

Inquiring Minds Topic – 4 December 2015

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“Can Europe Survive. . .?”

“Europe” or the European Union has grown from the 6 members of the European Economic Community that came together in 1956 to the 28 members of the European Union today. Throughout these nearly 60 years, people have constantly questioned its ability to last. Google the phrase “Can Europe Survive” and you’ll find a plethora of articles filling out the phrase with ...Maastricht?/...Globalization?/...Migrant Crisis?/...without Russian Oil (Gas)?/ ...without Britain?/...without Greece?/ ...Its Population Plunge?/...without Christianity?/...another decade? In this session, we’ll discuss the challenges to European Union, the factors that might lead to its survival as well as its destruction, and what this might mean to the US.

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH, “Can Europe Survive the Rise of the Rest?” *NY Times*. SEPT. 1, 2012

WHO won the most [medals](#) at the Olympics? Europe. Who has the largest [economy](#) in the world? Europe again. And where do most people want to go on [holiday](#)? Europe, of course. On many measures of power, the European Union belongs with the United States and China in a global Big Three. Yet say that to officials in Beijing, Washington or any other world capital today and they would probably laugh out loud. As European leaders stagger into yet another round of crisis summitry, this potential superpower is widely viewed as the sick man of the developed world.

Why? The flawed design of the euro zone has made Europe’s recession more acute than America’s, and a collapse of the euro zone would drag the rest of the world economy down with it. But why haven’t Europeans shown the political will to save the euro zone by moving toward closer fiscal and political union? What happened to the forces that drove the project of European unification forward over the last 60 years? And, if those have faded, where might Europeans find new inspiration?

As I recently argued in *Foreign Affairs*, the five great drivers of European unification since the 1950s have now either disappeared or lost much of their energy.

First and foremost was the personal memory of war, and the mantra of “never again,” which motivated three generations of Europeans after 1945. But the last generation to have experienced World War II is passing on, and the collective memory is weak.

Second, the Soviet threat provided a powerful incentive for Western Europeans to unite during the cold war. And throughout the cold war, the United States was an active supporter of European integration, from the Marshall Plan to the diplomacy around German reunification. No longer. Try as he might, Vladimir Putin is no Joseph Stalin. And these days, the United States has other priorities.

Third, until the 1990s, the engine of European integration was the Federal Republic of Germany, with France at the steering wheel. Germans felt a powerful idealistic desire to

rehabilitate themselves in the European family of nations — and had a hard national interest in doing so. For only by gaining the trust of their neighbors and international partners could they achieve German reunification. Now that national purpose has been accomplished, and European idealism has faded with the passing of the wartime generations. These days, Germany will no longer reach for its checkbook whenever Europe calls.

Fourth, the once captive nations of Eastern Europe are no longer uniformly passionate about the European Union even though their citizens have more recent memories of dictatorship, hardship and war. While Poland is one of the union's most vigorous advocates, Hungary and the Czech Republic are now among its most skeptical and contentious members.

Finally, the widespread assumption that “Europe” would mean a rising standard of living and social security for all Europeans has been badly dented by accumulated debt, aging populations, global competition and the crisis of the euro zone. Young Greeks and Spaniards hardly see those benefits today.

Nonetheless, even in the most skeptical countries there is a basic understanding that it is better to belong to a single market of 500 million consumers, rather than depend on a domestic one of 50 million, or fewer than 10 million — the size of half the European Union's current members.

And that is the beginning of the new case for European unification. While we Europeans should redouble our efforts to ensure that our continent does not forget its troubled past, the need for scale is the key to our shared future. The 21st-century world will be one of giants: weary old ones, like the United States and Russia, and hungry new ones, like China, India, Brazil and South Africa. You do not need to accept the most [apocalyptic forecasts of European decline](#) to acknowledge that Europe is unlikely to remain the world's largest economy for long. In such a world, even Germany will be a small- to medium-size power.

