



# THE NANOVIC INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES

LECTURE PAPER 11

“THE ROLE OF TRANS-ATLANTIC RELATIONS  
IN WORLD GOVERNANCE”

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2008-2009 EUROPEAN UNION LECTURER





# The Nanovic Institute Lecture Papers

A. James McAdams, Series Editor

Lecture Paper 11

*The Role of Trans-Atlantic Relations in World Governance*



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The Nanovic Institute for European Studies



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

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The original lecture was delivered on February 9, 2009.

Questions & Responses transcribed by Abigail Palko.

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# *The Role of Trans-Atlantic Relations in World Governance*

Lecture delivered February 9, 2009

Guido Lenzi

## **Introduction**

After Hiroshima, Einstein famously warned that “everything has changed, except the way we think.” The same could be said nowadays, as we pick up the pieces of both 11/9 (the Fall of the Wall) and 9/11. The current financial crisis has conclusively proven that the world is indeed “flat,” tightly interconnected. The playing field has become much wider, but the stakes have also increased for everybody, big and small. International politics would be well advised to follow suit. We are all eating humble pie nowadays, but the situation is not as chaotic as it appears to be, nor are we faced with uncharted territory. The signposts may have shifted, but the basic parameters are still there, all the more valid globally. The debate is about practical priorities, shifting away from the longstanding debate between idealists and realists.

## **A “Post-modern” World**

In the twenty years since the unraveling of the USSR, the international community has undergone a prolonged transitional phase, highly experimental. A wit observed that “the Wall came down and we all went shopping,” assuming (with Fukuyama) that things would eventually sort themselves out. Until, that is, 9/11 startled everybody, sowing confusion instead of having the sobering, shock-therapy effect. We are definitely in a ‘post-modern’ (i.e. post-Westphalian) situation, with intergovernmental relations in some disarray. Instead of the clear-cut mathematical formulas of the East-West nuclear balance of power, algebraic equations have appeared, comprising many an unknown variable, indicating at best a trend.

What is more, in our crowded planet in a hurry (“full of sound and fury,” as Shakespeare would have it), rising expectations and the ensuing disappointments produce a widespread rebelliousness. The authority of states, in their constitutional role as organizers and protectors of national communities, is dwarfed by novel transnational threats that are beyond their grasp, such as international organized crime, illicit trafficking, or mass migrations, while energy and commodity prices fluctuate out of control and climate change threatens humanity as a whole. Even international organizations have gone out of their way (“out of area”) in

the performance of tasks that overstretch their capabilities and erode their very credibility.

International law itself has been altered significantly. Power-politics are not conclusive anymore; wars have lost their heroic aura, which has been replaced by the endemic civil strife and terrorism resulting from the proliferation of failing or failed states; the very concept of just war has apparently lost its meaning; and the time-honored principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity have been eroded by an ill-defined right/duty of “humanitarian intervention.” Consequently, international accountability (the “responsibility to protect”) and the appropriate relationship between legitimacy and legality have become the new yardsticks.

So far, the international community has been reacting to emergencies as they occur, in a patchwork fire-fighter pattern, rather than interacting with them as a neighborhood watch would do to address shared threats and challenges. Best practices and codes of conduct have become pragmatic substitutes for the new common rules that the intervening international situation obviously requires. All of this contributes to a widespread unpredictability and the resulting feeling of insecurity that affects individual citizens. In present circumstances, we should revert to the Socratic method in which our civilization is anchored, according to which asking the right questions is more relevant than coming up with the right answers.

More than on single events, we ought to concentrate on the big picture, particularly on the omissions, on what should happen and does not. With the end of the Cold War, we should rediscover the rules of the game established at the end of World War II, when Franklin D. Roosevelt and Truman revived Wilson’s international liberalism and imposed on a severely battered world a cooperative security system, replacing the centuries-old balance of forces. The United Nations (UN) and the beginnings of the European Community were the most immediate tangible results, with the European Union (EU), Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and other European regional arrangements eventually following suit. Decolonization was another dramatic spin-off, confirming that a new era in international relations had dawned. Nowadays, the main challenge results not so much from head-on confrontations, but, instead, essentially from the many failed, failing, or outright rogue states, which dispute the very legitimacy of having common rules. Such a situation has given rise to a succession of humanitarian interventions directed at restoring law and order and at institution-building. Such a constabulary role is now showing signs of wear and tear, belying the neo-colonialist and war-mongering accusations that have been flung at it.

