy should be grasped with both hands. What could the new strategy most usefully say and promote? What makes Europe the most equal continent, providing the greatest security, freedom, and prosperity, is the European Social Model. It contains the principles and the values at the heart of EU, that also shape its vital interests. Bearing in mind this assumption, the new ESS should fulfil three functions: define strategic priorities, set a limited number of overall objectives and comunicate how the EU sees its role in the world. In sum, on the basis of a geopolitical analysis of the regional and global environment, this coming strategizing effort aims to identify the most important threats and challenges to Europe's vital interests, and to define priority objectives to which end the preventive, comprehensive, and multilateral method must be applied. How to do that? This paper offers some thoughts.

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Strategists of Europe, rejoice! The June 2015 European Council mandated High Representative Federica Mogherini to prepare "an EU global strategy on foreign and security policy" by June 2016. Fully twelve years after the adoption of the European Security Strategy (ESS), the chance to revisit the EU's grand strategy should be grasped with both hands. What could the new strategy most usefully say? This paper offers some thoughts.

1. A strategy for which Europe?

When writing strategy, the first question is: for whom am I writing? Which EU doesthe strategy seek to defend? For British historian Tony Judt it was clear what theheart of Europe is: the "European Social Model."[1]

Through a combination of democracy, capitalism, and government intervention at the European and national levels, Europeans have constructed a model of society distinguished by its egalitarian aspiration. And it works: Europe is the most equal continent, providing the greatest security, freedom, and prosperity (the three core public goods to which everyone is entitled) to the greatest number of citizens.

Security: every citizen has to be kept free from harm. Freedom: every citizen needs to participate in democratic decision-making, to have his human rights respected, and to be equally treated before the law. And prosperity as well: every citizen has a right to a fair share of the wealth that society produces. In 2009, the Member States even formally codified this aspiration in the Lisbon Treaty, which added equality and solidarity to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union:

> The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, includingthe rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women prevail.

What many have forgotten is that this social model is an inherent part of the European project. Everybody is familiar with the founding myth of the EU: after the end of the Second World War, in order to ensure that another world war would not start in Europe, the founding fathers launched upon a path of integration between states that would make war between them a practical impossibility. But this is only half of the story. At the same time as they started the process of European integration, the countries of (western) Europe made a quantum leap in the establishment of the comprehensive welfare state. They had learned in the 1930s that without this social buffer, democracy could not cope with severe economic crisis and the resulting

[1] Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945*, London, Penguin, 2005, p. 793.

political upheaval. For the founding fathers, the social model was an inherent part of their peace project – not a luxury product, nice to have when things are going well but easily discarded when things are going badly. On the contrary, it is precisely in times of crisis that one has to invest in the social buffer.

At the time, building the welfare state was of course a national undertaking. Today, when we have a single market and, for most Member States, a currency union, a banking union, and common budgetary rules enforced by the European Commission, maintaining the social model increasingly requires that some aspects at least are incorporated into this common European system of governance. Which is what Commissioner Marianne Thyssen proposed in June 2015, pleading for minimum unemployment benefits, a minimum income, and access to child care and to basic health care in all Member States.[2]

2. Projecting European values or the European crisis?

The strength of the current ESS is that it takes this internal egalitarian aspiration and turns it into a positive narrative for foreign and security policy. "A secure Europe in a better world": the subtitle of the 2003 ESS says it all. The aim is to secure Europe; the best way of making that happen is to make the world a better place. The core of the ESS is neatly captured in just two sentences:

> The best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states. Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order.[3]

In other words, the key to security is effective states that provide for the security, freedom, and prosperity of their own citizens. Where governments do not provide for their citizens however, tensions will arise; instability, repression and conflict will follow. Citizens will eventually revolt, and regimes will either implode, relatively peacefully (think of the Soviet Union in 1991 or Tunisia in 2011), or explode, with a lot of violence (as is happening all around Europe today). Therefore, put less diplomatically: the more the rest of the world becomes like Europe, the better for everybody. The better for Europe, for there will be less grounds for mass migration to Europe, less interruption of trade, and less risk of conflict spilling over to its territory. But the better also for citizens in the rest of the world, for they will enjoy more security, freedom, and prosperity. From this starting point, the ESS codifies a European way of foreign policy, which is: preventive, addressing the root causes of insecurity; comprehensive, tackling the security, political, and economic causes simultaneously; and multilateral, in partnership with other organizations and states.

