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## **The European Union after the Crisis: Risks and Opportunities—The Problem of “Uncomfortable Knowledge” and “Institutionalised Forgetfulness”**

*“All animals are equal but some  
animals are more equal than others!”*  
George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (1961)

### **1. Introduction**

Addressing the risks and opportunities of the ongoing crisis having unlikely causes, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, is challenging, even hazardous. Despite the many differences, the two reasons for the European crisis also show some commonalities. Their causes are controversially debated, and there is no reliable prediction on when and how they will end. Further, they enormously harm European Union's economy, with no recipe for how to master the economic consequences and defend the European Union's position as a global economic power.

There is one more commonality: A neutral, fact-based scrutinising and challenging of official positions is, at best, inopportune, at worst, detrimental or even dangerous.

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Depending on where the “mainstream media” report, they mirror either official censorship or opportunistic self-control.<sup>1</sup>

I shall follow the principle of the late US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan: “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.” Also, that opinions may not suppress or ignore facts!

To avoid any misunderstandings, I emphasise from the outset there is no justification and no excuse whatsoever for the Russian invasion of Ukraine! There should also be no doubt that war crimes must be carefully investigated and prosecuted, and those responsible brought to court! The exclusive aim of my analysis of historical developments, which led to the Ukraine catastrophe and the pandemic threat, is to draw lessons for their aftermath. Thereby I shall concentrate on general political aspects potentially affecting the EU’s macro-economy.

## 2. The Phenomena of “Uncomfortable Knowledge” and “Institutionalised Forgetfulness”

The late Oxford Professor Steve Rayner in his 2012 article “Uncomfortable Knowledge”, defined the “*unknown knows*” as “things we don’t admit that we know” and termed them “uncomfortable knowledge”.<sup>2</sup> Rayner identified denial, dismissal, diversion (or decoy) and displacement as strategies of organisations for managing “uncomfortable knowledge”. He argued, “The social construction of ignorance is not only inevitable, but actually necessary for organisations, even entire societies to function at all.”<sup>3</sup> Rayner also coined the notion of “*institutionalised forgetfulness*,” i.e. a method which functions as “a part of a broader set of informational and perceptual filters that enable individuals and collectives to make sense of what would otherwise be an overwhelming onslaught of sensory stimuli.”<sup>4</sup>

An assessment of risks and opportunities of the EU in the aftermath of the crisis requires confronting the Europe’s past “*unknown knows*”, including searching for an answer, how much of the “social construction of ignorance” may be stalled in informational and perceptual filters of politics and media without blurring the assessment of the EU’s post-crisis risks and opportunities. Addressing uncomfortable knowledge may imply an “uncomfortable” talk.

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<sup>1</sup> In an interview with Aaron Maté of The Grayzone of 24 March 2022, the former US Ambassador Chas Freeman deplored that those “attempting to be objective about this” were “immediately accused of being Russian agents”. (hereinafter: “Freeman Interview”).

<sup>2</sup> S. Rayner (2012), pp. 107–125.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122–123.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

### 3. Europe’s Distant and Current “Uncomfortable Knowledge”

#### 3.1. *The Cold War Era*

In 1952, Belgium, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the “Treaty Establishing the European Defence Community” in Paris. Its ratification successfully passed the parliaments of all signatories but that of France. This failure indirectly opened the way for the admission of Germany into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), on 23 October 1954.<sup>5</sup> From then on, NATO has become the foundation of Western Europe’s, now European Union’s defence system, with far-reaching political implications. As Rodric Braithwaite, a former British Ambassador to Moscow recently observed:

“NATO had justified the Americans’ dominant position in Europe. They [the US] had no intention of giving it up. Publicly they argued that Europe’s future security depended on NATO’s existence.”<sup>6</sup>

Article 42 (7) (2) of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) has implemented the dominance of NATO over the Union’s defence into the EU’s legal order.<sup>7</sup> By subordinating the “collective defence and the forum for its implementation” of the large majority of its member states under NATO, Article 42 TEU has substantially limited EU’s sovereignty.<sup>8</sup> The United States is not only the leading military power of the NATO alliance but also the NATO member from whom the security of all other members of the alliance depends. The military capabilities of the latter do not suffice to defend Europe.

US presidents have repeatedly blamed Europeans for being free riders benefitting from the disproportionately large military commitment of the US to NATO. Some in Europe, therefore, worried about the future of NATO and their security. However, they have overlooked that in the fact that the future of NATO ultimately depends on the US’s commitment also “lies the assurance that the organization has a secure future”.<sup>9</sup> Philip Stephens hits the essence:

“The argument about Washington’s disproportionately large military commitment has been going on for so long that many have come to see it as an act of altruism.

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<sup>5</sup> P.-H. Spaak (1969), pp. 210–248.

<sup>6</sup> R. Braithwaite (2022), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Article 42 (7) (2) sets forth that the “commitments and cooperation” of the EU Member States in the area of security and defence policy: “shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which, for those States which are members of it [Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden are not NATO members.], remain the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation.”

<sup>8</sup> Sovereignty does not only require “an absolute and perpetual power [...], which cannot in any way be subject to the command of others”. J. Bodin (1576), but also constitutes its “artificial soul created for its protection and defence”. T. Hobbes (1651).

<sup>9</sup> P. Stephens (2019), p. 11.

In truth, America has paid for NATO because it has served US national interests and it still does.”<sup>10</sup>

This hybrid NATO-EU construct has consequences transcending the issue of security and defence. In 1959, US president Dwight Eisenhower attempted to convince French President Charles de Gaulle not to develop own nuclear weapons, which France could acquire from the US, and asked, “How can you doubt that the US identifies her fate with that of Europe?”. De Gaulle, in his reply, first, emphasised that the NATO “deterrent is real” only for the two nuclear powers, America and Russia, “But it does not exist for their respective allies. What, after all, is there to prevent Russia and America from wiping out what lies between their own vital, in other words the European battlefield?”, and noted that the ideological slogans, “the cause of freedom” and “Atlantic solidarity”, praised by US, as usual, conceal vital interests. Then de Gaulle reasoned as follows:

“For I know, as you yourself know, what a nation is, with its geography, its interests, its political system, its public opinion, its passion, its fears, its errors, it can help another, but it cannot identify itself with another.”<sup>11</sup>

Bearing in mind what de Gaulle told Eisenhower, in the context of NATO, essential interests of the EU largely depend on US geopolitical interests, its political system, its public opinion, its passion, its fears, its errors, and even its geography.<sup>12</sup> For many rea-

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> The entire answer of de Gaulle: “If Europe, sliding to disaster, were one day to be completely conquered by your rivals, it is true that the United States would soon be in trouble. Hence your current ideological slogans ‘the cause of freedom’ and ‘Atlantic solidarity’ which as usual conceal vital interests. But before the day of reckoning, what would become of my country? In the course of the two world wars, America was France’s ally and France – ... has not forgotten what she owes to American help. But neither has she forgotten that during the First World War, that help came only after three long years of struggle which nearly proved mortal for her, and that during the Second she had already been crushed before you intervened. In saying this, I intend not the slightest reproach. For I know, as you yourself know, what a nation is, with its geography, its interests, its political system, its public opinion, its passion, its fears, its errors. It can help another, but it cannot identify itself with another. That is why, although remaining faithful to our alliance I cannot accept France’s integration into NATO.” [C. de Gaulle, translated by T. Kilmartin (1970/1971), pp. 213–214]. De Gaulle could also have added that France had to repay to the US for all the military help, which the US delivered before it formally entered into World War I, i.e. 7 April 1917. This French debt in December 1973 (!) still amounted to US \$ 6.4 billion (M. Hudson (2003/2016), p. 41 et seq., p. 103).

<sup>12</sup> For the complexity of what this means considering the current US situation, cf. the Economist article ‘The End of American Hegemony, The World Ahead 2022, United States’, The Economist, 13 December 2021, p. 56. It is further recalled that US president Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his Inauguration speech on 4 March 1933 emphasised *inter alia*: “I shall spare no effort to restore world trade by international economic readjustment but the emergency at home cannot wait on that accomplishment” (quoted from M. Hudson, No. 11, p. 75). In his comment of Roosevelt’s message, Hudson (ibid.) observes, first, that the long term economic position of a country is helped by growth in the world economy, but “the means to such growth along the way must reflect a com-

sons, they cannot and do not overlap entirely with the interests of Europe. Thus, some tensions in the NATO stables had always existed.

### 3.2. *The Developments since the 1990s*

However, as long as the world had been dominated by the two superpowers, the US “elephant” and its NATO alliance, and the Russian “bear” with its Warsaw Pact, separated by the “iron curtain”, the US Europe dominance had been felt as a kind of natural protective shield. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 with the removal of the “iron curtain”, the genesis of new independent states, the former Soviet Union “republics”, and the fast-progressing economic globalisation, brought about major changes. Many expected that after the “Warsaw Pact” alliance had dissolved, also NATO had lost its *raison d’être*. Instead, to the surprise, anger and upset of many, NATO not only prolonged its “life span”, it even substantially expanded to the East.