The present free-for-all state of international affairs has, in fact, called into question the applicability to the whole wide world of what is essentially a Western model, the roots of which dig deeply into the political philosophy of the Enlightenment. What needs to be argued is not the supposed moral superiority

of Western values, but instead the fact that they accommodate best the common interests brought about by globalization. The world at large should consider not so much Kant's ideal "perpetual peace," but rather Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill's utilitarian arguments, with the overriding aim of reaching a rules-based system of inter-state relations that would ensure some sort of shared governance among the increased number of states and non-state actors. This would be, not an ever-elusive world-order (vertical, hierarchical), but a network (horizontal, participatory), as befits our "e-world," based not on uniform behavior but on the convergence and compatibility of the most diverse contributions. We need a multilateral structure instead of the multi-polar one that some call for and which would instead reinstate the balance of power logic on a bigger, more ominous scale.

### **The European Union Experience**

It could be argued that globalization has finally caught up with the European Union, the only post-modern, *sui generis* actor. With all its contradictions, its diffused power centers, it is a place more than an actual thing. Kissinger is still looking for its telephone number and the president of the ill-fated Constitutional Convention, Giscard d'Estaing, has urged Europe to move on from the "euro-space" it has so far effectively been, and become a "euro-power." This prospect is quite beyond the horizon, which leads some to compare disparagingly Europe to Venus and America to Mars. There is nothing inherently wrong with that since, as many a Renaissance painter recorded on canvas, the two gods had a very amorous relationship. As a matter of fact, in present day crisis-prevention and management operations, the civil-military soft security approach has gradually emerged as an indispensable complement to hard security measures.

The EU's constitutive "shared sovereignty" makes it the only multilateral actor around; all of the others (not only the much-blamed USA) are still unilateralist, to the extent that they respond primarily to their national self-interest. The European Security Strategy of 2003, which has just been reviewed, declares its commitment to "effective multilateralism." It should now be fleshed out with a more focused political vision and a sharper sense of direction on specific issues. In order to establish what it wants to become, Europe needs to decide where it wants to go as it grows up.

Ever since in 1954 the French Parliament rejected the big leap of a political union (the European Defense Community) that its own government had drafted, Europe's unification has progressed slowly, by accretion, according to the bottom-up Monnet approach. Functionalists and institutionalists have been arguing with each other ever since. Occasionally, in response to external jolts (such as the Suez and Hungarian crises in 1956, the Kippur war in 1973, and the dismantling of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s), the integration process has ratcheted forward, indicating

that, politically, the European Union is basically a demand-driven institution. With the Berlin Wall tumbling down, Europeans, awestruck and wary, scrambled to rearrange the “common house” that Presidents Gorbachev and George H. W. Bush agreed over their heads to restore “whole and free.” Since then, emerging from under the protection of the Atlantic Alliance, the European Union has undeniably grown in stature, significance, and influence, both outwards with its enlargement and neighborhood projections eastward and southward, as well as inward, refining along the way its own decision-taking mechanisms.

At first unable to intervene decisively to contain the tragic consequences of the collapse of the Yugoslav Federation, and also bureaucratically slower than NATO in absorbing the states that emerged from the Soviet bloc, the European Union gradually, according to the Maastricht Treaty (the Treaty on European Union, TEU) of 1992, established a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), that resulted in a huge enlargement of its membership, to 25 (the “big bang”) then to 27 (and counting . . .), a development that threw a few spanners in the deepening of the integration process. The EU Nice Treaty of 2000 reformed both the Rome and Maastricht Treaties, while the Laeken Declaration of 2001 “on the future of Europe” looked ahead, admitting to the urgent need of streamlining the Brussels machinery. It thus became more coherent and efficient, as well as more transparent and accountable to the citizenry through subsidiarity, which implied the handing back to national and local administrations of the functions that do not require being dealt with centrally anymore.

A Constitutional Convention was finally set in motion, with the broadest possible participation, comprising representatives not only of governments, but of all of the other possible strands of national civil societies, including even all candidate states. A text was meticulously produced and solemnly signed in Rome, in the very hall where the 1957 founding Treaties had been underwritten. According to the Constitution, replacing all previous treaties, the European Union would have acquired a clearer political identity, streamlining its decision-making mechanisms, with the creation of a 30-month Chairman to replace the rotating six-month national Presidencies and a Foreign Policy High Representative to eliminate the compartmentalized structure (i.e., Commission versus Council structure with three pillars, respectively economics, foreign policy, and home affairs), and increasing majority voting, as well as the co-decision of the European Parliament. A Charter of Fundamental Rights and a consolidated text of previous norms (the *acquis*) completed this new and improved comprehensive treaty.