That does not mean that the EU should simply export its social model in all its intricate detail to the rest of the world. Not only would that be all too paternalistic; a one-size-fits-all model just

[2] Marianne Thyssen, *Policy Orientations for a Social Europe, Remarks to the European Parliament*, Strasbourg, 9 June 2015, http://europa.eu/!QK86Ng.
[3] European Council, *A secure Europe in a better world. European security strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 10, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf.

would not work. What Europe should try to promote is the egalitarian aspiration, the sense that government is responsible for the res publica and not just for the wellbeing of the ruling elite. Europeans should abandon the idea that they know better how to govern other countries than the citizens of those countries themselves, but they can legitimately advertise the results that they have achieved in Europe. There probably are many ways of achieving the same result, and it is the sincere commitment to attempt it that counts. Moreover, this is what the citizens of many countries are already demanding, loudly and clearly. The brave people who went out into the streets in Tunisia in 2011, whose actions would bring down the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali and trigger the Arab Spring, wanted a government that protects their security, respects their human rights, gives them a say in decision-making, and tries to make the economy work for everybody. They were not different from Belgian workers striking, and getting shot at, for the right to vote in the 1880s, Polish trade unionists resisting dictatorship in the 1980s, or Chinese citizens denouncing corruption today.

It is not just legitimate for European foreign policy to embody the same values on which its domestic social model is based – it is a moral duty. No polity can be called truly democratic unless it is democratic in all of its actions. One could never imagine that for the sake of expediency the EU would suspend the rule of law or respect for human rights when dealing with the Common Agricultural Policy or regulation of the telecommunications sector. It should be as unimaginable to do so in foreign and security policy. If Europe gives up on its own values, its foreign policy would perpetuate the very challenges that it tries to address: war, authoritarianism,and inequality. The more Europe is perceived to bring the values that it propagates into practice, not just in its foreign policy but even more so domestically, the more legitimacy it gains with citizens of other countries. The biggest source of Europe's influence is neither its soldiers nor even its trade, but the success of the way it does things internally.[4]

A strategy founded on promoting our values and the results of our social model outside the EU cannot be credible if we no longer adhere to it ourselves – that would kick the feet from under the strategic narrative. Unfortunately this is exactly what the EU did when the financial and economic crisis hit Europe.

That the crisis did not bode well for EU foreign policy was self-evident[5]. In times of austerity there simply is less money available for external action and as the EU Heads of State and Government struggled summit after summit to address the Eurozone crisis, foreign policy inevitably lost out. Member States chose to save the Eurozone by deepening financial and economic integration, so the trend remains ever closer union, but the painful and drawn-out decision-making created the image of a weak Union, paralyzed by dissent and unable to take resolute action. And it ain't over yet… Could anyone imagine that it would be seriously considered to kick a state out of the United States? Yet this is what many seem to steer towards when it comes to Greece. All of this inevitably undermines the credibility of any foreign policy initiative which the EU might want to undertake.

[4] It is interesting to see that in its latest, 2015 National Security Strategy even the US makes a (feeble) attempt to advertise its "competitive edge and leadership in […] healthcare" (p. 3).
[5] Richard Youngs, *The Uncertain Legacy of Crisis. European Foreign Policy Faces the Future*, Washington, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014.