Among those upset and concerned were two US veteran experts: George Frost Kennan, a former US Ambassador to Moscow, the architect of the Communism Containment Doctrine, and the former US Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, who negotiated the reunification of Germany at the end of the Cold War. As his 1997 diary notes reveal, in the rapid and reckless expansion of NATO, Kennan saw nothing “other than a new Cold War, probably ending in a hot one, and *the end of the effort to achieve a workable democracy in Russia*.”<sup>13</sup> In 2002, James Baker III, in his article “Russia in NATO”<sup>14</sup> prudently compared the situation of Russia following the end of the Cold War, including “the expansion of NATO up to Russia’s doorstep,” with that of Germany following the Peace Treaty of Versailles and, *inter alia*, expressed his concerns as follows:

“By continuing to treat Russia like a potential adversary, we may encourage it to become our enemy, the very thing we fear. The best way to find an enemy is to look for one, and I worry that *that is what we are doing when we try to isolate Russia*. The same principle would apply, of course, if we were to embark on a policy to try to isolate China.”<sup>15</sup>

In the face of the ongoing war in Ukraine, one is tempted to ask, had Kennan and Baker a “crystal ball” they could read in, or could they predict what we witness today based on their knowledge of how the US policy works.

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posite of calculated pursuits of national interest, not its subordination by some to the advantage of other economies” and then, that “no nation has shown itself more aware of this distinction between national self-interest and cosmopolitan ideals than the United States.”

<sup>13</sup> Cf. J.A. Warren (2014).

<sup>14</sup> The Washington Quarterly (2002), p. 95 ss.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100 (emphasis J.S.). It is difficult to understand how some commentators, such as Prof. Christina Spohr (Putin’s War Has Backfired by Reviving the West, Financial Times, 29 April 2022, p. 17), can call Kennan’s position as mistaken as if we would not be witnessing a hot war right now. It also seems that Prof. Spohr apparently has no knowledge of the 2002 article of James Baker.

How it had, in fact, worked, we can learn from Rodric Braithwaite. The former British Ambassador to Moscow reports, *inter alia*, that “under relentless US pressure, NATO’s borders advanced until by 2004 they were within spitting distance of Russia and Ukraine.” “They [Americans] set up the ‘Partnership for Peace’ to associate Russia with NATO’s work: but they made it clear that Moscow would not have an equal voice in them.” “American bureaucrats who believed that NATO should expand to include the whole of Eastern Europe drove their ideas with ruthless effectiveness.” Further, “Ukraine could never have avoided getting caught in the crossfire, although western policymakers always understood that bringing Ukraine into NATO would eliminate the distance between the world’s most powerful military alliance and Russia itself, thus crossing the reddest of all Russia’s red lines.” “Nonetheless, American hardliners successfully inserted references to Ukraine’s membership into one NATO communique after another.”<sup>16</sup>

Strikingly, Braithwaite does not mention whether and if, to what extent, the European NATO members were involved in this US NATO expansion efforts. We know no more than that German Chancellor Merkel and French President Sarkozy in 2008 prevented the start of the process for the admission of Ukraine and Georgia into NATO.<sup>17</sup> Europeans have seemingly not been involved in the developments preceding the occupation of Crimea by covert Russian troops in 2014.<sup>18</sup>

The EU also had no role to play in the 2014 Ukraine developments. This transpired from a leaked telephone conversation in which the then US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, now President Biden’s Undersecretary of State, on 4 February 2014, informed US Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt that the US State Department had selected Arseniy Yatsenyuk as the next Prime Minister of Ukraine. When Pyatt asked, what the position of the EU was, he got the widely publicized “Fuck the EU” as an an-

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Through the Lens of History’, Financial Times, 5 February 2022, p. 9. Former US Ambassador Freeman recalls in this regard: “In 1994, Mr. [President] Clinton was talking out of both sides of his mouth. He was telling the Russians that we were in no rush to add members to NATO, and that our preferred path was the Partnership for Peace. The same time he was hinting to the ethnic diasporas of Russophobic countries in Eastern Europe—and, by the way, it’s easy to understand their Russophobia given their history—that, no, no, we were going to get these countries into NATO as fast as possible. And in 1996 he made that pledge explicit.” (Freeman Interview, *supra* No. 1, p. 5).

<sup>17</sup> Cf., e.g., P. Taylor and M. John (2008).

<sup>18</sup> First, in 2008 Viktor Yushchenko, the then President of Ukraine, announced, not to prolong the lease agreement of the Russian Black Sea fleet of the port of Sevastopol beyond 2017 (cf. Č. Iškauskas (2008)). Then his successor Viktor Yanukovich, in 2010, agreed to extend the lease on Russia’s naval basis in the Crimea for 25 years, until 2042 at least (cf. L. Harding (2010)).

swer.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Yatsenyuk became Prime Minister on 27 February 2014, the very day on which Russia intervened in Crimea. A coincidence?<sup>20</sup>

According to US Ambassador Freeman, “since about 2015 the United States has been arming, training Ukrainians against Russia.”<sup>21</sup> In late 2016, US Senators Lindsey Graham, John McCain and Amy Klobuchar visited the Donbas battlefield, where Senator Graham stated: “Your fight is our fight. 2017 will be the year of offense. All of us will go back to Washington, and we will push the case against Russia. Enough of Russian aggression. It is time for them to pay a heavier price.”<sup>22</sup> Because the Democrats lost the 2017 elections, the promised 2017 “offense” did not take place.

Since Joe Biden took office of the US President, he has used every opportunity to attack Russia and its President, thereby provoking reactions of the latter. When the Russian President learned that President Biden, in April 2021, agreed with the assertion of an interviewer that he was “a killer” and would have to “pay a price for having intervened in America’s elections,”<sup>23</sup> Putin alarmed the military and, within a few days, started assembling troops on the Ukrainian border and in Crimea.<sup>24</sup>

The developments which followed the April 2021 Biden’s Comment on Putin and the subsequent massive concentration of the Russian military forces at the Ukraine border, two quotations from a Financial Times article illustrate best:

“Blinken’s [US Secretary of State] words were the latest salvo in a high-stakes information war between Moscow and Washington over the fate of Ukraine—one that Joe Biden’s administration has openly embraced. Having been blindsided by

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<sup>19</sup> The Washington Post commented that in the conversation, *inter alia*, “Nuland also assessed the political skills of Ukrainian opposition figures with unusual candor and, along with the ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, debated strategy for their cause, laying bare a deep degree of U.S. involvement in affairs Washington says are Ukrainian’s to resolve”. Cf. V. Nuland (2022).

<sup>20</sup> Here again, Ambassador Freeman offers an interesting insight into the 2014 events: “Ukraine entered that sphere of influence [i.e. American, see *infra* European NATO Allies Under the Monroe Doctrine]; it was not neutral after 2014. That was the purpose of the coup, to prevent neutrality or a pro-Russian government in Kiev, and to replace it with a pro-American government that would bring Ukraine into our sphere [...], Russia reacted by annexing Crimea. Let me say about Crimea: of course, Russia reacted because its major naval base on the Black Sea is in Crimea; and the prospect that Ukraine was going to be incorporated into NATO and an American sphere of influence would have negated the value of that base” (Freeman Interview, *supra* No. 1, p. 5).

<sup>21</sup> Freeman Interview, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from Freeman Interview, *supra* No. 1, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> In fact, the US in April 2021 imposed new sanctions on Russia (cf. ‘Overload – Foreign policy under Joe Biden’, *The Economist*, 24 April 2021, p. 31).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. ‘Place your bets – Vladimir Putin is keeping the world guessing’, *The Economist*, 29 January 2022, p. 18.



Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea and its 2015 intervention in Syria,<sup>25</sup> Washington wants to dominate the narrative before any conflict breaks out.”

“A senior Biden administration official told the Financial Times that their purpose was to make an ‘invasion harder to execute, and then should it be executed, to make it harder to claim legitimacy’.”<sup>26</sup>

It stands out that the purpose was “to make an invasion harder to execute”, not to prevent it.<sup>27</sup>

Since the war started, efforts to end it by diplomacy have been practically non-existent. The frail neutrality plan of Ukraine President Zelensky, of which Russia, with some positive connotations, took note,<sup>28</sup> received no public feedback from official Washington, being seemingly at a “dead end”.<sup>29</sup> The Western press mainly either ignored or refused the plan. James Sherr, an American now Senior Fellow at the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, for instance, raised an astonishing argument against peace based on Ukrainian neutrality. Sherr argued, “Once Ukraine is formally at peace with Russia, who in the west will argue the case for providing more military support to Ukraine, keeping sanctions in place or raising the costs to Russia?”<sup>30</sup> Not a single word on what a prolonged war causes to Ukraine and its people!

Against this background, after the war started, former US Ambassador Freeman observed:

<sup>25</sup> This may be the reason, why President Biden uses extremely undiplomatic language whenever he speaks about president Putin (cf. J. Politi, ‘Biden’s Rhetoric Departs from Balancing Act over Russia – US Officials Backtrack after President Appears to Support Removal of Putin’, Financial Times, 28 March 2022, p. 3; see also H. Foy, B. Hall and N. Astrasheuskaya, ‘Macron eschews Biden’s Accusation of Genocide’, Financial Times, 14 April 2022, p. 3).