It was not meant to be the completion of a never-ending European construction site, only the evolution of the species. But some capitals found it necessary to submit it to popular referenda: the result was a repetition of previous attempts at direct democracy! A Reform Treaty, hastily put together in Lisbon,

patched things up, preserving the substance, while doing away with many formal trappings . . . only to see it shot down by another referendum (which calls into question the democratic value of such consultations). The European Union, a fairly good student of international relations, still has to graduate!

### **European Common Foreign and Security Policies**

The European Union constitutes a force multiplier for each member state, a source of prosperity and stability for its neighbors and hopefully a source of inspiration for other countries in transition, worldwide. The Georgian conflict and the financial crisis have demonstrated that, in times of need, the European Union, even shorn of tidier institutions, is willing and able to act. Relying more on the soft power of its own social and economic integration, while the United States-led NATO allows it to save on defense expenditures, the EU accounts for one fourth of the world's GDP and the same amount of international trade, and it finances most development aid. Yet, on the international scene, the EU continues to behave like a debutante waiting to be asked, shying away from taking the initiative, sheltering behind a flower arrangement of declaratory statements and other common positions. Among the 27, no lead-country stands out, not even one of the two permanent members of the Security Council, and there is no privileged relationship anymore, after the demise of the Franco-German axis; instead, variable geometries and multi-speeds spring up according to specific needs as they arise, and the two external terms of reference, US and Russia, persist.

Reforming the EU machinery is meant to turn an impressive political hybrid into the recognizable (i.e., credible and operational), into the additional international actor that present times urgently require. The frustratingly slow process of European integration is now confronted with an accelerating string of events, urging it to improve and diversify its proactive, rather than simply reactive, capabilities (particularly since NATO is now overstretched beyond Europe). Any aspiring protagonist is recognized, not by what it claims to be, but by what it actually delivers and the specific responsibilities it undertakes. In these truly pioneering times, the fittest will blaze the trail; institutions will eventually follow: this is how, from time immemorial, international law and foreign policies have been forged.

Present circumstances indicate that the EU cannot sit it out any longer. (Now, the body language of the European Union is not always coherent; there is no continuity. The EU has to be recognizable, it has to be seen and understood for what it is. It has to become pro-active and not simply reactive, to prove it can be useful in influencing events and persuading people.) It must project a more convincing political vision and play a more active role, particularly on the European scene. In order to project its influence, Europe needs a more focused vision of itself, rather

than neatly drawn-out institutions, as it should now develop. After years of benign neglect of its own inner identity and ambitions, Europe needs to reconnect with America and restore the Western unity of purpose that represents a precondition for the restoration of an acceptable international system. America could then take a step back, away from its present overexposure.

The international agenda is clearly set out. First and foremost, there is the need to address the destabilizing consequences of failed and rogue states. The crisis-management tasks are not only along the fault-lines in the remote lands of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea, and Darfur, but also in the immediate European neighborhoods of the Mediterranean (including the Middle East), the Balkans, and the “belt of common contiguity” with Russia: from the precarious truces of Kosovo and Bosnia, all the way to Moldova and the Caucasus and the greater Middle East. All of these constitute the breeding grounds for terrorism, uncontrolled migration flows, widespread lawlessness (even piracy!), organized crime and religious extremism, not to speak of weapons of mass destruction proliferation. Here, a very volatile situation is compounded by the international finance, trade, energy and climate change conundrums. The EU Security Strategy provided an important, if under-stressed, platform, echoing the US 2002 strategic assessment. The Atlantic Alliance should also benefit from it, since President Obama has stressed the urgent need to “renew diplomacy and restore alliances” in the wake of the influence of the past eight years of the Bush administration.

The European integration process has been achieved in the economic field, with the single market and single currency. A “freedom, security, and justice space” was also established, including free circulation (“Schengen”) and an integrated judicial system (with common databases and a European arrest warrant), in fields that were considered the innermost preserve of national sovereignty until 9/11. Yet, no federal structure has emerged, as foreign and security policies remain the prerogative of individual states. The EU will continue to respond to events as they occur, relying on the attractiveness of its soft power, which we could characterize as preventive or persuasive. In any case, with international equations more than ever in perpetual flux, foreign policy does not lend itself to pre-established formulas, and will therefore remain inherently intergovernmental, subject to ad hoc coalitions (“the mission will define the coalition,” as Rumsfeld used to say).