But the Eurozone crisis also affected EU foreign policy at a less evident but actually much more fundamental level, because the way in which it was initially addressed was at odds with our values. For far too long, how to save the Euro was presented as a technocratic issue, devoid of political or ideological choices. The medicine was known, it was just a matter of convincing the unwilling patient to swallow it. Certainly the Euro had to be saved – but not as an end in itself. If the Euro were to be saved in such a manner that the prosperity and equality of European citizens were destroyed, the end result would be extremely dangerous for the European project. The social consensus would be broken and citizens would no longer feel committed to the Union and the governments that did not respect it. Furthermore, as illustrated by the way the Greek crisis was addressed in 2015, trying to push through policies that go against Europe's social aspiration has an immediate divisive effect, pitting governments against each other, and thus greatly damages the cohesion between the Member States. If austerity is driven too far, great internal instability will be the result – hardly a base for decisive external action.

Fortunately, it has dawned on Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker that jobs and growth are more likely to save the Union than austerity. Yet obsessed with austerity the EU and many governments had already gone very far and, with regard to Greece, continue to pursue this course. Restoring confidence in the EU will be a work of many years.

3. Values, interests, and the function of strategy

Because they constitute an integrated economy with a distinctive social model, Member States have shared *vital* interests. Values and interests are not fundamentally in contradiction; our values will determine which kind of society we want to build and preserve, which in turn determines which conditions need to be fulfilled for that to be possible: our vital interests. Our values further determine which types of instruments we can legitimately use to achieve those conditions. Thus while Europe need not be timid in defending its interests, it must do so in such a way that it does not harm the legitimate interests of others.

Europe's vital interests can be summarized as:

1. Preventing direct military threats against Europe's territory from materializing: such threats may appear unlikely today, but that does not mean this will always be the case.

2. Keeping open all lines of interaction with the world, notably sea lanes and cyberspace: as a global trade power, any interruption of the global marketplace immediately damages the European economy.

3. Assuring the supply of energy and other natural resources that society and the economy need.

4. Managing migration in an ethically acceptable way: on the one hand migration is necessary in order to maintain a viable work force, yet on the other hand the social model might not be able to cope with a surplus of migration.

5. Mitigating the impact of climate change in order to limit the multiplier effect on security threats and, of course, to save the planet.

6. Upholding the core of international law, notably the interdiction of the use of force in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the more the rules are respected, the better for international stability.

7. Preserving the autonomy of decision-making by preventing undue dependence on any foreign power: Europe should make its own decisions and not have decisions taken for it in Moscow or Beijing, or Washington for that matter.

Some Member States can of course defend their interests alone some of the time, but no Member State is powerful enough to defend all of these vital interests alone all of the time. Hence, to face the most important challenges of today, collective action is increasingly called for. This then is the primary function of an EU strategy: to decide what the big issues are that all Member States care about, and to set out a programme of action to address them. Knowing our values and our vital interests, strategy-making starts with an analysis of the world, in order to identify the most important threats and challenges to these values and interests, so as to define ends, ways and means: setting priority objectives, choosing the instruments to achieve them, and allocating the necessary means.

Such a strategy fulfils three functions. First, strategy helps EU decision-makers define a course of action when, per definition, unpredictable events occur. In the light of the strategic priorities, how important is an event *for the EU*? The answer will determine whether and which action is to be taken, with which means. But a truly strategic actor will not be limited to reacting to events: it will try and proactively shape events and developments. The second function of strategy therefore is to set out a limited number of overall objectives for EU foreign and security policy, in order to guide day-to-day decision-making and the allocation of the budget and other means. Finally, though some elements of strategy may remain secret, strategy also serves accountability and public diplomacy. The third function of strategy is to communicate how the EU sees its role in the world, in order to legitimize its actions *vis-à-vis* parliaments and citizens, and to create clarity *vis-à-vis* allies, partners, and competitors alike.

4. The process and scope of strategizing

How to go about strategizing then, not just now, but in the future as well? The starting point is the acknowledgment that the core of what Europe is, how Europe has brought universal values into practice, is its social model; preserving and even deepening this must be seen as the fundamental purpose of the Union and its Member States. For that to be possible, the seven vital interests outlined above have to be safeguarded.

