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Where is Europe?

Heinz Gärtner

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Abstract

The world requires global solutions. What is the right approach? Since the end of the Bush administration there has been an international debate on what kind of world will emerge. Where is Europe in this debate? Among American academics Europe plays only a marginal role. Their main concerns are the decline of America and the rise of China. Europe is not considered to be a major power factor in the new world. The “Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership” (TTIP) introduced a new element into the debate, however. For liberal internationalists the TTIP could provide a stable basis for market economies and liberal democracies to strengthen their global influence. Such an agreement could help to enlarge their standards to the emerging powers. On the one hand, it would pull them into the new system. On the other hand, it would push them towards it. The US and Europe would create an economic and politically unifying force that would integrate the new emerging actors such as China, India, Brazil, Russia and other established economic powers. Geo-strategists and Realists would argue that closer US – European ties, the TIPP together with the “Transpacific Partnership” (TPP), would enhance the West’s leverage with China.

Keywords

Global Security Governance, Power Transition and Diffusion, the global role of the USA, Emerging Powers, Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, Europe

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Introduction

The world requires global solutions. What is the right approach? Since the end of the Bush administration there has been an international debate on what kind of world will emerge. Where is Europe in this debate? Among American academics Europe plays only a marginal role. Their main concerns are the decline of America and the rise of China. Europe is not considered to be a major power factor in the new world. In the best case Europe is seen as a natural ally because it consists of market economies and liberal democracies. In the worst case it is seen as irrelevant because it lacks military capacities with global reach. The “Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership” (TTIP) introduced a new element into the debate, however. For liberal internationalists the TTIP could provide a stable basis for market economies and liberal democracies to strengthen their global influence. Such an agreement could help to enlarge their standards to the emerging powers. On the one hand, it would pull them into the new system. On the other hand, it would push them towards it. The US and Europe would create an economic and politically unifying force that would integrate the new emerging actors such as China, India, Brazil, Russia and other established economic powers. Geo-strategists and realists would argue that on a grand strategic level, closer US – European ties, the TTIP together with the “Transpacific Partnership” (TPP), would enhance the West’s leverage with China. Furthermore, it would push back China’s autocratic capitalist model and the US and Europe would not only consolidate their status as the leading economies but build a political bloc of liberal democracies.

The American debate

The world requires global solutions. What is the right approach? Since the end of the Bush administration there has been a debate among American academics on what kind of world will emerge. Where is Europe in this debate? Europe plays only a marginal role. The main concerns of American pundits are the decline of America and the rise of China. Europe is not considered to be a major power factor in the new world. In the best case Europe is seen as a natural ally because it consists of market economies and liberal democracies. In the worst case it is seen as irrelevant because it lacks military capacities with global reach.

The “bipolarity” of the Cold War era is gone. George W. Bush’s “unipolarity” or Charles Krauthammer’s “unipolar moment” are over – if they ever existed. With the absence of a more suitable expression most observers uninventively speak – very general - of a “multipolar world” with a few world actors or players, among them the US, Europe, China and Russia (as is mentioned in the report of the National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025*). The term “multipolarity” originates from the realist school and implies polarization, balance of power, zero-sum, win and lose. All actors are potential enemies. Richard Haass (2008) rejects the polarization reference. Rather, he sees a “non-polar world” emerging. This highlights the necessity of common, rather than opposing, strategies, in solving global problems. One of the emerging measures to address global issues is the G-20. It began by dealing with economic, financial and climate-related questions but sooner or later it will also include other security topics, as was the case with the G-7/8.

A similar observation of emerging powers has been made by Fareed Zakaria (2012) and Parag Khanna (2008). Zakaria sees the “rise of the rest” in a “post-American world.” Khanna observes the “rise of the second world,” i.e. almost all others except the US and Europe. Their analyses are not necessarily as declinist as Paul Kennedy’s “Rise and Fall of Great Powers” of 1987. For both of them the US will remain the dominant power (especially in military terms) but their argument is that the US will not be able to act alone.

