

After 20 years of German unity: New Global Challenges for Europe and the Transatlantic Alliance

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This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the German reunification; last year, the preceding case of the fall of the wall in Berlin. These historical events not only brought back unity and full national sovereignty to Germany; they did not *only* free the people in the former GDR from the yoke of dictatorship, but above all, they changed the European map fundamentally. The East-West contrast ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its suppressive system: the Warsaw Pact in Eastern Europe. The countries of Eastern and Central Europe returned to Europe and also into the circle of the constitutionally democratic and increasingly uniting states of Europe. In this sense German unity was understood and carried out with good reason as a part of the agreement of Europe. The danger that Germany, the economically strongest country of Europe, would return again - like many centuries before - to a European central position, constantly forced to oscillate and to manoeuvre itself between east and west, was effectively avoided. The reunited Germany is a definitive part of the West with its moral concepts, democratic structures and its integration into the transatlantic alliance. The process of the European agreement proceeded even after the failure of the constitutional treaty of Lisbon that was planned at that time, without however succeeding to give the European Union a quasi-national structure fully authorized to act internationally. A deficit that comes to light, in particular through the unchanging national dominance on sovereignty issues concerning safety and defence policy.

Europe remains as far as security-policy is concerned invariably dependent on the transatlantic alliance with the USA. The USA is the security-political hegemon in the transatlantic alliance. Especially the repeated call of the USA for "burden sharing" between them, namely the USA, and Europe still exists.

After the fall of the Soviet Union many assumed not only that a century of peace, but also that one of absolute worldwide US-American dominance would ensue. However, both

have proven to be an illusion, going so far as to bring forth such visions as Francis Fukuyama's theory of "The End of History". The former East-West contrast had obtained a certain measure of international stability, based on the military supremacy of the two superpowers: the USA and Soviet Union. Today there is an infinitely growing number of international areas of conflict as well as factors of instability which are still hard to control or even to manage. Today the USA is the only remaining military superpower. But even this superpower is not able to measure up to those new international areas of conflict. In a certain sense the world is more unstable today than ever before. "The American century" has yet to begin and will probably never do so. This is perhaps down to the fact that the USA is still indeed the only military superpower in the world, yet on the other hand, it lacks comparable economic strength. The recent worldwide economic and financial crisis revealed exactly this point: Especially the fact that the root of the crisis lay in the USA exposes the elementary economic weaknesses of the United States. Starting from the USA, all developed national economies were drawn into the world economic crisis which led to crashes, financial disasters and new world-economic uncertainty which has still not been averted. In order to meet crises of this kind in the future there is a global need for new structures, new regulations and a rethinking of behaviour in the economy as well as in financial politics. But where are these new structures? Where are these new regulations? On closer inspection it becomes clear that they are neither evident, determinable and above all they are still not equipped with the necessary readiness to act.

The world of today is economically determined by globalisation. Globalisation has led to incalculable measures of economical freedom worldwide, it has led to an eminent opening of several national and international markets. It forced open national economies, made them more interdependent and as a result mutually dependent on one other. The process of globalisation superposes all world-historical events and thereby offers plenty of great new chances for development across the whole world. It is without question that the financial crisis promoted and produced multifaceted scepticism and rejection of these chances for development, but all that does not really change anything. Everywhere that they already have or are ready to give in to the temptation of new national protectionism or the like, definitively gives a negative or anti-historical example. The times of national economical sovereignties are definitely over, once and for all.

Despite this, given the impact of globalisation, new structures, a new scale of order and new forms of integration are required in order to pacify and create a legally secured world, which got into its state of disorder mostly through economic, but also security policies.

Herein lies the key and the sole future challenge for Europe and the transatlantic alliance. Europe and the USA share the same norms and are not only connected through security cooperations, such as NATO, but also share the same fundamental values, which also require political consequences. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is still based on the old guidelines from the times of the East-West antagonism; a revision and redetermination of these guidelines, given the new world political conflicts, has yet to take place. In other words: NATO requires a fundamental renewed security and strategy concept, which is globally effective in the field of security cooperations and security partnership. It is not only tragic, but also dangerous that these long-recognised challenges are still without appropriate and effective solutions.

This does not only concern the area of security policy. It is equally and perhaps even more so about the field of economic and financial policy, and furthermore it is about the development of new sustainable answers for the fluctuating and imbalanced geopolitical sphere.

