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THE POWER OF THE SUPERPOWERLESS

by Kalypso Nicolaidis

ESOP, THE MOST POPULAR storyteller of ancient Greece, told the tale of the fox and his beautiful tail.[1] One day, to the fox's horror, a hunter shoots off his tail. The fox does not know which is worse, the pain or the shame. Then he hatches a plan. Proudly he rejoins his friends and announces that he has got rid of his cumbersome and impractical tail. Soon, there are no tails left in the land of the fox.

It is no wonder that Robert Kagan's seminal 2002 essay struck a chord in Europe, where commentators since then have competed to prove him wrong with ever greater vehemence in the wake of the war in Iraq.[2] Kagan assumed that Europeans, brandishing an external policy that seems devoid of all forms of real power, are, like Aesop's fox, simply making a virtue out of necessity. Having lost their power and appetite for war, addicted to welfare state spending and unable to muster the political will to rebuild a credible military capacity, European leaders present their meek civilian power as the ideal instead of the default option it really is. Accordingly, Europeans, rather than humbly and gratefully accepting that their Kantian paradise can only survive in a

Hobbesian world thanks to American military strength, fool themselves into believing that their own naive view of international affairs can and should prevail—thus assuming away the huge power differential that now exists between the two sides of the Atlantic. To many in the United States, Europe is not only irresponsible, indecisive, and irrelevant but also hypocritical.

Of course, Europeans must acknowledge that Kagan's view is right on many counts: that successfully building a zone of peace on their continent colors the way most of them see the world, that Europeans have achieved this peace under the umbrella of the U.S. security guarantee in the past half century, that the end of the Cold War has given Europe a peace dividend in contrast to continued military buildup for the United States, that there are places and instances in the rest of the world where the occasional use of military force by outside actors may be legitimate, and that they, the Europeans, have been unable as of yet to forge a meaningful post–Cold War strategy because of their disagreement over what such use of force means for them in practice.

But what if, beyond these undeniable facts, the tailless fox had a point? What if Europe's story of peace building had more relevance for the rest of the world than the U.S. story of liberal imperialism? What if *not to be the superpower*—or even *a* superpower—was itself the key to Europe's international influence? There is no single narrative in Europe to describe and guide this alternative project. Instead there are debates about a new European Constitution, a new European army, a new European agricultural policy, and, yes, a new transatlantic bargain. Make no mistake: at the dawn of the third millennium, Europe is reinventing itself as a global actor.

The paradox is as follows: for all its brilliant insight, Kagan's essay failed to carry through his own ultimate logic. Kagan believes that material conditions determine the ideological superstructure: the European view of international relations is the reflection, albeit mythologized, of Europe's weakness and its place in the balance of power. Moreover, in this classic (Marxist-realist) logic, European consciousness is blind to the very conditions that have led it to believe in the effectiveness of law and negotiation in the conduct of international affairs.[3] Yet in the end Kagan calls for Europeans to overcome their

psychology of weakness and share the burden of global coercive leadership with the United States.[4] This is not a contradiction, as his critics too easily like to point out, if one believes that free agency can transcend determinism. And Kagan does recognize that the ideological gap between Europe and America has its own role to play in explaining the rift. But then because this gap is a function of power differentials, the circle is complete: weakness causes Europe's vision, which justifies its weakness.

If the psychology of nations matters, would it not be more consistent to take the Europeans' claim to relevance seriously? Why assume that causality runs only in one direction, that the ideas Europeans hold about the world are only a product and not a cause of its military weakness? If the latter can be the case, why assume a lack of self-consciousness on the part of Europeans? Why assume that there are no other bases for Europe's philosophy and behavior than power—or lack thereof? Why assume that in the post–Cold War era, Europeans would want, if they only could, to compete militarily with the United States? And why assume that in the rest of the world beyond "the West," a world presumably weaker than Europe itself, the materialist logic of history generally prevails over the institutionalist-idealist logic expounded by Europeans?

When Vaclav Havel wrote *The Power of the Powerless* twenty years ago, he may not have predicted the Velvet Revolution of 1989. But he described a world vying under an oppressive superstructure, where the capacity to connect and communicate with others, the creation of networks of understanding and signs of mutual recognition between apparently powerless individuals shaped an alternative reality where the long hand of the communist state had little purchase. Could the Europeans similarly yield their ultimate from exploiting the potentails of being superpowerless?