According to Joseph Nye (2008, 2011), in today's world, the distribution of power varies with the context. It is distributed in a pattern that resembles a three-dimensional chess game. On

the top chessboard, military power is largely unipolar, and the US is likely to remain the only superpower for some time. But on the middle chessboard, economic power has already been multipolar for more than a decade, with the US, Europe, Japan, and China as the major players, and others gaining in importance. The bottom chessboard is the realm of cross-border transactions that occur outside of government control. It is only the middle chessboard – in the economic realm - where Europe play role.

According to John Ikenberry (2011) in new world order the US will find itself in the position to share power and rely in part on others. The contested and unstable US led hegemonic order does not destroy the American built liberal international order but rather makes it more inclusive. - Ikenberry does not talk of an American-European built order. - It would be built around rules, norms of nondiscrimination and market openness, creating for conditions for countries – including rising countries on the periphery of this order. Such a liberal international order would create a foundation in which states can engage in reciprocity and institutionalized cooperation. Such an order can be contrasted with closed and non-rule-based relations like geopolitical blocs, exclusive regional spheres, or closed imperial systems.

Charles Kupchan (2012) sees the clock running out on the West's global dominance. Power will become more widely distributed around the globe. The next world will belong to no one. Rather, the coming world will be both multipolar and politically diverse. The diffusion of global power ultimately means the diffusion of international responsibility from the Atlantic community of democracies to a broad array of states in good standing in all quarters of the globe. The goal would be to forge a consensus among major states about the foundational principles of the next world. The rules must be acceptable to all powers.

For Zbigniew Brzezinski (2012) American system's capacity to compete globally depends increasingly on its ability to confront problems at home. If America falters, the world is unlikely to be dominated by a single preeminent successor, such as China. No single power will be ready to exercise the role that the world expected the United States to play after the end of the Cold War. The US must accommodate constructively China's rising global status and engage Russia and Turkey to avert global chaos. Europe remains through its cultural,

ideological, and economic connections and more concretely through NATO, a junior geopolitical partner to the United States.

Liberals vs. conservatives

The American debate about the world is very much a domestic one about America's role in the world. The promotion of democracy has always been central in US foreign policy debate. The export of American values is not limited to liberals but the dominant principle of the neo-conservatives. Liberal values and democracy are hardly the only driving force (Bouchet, 2012). The prevalent elements in US foreign policy have always been national security and economy interests. Representatives of the realist school are the most outspoken advocates of the American interests. They can be found in both the Democratic and the Republican Party. The same is true for liberal internationalists (Ikenberry, 2011) who also stress the importance of international institutions to manage interdependence and security. Liberals as well as conservatives focus on the reform of the domestic political and economic structure to reinforce the basis for a strong foreign policy. Neither liberals nor conservatives are monolithic groups. In each camp are those who believe that the US should not engage too much in the world (Posen, 2013) and those who think the US should remain a global leader, stay engaged and influence global and regional developments.

Conservatives claimed greater competency when it came to security and defense and accused liberals of being weak on these issues. Liberals have always been caught in the contradiction between their own values and US-national security interests. The liberal foreign policy dilemma began with the presidential candidacy of McGovern in 1972, when among liberals a strong anti-war sentiment emerged. Since then they have been suspicious of any larger military involvement by the US government. For liberals in the Democratic Party, it was almost impossible to reclaim them. The Democrat Gary Hart, who ran for president in 1984 and 1988, was the last one before President Obama who attempted to do so. Bill Clinton focused on the economy and hesitated to use force in the Balkans, which he eventually did with a series of airstrikes without deploying ground troops.

With regards to foreign policy, liberals have traditionally preferred economic and diplomatic incentives, rather than resorting to force and military intervention. Barack Obama was able to strike a balance between those dimensions. Barack Obama's prioritized a policy of multilateralism and engagement; however, the use of force has become a natural part of his foreign policy. In Libya, the use of force was justified on humanitarian grounds, drones were used for tactical strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Obama gave the final go-ahead to kill Osama bin Laden. At the same time, within the framework of his engagement policy, Obama committed himself to political solutions with rival states. During the Inaugural Address in January 2013 Obama rededicated himself to the engagement policy and the peaceful resolution of differences "not because we are naïve about the dangers we face, but because engagement can more durably lift suspicion and fear". Obama was the first president who could reclaim competency on security and defense issues for the Democratic Party. Still, liberals struggle with high defense expenditures, with the support for conservative governments in Israel, and with the potential use of force against Iran. "True liberals" or libertarians support deep cuts in defense budgets because US Foreign Policy should be constrained anyway. There is some overlap with isolationists on these issues.