<sup>26</sup> J. Politi, A. Williams, M. Seddon and R. Olearchyk, ‘Biden’s information war with Putin: The US says it has published details intelligence about Russia’s military plans in order to make it harder to launch an eventual invasion of Ukraine. But some allies fear the tactics are exacerbating tensions’, Financial Times, 19/20 February 2022, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> In an interview given on 13 April 2022 to Robinson of Current Affairs, Prof. Noam Chomsky observed in that regard: “The Biden administration has seemed disinclined to pursue the possible diplomatic solutions since before the invasion.” Cf. N. Chomsky (2022).

<sup>28</sup> Putin’s Press Secretary said, neutrality for Ukraine based on the status of Austria or Sweden was a possibility (cf. M. Seddon, R. Olearchyk, A. Massoudi and N. Zilber, ‘Moscow and Kyiv explore neutrality plan’, Financial Times, 17 March 2022, p. 1).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. M. Seddon and H. Foy, ‘Putin says peace talks at a ‘dead end’ and trains sights on Ukraine land grab’, Financial Times, 25 April 2022, p. 1; and N. Astrasheuskaya and R. Olearchyk, ‘Putin Blames Kyiv After Peace Talks Reached ‘Dead End’’, Financial Times, 14 April 2022, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> J. Sherr, ‘Zelensky’s Muddled Neutrality Plan May Prove a Siren Song for Ukraine’, Financial Times, 4 April 2022, p. 19. Sherr also observed that it was no secret that “Kyiv’s terms were drawn up largely by Zelensky’s Presidential Office, with little input from the foreign and defence ministries. The stamp is all too visible” (*ibid.*).

“Everything we are doing, rather than accelerating an end to the fighting and some compromise, seems to be aimed at prolonging the fighting, assisting the Ukrainian resistance—which is a noble cause, I suppose, but that will result in a lot of dead Ukrainians as well as dead Russians. And, also, the sanctions have no goals attached to them. There’re no conditions which we’ve stated which would result in their end.”<sup>31</sup>

Freeman further points, “[...] the West was, basically, saying to President Zelensky ‘We will fight to the last Ukrainian for Ukrainian independence’, which was pretty cynical, despite all the patriotic fervor.”<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. European NATO Allies under the Monroe Doctrine

According to US Ambassador Freeman, the successful expansion of NATO, which incorporated all the countries right up to Russia’s and beyond them, brought all the NATO members into an American sphere of influence, which the US “modelled on the Monroe Doctrine”, and has applied it since then.<sup>33</sup> By applying the Monroe Doctrine,<sup>34</sup> the US claims the right to reject the interference of foreign nations in the sphere of its influence and in its own affairs,<sup>35</sup> i.e. the entire territory of NATO. Such foreign nations are primarily Russia and China. Since the notion of “interference” leaves room for broad interpretation, the limitation of the sovereignty of European NATO members “modelled on Monroe Doctrine” goes far beyond the issue of security, itself a flexible term. Whether this limitation of sovereignty is one in the sense of international public law or the sense of political sovereignty,<sup>36</sup> is left open. In any case, the idea of privileged states being entitled

<sup>31</sup> Freeman Interview, *supra* No. 1, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Freeman Interview, *supra* No. 1, p. 5. In an interview given on 13 April 2022, to Robinson of Current Affairs, Prof. Noam Chomsky stated in that regard: “Since the Second World War, the U.S. position was that Europe should fall within what’s called the Atlanticist framework, the native framework, which the U.S. runs. Europe should be subordinate to the United States.” (N. Chomsky, *supra* No. 27, p. 24). It appears at least doubtful, whether the proud Fins and Swedes, now candidates for NATO membership, are aware that by becoming a NATO member, they will also benefit from the Monroe Doctrine.

<sup>34</sup> Some details on the Doctrine named after the US President James Monroe, which was first articulated on 2 December 1823, in Wikipedia under Monroe Doctrine. Some authors characterise the Monroe Doctrine also as “Imperial Anti-Colonialism” (J. Sexton (2011), pp. 5–6).

<sup>35</sup> Cf., e.g., Remarks by President Trump to the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, on 25 September 2018, where he stated: “It has been the formal policy of our country since President Monroe that we reject the interference of foreign nations in this hemisphere and in our own affairs.”, <<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-73rd-session-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-ny/>> (last accessed 26 April 2022).

<sup>36</sup> See on this difference A. Verdross and B. Simma (1984), p. 33.

to intervene in their sphere of influence contradicts the principle of sovereign equality of all UN members under Article 2 (1) of the UN Charter. It is inept as a justification model, used in the past to circumvent the prohibition of intervention.<sup>37</sup> How the Monroe Doctrine works in practice, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz experienced in a February 2022 White House press conference. He silently listened to US President Biden when Biden answered a question from a journalist about how the US could bring the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline to an end, as the president argued, although “the project and the control of the project is within Germany’s control?”, simply with: “We will—I promise you—we’ll be able to do it.”<sup>38</sup>

## 5. The Quest for “Atlantic Solidarity”

That the US, working on isolating Russia, was not interested in an independent Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok, with no military alliance, a vision developed by Michail Gorbachev in 1991,<sup>39</sup> seems obvious. Likewise obvious appears that the US had no sympathy for either seeing the EU economically closely cooperating with Russia and China and becoming a global economic power and its serious competitor. President Trump made his aversion towards the EU public by calling Brexit “great” and the EU worse than China, only smaller. Further, by imposing higher customs duties on imported goods from Europe and threatening Europe with all sorts of sanctions, should it not follow US’s requests. It is also hard to believe that Ms Victoria Nuland, now chairing strategic meetings between the US and the European NATO allies, has changed her 2014 “appreciation” for the EU,<sup>40</sup> although she certainly conceals it more or less diplomatically.

American authors started more subtly to sow seeds of discord between the EU Member States. Jakub Grygiel, e.g. argued that:

“A Europe of newly assertive nation-states would be preferable to the disjointed, ineffectual, and unpopular EU of today. There are good reasons to believe that European countries would do a better job of checking Russia, managing the migrant crisis, and combating terrorism on their own than they have done under the auspices of the EU.”

<sup>37</sup> Cf. T. Stein, C. von Buttlar and M. Kotzur (2017), p. 245, also noting that the Doctrine had *ex post* been used to justify the 1968 intervention of the Warsaw Pact states in Czechoslovakia.

<sup>38</sup> Remarks by President Biden and Chancellor Scholz (2022).

<sup>39</sup> Cf., e.g., N. Chomski, *supra* No. 27, p. 23. Actually, Gorbachev only revived an idea President De Gaulle discussed with Nikita Khrushchev in 1960. De Gaulle said to Khrushchev: “The solution must be sought not in raising two monolithic blocks, one against the other, but on the contrary in working step by step towards *détente*, understanding and co-operation within a European framework. In this way, we shall create among Europeans, from the Atlantic to the Urals, new relationships, new ties, a new atmosphere” (C. de Gaulle, *supra* No. 11, p. 229).

<sup>40</sup> See *supra* No. 19 and the accompanying text.

Grygiel went even that far as to state:

“The United States, for its part, needs a better partner in Europe than the EU. As the union dissolves, NATO’s function in maintaining stability and deterring external threats will increase—strengthening Washington’s role on the continent.”<sup>41</sup>

President Biden has also been using all but gloves when dealing with the Europeans. When he decided to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, he had not consulted his European allies, whose troops were in Afghanistan based on NATO’s Article 5 Mutual Defence Clause—invoked by the US—following an assault on America (the 9/11 attack), not Europe.<sup>42</sup> Josep Borrell, the EU Foreign Affairs Chief, stated in the European Parliament that the US departure from Afghanistan was “a catastrophe for the Afghan people, for Western values and credibility and for the developing of international relations.”<sup>43</sup> Following the signing of the AUKUS Pact, France accused Washington of betrayal, Canberra of duplicity and London of opportunism and recalled its Ambassadors from the US and Australia. Thierry Breton, the EU’s Commissioner for Internal Market, warned that there was, “something broken in transatlantic relations.”<sup>44</sup>

I recall that the French President Emanuel Macron in 2019 saw Europe on “the edge of a precipice”. He stated, “If we don’t wake up [...] there’s a considerable risk that in the long run, we will disappear geopolitically or at least that we will no longer be in control of our destiny.” Macron deplored that there was “no co-ordination whatsoever of decision-making between the United States and its NATO allies. None.” The unilateral withdrawal of the US troops from Syria he called “the brain death of NATO.”<sup>45</sup> I also recall President Macron’s 2017 Sorbonne speech “Initiative for Europe – A Sovereign, United, Democratic Europe”,<sup>46</sup> in which he developed a vision for Europe. Macron stressed that Europe must guarantee every aspect of security. In defence, it needs to establish a common intervention force, a common defence budget and a common doctrine of action. The French President, *inter alia*, recalled the powerful words of Robert Schuman, who, on 9 May 1950, proposed to build Europe by stating: “A united Europe was not achieved and we had war.”<sup>47</sup> Speaking at the Elysée Palace on 28 September 2021, President Macron stated:

<sup>41</sup> J. Grygiel (2016), p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> E. Luce, ‘Biden’s America is confused – and so is the world’, *Financial Times*, 24 August 2021, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> E. Luce, ‘Biden’s Afghanistan fiasco’, *Financial Times*, 21/22 August 2021, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> J. Politi and A. Williams, M. Khan, S. Fleming and V. Pop, ‘EU official warns of ‘something broken’ in relations with US’, *Financial Times*, 22 September 2021, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> ‘A president on mission’, *The Economist*, 9 November 2019, pp. 17–18.