Globalisation has not only forced open the national economic structures and internationalised them. It has mainly led to the fact that today we only differentiate between different global economic and interest areas - a point which Klaus von Dohnanyi recently and with good reason drew much attention to. Next to the European and transatlantic region is the dynamically growing Asian region. Besides these two exist the diverse geopolitical development processes in the developing countries, specifically in Africa and South America. Another area of this type is the Pacific, led mainly by the so-called "Four Asian Tigers". The Asian region is exploding not only through its economic but also its demographic growth – especially the countries of China and India. In other words, it is these geopolitical areas with their economic and demographic requirements that govern the world today, there are no longer or only very limited state formations that primarily determine the world order with their traditional structures of national sovereignty and mutual nationally defined interests. Globalisation created geopolitical large open spaces, which are determined by the principle of the world's increasing economic freedom and economic competition. Freedom and competition provide great opportunities, but they also harbour many dangers. Unbridled freedom and unbridled competition can produce large risks, not only economic but also security risks such as conflicts. Today one can and must speak about a "competition between geographical and cultural-demographic areas", but that does not absolve

one from the obligation or responsibility to develop the right and above all peace-keeping design and regulation structures for this competition.

We look first to the 'European sphere' and ask about its development perspectives as well as development postulates. After reunification and after overcoming the contrasts between East and West and the liberation of East and Middle Europe from the yolk of the Soviets, a properly consolidated Europe is required in the sense of a political union, which is also an international authority. Also, the Lisbon treaty is still not successful to a certain extent. Although the process of European unification is economically successful to a large extent, it isn't beyond that, in the sense of being able to act authoritatively on a political level. Incidentally, substantial economic inequalities dominate within the European Union. East and Central European countries in particular still lag behind to a certain extent, requiring invariably more sustainability, particularly with economic assistance. Currently the strongest economic power of Europe, the reunited Germany is has a special responsibility in this. Germany is not only the natural 'bridging state' between East and West Europe, but due to its diverse and traditional ties to the countries of East and Central Europe, Germany is destined to take a leading role in further economic promotion as well as political harmonisation and development in East and Central Europe. Besides this it is also important in relations with Russia. Russia is still a military world power, however economically versatile, it has in many areas relapsed to the state of a developing country with its economic existence being more or less only based on its high reserves of raw materials. Geopolitically, Russia is situated between Europe and Asia. Russia is a Eurasian Country, with hardly any measurable problems and difficulties within the geopolitical setting. In particular, pressure from China on the Asian part of Russia continues to increase and the European part of Russia urges ever more strongly towards Europe, and in my opinion, with good reason. In addition, Russia is at the gateway because of its central location, between the European and Asian economic development areas. Hereupon, Europe needs to find a solution with regard to competition with the Asian realm, should Russia not fall into self-destructive isolation and uncertainty. Russia can most certainly not become a part of the European Union when one considers its size, strength and its connection to Asia. However, what hinders the European Union from forming mutual connections and common development with Russia, for example a specific association of Russia with the European Union and with the Trans-Atlantic alliance? This is a necessity, which in my opinion is founded on a security-based and economical basis. In terms of security Russia can most certainly not become a part of the European Union, and a member of NATO even less so. Former Russian President Boris Yelzin's idea of 'a NATO which would span

from Vancouver to Vladivostok,' was simply a utopian ideal. However, in terms of security policy, a strong cooperation on the one hand between Europe and the Trans-Atlantic Alliance and with Russia on the other is necessary. The increasing conflict potential in the Caucasian regions and in the Middle East has already proven this. Here, common security, political and economic interests exist and with this it is a valid opportunity to proceed together to define common interests and to provide joint solutions to common challenges. In light of these new international initiatives, there is a concern in developing a form of strategic partnership on the one hand between Europe and the USA and Russia on the other - an aspect which Westerwelle, the Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, has recently referred to, with good reason. In terms of security, the strategic partnerships mainly address the constantly-growing dangers of international terrorism, particularly the development of the so called "failed states". More and more states from Afghanistan to Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and in the future, possibly Pakistan, are falling apart domestically, losing the power of domestic security and domestic scope for design, with the further consequence, that such countries produce the cells of international terrorism, most notably Al Qaida. Such developments can only be met, particularly with the trans-Atlantic alliance, in cooperation with Russia and with China and India in the future.

Europe and the transatlantic alliance also have to generate new solutions for their own relations and for their general responsibility in the world, not just security-politically but also geopolitically. In my opinion, the transatlantic alliance has to work closer politically concerning the economy, not just with regard to the recurring American concepts of isolationism, but also concerning increasing interests of the US in the pacific region. If the geopolitics of the united states turned away from Europe and focused on the pacific region, the transatlantic alliance would slowly come to an end. Therefore, everything leads to establishing an economic free trade area between the European Union and the United States, which would consolidate both of the markets – pursuant to their common roots and values. Europe alone cannot face the competition of the international sphere, nor can the US. However, together they can become an anchor of stability and a warrantor of safety for the globalized world. Here, 'together' refers to both a international security partnership and economic integration.