The next step is to analyse the world around Europe. This is what the High Representative already did in her report to the June 2015 European Council, which highlights that the world has simultaneously become more complex, more connected, and more contested,[6] or what Giovanni Grevi has called "interpolar"[7]: multipolar and interdependent. More powers with global range are competing for scarce resources yet at the same time their economies are deeply interwoven and

[6] Federica Mogherini, *The European Union in a Changing Global Environment. A More Connected, Contested and Complex World*, Brussels, EEAS, June 2015, http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2015/150627_eu_global_strategy_en.htm.
[7] Giovanni Grevi, "The Interpolar World: A New Scenario", in *EU ISS Occasional Papers*, No. 79 (June 2009), http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/op79.pdf.

they are facing complex global challenges such as climate change that no single power can solve alone. This does not guarantee that the great powers will cooperate, but it does increase the chance that they might cooperate and attempt to manage tensions peacefully. Therefore the EU's preventive, comprehensive, and multilateral way of doing foreign policy remains as valid as ever, in order to stimulate the other powers to work through the multilateral institutions, on a comprehensive range of issues, wherever their interests coincide, so as to avoid tension and conflict.

EU strategy does not have to start from a blank page therefore, but would do best to reconfirm the "how to" that the ESS already defined. That is not enough though; another statement of principle, merely paraphrasing the existing ESS, would not have much added value. The strategy should above all be ambitious, focusing on real yet realistic objectives to be achieved. Strategy is more than merely reacting to threats; that will produce a reactive, defensive, or even antagonistic foreign policy. A positive agenda on the other hand will stimulate initiative, transparency, and partnership in dealing with the challenges that Europe does face. The crux of strategizing is to identify, on the basis of a geopolitical analysis of the regional and global environment, the most important threats and challenges to Europe's vital interests, and to define priority objectives (the "what") to which end the preventive, comprehensive, and multilateral method must be applied.

EU strategy should not try to say something about everything therefore. Strategy should be short and sharp. Of course EU foreign policy has to cover a broad range of issues and countries, from organized crime in Columbia to nuclear safety in Japan, but they cannot all be priorities – that would paralyze the machine. The topics that remain unmentioned will of course not be ignored, but the function of strategy is to fix priorities, in order to energize and give purpose to the EU institutions, and to signal to third parties what we consider vital. Similarly, the aim is not to compile the national foreign policy priorities of all Member States. The point of EU foreign policy is not to replace Member States' national policies, but to complement them where necessary. EU strategy should prioritize those issues that (1) all Member States regard as priorities because their shared vital interests are most directly at stake and that (2) are so challenging that no Member State can deal with them alone. These are the types of issues on which EU foreign policy will bring the greatest added value as compared to what the Member States can do. This is where the EU can and must prove that it is better at defending the Member States' national interest than the Member States themselves.

In order to ensure that the resulting three, four, or five priorities effectively guide EU decision-making and the allocation of means, they have to be understood as a mandate to the High Representative, and as a programme for action, now. For every priority the strategy should define:

1. The overall objective and the EU level of ambition: what do we want to achieve and what are we willing to commit to that end?
2. The overall substantial guidelines on how this objective is to be reached: in which sense should policies be developed or reviewed?
3. A tasking and a deadline for the relevant actors to elaborate detailed substrategies, policies, and actions: how to bring the strategy into practice?

Such priorities will obviously not remain valid for many years, but such is not the point of strategy. The time horizon of the geopolitical analysis from which the priorities are derived must be 15 to 20 years, but the priorities themselves are not meant to be carved into the walls of the EEAS building on the Schuman Roundabout in Brussels – they are to guide decision-making for this term of this High Representative. Just as a national foreign minister produces a policy statement at the start of each term of office, so the High Representative should review EU strategy at least at the beginning of each five-year term. Perhaps on some occasions the decision will be that not much has to be changed, but then it will be a conscious choice and not the result of avoiding the debate, as unfortunately has been the case since 2008. There is a risk that a five-yearly strategic review would become a ritualistic exercise. Certainly not all editions of the US National Security Strategy have been equally important. But a High Representative who is a politician will have an idea of where he or she wants to leave his or her mark. In the full knowledge that a large part of the job will naturally consist in reacting to events, he or she can set a proactive agenda and assess the issues where only Europeans together can and must actively shape, rather than just undergo, events.