<sup>46</sup> Initiative pour l’Europe - Discours d’Emmanuel Macron pour une Europe souveraine, unie, démocratique, <<http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-d-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique>> (last accessed 13 April 2022).

<sup>47</sup> For more, see J. Straus (2018), pp. 100–102.

“We are forced to note that for a little more than 10 years now the US has put itself and its strategic interests first [...] We would be naive, or rather we would be making a terrible mistake, not to [...] grasp all of the consequences this has for ourselves. We need to react and show that we have the power and capacity to defend ourselves. Not escalating things but protecting ourselves.”<sup>48</sup>

## 6. The Remedy of “Institutionalised Forgetfulness”

Since 24 February 2022, the day Russia invaded Ukraine, Europeans, with the vigorous support of the US, have activated and programmed all available informational and perceptual filters, first, to wipe out the recollection of how, in the understanding of European leaders such as President Macron, the US in the past had treated its European NATO allies. Then, to praise and celebrate NATO’s unity and Atlantic solidarity. Solidarity in the context meant, the US delivering predominantly US weapons to Ukraine<sup>49</sup> and expecting/requesting Europeans to deliver not only weapons but also welcome and take care of millions of Ukrainian refugees, contribute to the Ukrainian budget, pledge to help in rebuilding the destroyed country, etc.<sup>50</sup>

Without the input of “institutionalised forgetfulness”, accepting such an enormous economic burden as a consequence of a war in whose genesis Europe had not participated, for European voters and taxpayers, although willing to offer every humanitarian

<sup>48</sup> Quoted from A. Gross and E. Varvitsioti, ‘Macron claims EU ‘naive’ over US interests – French leader calls on bloc to strengthen its defences in wake of Aukus deal’, *Financial Times*, 29 September 2021, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> On 6 April 2022, the US Senate adopted S.3522, an Act “To provide enhanced authority for the President to enter into agreement with the Government of Ukraine to lend or lease defense articles to that Government to protect civilian populations in Ukraine from Russian military invasion, and for other purposes.” – “Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022”. The Act was cleared by Congress on 28 April 2022 (cf. U.S. to lend and lease military supplies Ukraine under bill cleared by Congress, 28 April 2022. According to Section 2(a)(3) of the Act – ‘Conditions’ – “Any loan or lease of defense articles to the Government of Ukraine under paragraph (1) shall be subject to all applicable laws concerning the return of and reimbursement and repayment for defense articles loan or leased to foreign governments.”

<sup>50</sup> Grzegorz Kolodko, economics professor at Kozminski University in Warsaw and a former finance minister of Poland, offered a first idea on the Ukraine recovery costs. He suggests that the EU should create a special long-term financial vehicle—a European Fund for the reconstruction Ukraine and that successive multibillion-euro tranches should finance infrastructure investment and human capital development. Further, that Ukraine’s public debt, which at the end of 2021 amounted to about US \$ 94bn (some US \$ 57bn foreign debt) should be either to a large extent reduced or completely cancelled (‘Ukraine recovery needs debt write-off and help from EU and China’, *Financial Times*, 8 April 2022, p. 19).

help, especially to refugees, would be an unacceptable “overwhelming onslaught of their sensory stimuli”.

European politicians celebrating the “revived West” mirrored in their actions demonstrating unity and Atlantic solidarity as a consequence of the Ukraine war<sup>51</sup> should note what Prof. Chomsky says about the position of Europe as a result of the Russian attack on Ukraine.

“Putin did what every man of violence does: reach for the violent option, attack Ukraine with criminal aggression, and hand the United States on a silver platter its most fervent wish: *Europe deep in its pocket. More than ever before. The greatest gift that the Kremlin could have given Washington, while it stabs itself in the back. That’s called statesmanship. Okay. Quite apart from the criminal aggression.*”<sup>52</sup>

Being even “deeper in the pocket” of the “governor” of the Monroe Doctrine potentially constitutes the most recent and threatening piece of Europe’s “uncomfortable knowledge”.

So far, there are no signs that European leaders, enthusiastically celebrating the “re-gained” unity, realise that being deeper than before in the pocket of the US means being and becoming more dependent, not only in terms of defence and security but geopolitically and economically in general.<sup>53</sup> Deep in the pocket, the stick of the Monroe Doctrine is more “palpable” and the room left to manoeuvre, i.e. the sovereignty, even more limited. The “pocket” does not stand for a safe shelter in terms of security. Quite to the contrary, being in the “pocket”, Europeans have few chances to prevent the sparks of the war from reaching the territories of European NATO members if that would not suit the US strategy.<sup>54</sup>

## 7. The Problem of Double Standards and the Hypocrisies of Western Values

Firmly embedded in the pocket of the concealed interests of “Atlantic solidarity”, Europeans, with all available means, support Ukraine in defending the liberal international order against the Russian threat to a rule-based world. Europeans have also joined

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. G. Rachman, ‘Has War in Ukraine Revived the West?’, *Financial Times*, 16/17 April 2022, p. 5; also, ‘The Concert of Europe’, *The Economist*, 26 March 2022, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> N. Chomsky, *supra* No. 27, p. 24 (emphases added, J.S.).

<sup>53</sup> This transpired also from a statement President Biden made before a meeting with European NATO leaders. He told a group of US CEOs: “Now is a time when things are shifting. There’s going to be a new world order out there, and we’ve got to lead it. And we’ve got to unite the rest of the free world in doing it.” (cf. J. Politi and H. Foy, ‘Biden arrives in Europe on mission to keep western countries united’, *Financial Times*, 24 March 2022, p. 4).

<sup>54</sup> In fact, e.g. the US strategy of weapons supply to Ukraine is in a continuous flux (cf. F. Schwartz, ‘US Makes ‘Profound Shift’ on Weapons Supply to Kyiv’, *Financial Times*, 25 April 2022, p. 3).

the US calls to bring President Putin for committed war crimes before the International Criminal Court (ICC). Thereby they either do not know or do not admit to know (?), that the US, e.g. in the case of Serbia, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, has broken the rules of the liberal international order itself. The same applies to the fact that the US is not a Member State of the ICC because the US Senate refused to ratify the ICC Rome Statute to prevent the Court from prosecuting US soldiers for alleged crimes committed in, e.g., Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the US for years has been hindering the work of the judiciary system of the World Trade Organization (WTO) by blocking the work of the Appellate Body of its Dispute Settlement system.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, although these aspects do not enjoy much public attention in Europe, the war in Ukraine has again unveiled the problem of the applied double standards and the hypocrisies of western values.<sup>57</sup> As Edward Luce correctly observes, western values “will only endure if the West applies them to itself.” Therefore, “the US can no longer afford to be selective. Either everyone submits to the rules, or they will end up in history’s dustbin.”<sup>58</sup> Europeans “would be naïve, or rather would make a terrible mistake”, to paraphrase president Macron,<sup>59</sup> not to grasp that they themselves since long have been treated by the double standards and should, therefore, find a way out of the “pocket” as a matter of high priority.

<sup>55</sup> John Bolton, as the White House Security Advisor, in 2018 threatened the ICC Justices with a ban to enter the US, should they begin with investigations into alleged crimes committed by US soldiers in Afghanistan. That would interfere with the US sovereignty. Therefore, “we [the US] will let it [ICC] die on its own” (cf. D. Sevastopulo and M. Peel, ‘Bolton Threatens ICC with Sanctions’, *Financial Times*, 10 September 2018, p. 1).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. B.J. Condon (2018), pp. 535–556; and E.U. Petersmann (2018), pp. 103–122.

<sup>57</sup> On the problem of double standards and hypocrisy in the US foreign policy, cf. J. Ganesh, ‘The Ukraine conflict is not about democracy versus autocracy’, commenting the former US foreign policy: “The reality is that America had to be pragmatic to the point of amorality between 1945-1989-91. Pretending otherwise now is understandable enough as a piece of rhetoric. The danger is that a generation of policymakers actually comes to believe the wholesome cant that America saw off the Soviets by standing up for its values, or some such, and tries to repeat the trick today.” (*Financial Times*, 23 March 2022, p. 21); cf. also E. Luce, ‘Biden bets on democracy – facing competition from China and Russia, the White House is using summit with allies to outline a foreign policy that is built around liberal value. But will it end pushing autocracies closer together?’, *Financial Times*, 9 December 2021, p. 17.

<sup>58</sup> E. Luce, ‘US Can No Longer Afford to be Selective about Western Values’, *Financial Times*, 22 April 2022, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Quotation accompanying *supra* No. 45.