IF Europeans are to preserve the remarkable combination of prosperity, peace, relative social security and quality of life that they have achieved over the last 60 years, they need the scale that only the European Union can provide.

In a world of giants, you had better be a giant yourself: A trade negotiation between China and the European Union is a conversation between equals; one between China and France is an unequal affair.

A decade ago, Chinese policy makers took the European Union seriously as an emerging political force, a potential new pole in a multipolar world. Today, they treat it with something close to contempt. They look to Brussels only in a few specific areas, like trade and competition policy, where the European Union really does act as one. Otherwise, they prefer to deal with individual nations, as this week's reception in Beijing for Germany's chancellor, Angela Merkel, made clear.

The remedy lies in Europe's own hands. Were it to move beyond the resolution of the euro zone crisis into a closer fiscal and political union, then onto a genuinely common foreign policy, China would take it more seriously, as would America and Russia.

And Europeans should not entirely abandon the hope — faint though it looks today — that their pioneering version of peaceful integration between previously warring states could point the way for better “global governance” in response to shared threats like climate change and to the tensions that inevitably arise between rising and declining powers. For without enhanced cooperation on a global scale, the 21st-century world may come to look like the late-

19th-century Europe of rivalrous great powers, writ large. At best, Europe could become not just another giant; it could offer the example of a new kind of cooperative multinational giant.

When Ms. Merkel's 19th-century predecessor Otto von Bismarck was shown a map of Africa by an eager German colonialist, the Iron Chancellor, dismissing the strategic value of faraway colonies, replied that the only map that mattered to him lay in Europe: "France is to the left, Russia to the right, we're in the middle — that's my map of Africa." Today's Europeans need to adapt Bismarck's wisdom, declaring "China, India and Russia are to the right, America and Brazil to the left — that's our map of Europe."

Robert D. Kaplan, "Why the European Union Will Survive" *Forbes*, 4/23/14

The European Union has been on its knees for half a decade now, reeling from low or negative economic growth rates and obscenely high levels of unemployment. The result has been the partial fracturing of Europe into states, mainly in the north, that have weathered the crisis, and states, mainly in the south, that in some cases have seen catastrophe close to the statistical levels of the Great Depression. In the southeast, Greece has been the hardest hit country, and Bulgaria is periodically on the brink of political chaos. These divisions, in turn, mirror those of former geographically based empires: Carolingian, Prussian, Habsburg, Byzantine and Ottoman.

Nationalism, often in the form of far-right anti-immigrant parties, has also seen a resurgence — a troubling indication of demons from the past that Europe's elites thought they had vanquished in the course of the Cold War and especially in the years following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Obviously, this development is in large measure due to the economic crisis. But there is much more to it than that, and it has to do with human psychology. Norman Manea, the exiled Romanian writer and Bard College professor, writes about how, "The modern world faces its solitude and its responsibilities without the artifice of a protective dependency or a fictive utopian coherence," so that, as he intimates, all sorts of exclusivist, tribal-like mentalities survive into the 21st century, allowing people to find meaning within some type of protective solidarity group. We tend to associate this with blood-based or religious rebellions in places such as the Middle East or Africa, but an economically downtrodden Europe is not immune from this lugubrious development.

Of course, nationalism itself is not necessarily bad, as the University of Maryland academic Vladimir Tismaneanu explains in his 2012 book, *The Devil in History: Communism, Fascism, and Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century*: "It is often described as archaic, antimodern, traditionalist, in short reactionary. Other interpretations," he goes on, "see it as a driving force of modernizing liberation, an ideology of collective emancipation, and a source of human dignity and pride." We have seen the uplifting side of nationalism in certain aspects of the Ukrainian revolt against the domination of Vladimir Putin's neo-czarist Russia. We have seen the reactionary side of nationalism in the anti-immigrant movements across Europe. And because Europe's population is graying, increasingly more immigrants will be needed over time to supply European economies with workers. So we might expect this right-wing fervor to continue, if not to grow.