Many liberals do not believe in American moral leadership because they hesitate to claim that America is superior to other cultures and systems. Liberals reject George W. Bush's neo-conservative democracy promotion with the use of force as in Iraq. They do believe, however, that the support of democracies all over the world is good thing. They stress the pull rather than the push factors. The differences are often blurred when it comes to a neo-conservative league of democracies (Kagan, 2008, McCain) and a liberal society of democracies. Should such a concept replace the Security Council of the United Nations? The liberals are divided on this issue! More concrete, military intervention for humanitarian reasons might be supported by some liberals (e.g. Libya and Kosovo) or neo-conservatives (e.g. Syria) alike. Realist conservatives oppose humanitarian interventions. Liberal institutionalists and international lawyers, in contrast, request that military interventions are consistent with international law, either authorized by the UN-Security Council or justified by self-defense.

More general, the academic world (Kupchan, 2012) discusses a concert of powers, which goes back to the Democrat Franklin Roosevelt and was reinvented by the Republican Henry Kissinger. Such a concert would include both democracies such as the US and Europe as well as non-democratic powers such as Russia and China as well, but could lead to a safer peace and more security among world powers.

Liberal internationalists (Ikenberry, 2011; Brooks/Ikenberry/Wohlforth, 2012/2013) argue that a liberal international order emerged under the US-leadership after the Second World War. The order is rule-based, organized around international institutions and market economies. The order would survive even without an US-hegemony. Liberal internationalists who believe in international cooperation can also be found in the Republican Party.

Although the strategic relationships Americans formed in Europe and Asia became pillars of the liberal world order during the Cold War and Europe now is supposedly passé and the world is entering the “Asian century,” Robert Kagan (2012) believes that Americans also have an interest in whether the global trend is toward more democracies. It would make a very big difference to the future world order if the United States may eventually have to share global power with a richer and more powerful but also autocratic China. “The United States and Europe must not give up on each other.” It is not without irony that Kagan advised the presidential candidates McCain and Romney both of who have been very critical about the European social model. Kagan himself once categorized the Americans as coming from the Mars and ridiculed the Europeans as being from the Venus.

However, while democracy may help political cooperation, it is not sufficient. The commitment to democracy is good for the citizens but no guarantee for improved international problem-solving. (Kupchan, 2010a, b) When it comes to nuclear weapons, terrorism, war and peace, crisis management, the economic crisis, carbon dioxide emissions, pragmatic cooperation is required, rather than ideological finger-pointing and intransigencies.

Europe's economic power: An American asset?

Are traditional “transatlantic relations” that are based on a common threat, economic interdependence and common values better suited to address global questions, or is Europe's role in the world, and specifically in relation to the US, contingent regarding its contribution to world affairs? Is Obama's approach of “engaging” partners, competitors, and potential rivals the right approach?

It goes without saying that economic ties can stabilize relations between the US and the EU and prevent bloc building. Mutual investments of European and American companies in the US and in Europe generate approximately ten million jobs. Both the US and Europe account for 50 percent of the global production and 40 percent of the global trade. (Neuss, 2009) Mutual direct investment (almost 60 percent of the overall investment) did not suffer during Bush's unilateral foreign policy. The Eurozone accounts for 16 percent of the world exports, well above 8 percent for the US and 5 percent for Japan. However, Europe is economically engaged in Asia as well. It is China's first and India's second largest trading partner. China has also become the biggest investor in Germany. For the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Europe is also the most important commercial address. The EU is beginning to negotiate free trade areas with various Asian countries. (Leonard/Kundnani, 2013)