## 8. Assessing Risks and Opportunities of the Crisis’ Aftermath

### 8.1. *No End of the War in Sight*

Risks and opportunities for the EU in the aftermath of the crisis largely depend on how long the Ukraine war is going to continue. The prospects for a nearing end are grim, and the EU’s ability to influence the events is more than modest, not to say none. The vision of the former US Ambassador Freeman reads in this regard:

“And finally, we have people now, including the president of the United States and the prime minister of Great Britain, calling Putin a war criminal and professing that they intend to bring it to trial somehow. This gives Mr Putin absolutely no incentive to compromise or reach an accommodation with the Ukrainians, and it probably guarantees a long war. And there seems to be a lot of people in the United States who think that’s just dandy: it’s good for the military-industrial complex; it reaffirms our negative views of Russia; it reinvigorates NATO; it puts China on the spot. What’s so terrible about a long war? If you’re not Ukrainian, you probably see some merit in a long war.”<sup>60</sup>

Statements made by U.S. and U.K. officials confirm Freeman’s assumption of a long war. US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin, on 25 April 2022 stated in Kyiv: “We [the US] want to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can’t do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine.”<sup>61</sup> And on 27 April 2022, U.K. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, seconded: “Ukraine’s victory is a strategic imperative for all of us”. The West had to be “prepared for the long haul.”<sup>62</sup>

### 8.2. *Any Beneficiary(ies) of the War?*

It is difficult to believe that despite all the public attention that the war in Ukraine has attracted, the core question, who is (are) the actual beneficiary(ies) of that war, has practically not been raised.

The vastly devastated *Ukraine*, with thousands of casualties, a ruined economy, millions of refugees and an estimated financial need for its reconstruction alone of US \$ 750

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<sup>60</sup> Freeman Interview, *supra* No. 1, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted from J. Politi, F. Schwartz and R. Olearchyk, ‘US Wants Russia ‘Weakened’ and Orders Return of Diplomats’, *Financial Times*, 26 April 2022, p. 3. A commentator noted on the duration of Ukrainian war in *The Economist*: “Victory [of Ukraine] would revitalize democracy and might even bring down Mr. Putin. Mr. Biden, however, prefers the long game. Ukraine is bravely holding its ground. Russia is being weakened and China is paying a political cost for embracing Mr. Putin.” (‘The Revers Roosevelt Doctrine’, *The Economist*, 2 April 2022, p. 42).

<sup>62</sup> Quoted from ‘Pushing for ‘victory’’, *The Economist*, 30 April 2022, p. 20.



bn?<sup>63</sup> Even winning the war, i.e. regaining most of its territory, and achieving its strategic political goal, i.e. successful defence of independence, sovereignty, affiliation with the US sphere of influence, with the prospect of becoming a NATO member, i.e. enjoying the same sovereignty as other members, will hardly make Ukraine a true war beneficiary in the short and medium term. The longer the war lasts, the less so.

*Russia*, even if “winning” the war, e.g. by achieving some agreement on retaining Crimea and some compromise on Donbas? It will remain, for long, isolated from the rest of the Western world, economically, financially and geopolitically, with thousands of casualties, an enormously damaged economy, continuously threatened with new sanctions, which will not end by the end of the war, and condemned to be a pariah?

*The European Union*, no matter how the war may end? It is burdened with up to 10 million Ukrainian refugees, facing enormous energy costs, desperately searching for new suppliers for gas, oil and various other raw materials at much higher prices than before the crisis. Confronted with supply chain problems, inflation, negative consequences of sanctions imposed on Russia, etc.<sup>64</sup> Europe is supposed to bear the lion’s share of the costs directly incurred by the war in Ukraine.<sup>65</sup>

The war works, as Martin Wolf of the Financial Times put it, “Via five main channels: higher commodity prices; disruption of trade; financial instability; the humanitarian impact, above all millions of refugees; and the policy response, notably sanctions.”<sup>66</sup> This reflects, at a higher level of abstraction, the present and the after-crisis European problems. Europe does not appear a beneficiary, but, hopefully only, the economic loser of the war. What Wolf fails to address is, is there a beneficiary of the war, politically and economically.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. S. Fleming and R. Olearchyk, ‘Ukraine Estimates Recovery Will Cost \$ 750bn’, Financial Times, 5 July 2022, p.2; cf. also ‘The Builder’s Bill, the Ukrainian Economy is in Tatters and Much of its Infrastructure Wrecked. Setting things right could cost half a trillion dollars’, The Economist, 16 April 2022, p. 20.

<sup>64</sup> Some titles of articles published in the Financial Times may illustrate Europe’s situation: Ch. Giles, ‘Russian Export Curbs Raise Risk of Stagflation Across Europe’, Financial Times, 9 March 2022, p. 3; S. Pfeifer, *et al.*, ‘Grim Energy Outlook for European Industry: Sectors Including Aviation, Carmaking, Steel and Chemicals Braced for Closure After War Sends Oil and Gas Prices Higher’, Financial Times, 8 March 2022, p. 11; C. Giles, ‘Backlash Against Russia Threatens to Bring Hold to 30 Years of Trade Growth’, Financial Times, 6 April 2022, p. 3; T. Wilson, ‘Severe Growth Impact Protected if EU Succeeds in Braking Russian Gas Habit’, Financial Times, 8 April 2022, p. 9; J. Miller, A. Kazmin and S. Sciorilli Borrelli, ‘Germany Strikes Long-Term Gas Accord with Qatar’, Financial Times, 21 March 2022, p. 2; O. Storbeck, ‘Immediate Russian Gas Ban Would Cost Germany € 165 bn, Bundesbank Warns’, Financial Times, 23/24 April 2022, p. 1); H. Agnew, ‘Supply Chains, Ukraine Fallout – Onshoring Gains Grounds Globalization Grinds Halt’, Financial Times, 26/27 March 2022, p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *supra* No. 50, and text accompanying No. 63 *supra*. Cf. also S. Fleming and A. Bounds, ‘Yellen and IMF Urge Additional Financial Aid for Defenders’, Financial Times, 18 May 2022, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> M. Wolf, ‘Shocks from War in Ukraine are Many-Sided’, Financial Times, 27 April 2022, p. 17.

As regards *the United States*, the expectations of many Americans, who, according to Ambassador Freeman, assess a long war in Ukraine as good for the military-industrial complex, reaffirming their own negative views of Russia, reinvigorating NATO and putting China on the spot,<sup>67</sup> seem already fulfilled. President Biden has boosted the US military spending.<sup>68</sup> The defence stocks have outpaced the global market,<sup>69</sup> the US natural gas prices have surged,<sup>70</sup> and, e.g., the US oilfield services experience a US drilling boom.<sup>71</sup> Not surprisingly, some commentators see in the US “the ultimate winner of the war in Ukraine”.<sup>72</sup> This is even without taking into account that the US, thanks to the war, has in the “pocket” Europe deeper than ever before, and, most importantly, it has successfully accomplished its decades-long endeavour, to isolate Russia,<sup>73</sup> geopolitically, economically and financially.

### 8.3. *The “Secret” of the EU’s Silence*

Another, seemingly never, at least not in public, asked question of paramount importance for Europe’s prosperity and peace is that how could the leaders of the European Union and its Member States silently tolerate the strategic efforts of their most important NATO ally, on whose military might they depend, to isolate Russia? In other words, on purpose, since the 1990s working on cutting Europe’s economic ties with Russia and transforming Russia, first to an adversary and then to an enemy not only of the US but also of the EU.<sup>74</sup> The EU and Russia share a land border of some 1.900 km, and Russia has an extension of over 17 million km<sup>2</sup>, which stretches from Norway, Finland and the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and is a country with extremely rich natural resources. It needs technologies, which Europe can offer. Even without the experience of the adventures of Napoleon and the Nazi-Germany, every mindful and rational, prudently deliberating European should have understood that it is in his/her, *Europe’s (!)* very genuine interest

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<sup>67</sup> *Supra*, text accompanying No. 60.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. C. Smith and J. Politi, ‘Biden Plans Military Spending Surge in \$ 5.8 tn Budget Proposal’, *Financial Times*, 29 March 2022, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. S. Pfeifer and H. Klasa, ‘Defence Stocks Beat Global Indices on Expectations of Higher Spending’, *Financial Times*, 23/24 April 2022, p. 15; S. Chávez, ‘US Weapon Makers Face Battle to Meet Demand’, *Financial Times*, 10 May 2022, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. D. Brower, ‘US Natural Gas Prices Surge as Europe Spurns Russia Energy’, *Financial Times*, 6 May 2022, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. J. Jacobs and M. McCormick, ‘Oilfield Services Rebound in US Drilling Boom’, *Financial Times*, 3 May 2022, p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. J. Ganesh, ‘The US Will be the Ultimate Winner of the War in Ukraine’, *Financial Times*, 6 April 2022, p. 19.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. J. Baker’s 2002 publication (*supra* text accompanying Nos. 14 and 15).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. J. Baker, *ibid.*

not to have Russia as an adversary even less as an enemy. In particular, when that neighbour's and Europe's economies could/can complement each other. The best proof that this mutual economic interest had endured over more than a hundred years, i.e. survived a number of wars and ideological differences, is the successful engagement of the German Siemens AG, one of the world's largest industrial conglomerates, in Russia, which had lasted for over 170 years! Thanks to the "Atlantic solidarity", wrapped in sanctions on Russia and the war in Ukraine, Siemens is now definitively closing its Russia business!<sup>75</sup>

#### 8.4. *The Starting Point for the Assessment and the EU's Message to its Members, Allies and the Globe*

The assessment of risks and opportunities must depart from the established facts of "uncomfortable knowledge" as regards the "unity" and "Atlantic solidarity" before the Ukraine war started! There is no indication of any changes in that regard. Thus, the "social construction of ignorance" is reduced to the minimum, necessary for the functioning of the EU. "Institutionalised forgetfulness" and self-deception are entirely avoided. The ongoing crisis shows how dangerous and harmful they can be.