Thus, the reasons to be pessimistic about the European project are several. The unwieldy

bureaucratic machinery in Brussels, saddled as it is with competing national interests, is unlikely to achieve the reformist energies required to return the Continent to healthy and sustained growth. The developmental differences between, for example, northern Europe, Iberia and the Balkans are just too profound for a one-speed Europe to emerge in the foreseeable future. The United States, busy with Asia and the Middle East, is unlikely to provide Europe with the same robust sort of a security umbrella in the 21st century as it provided in the decades following World War II, no matter what President Barack Obama says at the moment. Finally, the very alienation common to postmodern life, alluded to by Manea, will require the survival of group identities that will often enough be reactionary.

Indeed, in geopolitics, necessity is more important than desire. And an economically drifting, more viciously nationalistic Europe — insufficiently protected by the United States — reflects bureaucratic, psychological and strategic necessities. And yet, even if desire does not trump necessity, it still matters significantly. This is where the European Union has a future.

The drawing power of the European Union has been most succinctly explained by Yale professor Timothy Snyder in his 2003 book, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999*. The latter part of his narrative explores how an enlightened, late-Cold War and post-Cold War Polish nationalism saw the possibilities of historic reconciliations with its neighbors, such as Lithuania and Ukraine, in the context of a European Union that emphasized the benefits of *states* over the drawbacks of *nations*. States, in this case, signified legal entities ruled by impersonal bureaucracies that treated all citizens as equals, and thus promoted individual rights over group rights; nations, in this case, indicated ethnic or religious phenomena that saw people as part of groups and thus treated some people as more equal than others.

Of course, the American security umbrella over Western Europe throughout the Cold War allowed for the formation and the development of the European Union in the first place. Without NATO, there could have been no European Union, in other words. But it has been specifically the European Union that has provided the vision and bureaucratic framework for a country like Poland to, so to speak, escape from a difficult past into a more humanistic and universal present. For a favorable geopolitics is not enough: An immense domestic machinery and specific program is required to take advantage of it. That's what the European Union originally represented to Poland, and lately to many of the demonstrators in Kiev's Maidan Square. And that's where the evangelizing force of the European Union lies — in a future that promises something different from the past. Never underestimate the power of symbolism, especially in a media age.

Thus, in forecasting the future of the European Union we have to be careful about taking realism too far. Realism can be self-limiting because, just as there is more to life than self-interest, there is more to national life than national interest. Individuals and whole peoples will often aspire to a higher truth that is not necessarily pragmatic. Universalist motivations may not be necessarily prudent, but they can nevertheless drive politics. That is why a geopolitics that is all mechanics will often be proven wrong.

To wit, the protesters in Maidan Square in Kiev were supposed to fail. They were supposed to have become demoralized by apathy elsewhere in the country. They were supposed to be altogether compromised by the far-right protesters who belatedly joined them. For what the original protesters in Maidan Square did was not necessarily prudent, expecting to topple —

with uncertain support from the West — Putin ally Viktor Yanukovich's gangster-like regime. But they eventually succeeded, partly because they believed in a vision of Europe synonymous with that of the European Union. Even if the European Union did not entirely want to push east, many of the demonstrators did.

This is why I do not believe that the European Union is merely a phase in history. Rather, it is the beginning of a regional grouping of sorts, united in universal values, that, while not ever truly united from Iberia to the Black Sea, will be a pivotal factor in Europe indefinitely. This will especially be the case in future years as Russia loses dominance in energy markets, suffers from a declining population and calcifies further under autocratic rule. The vision of Europe's elites a decade ago was too ambitious, but that does not mean at all that the age of the European Union is past. The European Union has a brighter future than Russia does.

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Patrick Buchanan, “Can Europe Survive This Invasion?” 11/9/15

“A modern day mass migration is taking place ... that could change the face of Europe’s civilization,” warned Hungarian President Viktor Orban.

“If that happens, that is irreversible. ... There is no way back from a multicultural Europe,” said Orban. “If we make a mistake now, it will be forever.”