High expectations about an eventual European Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) could therefore prove self-delusional. The EU will never turn into a peace-enforcing instrument. The Helsinki Council of 1999 established the creation of battle groups of up to 60,000 soldiers (since then reduced to a 15,000 rapid-reaction force); a Military Committee; and a Defense Agency, designed to identify operational defense requirements and promote the relevant “headline goals.” Twelve missions operate in the field, focused mainly on policing or restoring

the rule of law, not on hard military tasks. That notwithstanding, a fully-fledged European common defense would, in any case, turn out to be as unimpressive as a mouse that roars, considering the specific, nonmilitary imprint of the European integration process. It could even diminish its overall political credibility.

On the institutional side of things, the Lisbon Reform Treaty that is awaiting full ratification streamlines the decision-making mechanisms, establishes a common capping of the Commission and Council machineries, and allows for more flexibility and transparency, all of which will improve the visibility and credibility of the European Union. A big step forward has already been made with the enlargement process (which has proven less irritating to Moscow than NATO's own), a convincing expression of the effectiveness of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Europe's influence as a stabilizing factor at the continental level continues to reside in its transformative, "normative power" (spelled out in the Copenhagen conditionalities addressed to countries who are candidates for membership). Its enlargement and neighborhood policies have proven effective for crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation purposes, assisting NATO in many an exit strategy, to which it provides the appropriate civil-military mix. It has not proven so for conflict resolution yet, even though the swift response of President Sarkozy in the crisis in Georgia could be a harbinger of more impressive things to come.

Furthermore, the Lisbon Treaty (art. 28A) foresees the possibility of permanent structured cooperations in security and defense matters among members who are ready and willing to "fulfill higher criteria of military cooperation," undertaking "more binding commitments" for "the most demanding mission." The responsiveness of the European Union would, of course, improve with such a pre-established commitment of the main EU members (militarily speaking), and the advance preparation of dedicated military units, supported by the Treaty's solidarity clause (i.e., collective defense engagement, mirror-imaging NATO's article 5 and WEU's article V). It could, of course, be argued that, whenever the need arises, such an arrangement could always click together on a pragmatic, intergovernmental basis. But—as Monnet used to say—if nothing is possible without the will of men, only an institutional back-up makes it durable. Ad hoc coalitions, created on the spur of events, as any other *à la carte* or opting-in option, would hurt the overall political credibility of the European Union.

Europe should in any case engage in more energetic diplomatic activity in order to probe into the as-yet-undiscovered agendas of the new international actors, persuade and co-opt them, expose their dysfunctional behaviour, involve their responsibility, and promote the convergence of their actions towards a common, mutually beneficial result.

## A New and Improved Trans-Atlantic Relationship

More fundamentally, Europe's immediate task will be to improve the trans-Atlantic link, especially in order to bolster the coherence of the 'Western model' of international relations dating back to Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and George C. Marshall. History and geography will maintain the Atlantic Alliance asymmetrically, but it need not continue to be the "troubled partnership" that Kissinger described decades ago and that Kennedy (with his "two-pillar" approach) and Kissinger (with his "year of Europe" proposal) tried unsuccessfully to redress. It is no longer only a matter of the operational effectiveness of overstretched NATO operational capabilities.

Like any other international organization, NATO has gone "out of area," much beyond its original self-defense tasks, by addressing critical situations and civil wars far and wide, in the interest of international stability. Before deciding to adopt NATO's integrated military structure, the Atlantic Alliance was a political compact designed to regenerate a European continent torn apart by two internecine wars. It should therefore revert from the convenient tool-box that it has apparently become back to its original role of political backbone to the Western community of nations (inspired by the international liberalism of Lippmann, Acheson, Kennan, and their ilk, as originally spelled out in the Atlantic Charter of 1941). The flare-up in Georgia indicated that the pan-European spirit set in motion by the CSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1975 has evaporated just when it could have acquired a much broader world purpose.

With France's return to the military side of things, Germany's reunification, and the UK's "special relationship," Europeans should finally be able to provide the missing third leg of a new and improved US-EU-Russia tripod that would constitute not only the premise for the much-needed reintegration of a Europe "whole and free," but also the spoke for the restoration of a workable system of international relations. A clearer trans-Atlantic division of tasks should ensure that, while the American bad cop is called upon to provide quick-fixes, admonish, punish, and intervene surgically, the European good cop seeks to prevent, persuade, and heal in a longer-term perspective. Both of these would be essentially directed at reintegrating the international system engineered at the end of World War II.