As a consequence of this new policy between Europe and the US, in areas of increasing conflict in states like Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, etc would ease up as well. These states aspire to be part of Europe, the EU, or NATO. Especially joining NATO might seem like a

threat to Russia's security. Given the truly peace-securing activities of NATO, Russia's attitude might seem unjust, but we cannot underestimate the resentment which is still present in Russia. Russia also has its own security interests – particularly in view of its precarious and unstable position in the euro-asian context in general. However, if the relationship of Europe and the transatlantic alliance with Russia developed into a closer, more cooperative level of mutual understanding, problems in states such as Ukraine etc. can be faced and solved faster and in a more peaceful and sustainable manner.

Only under the umbrella of the United Nations are the nations encompassed in a system of coordination and hence, also peacekeeping. Although this order mechanism of the UN is limited, it probably still offers the only opportunity for developing globally effective mechanisms for peacekeeping measures as well as economic reconciliation and politico-economic adjustments. The German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel once spoke of, or rather suggested, implementing a comparably structured world economic council alongside the security council of the United Nations. With this proposal she did not only meet with a square refusal, but was even accused of being unworldly and utopian. I think that this reaction was truly wrong. The security council of the United Nations affected has changed many things over the last few decades, with regard to international peacekeeping measures, especially in Europe after the downfall of the former Yugoslavia. A comparably structured world economic council could ensure, particularly in situations like the world economic crisis, that the necessary rules and measures, which effect the whole world are properly developed and implemented.

To emphasise this point once more, the main thing that globalisation has bestowed upon us, geopolitically speaking, is competition between areas that can generally only be defined territorially. Areas that reach over national borders, areas that literally seem not to have or even recognise borders, areas based on different economic interests, varying cultures and different demographic factors and areas that have little in common with regard to their political structure and regulatory policies, except for the wish for more freedom and economic competition.

Regulatory policies, in terms of cross-geopolitical similarities are, however, necessary. This is yet another thing that the economic crisis is teaching us. Only regulatory policy can allow us to develop the vision of a multi-polar world and make it a reality. But a multi-polar world, as envisioned, does not exist and merely remains a utopia. The East-West contrast

presented a condition of world dominating bi-polarity, especially exemplified between the US and the former Soviet Union. A similar dual polarity is not imaginable today, and the fragility of the foundation on which the Soviet Union and the imperialistic goals of its dictatorial system stood, is now common knowledge. But the US has also been noticeably shaken in its truly polar role during the last few decades. A multi-polar world cannot be based on the peacekeeping dominance of the United States. It can, however, be largely and sustainably based on a polar role of the transatlantic alliance. Europe and the US are not only historically linked, but they are inextricably linked through their common understanding of values, in their common commitment to liberal democracy and human rights. If this union of shared values would also be strengthened geopolitically, reinforced particularly through uniting into a fully integrated economic area, also reinforced through a new concept of globally effective security responsibilities, we might at least from a perspective of the Western world, establish the conditions for a true polar anchor of sustainable economic, security and regulatory policy.

Just *how* the Asian region - as the main rival of the West - will develop, no one can predict today. China and India are on the way to becoming real world powers, and not *just* economically. Their competition with each other and against each other will decisively determine the further development of Asia. But this Asian as well as global competition requires a multipolarizing balancing act and hence the stabilising power of others, namely, the transatlantic alliance of Europe and the United States. A functioning multipolar world economic system which ensures peace needs to seek such a balance and stability, between the Asian region on the one hand and the transatlantic region on the other. But even in the Asian region there are basic structures which can be recognised or at the very least conceived of. I am alluding here, to the still extraordinarily loose and unconsolidated system of ASEAN. Why should ASEAN not develop into a structurally ordered institution that meets with the requirements or goals of a multipolar world order? A first significant step in this direction is the elimination of approximately 90% of the tariffs between China and most ASEAN countries. With this, an Asian free trade area has formed that is of immense future importance.

Let me finish by saying that our goal, in any case, must be: An uninhibited global, politically-uncoordinated and unregulated competition between geographic areas poses too many risks, as great as its liberal and business opportunities may be. International competition, international freedom and open international markets are not only necessary and inevita-

ble in a globalizing world, they also harbor infinite opportunities for humankind as a whole. But we must also see their risks, and this calls for effective, geopolitically comprehensive regulatory policy – a regulatory policy that everyone would be obliged to strictly observe and which does not exclude anybody, but would rather establish "global domestic policy" that takes us a step closer to world peace.