US president Barack Obama formally endorsed a free trade partnership between the United States and the European Union in his State of the Union Address in February 2013. Such an agreement is not only about stimulating trade and investment, creating jobs, eliminating tariffs but also about the future of the world. Liberal internationalists see a chance to support a rule-based liberal world order. The agreement, the “Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership” (TTIP), could provide a further stable basis for market economies and liberal democracies to strengthen their global influence. Such a transatlantic partnership could help to enlarge their standards to the emerging powers. It could complement and reinforce the multilateral system, and contribute to the development of global rules. (Hormats, 2013) Liberal internationalists argue that down the road, the TTIP has the

potential to create new international standards, common bonds and shared values. On the one hand, it would pull them into the new system because they would want to benefit from the access of the new market; on the other hand, it would push them towards it because they will become dependent on it. Any country might join if it accepts the norms and principles. The US and Europe would create an economic and politically unifying force that would integrate the new emerging actors such as China, India, Brazil, Russia and other established economic powers (Hormats, 2013). Turkey has expressed its interest to participate in the TIPP, Brazil wants to revive an old trade-pact with Europe (The Economist, 2013). The agreement would support efforts for similar deals with Asia and the Pacific such as the multilateral “Trans-Pacific-Partnership” (TPP) or the bilateral free trade agreement with Korea (KORUS) and Vietnam. The US is also working with Canada, Mexico, Peru and Chile on the eastern shore of the Pacific to negotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership with trading partners in East Asia. (Kurata, 2013)

The more detailed rules and standards might be very different, however. There are profound differences in agriculture policies such as disputes on genetically modified products, in labour laws, minimum wages or economic policies on deficit spending. Additionally, critics would say such a US – EU accord would exclude poorer nations and a global trade agreement involving more countries would be more desirable. Also, it would undermine the regulatory work of the “World Trade Organization” (WTO).

Geo-strategists and realists would argue that on a grand strategic level, closer US – European ties, the TIPP, and improved cooperation of the US with Asian-Pacific states, the TPP, would enhance the West’s leverage with China. (Barker, 2013) It would push back China’s autocratic capitalist model that could dominate the world order as Kagan and others fear. The deal would enable the US together with Europe to set global rules to maintain their control over the global economic governance. The US and Europe would not only consolidate their status as the leading economies but build a political bloc of liberal democracies.

Economic interdependence neither necessarily hinders nor helps improve political relations, however. It is by no means sufficient for achieving political rapprochement to solve common

problems. Both sides of the Atlantic remain extremely vulnerable to the economic and financial crisis, to climate change, proliferation, and terrorism. Economic interdependence is no guarantee for solving political problems. Realists even argue that interdependence is a cause of conflict because it increases vulnerability. Before World War I mutual trade relations among the later war fighting parties were stronger than trade relations between the US and Europe today. On the other hand, the Anglo-American economic relations declined before the war, while critical rapprochement occurred. (Kupchan, 2010a, b) Crises among the highly interdependent European powers in the decades leading up to the war were generally resolved without bloodshed, however. Among the less interdependent powers in Eastern Europe crises regularly escalated to militarized violence. (Gratzke, 2012)

Europe's political and military power: sufficient?

The "European Union Institute for Security Studies" is not sure whether it prefers more "multipolarity" with the EU as a confident global actor, or more "interdependence." Therefore, one author (Grevi, 2009) comes up with a mixture, the "inter-polar world".

The "European Council on Foreign Relations" (2009) argues that Europe's role in the world, and specifically in relation to the US, is contingent regarding its contribution to world affairs. This is because the world requires global solutions. These global challenges include: the economic and financial crisis, climate change, nuclear proliferation and disarmament, terrorism, organized crime, pandemics. Additionally, regional conflicts like in Afghanistan, the Balkans, the Middle East, and Iran's and North Korea's nuclear programs require common global involvement.

The analyses of Europe's global role in many ways are based on a realist scenario of powers, a "balance of power system" or a "global network of political and military alliances" (Kagan, 2009) although they aren't sufficient means to solve global problems. Global solutions are not based solely on military contributions. In this context, Europe's should not be undervalued or ignored.