In the Balkans, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, NATO has proven to be a most efficient military instrument, not only because of its unique logistical means and integrated chain of command, but essentially for the political credibility that it has accumulated over time. Military planning, force-generation, burden-sharing, and interoperability (NATO-plus or otherwise) are of course important issues, but there is more to Atlantic solidarity, especially when civil-military expeditionary peace-building missions, instead of past straightforward East-West confrontation, are at

stake. The nature of new international tasks should allow for a more articulate and flexible (i.e., essentially political) Euro-American security relationship for the whole world to consider, particularly since the new American administration may decide not to have a finger in so many hot pies (Baker's "no dog in this fight!" still rings out as an admonition).

In more ways than one, after the demise of the Cold War, we are indeed back to the post-World War II square one. The West must once again embark in the laborious task of persuading "the Rest" that common global interests have become as relevant as the host of different national values. In order to do so, Americans and Europeans must consult much further upstream than they have ever done and engage in joint decision-shaping much earlier, before decision-making becomes imperative. Joint analyses of evolving situations, identification of looming crises, and the assessment of their relevance and priorities have become indispensable both in order to provide a coordinated, if differentiated, Euro-American response and to attract a wider international convergence.

For a Western alliance that still believes its primary duty to sort things out globally, a Euro-American public diplomacy should emerge as soft and hard security roles are apportioned more clearly between Washington and Brussels. Not only because Venus will be Venus and Mars will be Mars, but also because the two will be more credible if they engage in what they are respectively known to be best at, both when dealing with other would-be powers and also within the international organizations (UN, OSCE, IFIs, WTO, and the newcomer G20), with the many "out-of-area" commitments with which they are presently confronted.

### **The Way Forward**

Security (i.e., predictability not only in the military field, but increasingly also in the economic and social order of things) remains the overarching concern of human endeavors. Human security is the stated concern of every international intervention, with the boots on the ground designed only to protect, restrain, rebalance, and rehabilitate. International organizations (in particular the UN, which is emerging from the sclerosis induced by the Cold War) should be revisited (although not necessarily reformed) in order to improve their legitimating role on the many ad hoc coalitions.

Such a state of affairs requires a new international compact, where every would-be protagonist of international affairs, regionally or globally, undertakes his own responsibility in converging towards a common goal, however different the respective geo-political situation may be. In order to find its balance, the system of international relations must, however, recover two indispensable actors, namely the European Union and Russia. Both have been shying away for too long from a more

proactive role in continental and world affairs. It should be the EU's responsibility to entice Russia back, away from its instinctive reliance on the old-fashioned and obviously outdated display of force, encouraging it to partake instead in the running of world affairs as its status as a permanent member of the Security Council also implies it should.

United Europe owes its birthright to the United States: it grew and prospered under American protection, it was eventually reunited when George W. H. Bush brushed aside the many European hesitations, and it reached out with its enlargements in the wake of NATO's similar initiatives. It must now undertake the responsibilities that go with any coming of age, especially in this global New Age. In order to do so, as any teenager would, Europe must finally emancipate itself from the prolonged bipolar US and Russian protectorate and become the lynchpin of pan-European reconciliation, which constitutes the necessary precondition for a rules-based system of international relations (which in turn constitutes the innermost fabric of the "exporting democracy" mantra).

Turning Clausewitz on his head, the time has come when politics must become the continuation of war with other means.<sup>1</sup> For all intents and purposes, America remains the only global actor, the essential term of reference and external catalyst, all the way from Rome to Moscow, from Teheran to Beijing. Obviously, the US's prolonged overexposure has not only tied them down, Gulliver-like, but has also resulted in a very severe contamination of its prestige. Neither isolationism nor unilateralism is an option anymore, not even for a powerful nation isolated by two oceans. America remains the "indispensable nation" that must recover its flexibility to decide not only if, but also how, to get eventually "entangled" abroad.

There is only one thing worse than American unilateralism, and that is American isolationism. After all is said and done, the whole world secretly recognizes that, as Churchill used to say with a shrug, "Americans will be Americans, but they are the only Americans we have." Under the pressure of events, worldwide Obamamania may soon fade. Honeymoons are mainly about learning to live together, which is what needs to happen, initially with the European partners of America huddling around.

A new trans-Atlantic agenda should become the main driving factor in promoting a restoration of world governance of the kind drafted in San Francisco in 1945, whose purpose it was to promote the convergence of diversities. The West should, in other words, improve its narrative, specify the overall purpose, argue the usefulness of multilateral statecraft over unilateral initiatives, urge like-minded states to assume their share of responsibilities, make them shareholders, stress the

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1. "War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Colonel J.J. Graham, (London: N. Trübner, 1873), Book I, Chapter I, Section 24.

importance of free trade, make one and all accountable for crisis-prevention, and—for management purposes—establish the relevant conditionalities and eventual sanctions.