One core message of the EU to its Members must be the "*European solidarity*", with all of its attributes, including security and defence, comes first under all aspects! Especially the Baltic States and Poland reminded, firstly, that the decades they suffered under the Soviet regime had their origin in the conferences of Teheran and Yalta, where the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, without consulting Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, conceded Stalin the Soviet post-war dominance over Eastern Europe.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, they owe their economic prosperity and relative wealth to their integration into the EU, and the enormous economic support, that they have received from the EU, not from NATO, i.e. the U.S.! Thus, they have to stick unconditionally to the EU's legal order and to the EU's foreign and security policy and demonstrate unrestricted loyalty to Europe.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Siemens (2022).

<sup>76</sup> Frustrated that US President Roosevelt refused to consult him before meeting Stalin in Teheran in December 1943, Churchill later noted: "When I was at Teheran, I realized for the first time what a very small country this [UK] is. On the one hand, the big Russian bear with its paws outstretched – on the other hand the great American elephant – & between them the poor little English donkey – who is the only one that knows the right way home." (cf. Baham-Carter (2005), p. 202). To paraphrase Churchill and transfer his comments to the present, Europe between the US and Russia may be viewed at best as a donkey.

<sup>77</sup> Koen Lenaerts (2022, p. 23) makes this clear: "So, once a Member State makes the sovereign and free choice of being part of a structure of common governance, the *pacta sunt servanda* rule of international law applies: all the branches of government—including courts—have to comply with the common standards. There cannot be any unilateral break with the common rules, no matter how justified such break might seem from a purely national perspective."

For the EU and its Members, it is unacceptable to see their sovereignty significantly limited by the application of the Monroe Doctrine by the US. It seems doubtful that Finland and Sweden have realised that NATO membership is not about security and defence only, as stressed by President Biden welcoming the Finish President Sauli Niinistö and the Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson in Washington.<sup>78</sup> Equally, geopolitically and economically, even more important is the aspect that by becoming a member of NATO, their countries join the sphere of the US influence with all the consequences. Leaders of the EU should finally realise that it has been irresponsible to either not realise, or not to have the necessary courage, the gut, to make the NATO leader clear that Europe is not going to accept its efforts to isolate Russia (from whom and from what?). How could Europe ever accept the logic that a privileged state has the right to intervene, under the Monroe Doctrine, in an established relationship of a NATO ally with a third party and request to terminate it as dangerous and harmful?<sup>79</sup> Although knowing that the potential harm will result from the fact that that privileged state has successfully transformed the third party into Europe’s adversary and enemy?

### 8.5. *The Aftermath Risks*

Some risks for the EU in the aftermath of the crisis are already visible. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and even more so the ongoing Ukraine war, the EU and its Member States have accumulated an enormous debt rising on a daily basis and have had to battle with the highest rate of inflation since more than 40 years. The near- and at least medium-term perspectives are grim for both the debt and the inflation, where the EU has not yet developed clear exit plans.<sup>80</sup> For Europe, integrated in and strongly depending on the globalised economy, supply chain problems resulting in the tendency of companies to pull back from global supply chains<sup>81</sup> severely endanger its position as a global economic power.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. J. Politi, ‘Biden Vows Security for Finland and Sweden’, *Financial Times*, 20 May 2022, p. 2. What NATO security under its existing defence plans offers in practical terms to the three Baltic states, according to a recent statement of the Estonian prime minister Kaja Kallas, was to allow them to be overrun before liberating them after 180 days. Kallas said: “If you compare the size of Ukraine and the Baltic countries, it would mean the complete destruction of countries and our culture.” (cf. R. Milne and S. Fleming, ‘Estonia fears being wiped from map’, *Financial Times*, 23 June 2022, p. 2. That statement reminds one of what de Gaulle told Eisenhower in 1960) (see *supra* text accompanying No.11).

<sup>79</sup> The US Ambassador Freeman, who sees the Ukraine war as a US-Russia conflict, makes the point: “It’s not Russia versus Europe. So, in this context, why would a great power [Europe] that values its cooperation with Russia want to alienate Russia?” (Freeman Interview, *supra* No. 1, p. 9).

<sup>80</sup> Cf., e.g., G. Chazan, ‘Germany warns EU to rein in spending’, *Financial Times*, 23 May 2022, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Cf., e.g., B. Masters, ‘Fink Says War has Finished Off Globalization’, *Financial Times*, 25 March 2022, p. 8; also R. Foroohar, ‘Davos and the New Era of Deglobalisation’, *Financial Times*, 23 May

A challenge, if not even a threat for the EU and its Member States, constitutes the US strategy to contain China and decouple its allies from China. That could result in a divided global economy, forcing American partners to choose between the US and China.<sup>82</sup> That the US is working to ensure that its partners will share and support its strategy to contain and isolate China is apparent.<sup>83</sup> Also apparent should be that the US strategy implies all sorts of sanctions against China, which Europe would have to follow, although they may have a detrimental impact on EU's economic position. The US and its European allies should not forget the warning of the former US Secretary of State James Baker of 2002,<sup>84</sup> as regards the potential consequences of such endeavour. In any case, Europe should timely develop strategies on how to react to sanctions demands. It should not shy away from making it clear that it will retaliate if needed. It should never accept measures having asymmetric effects.

The EU should also closely monitor developments in the ongoing “financial warfare” in which the US has developed “the powers to act as the global financial police”.<sup>85</sup> The sanctions imposed in this warfare generated great economic pain, which, however, affected Europe much harder than the US.<sup>86</sup> It is premature to say whether the ongoing financial warfare and a substantially weaker EU could make Euro a target to attack its position as an important international reserve currency. From the history, we know that the British Pound Sterling lost its international reserve currency role to the US Dollar between World War I and World War II as a result of geopolitical changes and the changes in economic balance. Thereby the British World War I debt from the “Lend-Lease” Agreement with the US played a significant role.<sup>87</sup>

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2022, p. 21.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. E. Luce, ‘Biden’s China Strategy Cannot Work with Weapons Alone’, *Financial Times*, 18 May 2022, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. D. Sevastopulo, ‘Biden’s Lopsided China Strategy’, *Financial Times*, 27 April 2022, p. 15.

<sup>84</sup> See *supra* Nos. 14 and 15.

<sup>85</sup> V. Pop, S. Fleming and J. Politi, ‘The New Era of Financial Warfare: From 9/11 to Russia’, *Financial Times*, 7 April 2022, p. 17.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. V. Pop, *et al.*, *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Cf. on these developments M. Hudson, *supra* No. 11, pp. 75–117. As Hudson notes, to Britain the fact was critical “that the US Government insisted that wartime Lend-Lease support must stop with the end of hostilities.” By amending the Lend-Lease Act in April 1945, US Congress prohibited the President from promising “post-war relief, post-war rehabilitation or post-war reconstruction” (*ibid.*, p. 113). Hudson starkly comments the causes of the end of Britain’s economic power with the words: “What Germany as foe had been unable to accomplish in two wars against Britain, the United States accomplished with ease as its ally.” (*ibid.*, p. 117). Hudson’s book should be made mandatory reading for European politicians and bureaucrats responsible for economic and legal affairs. Only a detailed knowledge of how the US had treated European allies in financial affairs in the past can prevent naïve and illusionary European approaches in the aftermath of the crisis.

## 8.6. *The Aftermath Opportunities*

Nobody knows how the US led the “new World order”, announced and planned by President Biden,<sup>88</sup> will look like once the Ukraine war is over and the COVID-19 pandemic is defeated. In any case, it is relatively safe to assume that for the reasons discussed, at that point in time, if nothing very unpredictable happens, Europe will be economically much weaker than before the crisis. This, however, does not mean it could not use the opportunity of the imminent global political changes to strengthen its global position by consolidating its Member States firm commitment to the Union and *overhaul its legal foundations and its foreign and security policy*. In an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg from The Atlantic, in November 2016, the former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, by stating, *inter alia*,

“Today, a standard statement is that when Europe is weak, it cannot conduct great foreign policy, therefore it must be, at a minimum, economically cohesive. That is only partially true. At the end of World War II, when Europe was exhausted and devastated, they produced Adenauer [in Germany] and Schuman [in France] and De Gasperi [in Italy]. They had a vision. Now, their successors risk transforming their vision into a bureaucracy.”<sup>89</sup>

indirectly indicated that a vision is necessary to master such unfavourable conditions.

Less than a year later, the then new French President Emmanuel Macron, on 7 May 2017 in his Sorbonne speech titled Initiative for Europe—A Sovereign, United, Democratic Europe,<sup>90</sup> developed what Kissinger called for, namely the “vision for Europe”. President Macron addressed in his initiative altogether six key aspects of European sovereignty—security, migration challenge, focus on Africa and the Mediterranean, Europe exemplary in sustainable development, Europe’s innovation and regulation adapted to the digital world and Europe standing as an economic and monetary power. At the centre of his considerations, however, stood the aspect of security. He explicitly emphasized that

*“In defence, Europe needs to establish a common intervention force, a common defence budget and a common doctrine for action. We need to encourage the implementation of the European Defence Fund and Permanent Structured Cooperation as quickly as possible and to supplement them with a European intervention initiative enabling us to better integrate our armed forces at every stage.”*<sup>91</sup>

Deplorably, the security aspect addressed so energetically by President Macron found little, if any, attention. Others, however, especially the problem of migration challenge,

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<sup>88</sup> See *supra* No. 53; and G. Rachman (2022) [2].