Naturally, if game-changers occur in the meantime, strategic priorities may have to be changed. But that is not an argument against strategizing. As stated above, unpredictable events will happen. Having a strategy provides decision-makers with a framework and a starting point to analyse such events and to assess if and how to adapt; without a strategy, improvisation would rule. Instituting a systematic process of strategizing will help decision-makers to achieve suppleness and confidence in continually reassessing the threats and challenges facing our values and interests, evaluating past actions, and reprioritising objectives and the allocation of means accordingly.

5. The substance of EU strategy

A With regard to today's strategic exercise, four interconnected challenges stand out as priorities for collective EU action:

1. Europeans have to deal with the consequences of the "Arab Spring" and the Ukraine crisis in their broader neighbourhood.

2. They have to decide, now that the US is pivoting to Asia, which responsibilities they must assume themselves for security problems in that very neighbourhood as well as further afield.

3. Europeans at the same time have to increase their room for manoeuvre in foreign policy by reducing their energy dependence, notably *vis-à-vis* Russia, and contribute to mitigating the consequences of climate change.

4. They have to reinvigorate multilateral cooperation on energy, climate change and other key issues, notably by making better use of their so-called strategic partnerships, in particular with the BRICS.

5.1 The neighbourhood

The strategy could start by saying that the EU will have more than one neighbourhood policy. The dynamics in the east (geographically and culturally in Europe, but also within the ambit of a power with irredentist designs, Russia) and the south (in Africa and Asia, where multiple powers compete for influence) are just too different. And "the neighbours of the neighbours" are often as crucial to EU interests. At least five partially overlapping and strongly interrelated areas are vital: the eastern neighbourhood, the Mediterranean, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East/Gulf. Each of these requires its own sub-regional strategy and multilateral forum as a framework for bilateral relations.

In the immediate east, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) can to some extent to be said to have worked: the majority of people in Ukraine want closer association with the EU. The same applies to Moldova, whereas in Belarus too those dissatisfied with the regime look to the west. What the EU forgot was the geopolitical implications of the ENP and how those would be perceived in Moscow. The strategy should define the level of ambition with regard to the Eastern Partnership countries: which degree of association is on offer under which political and economic conditions, while making it clear that the EU is not in search of an exclusive sphere of influence. The level of ambition with regard to Ukraine and Moldova seems clear, and even that with regard to Belarus, if the regime were to implode. But EU aspirations with regard to the Caucasus and, further afield, Central Asia, are less obvious so far.

In the south, an entirely new concept of relations is required, for the conditionality-based ENP can no longer work. Currently, the EU is stuck with an ambitious rhetoric of reform and a practice of so-called partnership, and cooperation on concrete issues, with countries that don't want to reform at all, to the detriment of EU legitimacy. An alternative would be a really tailor-made approach to the bilateral relationship by offering various issue-based packages of cooperation and support, from which neighbours could choose at their own discretion and agree on a mutually beneficial range of activities with the EU. This would provide more choice to the neighbouring country, making for a more equitable relationship with the EU, while leaving the EU more freedom to focus cooperation on its own interests without violating its own rhetoric. Packages could cover human rights, democracy, security sector reform, mobility of people, transport, energy, etc., but also intelligence, security, and defence. Whereas the human rights package would not be compulsory, so cooperation would not be conditional upon it, the one limit would be that the EU cannot engage in any form of cooperation that would strengthen the authoritarian nature of a regime or that would condone human rights violations.