After all, about 70,000 European troops are deployed in various missions abroad. Europeans spend about half of what the US spends on defense. The austerity policies on both sides of the Atlantic caused cuts in military spending. This in turn led to accusations from the former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that European countries are failing “to pull their weight” in military affairs. NATO responded with concepts like “smart defense” and “pooling and sharing” as a way to reduce costs and setting priorities. But why should Europe compete with the US regarding defense expenditures? They are not enemies or rivals. The EU military expenditures account for more than one fifth of total military spending worldwide compared to the US with about 45 percent. The Europeans spend twice as much on defense as Russia, China, India and Brazil together. Russia spends a little more than the UK or France; China about twice as much as Russia. (SIPRI, 2012. de Wijk, 2012) In 2000, Britain sent troops to Sierra Leone, and in 2002, France to Ivory Coast to suppress unrest. In Afghanistan Europeans lost about 1000 troops. In Bosnia and in Kosovo the Europeans provide most of the troops. In the missions Libya and Mali the UK and France took the lead even though they still lack sufficient capabilities. It is doubtful if the US would have conducted these operations without the European initiative, however. The EU looks like a real “military heavyweight.” (Hellmann, 2010)

But the real question is what the focus of security is: “national security” to protect your territory; “human security” to protect individuals all over the world under conditions of regional destabilization, dysfunctional states, poverty, demographic changes and refugee flows, pandemics; or “global security” to meet challenges like global warming, nuclear proliferation, international terrorism. It seems that the US still concentrates more on “national security” and the EU more on “human and global security.” The latter, of course, can only be addressed cooperatively and multilaterally.

NATO is being transformed. It no longer faces a wholesome territorial assault by Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces. Today it deploys its forces in support of peace and stabilization operations out-of-area and -continent desirably mandated by the UN. NATO after the Chicago summit in May 2012 will recognize that the most direct threats to the security of their member states are neither military nor territorial in character, like climate change, nuclear proliferation, terrorism, demographic transformation. At the same time NATO has

the huge legacy of the armed forces left over from the Cold War. It still has to figure out what to do with territorial defense, as defined in Article 5 of its treaty because it does not expect a major onslaught on Alliance territory. Its forces rather have to operate hundreds or even thousands of kilometers distant. NATO and the EU will have to find some division of labour regarding capacities and geographical fields of operation. The EU appears to focus on the West-Balkans and Africa while the US will concentrate on the Gulf region, the Middle East, the Pacific and East Asia.

The Libyan and Mali examples

Europe and European states are able to act when problems arise and common interests are at stake as the examples of Libya and Mali show.

The Libyan operation of NATO was a successful US European cooperation although the US provided most of the intelligence, the fuelling and targeting capabilities, the surveillance and reconnaissance. The states of the coalition of the willing, consisting of the US and European countries, decided to use force to protect Libyan civilians against armed attacks by the Libyan regime. UN Security Council Resolution 1973 of March 2011 emphasizes the responsibility of the Libyan authorities to protect the Libyan population and of the parties to armed conflicts “to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians.” The intervention met the criteria of the concept of human security because it’s the primary purpose was the protection of civilians from grave and systematic violations of human rights. For the US State Department, humanitarian reasons were the decisive factor, not potential military hazards, and it overruled the Pentagon, which had doubts about the military feasibility. There was a Security Council mandate that was being implemented by a coalition mainly of NATO states. In addition, the resolution has been endorsed by the Arab League. The United States in particular signaled that this time it renounced a unilateral approach. France und the UK officially took the lead.

The Libyan intervention based on the principles of “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) is an expression of change in the norms of state sovereignty. They have given way to the human

rights revolution and new ideas about a more complex array of norms concerning legitimacy and authority. Opposition to Bush's Iraq war was not about the use of force as such, but rather about the principles and procedures for using military power. (Ikenberry, 2012, 270-277) If there were no legitimate international competent and enduring authority, liberals in both governments and NGOs might want to decide for themselves if and when human rights were violated, and neoconservative nationalists might want to determine whether and where to promote democracy (with or without the use of force). Instead, both camps feel constrained by multilateral institutions, and may even benefit from unipolar structures. There is no alternative to an international order based on rules, principles and institutions.