Present international circumstances may be transitional and not as bad as they appear. The chaos theory (of Harsanyi, Nash, and Selten) states that order can be found in random data and that models can be drawn out of a disorderly situation of disorder can be established. The catastrophe theory (of René Thom) similarly claims that a loss of stability is inherent to any dynamic order, such as the present one. Nothing to worry about, then. If only human beings respected the findings of abstract theories!

Western countries, who still cling to the vision of a cosmopolitan community of nations, should address together the priority of priorities, i.e., managing the instabilities that are inherent to transitional times such as ours. This means essentially striving to identify the underlying empirical patterns, while keeping an eye on the big picture and the general direction. In other words, it demands a utilitarian results-based, rather than an ideal values-based, approach, while reaching out for the hearts and minds. A web of institutions and alliances should reconcile diversities and stimulate participation and responsibility-taking in the direction of a self-organizing model of international relations designed essentially to contain and reduce the current levels of unpredictability, a requirement more akin to the pruning skills of a gardener than to the geometric blue-prints of an architect.

In the end, maybe, Fukuyama wasn't that wrong, after all. Maybe Friedrich Hegel, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill are finally back, peering over the shoulder of an American revival of international liberalism. Walter Lippmann, Truman, Marshall, Wendell Wilkes, and Alfred Steichen, in their respective heavenly dens, must be smiling.

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## Questions & Responses

*You mentioned that the European Union has a body language that is incoherent. Do you think it is a matter of time, with the rotation of the presidency and other factors, until the EU achieves this coherency, or are there really states that will, in the future, be a voice of opposition at some point?*

You're right. That is the big issue. Europe went from six to nine to fifteen, now to twenty-seven and counting, because you have Croatia, Turkey, maybe Iceland, waiting in the wings. Iceland has had such a beating financially that it wants to come under the cover of the euro, it seems. So thirty, thirty-plus, because there are the many other connections that the European Union makes with other countries. Such an enlargement of the European Union was not a choice; we had to do it. When somebody is starving, coming out of the Soviet system, and starving on your porch, on your sidewalk, what are you going to do: "Ah, just a minute, I have to get organized, because you know, I still haven't done the spring cleaning" and so on? There was no time for that. As I told you, events just happen; the Wall fell, and the European Union had to reach out to the ones behind it. Which means, of course, that, like you say, the question arises: "How on earth are we going to run such a juggernaut?" such a big thing, with twenty-seven would-be drivers huddling around the one who is provisionally in the driving seat, telling him go more to the left, go right, with the Poles who don't like the Russians, and Madame Merkel seems to want to strike a deal. Berlusconi is a very good friend of Bush, I'm sure he will be a very good friend of Obama as well, but he is also a very good friend of Putin, which may prove at times a difficult balance to achieve. Now, how are you going to run such a thing?

Very obviously, the European Union at twenty-seven or thirty is not what it was at nine or even at fifteen. It has preserved its intention, its meaning, its essential purpose, but it cannot function anymore with a system of rotating presidencies. We have had Sarkozy very forcefully in the chair. Now will he be able to continue to stimulate the European Union? Not, if he steps on the toes of the present Czech presidency. But yes, if he manages to intervene effectively, as he did when the Gaza conflict happened, even though he was not president anymore.

Europe is, obviously, a very complex international body, a place more than an actual "thing." The Lisbon Treaty, which should soon be ratified, foresees the possibility of "structured reinforced cooperations" in foreign and security matters, which means that the group of countries that have the wherewithal, the military capabilities and the political will to do things (especially those who are members of the Security Council like France and Britain; those who would like to be, among them Germany; and Italy, who feels that it has a place up there; Spain, etc.) are

going to put up front their operational instruments for non-military purposes: for interposition and peacekeeping. Of course, you put your money where your mouth is: so if they put their military in the field, the disposal of the European Union, then, of course, the politics will follow. So you will have a group of states that are going to be more assertive; not more pro-European than others, Luxemburg is as European as anybody else. But some are more assertive, more ready to step up to the plate. They are the ones who are more prepared to act, politically and operationally. That is the point, you know: it's not the standing presidency, but the more credible among the twenty-seven that will make the difference. That is what I am saying. It's not a matter of how powerful a state is, how tightly knit is the institutional structure. You should not consider the European Union a war-fighting machine. What is important is how it will adapt to circumstances. Like a fluid, it depends on the shape of the bottle: if a bottle is round, it will take that shape; if it is narrow it will take another shape, and so forth. The important thing is that it steps forward, and makes a statement as a group of states. You must have France, Britain and Germany and Italy and Spain, at least. I am not sure Italy very keen about that, but we'll see.