The previous geographic boundaries of the southern ENP no longer make sense, if they ever did: instability in the neighbours of the neighbours in itself menaces European interests and is often a major source of instability in the immediate neighbours. Therefore the same bilateral relationship can be aimed at with all countries in the Mediterranean, the Sahel, the Horn, and the Middle East/Gulf. There is no reason why Mali for example would not be offered the same opportunities for close relations with Europe as Tunisia.

5.2 Security and defence

It is only possible to have one grand strategy, and Member States have but a single set of forces, but this has to serve national objectives as well as those of the EU, NATO, and the UN. Formally, there is no overarching strategy that outlines European ambitions as a security provider regardless of the operational framework chosen in a specific contingency. Yet this is precisely what is necessary, for as the focus of US strategy has pivoted to Asia, it will have to be Europeans who take the initiative to address security crises in their own broad neighbourhood, in both NATO and the EU. It could be the role of the European Council, as an intergovernmental body uniting Heads of State and Government, to state that the level of ambition expressed in the new EU strategy will guide their States' efforts through NATO as well.

The strategy could define the political level of ambition, stating which responsibilities Europe will assume as a security provider outside its borders. There could be three priorities:

1. to take the lead in stabilizing Europe's broad neighbourhood, including the neighbours of the neighbours, because no other actor will do that for us;

2. to contribute to global maritime security, which is of vital interest because 90 percent of European trade is seaborne;

3. to contribute to UN collective security, for the EU needs an effective UN when it deems intervention necessary itself (as today in Libya).

From that would follow a mandate to adapt the Headline Goal to this new level of ambition, taking into account that at least in its broad neighbourhood Europeans should be able to act autonomously when necessary, without recourse to US assets – and thus relying on their own strategic enablers. This would require at least doubling the existing Headline Goal: Europeans need to be able to deploy up to a corps (60,000 troops) over and above ongoing operations of (collectively) up to the same numbers. Ideally, and to avoid duplication, a new Headline Goal could be incorporated into the NATO Defence Planning Process, so that a capability mix can be designed that allows Europeans both to fulfil their collective defence obligations and to engage in autonomous expeditionary operations, which would then form the basis for collective capability development under the aegis of the European Defence Agency. Those Member States that so desire can further integrate their defence efforts in smaller clusters. These will create maximal synergies and effects of scale if they change the mind-set and instead of doing national defence planning and then exploring opportunities for cooperation, they move to multinational planning and then decide what each will contribute. A core group of Member States could thus still create a de facto Permanent Structured Cooperation even though this mechanism is unlikely to be formally activated any time soon.

5.3 Energy and climate

Short of nuclear war, the potentially most destructive challenges, not just to Europe but to human progress as such, are energy scarcity and global warming. While global actors are competing for access to the remaining fossil fuels, finding the technological solution to break through the energy ceiling need not be a zero-sum game. Indeed, if the breakthrough is not realized, all great powers will be affected equally disastrously. If that happens, it will not then

matter much whether until that point Europe or the US or China controlled the last fuel reserves, for development will be finished for all. With regard to climate change, it is even clearer that we live in an interpolar age: no great power could mitigate the consequences of global warming on its own, even if it wanted to, though the powers have yet to prove that they do want to do so collectively.

For Europe, a great part of the answer is domestic: investing in research and technology and creating a real single market in energy. EU foreign policy needs to mitigate the short-term effects of energy scarcity and climate change, for example by further diversifying the sources of supply (whereas the US is seeking energy self-sufficiency), and stepping up conflict prevention efforts to offset the multiplier effect of climate change on tension and conflict within and between states. With Russia specifically, energy supply is a crucial dimension of the relationship. Even when it achieves substantial diversification, the EU would do well to still buy Russian gas. It would then be in a much stronger position, able to demonstrate its goodwill by continued purchasing from and investment in the Russian energy sector, which is important for the stability of the country, but in the knowledge that it could much more easily turn its energy supply around.