<sup>89</sup> J. Goldberg (2016).

<sup>90</sup> See *supra* No. 46.

<sup>91</sup> English Synthesis of the Speech provided by the Élysée <<https://www.elysee.fr/admin/upload/default/0001/03/76ee524bea17f6c386a5f2a99a00d142cf94436a.pdf>> (last accessed 24 May 2022). [emphases in the original].

were broadly discussed.<sup>92</sup> France's EU partners failed to understand the danger of the precarious security dependence of Europe on NATO. Also, Macron's "wake-up calls" of the last years received no adequate feedback from EU partners. The aftermath of the crisis, whose causes and results should finally wake up the EU, is a unique opportunity to take up President Macron's 2017's ideas and subject them to a thorough analysis. There is no doubt that sovereignty and independence are those two attributes of the European Union, which are in urgent need of being adapted to the prevailing and predictable circumstances.

Such an overhaul will require an overall revision of the TEU and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), overdue to improve the EU's functionality. The revised laws should avoid any "unmeetable demands for ethical rationality" because such demands generate laws which in the past turned out to be largely dysfunctional.<sup>93</sup> Instead, rational, value-based pragmatism should be the principle of preference. A priority in the efforts for the revision of the TEU and TFEU is the progress braking/preventing *principle of unanimity*, which enables to veto important decisions of the EU by a single Member State. Therefore, the Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi recently proposed the EU to abandon the requirement of unanimity for most common foreign and security policy decisions.<sup>94</sup> This proposal merits the unconditional support of all EU Members committed to the idea of the EU and is concerned with its future.

As it stands, the EU's Security and Defence Policy has neither a common Union defence policy nor a common defence. As Article 42 (2) TEU provides, a "Common Union Defence Policy is at a stage of progressive framing," which "will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides." However, even if that, for the time being, unlikely decision would be adopted, it would not directly result in a "common defence". The latter would require, on the one hand, a respective recommendation of the European Council and, on the other hand, a subsequent adoption of all Member States "in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements". Thus, the "common defence policy", still being at a stage of progressive framing" (!), is already a union *competence*, the "common defence", however, not even that!<sup>95</sup> The TEU

<sup>92</sup> See for more J. Straus, No. 47, pp. 100–101.

<sup>93</sup> Duncan Kennedy argues, "politics is law by other means, in the sense that politics flows as much from the unmeetable demands for ethical rationality in the world as from the economic interests or pure power lust with which it is so often discursively associated." ("The Globalization of Law and Legal Thoughts: 1850-2000", in D.M. Trubek and A. Santos (eds.) (2006), p. 72). EU's legal order is full of regulations and directives which, at least in part, pursue "unmeetable demands for ethical rationality", e.g., in the area of migration or border control, which, therefore, cannot achieve their goals.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. A. Kazmin, S. Fleming and A. Bounds, 'Draghi Urges End to Vetoes on EU Security', Financial Times, 4 May 2022, p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. M. Kellerbauer, M. Klamert and J. Tomkin (eds.) (2019), Article 42 (by T. Ramopoulos), marginal note 15, pp. 279–280.

fails to define the meaning of the two terms. However, “common defence”, according to a view expressed in the legal doctrine, would require “a qualitatively different level of integration going beyond that set forth in the TEU and TFEU”. For instance, it should entail integrated armed forces of the Union.<sup>96</sup> In other words, it would require what President Macron had proposed in 2017.

For the EU to base its sovereignty and independence claim on common defence, it should, first, delete the unanimity requirement in Article 42 (2) TEU. Next, a revision of Article 42 (2) (2) should follow. Instead, to provide that the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy not to prejudice the specific character of the Security and Defence Policy of EU NATO Members, and respect their obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty and be compatible with NATO’s common security and defence policy, EU NATO members should comply with EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy rules. Otherwise, even if once the EU Common Security and Defence Policy is established, it would be subordinate to the NATO rules, cementing a not acceptable limitation of EU’s sovereignty.

Finally, also the provision of Article 42 (7) (2) TEU cannot pass the EU’s “sovereignty test” because it sets forth that for the EU NATO Members, the NATO Treaty “remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation.” Thus, NATO does not complement the EU’s security and defence, but in truth, entirely dominates it. In future, the reverse should be the case!

In the past, in the EU, the view had prevailed that its security and defence depended on the US military might due to the insufficient military capabilities of the EU Member States. President Macron’s repeated wake-up calls and his “rhetoric about EU sovereignty, strategic autonomy and European armies” some commentators characterised as having “a phantasy quality”. This is because “in the reality the EU is still a long way from having the spending power, the structures or the shared vision to turn ideas into reality.”<sup>97</sup> Many politicians, especially in Germany, shared that view.

Why could the aftermath of the crisis be the right point in time, to paraphrase President Macron, to react and show that Europe has the power and capacity to defend itself—without escalating things but protecting itself?<sup>98</sup> The circumstances of the Ukraine war made the EU and its Members aware that relying on the US military might and neglecting security and defence was irresponsible. This led to a radical change in defence policy and to a substantial increase in military expenditures in Europe. Even Germany, for a number of reasons for long reluctant to invest heavily in defence, decided to put an amount of EUR 100 billion into a special fund for improving the defence capabilities of its armed forces. Moreover, it also pledged to comply with its NATO obligation to

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> G. Rachman, ‘Europe Still Lacks a Unifying Vision’, *Financial Times*, 28 September 2021, p. 19.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. text accompanying *supra* No. 48.



spend per annum 2% of the GDP.<sup>99</sup> The EU Commission has put forward a number of initiatives in areas critical for defence and security within the EU. They relate to conventional defence industry and equipment on land, sea and air, as well as to cyber, hybrid and space threats, military mobility, etc.<sup>100</sup> The EU Commission has adopted measures for investing in defence research. End of 2022, the European Defence Fund (EDF) will have invested EUR 1.9 billion in defence research and capability development projects. For the first time, the EU Commission is also planning to spend EUR 500 million of EU taxpayer money on the joint procurement for the weaponry of the Member States. In the wake of the Ukrainian war, the EU Member States raised their collective military budgets by more than EUR 200 billion.<sup>101</sup>

It may appear as a paradox that improved security and defence capabilities of the EU resulting from the experience with the Ukraine war may lay the foundations for the EU to regain sovereignty and independence and get rid of, or at least essentially reduce its exposure to the Monroe Doctrine of the NATO leader. It is time for the EU, having a population of some 447 million, military personnel of about 1.2 million, and expenditures for the armed forces in excess of EUR 264 billion, to organise its security and defence adequately. The EU should let the US “Elephant”, the Russian “Bear”, and the Chinese “Panda” know that it claims the status of an “*equal animal*” in the “*animal stables*” of the Globe, but it must also act and behave accordingly. The EU must finally reach a state of *Enlightenment* and leave behind its self-incurred immaturity.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Cf. J. Miller and E. Solomon, ‘German Defence Sector Puts Foot on the Gas’, *Financial Times*, 2 March 2022, p. 9; and ‘Ploughshares to Swords: A Risk-Averse Germany Reluctantly Enters an Age of Confrontation’, *The Economist*, 19 March 2022, pp. 19–21. Also, Denmark and Poland, and other EU Members are increasing their armed forces expenditure (cf., e.g., A. Spalinger, U. von Schwerin, K. Büchenbacher and J. Monn (2022)).

<sup>100</sup> Commission Press Releases IP/22/924 and Quand A/22/1045 (2022).

<sup>101</sup> Cf. H. Foy, ‘Brussels plans to help finance joint weapons procurement by states’, *Financial Times*, 20 July 2022, p. 2; and S. Pfeifer and H. Foy, ‘Europe’s war dividend’, *Financial Times*, 19 July 2022, p. 15. Pfeifer and Foy report also on fears of European manufacturers that Europe will spend much of the funds in the US, and on quite unbelievable lack of consistency of military equipment in the EU Member States (e.g. 17 different main battle tanks, 29 different naval frigates or destroyers!).

<sup>102</sup> A critical analysis of the EU’s present behavior leads one to the conclusion that it has not yet reached the state of the Enlightenment, which Immanuel Kant in 1794 defined as follows: “Enlightenment is the emancipation of man from a state of self-imposed tutelage [...] of incapacity to use his own intelligence without external guidance. Such a state of tutelage I call ‘self-imposed’ if it is due, not to lack of intelligence, but to lack of courage or determination to use one’s own intelligence without the help of a leader [...] *Sapere aude!* Dare to use your own intelligence! This is the battle-cry of the Enlightenment.” (From Karl Popper, ‘Immanuel Kant: The Philosopher – A lecture to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kant’s death’, reprinted in Karl Popper, *In Search for a Better World*, Routledge, London and New York 1994 (2000), pp. 126 et seq., at 128). The EU and its Members should also heed the warning of Kant: “May God protect us from our friends [...] For

## 9. How to Reach the Aftermath of the Crisis?

The aim of this contribution has been to find out how the EU could be best prepared in the aftermath of the crisis to identify and master the potential risks reliably, as well as to identify the opportunities and see how to exploit them at best. Neither the causes of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian war nor their management and their solution has been explicitly addressed. However, to deal with the addressed risks and opportunities in practice, the war must find an end. Neither the parties directly involved in the armed conflict nor their engaged supporters show a clear will to end the conflict. One cynic could assume that they want to confirm the cynical comment of the US Ambassador Freeman, that they “will fight to the last Ukrainian for Ukrainian independence”.<sup>103</sup> Thus, continuing the harm and increasing the costs, including those of the EU, although the latter never had a realistic opportunity to have any independent impact on this armed conflict.