Orban acted on his beliefs. He erected a 110-mile fence on the Serb border, redirecting hundreds of thousands of migrants away from Hungary to Croatia, thence to Austria and Germany.

Sunday, after a third of a million had passed through, Croatia replaced a center-left with a rightist party. A fortnight ago, the right-wing eurosceptic Law and Justice Party won a landslide victory in Poland.

Support for Angela Merkel, who has opened Germany to a million migrants, is plummeting. Bavaria’s CSU, sister party of Merkel’s CDU, is in rebellion. Bavaria has been the main port of entry for the hundreds of thousands of arriving migrants.

Europe is undergoing the greatest mass migration since World War II, when 14 million Germans were driven out of Prussia and eastern Germany and Central and Eastern Europe.

That mass migration halted after two years. But no end is in sight to the migrations from Africa and the Middle East.

As long as Europe’s borders remain open, they will come. And the people who wish to come number not just in the millions but the tens and scores of millions. And they know how to get there.

The routes — through Turkey to the Balkans on land, or across a few miles of the Med to the Greek islands, or from Libya to Lampedusa and Sicily, or into the Spanish enclaves on the Moroccan coast, or out to the Canary Islands — are arduous but not impossible.

Why should they not come?

Why should Arabs and Africans not flee the tyranny, terror, poverty and war that are their lot to come to Europe, live the good life, and have life’s necessities provided for their families by the munificent welfare states of northern Europe? And what is to stop them?

Jean Raspail’s “The Camp of the Saints” is proving more prophetic than Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World” or Orwell’s “1984.”

Considering the crises facing Europe, the question is no longer: Will the EU survive? It is

Orban's question: Will European civilization survive the century?

This year, the EU monetary union, the eurozone, avoided breaking apart because Athens capitulated and accepted austerity, and the hard-bargaining Germans agreed to a bailout.

How long will Greeks and Club Med members of the EU accept austerity? How long will Germans bail out nations whose people like to work fewer hours while enjoying superior social benefits?

Under the Schengen Agreement, there are to be no barriers to trade and travel, to the movement of goods and people inside the EU.

Yet, across Europe, fences are going up, borders are being re-established, anti-immigrant and anti-EU parties like the National Front of France's Marine Le Pen, are gaining converts.

If the mass migrations are not halted, the rise of nationalist regimes at the expense of Europe's liberals and leftists is inevitable.

With birth rates in this smallest and least populated of continents below replacement levels for decades, Europe is aging, shrinking and dying, as it is being invaded and altered forever.

Optimists point to how America absorbed the 15 million that arrived in the Great Wave of immigration from 1890 to 1920. But they ignore the differences. America's immigrants were Europeans from Christian nations coming to a country with a history of assimilation. And the Great Wave stopped in 1924, for 40 years.

Unlike America, Europe has never known mass immigration. And those pouring into Europe are Arab, African and Muslim, not European Christians or Jews. They come from other civilizations and cultures. And they are not all assimilating but rather creating enclaves in Europe that replicate the lands whence they came.

Last year, the Swiss voted to cut back on immigration. This year, with the UK Independence Party growing in popularity, Prime Minister David Cameron is demanding reforms in the EU charter, before the British vote on whether to leave the EU altogether.

With migrants in the thousands milling around Calais and the entrance to the tunnel to Dover, Brits must be wondering whether it was wise to dig that tunnel beneath the Channel to their island home.

The threats raised by the mass migration into Europe rise to the level of the existential.

Can a civilization survive the replacement of the people who created it by people of other races, religions, and civilizations?

Ask the Native Americans.

Will Europe remain Europe if she is repopulated by Arabs, Muslims, Asians and Africans? What will hold Europe together? Free trade?

In 1981, when Solidarity was crushed by the Warsaw regime on the orders of Moscow, Americans took up the cry — "Let Poland be Poland."

One day soon, a voice will arise across the Atlantic calling for an end to this invasion, by force if necessary, and declare: "Let Europe be Europe!"