5.4 Multilateralism

Multilateralism is more difficult in an age of increased competition for dwindling resources between a growing number of global actors – which is exactly why it is even more important than in 2003. War between the powers would be disastrous for Europe's vital interests. Europeans are conscious of the imperfections of the current multilateral system: they are often over-represented, at the expense of the emerging powers, and certain policy areas lack institutions with the necessary competences and the power to enforce them. Europe ought to actively try and shape the reform of the system, rather than cede the initiative to others. The examples of Russia's project for a Eurasian Union and of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization demonstrate that the desire to have a "no westerners allowed" club is insufficient to create a purposive and performing multilateral organization. In 2015 China opted for an alternative road and invited western countries to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that it set up.[8] Europeans accepted the invitation, thus buying a say in the decision-making and ensuring that the new bank contributes to rather than detracts from effective multilateralism.

But the fact remains that many of the emerging powers adhere to the multilateralism of 1945: multilateral bodies as forums where the powers meet to settle their problems, rather than as institutions with powers in their own right. Europeans, formed by their own experience of EU integration, of course have a much more ambitious view of strong multilateral institutions that can impose binding rules. But the emerging powers do not agree among themselves; the BRICS for example have demonstrated their differences more often than their accord. Fortunately, for it would be very disadvantageous were the BRICS to be consolidated as a firm anti-western grouping. At the same time, many deplore Europe's *suivisme vis-à-vis* the US's TTIP initiative, which together with its Pacific counterpart, TTP, seeks to organize the world on a US-centred basis that excludes China. Are we sure that this will make multilateralism more effective?

[8] Thomas Renard, "The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB): China's New Multilateralism and the Erosion of the West", in *Egmont Security Policy Briefs*, No. 63 (April 2015), http://www.egmontinstitute.be/?p=16347.

The strategy could outline in which priority areas multilateralism needs to become more effective, by creating new institutions or reinforcing existing ones. Europe should then use its bilateral strategic partnerships to forge ad hoc coalitions in different issue areas and work with different sets of countries wherever interests coincide, for example on maritime security, on environmental problems, or on social affairs.

Conclusion

"Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free." The opening sentence of the 2003 ESS is often quoted with derision, as obvious proof of its obsolescence. But in the light of history, the bold opening statement of the ESS still holds true.

What has changed since 2003 is, first of all, that although Europe still is one of the most prosperous places on the planet, it has become more unequal, as a consequence of the financial crisis and the way it was addressed. Thanks to the buffer provided by the European social model, inequality has risen less than in the US, but it has risen, in some Member States dramatically so – because the European Commission and the IMF, with the backing of some Member States, forced them to dismantle the social model. Inequality is dangerous. First because the egalitarian aspiration is precisely what binds most Europeans to their states and to the European project on which they have embarked, rather than nationalism or great power ambitions. Second because the egalitarian aspiration is at the heart of what makes Europe an inspiring place to many people in other parts of the world; it is the source of Europe's soft power. The other change is that Europeans have learned again from the turmoil in their neighbourhood and the terrorist attacks on their soil what they should have known all along: that their freedom and security are not self-evident. Europeans are very fortunate that among themselves, within their Union, they need no longer think about geopolitics and count tanks, fighter aircraft, and battleships. But that should not blind them to the fact that outside the EU geopolitics still matter. If it does not take into account the geopolitical situation and prioritize the most important challenges to European interests, Europe's distinctive preventive, comprehensive, and multilateral foreign policy will not succeed.

The response to these two changes must be optimism. The optimist may be proven wrong, but at least he will have enjoyed life until then – there is no need to be pre-emptively unhappy. An optimist message about investment, job creation, and how to perfect the social model (rather than about its defects) is the only way of restoring confidence within Europe itself. A self-confident Europe can in turn engage with the world, advertising its model of society, working with those who share its egalitarian aspiration, and acting against those who go too far in breaking the rules. That does require strategy. Having a strategy does not guarantee success, for other actors will obviously be pursuing a strategy of their own that may be at odds with yours. Nor does not having a strategy guarantee failure, as others may act even less soundly than you. But you cannot be half strategic. Either you know what you want and act accordingly, or you do not.

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