I hope I answered your question. I cannot give you a still picture of Europe. I can give you an algebraic formula so that you can figure out something and it will all depend on the unfolding of actual events, what events, how fast, where, and so forth.

*In light of your experience and in light of your comments about the development of the European Union, what do you think about Turkey and the European Union? It can be in terms of religion; it can also be in terms of transcontinental relationships or other issues like that.*

To my Turkish friends, when they ask me this question (and they've been asking this question for a long time) I reply: "do you think that the Japanese are European? Well, of course not, yet they are our best friends." We have a trilateral relationship between America, Europe, and Japan; we've had it for decades now. Japanese are our very best friends politically, economically, and so on. So you don't have to be a member of the European Union to be important to Europeans. If Turkey came into the European Union, it would cause a series of problems. It's a big country, economically, demographically. Forget about the Muslim, Islamic issue, which I don't think is that relevant. I don't think that the European Union can sustain such a big country, for economic reasons. You are adding a big chunk. We had ten states who came in with a big bang all of a sudden, but their GDP and their population was not that big.

So I feel that, in present circumstances, as I was saying, there should be different speeds, different geometries, and different combinations. I prefer my very dear Turkey to stay out of the institutions but very much in our common project.

If Turkey comes into the European Union, will it be more influential toward Syria? You know that Turkey is helping out with the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. Would it maintain its standing with Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran, the central Asian states? They would say, “you’re taking your cue from Brussels.” Turkey is much more useful to Europe, to the world stability in general, and to itself, if it stays out but closely connected to the European Union, just like the Japanese or the Australians. Besides, I repeat, the European Union is not anymore what it was when we were six or nine or even fifteen. You remember Marx—not Karl, the other one, Groucho—who used to say, “I would not like to be a member of a club that would have me as a member.” Well, it’s the same type of a situation. Is it still as useful for Turkey to come into this new kind of Europe? Ask the Swiss how much better it is to be in without being an actual member. It’s not a matter of standing. Besides Turkey is an outstanding member of NATO. That’s an additional reason why we need it as a close partner, but not necessarily an EU full member.

*You have spoken of Europe’s need to become more proactive in world affairs. I was curious as to what role you think Europe as a world actor should play in the Israeli-Palestinian problem.*

I asked this question to an Arab friend of mine. I said: “Why have Palestine, Israel and America been locking horns for years and years. Why don’t you call out for Europe to step in? We’ve been giving you lots of assistance money over the years, with mighty few political results.” (By the way we are not sure where it went, some of it possibly in Switzerland.) Some of it much of it. The European solidarity with the Palestinians should have made them feel less vulnerable, and make everybody step away from the blaming game, establishing who is right, who is wrong. As a matter of fact, we all feel that by now everybody is wrong. Israelis know they are wrong, Palestinians know they are wrong, the Arabs know they are wrong, the Iranians know they are wrong. You see, I am not as impartial as I would like to be. But we are in an academic location.

That being said, when I told this to my Arab friend, he said, “Oh, but the EU is not credible. You give us the money—thank you very much—but you have no influence over the Israelis, because the Israelis only look up to the US.” I got the same answer from the Israelis: they said “You are not credible because you are not politically persuasive enough. You are not able to tell the Palestinians to stop, and come with an agreement.” First and foremost, I hope you realize that. the two Palestinian factions have to come together: you cannot have an agreement if your interlocutor is split. One of them is extending his hand and the other one, as Obama said, holds a clenched fist. The same interlocutor keeps one hand outstretched, while withholding the other. Consider international relations as you would inter-human relations: it doesn’t work. So the Israelis tell us, “You have no influence over the

Palestinians; they don't take you as a serious, hard-nosed interlocutor." That is the short answer.

By the way, something I should add, very briefly: is that the European Union should be more proactive. It has been so far a demand-driven organization. It has responded well when asked; when somebody knocked at the door. In terms of enlargement, the EU said yes, we're ready, we will do it. But it does not appear as an assertive organization. It does not go out saying, "Come here, I want to talk to you." We don't do that. I mean we have not done it. But if somebody comes and says: "please open your door to me," no problem there. I think the Americans should urge us to be more proactive. Obama, I think, will do so—and therefore tell the Israelis and the Palestinians, that they should bring us in as, not only as payers, but also as players and eventual guarantors, as an added external actor, which will guarantee the peace, prosperity, cooperation, trade. We could be an external element to protect them, assist them, additional to the Americans.