France's military intervention in Mali in February 2013 demonstrated that France has the capability to deploy a large military force. As in the Libya's example of 2011 showed, the EU's security and defense policy is highly dependent on Britain's and France's military capabilities. France and Britain are the only EU members that are both able and willing to project hard power. Still, the Europeans are dependent on US support at least indirectly without the involvement of US troops. In Libya and Mali, the United States supplied intelligence, drones, fighter and refueling and transport aircraft, ammunition stocks and missiles to destroy air defenses.

The US seems to accept this division of labour since the US is determined to devote more resources to the Pacific. But it wants the Europeans to provide more of the capabilities. It is not only a question of military spending but of a new philosophy. The European Armies still appear to prepare for a massive land invasion that more or less disappeared together with the Warsaw Pact. The Mali intervention once more raises the question: Under which criteria and conditions will European states use force with the approval of the EU? The legitimacy of the Libya intervention was based on the principle of R2P. In Mali, France claimed that it is not trying to promote democracy but to bring stability, that it is not securing resources but supporting the Mali government, that it is not extending FrancAfrique but defending European interests. The fact that France was acting militarily on behalf of the EU highlights the weakness of its "comprehensive approach" for security and development that it pursued in the Sahel zone since 2011.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100 of 25 April 2013 “Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali” (MINUSMA)¹ replaces the “African-led International Support Mission in Mali” (AFISMA). To support political processes in Mali it covers a broad security-related mandate: support the transitional authorities of Mali in the stabilization of the country and implementation of the transitional roadmap, focusing on major population centers and lines of communication, protecting civilians, human rights monitoring, the creation of conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced persons, the extension of State authority and the preparation of free, inclusive and peaceful elections. The broad mandate would enable the EU or some of its member-states to participate on various levels of the mission.

Conclusions

In the American academic debate Europe’s role in the future world is largely ignored. It is mainly debate about the US and China. The challenges for the US and Europe alike are almost all global. There are regional conflicts that involve state and non-state actors, climate change and resource shortages, the danger of nuclear weapons, massive human rights violations, criminal and terrorist organizations who also use the cyberspace.

Traditional “transatlantic relations” that were based on a common threat are not sufficient to address global questions. President Barack Obama’s approach of “engaging” partners, competitors, and potential rivals goes beyond them. It is strength rather than weakness and it is a strategy for problem-solving rather than a goal in itself. In the long run, “engagement” can also contribute to democratization and regime change.²

The best concept for global problem-solving could be Hillary Clinton’s “multi-partner world”, in place of the “multipolar world” concept. This does not mean that competition, polarity, and ideological differences would disappear. But it creates a level of global cooperation. Such attempts emerged after every major crisis: after 1815 with the “Concert of Vienna,” after 1918 with the “League of Nations,” after 1945 with the “United Nations,” after the 1989/90 globalization took place (disrupted by Bush’s unilateralism).

We are moving towards a new world but we do not yet know what it will look like. Of course the US and Europe will be important actors of it but it is equally clear that traditional concepts will not be desirable. The new focus now is on what the US and Europe can achieve in the world rather than the focus on the relationship as an end in itself.

Europe and European states are able to act once the need for action becomes obvious once a problem arises as the examples of Libya and Mali demonstrate. It need not be always be NATO or the EU but in many ways coalitions of the able and willing are more flexible and can act on a case-by-case basis. They can use the infrastructure provided by NATO, the EU and the member states. The cases of Libya and Mali made it clear that the US will increasingly expect contributions from allies and rely on partners when it comes to international military missions. (see also Gross, 2013) NATO and Europe have to accept that they have to build not only a European but a global security architecture.

Notes

¹ Resolution 2100 was adopted by the Security Council at its 6952nd meeting, on 25 April 2013.

² Examples are: the improving relations of US – Chile, US – Brazil, US – Argentina, and Brazil – Argentina in the eighties; and also US – Philippine relations under Ferdinand Marcos.

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