Now the Italian Government decided to take the initiative. On 19 May 2022, it presented to António Gutierrez, the Secretary General of the UN, a four-point peace plan. According to the plan, its first stage should achieve a ceasefire and the demilitarisation of the front lines. In the second, Ukraine should acquire a neutral status (compatible with its accession to the EU), with security guaranteed by a group of countries not yet identified. Details discussed in a peace conference. The third stage should encompass a bilateral agreement between Russia and Ukraine and should clarify the future of Crimea and Donbas. Finally, as a fourth and last stage, a new multilateral agreement on peace and security in Europe, in the context of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), and the EU’s neighbourhood policy, is proposed. It should reassess international equilibrium, starting with the relationship between the EU and Russia.<sup>104</sup>

The chances of the Italian plan, which should be welcome by all, especially by the EU and its Member States, however, seem modest. For whatever reason, except from President Macron, European politicians until now have shown little if any sympathy for an attempt to put on solid legal ground the unsettled situation which European countries, including Russia, “inherited” at the “informal” end of the Cold War. They seemingly fail to realise that a peace treaty modelled according to those of Westphalia of 1648 and Vienna of 1815, not that Versailles of 1919 if held on time, could have prevented the catastrophe we witness now. It would be a tragedy if the European Union and

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there are fraudulent and perfidious so-called friends who are scheming for our ruin while speaking the language of good will.” (cf. K. Popper, *ibid.* p. 127).

<sup>103</sup> See *supra* accompanying text of No. 32.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. 24ORE (2022); cf. also E. Sylvers (2022).

its Member States failed to realise that enduring peace and prosperity in Europe cannot be achieved without Russia and, even less so, against Russia.<sup>105</sup>

Karl Popper, in April 1992, ended an interview with *Der Spiegel*, in which they discussed “Waging Wars for Peace”, today an even more than then topical subject, with the following remark: “Optimism is a duty. One must focus on the things that need to be done and for which one is responsible. What I have said in this interview is meant to make you vigilant. We must live so that our grandchildren have a better life than ours—and not just in an economic sense.”<sup>106</sup> Indeed, we should never give up optimism, but rather work hard to justify it!

## 10. Epilogue

The assessment of risks and opportunities of the EU after the crisis in this contribution rests on an analysis of EU’s “uncomfortable knowledge” as identified in historical retrospective. Conceptualised as a conference introductory lecture, it by necessity does not cover all facts, i.e. “things the EU knows but does not admit to know”. The recently published book by Klaus von Dohnanyi *Nationale Interessen: Orientierung für deutsche und europäische Politik in Zeiten globaler Umbrüche* (National Interests: Orientation for German and European Politics in Times of Global Upheavals), Siedler publisher in the Penguin Random House Group, Munich 2022, constitutes a perfect complement in that regard. Von Dohnanyi, a former German Minister, Mayor of Hamburg, and close aid to the late Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, offers an impressive first-hand analysis of the respective developments spanning over many decades. The book is a “Spiegel-Bestseller”, but its content and analysis have remained practically unnoticed, ignored by the German mainstream media and politicians. Best proof that it reveals and analyses “uncomfortable knowledge”, and that the “institutionalised forgetfulness” is efficiently working.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. J. Straus, *supra* No. 47, p. 103; N. Chomsky, *supra* No. 27, p. 23, who emphasised that the Vienna Treaty “accommodated all of the warring powers, including the defeated power, which had been the aggressor in recent years, namely the Napoleon France, which had virtually conquered Europe. So, they accommodated France within the peace treaty. And that led to a century of pretty much peace.” US Ambassador Freeman, *supra* No. 1, p. 7, opined, that “from the very beginning the solution [of the Ukrainian conflict] had been obvious, which is some variant of the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, meaning a guaranteed independence in return for two things: one, a decent treatment of minorities inside the guaranteed state; and second, neutrality for the guaranteed state.”

<sup>106</sup> K. Popper (1994). Popper’s then suggestion that to prevent a nuclear war, “We should try to cooperate so actively in this *pax Americana* that it becomes a *pax civilitatis*” (*ibid.*, p. 120), because this were simply what the situation requires for the survival of mankind, seems naïve already for that time, it is certainly illusory today.

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### **Evropska unija po krizi: tveganja in priložnosti – problema »neprijetnega spoznanja« in »institucionalizirane pozabljivosti«**

Kriza, ki sta jo povzročili vojna v Ukrajini in pandemija covid-19, je najresnejši izziv za Evropo po drugi svetovni vojni. Stopnja ogroženosti evropske varnosti zaradi krize je brez primere. Ni mogoče napovedati, kdaj in kako se bo kriza končala. Vendar ne glede na njen konec pa ni dvoma, da bo Evropi povzročila stroške v višini več sto milijard, če ne celo nekaj tisoč milijard evrov, torej bo resno škodila in oslabila evropsko gospodarstvo ter ogrozila položaj Evrope kot svetovne gospodarske sile. Posledice se bodo kazale tudi v korenitih spremembah mednarodnih gospodarskih in političnih odnosov. Za Evropsko unijo bi moralo biti iskanje in oblikovanje racionalnih ter učinkovitih rešitev za uspešno politično in ekonomsko obvladovanje posledic krize prednostno, in sicer takoj za neverjetno zahtevnimi prizadevanji za obvladovanje sedanje krize. Pandemija covid-19 in vojna v Ukrajini sta EU presenetili. Evropa bi se morala taki izkušnji v prihodnje izogniti. Ne glede na to, kako se bo ta kriza končala, bo treba za obvladovanje njenih posledic ter prepoznavanje zadevnih tveganj in priložnosti EU začeti ugotavljati, kdo je imel od krize največjo korist. To ne bo mogoče z omejevanjem aktivnosti na tekoče posle, kot so iskanje novih dobaviteljev surovin in energije, harmonizacija fiskalnih pravil, zagotavljanje potrebnih sredstev za obvladovanje finančne krize itd. Za iskanje rešitev za trajnostni mir v Evropi bo potreben veliko širši vizionarski pristop. Izogibati se je treba izidu, kot je Versajska pogodba. Treba je preprečiti, da bi današnji »zaspanci«, torej tisti, ki ignorirajo »neprijetna spoznanja«, dopustili, da Evropa zdrsne v tretjo svetovno vojno. EU bi morala vsem svojim članicam jasno sporočiti, da je za Evropo »evropska solidarnost« z vsemi svojimi lastnostmi jedro resničnih interesov EU, vključno z interesi varnosti in obrambe. To bo zahtevalo tudi spremembe v Pogodbi o EU in Pogodbi o delovanju EU, obravnavane v prispevku. Če tega ne bo, EU in njene Članice nikoli ne bodo dosegle statusa »enakopravnih živali« v globalnem smislu – se pravi, da ne bodo postale resnično suverene in neodvisne.

**Ključne besede:** Evropska unija, NATO, covid-19, Ukrajina, skupna zunanja in varnostna politika, finančna kriza.

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### **The European Union after the Crisis: Risks and Opportunities—The Problem of “Uncomfortable Knowledge” and “Institutionalised Forgetfulness”**

The crisis caused by the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic constitutes the most serious challenge for Europe since World War II. The crisis threatens Europe’s security and economy to an unprecedented level. No prediction on when and how the crisis will end is possible. However, irrespective of its end, there is no doubt that for Europe, it will generate costs amounting to several hundreds of billions if not even some trillions of Euros, i.e. seriously harm and weaken the European economy and endanger Europe’s position as a global economic power. It will also result in fundamental changes of international economic and political relations. Searching for, working on and designing rational and effective solutions to successfully master the aftermath of the crisis politically and economically should have a priority for the European Union, coming next only to the incredibly challenging efforts to master the ongoing crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic as well as the war in Ukraine caught the EU by surprise and unprepared. Europe should avoid such an experience in the future. Regardless of how this crisis will end, mastering its aftermath and identifying the respective risks and opportunities of the EU will have to start with identifying the main beneficiary(ies) of the crisis and analysing its (their) treatment of the EU and its Member States before and during the crisis. This will not be possible by limiting the actions to the day-to-day business, such as finding new suppliers for raw materials and energy, harmonising fiscal rules, providing the necessary funds to master the financial crisis, etc. A much broader visionary approach will be necessary to find solutions for sustainable peace in Europe. An outcome such as that of the Treaty of Versailles should be avoided. One should prevent the “sleepwalkers” of today, i.e. those ignoring the “uncomfortable knowledge”, letting Europe slide into World War III. The EU should make it clear to all of its Members, for Europe, the “European Solidarity”, with all of its attributes, constitutes the core of the EU’s genuine interests, including those of security and defence. This will require also amendments of the TEU and TFEU discussed in this paper. Otherwise, the EU and its Members will never acquire the status of an equal animal—in the global context—i.e. become truly sovereign and independent.

**Key words:** European Union, NATO, COVID-19, Ukraine, common foreign and security policy, financial crisis.



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