*You had spoken of the understanding that the Bush administration over the last eight years has done some damage to the American reputation abroad, and I was just wondering, at the onset of the Obama administration, what kind of hope or promise you can recognize in Europe specifically that this might improve and what can Obama do specifically over the next couple of years to try to turn that around and improve our reputation in Europe?*

I have been working with American colleagues for many years, so I know how you react, I know what your society is made up of and how you behave. The fact is that I think that Americans are suffering from overexposure—because that's what's happened to America after 9/11. When something is overexposed, it gets corrupted. It is a difficult task that the Americans are performing, for the benefit of everybody, I am persuaded of it. But we all have to do it better. I think that we can blame the present situation in Iraq on the Europeans as much as on the Americans. The Europeans should have been in there from the very start. We never went to Saddam Hussein to tell him to stop. Do you know what Mommies do when their children misbehave? Dad says, "I'm going to slap you silly," and Mom says, "Please stop because Dad is going to slap you silly." So each one of the two, Venus and Mars, have a different chore. We never went to Saddam. Go and look at the record of what Chirac and Schröder, the French president and German chancellor, said instead said at that time. I think it was Baker who said, "We don't have a dog in this fight, in the Balkans." Similarly, we told America "we don't have a dog in Iraq" And yet all of the oil that we need comes from there and from Russia. We should therefore have been a little more active with the Middle East (and with Russia) if only because it is with that energy that we eat and drink and wear and warm ourselves. We sat on the sidelines, instead. So the Europeans are just as much to blame. But that is past. The

important thing is what do we do now.

Samuel Beckett used to say: “try again. Fail better.” Try again. You know you made a mistake, try again. You may fail again, of course, you will never have a final, definitive result, as in every human endeavour, human nature being what it is. But you will fail better; in other words, you will fail less. You will get closer to the object. What will happen is that Obama is coming to Brussels for the European Union-USA biannual meeting—at the beginning of March. Then he will be in Strasburg at the beginning of April for the summit of the sixtieth anniversary of NATO to be held in Strasburg and Kehl. In the two cities in France and Germany, across the Rhine, to indicate how important NATO was to the reconciliation. I am sure every time he will come and say, “Ok, here I am, I am listening to you.” I am afraid he will not get many suggestions, ideas, or proposals, because Europeans will say “No sir, please tell us what you want, and then we will think about it and come back some other day.” But the important thing is that Obama keeps asking the question, the next time he comes. The US should expose the European responsibilities, the Russian responsibility, etc.

So, I repeat what I started with: let’s not expect the right answers. You will never get them in international relations. What you have to ensure is that you continue asking the right questions. Asking the right questions in the Socratic method in which you keep reducing the scope of your investigation, slowly, toward the essential purpose. The essential purpose is to ensure that Europeans and Americans will stand together (not fall together) as a model of international relationship. Only the Europeans and Americans, the Westerners, can energize the system of international relations and enlist the contribution of others. No other can do it. Look around: the Chinese cannot do it. The Russians will not do it. The critical mass, in terms of physics and chemistry, is provided by the Westerners and that’s what Americans and Europeans should recall. When we say “Oh, but China will be the actor of the future,” of course, why not, the more the better around an international cooperative system, the only available nowadays. It has been proven, of late, that military machines cannot be utilized as they have been for centuries. It cannot, I mean we should not, it cannot be done any more.

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Born in 1941 in Bucharest, the son of a diplomat, **Guido Lenzi** has lived abroad for most of his life. He was educated in French and American Schools before graduating in law at the University of Florence.

He joined the Foreign Service in 1964. His professional life took him successively to Algeria, Switzerland, London, and Moscow. He was involved for over twenty years in a series of multilateral diplomatic tasks, as head of the NATO Desk at the Foreign Ministry, Minister Counsellor at the Italian Mission to the United Nations, Director of the WEU (now European Union) Institute of Security Studies in Paris, and finally Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Vienna.

Guido Lenzi also served as Diplomatic Advisor to the Minister of Defense, Deputy Chief of Cabinet to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of the Senate. He presently serves as Diplomatic Advisor to the Minister of the Interior.

Before, during, and after his tenure as Director of the WEU Institute, Guido Lenzi has regularly published numerous essays and articles in English, French, and Italian and engaged in research on matters such as East-West relations, multilateralism, national and international institution-building, and European integration. His experience with OSCE has further familiarized him with the issues of political and institutional transition, as well as with the process of political consensus building at European- and world-wide levels.



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