My aim in this chapter is to suggest that, whatever its own reckoning with the ambitions of superpowerhood, the United States would greatly benefit from a new division of labor with Europe, grounded on a recognition of the latter's comparative advantage; the real question is whether Europe will want to play. Such comparative advantage rests on three premises that build on and diverge from Kagan's account.

First, today's Europe is no longer Kantian by necessity, as Aesop and Kagan would have it, but by choice. The widening divide between the United States and Europe should not be attributed to some born-again European naïveté about power. Rather the divide is both less and more acute. It is less acute because most Europeans harbor little doubt about the relevance of power to world affairs, in all its forms. Conversely, most Americans believe in multilateral institutions.[5] The divide is more acute, because the European Union (EU), which increasingly shapes Europe's role in the world, is such a radically different entity from the United States.

Second, the rest of the world, far from being Hobbesian, is attuned to this European choice because both power and purpose matter in international relations: legitimacy translates power into effectiveness. In such a world, the promise held up by the "European difference" is great and lies in the legitimacy of the narrative of projection that the European Union seeks to deploy, that is, the consistency between its internal and external praxis and discourse. EU-topia is relevant beyond the shores of its own paradise.

Third, perhaps spurred by the fallout of the Yugoslav wars, 9/11, the Iraq conflict, and Europe's own divisions, Europeans are finally starting to engage in a debate not only on how the use of military power fits the European Union's raison d'être but on the relevance of power to the European project. It has been one of Kagan's great merits to expose the unspoken prejudices, implicit assumptions, and unresolved tensions underlying this debate in Europe.

THE KANTIAN CHOICE

The European Union, like the United States, was born in opposition to empire. But unlike the United States, this opposition was grounded in a colonial past, that of its constituent member states, which rendered suspect any talk of a civilizing mission as a basis for acting in the world. Indeed, the colonial notion of Europe as a vanguard that may have something to teach the rest of the world was the discourse invented to deal with an altogether more powerful underlying factor: Europe's fundamental security dilemma. This dilemma, the internal power rivalry and conflict between its constituent nations that have plagued Europe

for the past four centuries, was exported around the globe—and in the process, the European space, self-conceived as the center of the world, became the basis for organizing its periphery.

It took two successive continental wars turned world wars to solve Europe's security dilemma. Initially, with the establishment of the European Community, institutions were created with the ambition of locking European countries in peace forever through supranational constraints on unilateral policies and the progressive development of community norms. These institutions were indeed Kantian in inspiration—the second Kant, who eschewed the first's recourse to a supranational government in favor of autonomous republics committed to relating to each other through the rule of law. Progressively, the new union replaced the old balance-of-power logic with the creation of what Karl Deutsch called a security community: a group of peoples and states integrated to such an extent that they derive their security from each other.[6] Within a few decades, this most ambitious of conflict-prevention projects had made war between European states unthinkable. But only with the end of the Cold War and the last remnant of the old belligerencies as they appeared in the breakup of Yugoslavia was Europe's security dilemma concluded for good. And with it, grounds in Europe for exporting conflict have simply disappeared.

Who denies it? It was the American conventional and nuclear umbrella that allowed Europeans the breathing space for so much fence-mending and fence-removing. Without this external military safeguard, it is unlikely that the European community could have been created— let alone evolved into a political union. The creation of a quasi federation without collective security as a driving force was an aberration of history made possible to a great extent by the United States.

Ironically, it is precisely at this historical juncture, when Europeans freed from their internal security dilemma no longer need this ultimate reassurance, that they seem to want to learn anew to project power externally to Europe's periphery and beyond.[7] But in great contrast with the past era of colonial rivalry, such power projection would be justified and sustained not by the need to maintain an internal balance of power but by the needs and ambitions of Europe as a whole. What are those needs? Are existing global threats sufficient enough to overcome

European historical inhibitions? What can such ambitions be, short of a modernized version of the *mission civilisatrice*? Can any such ambition justify the use of coercive power—by the EU or by its member states? To view Europeans as naive, free-riding wimps preempts the burning questions that are at the heart of our debates today.

To the extent that there exists the beginnings of a European answer, a global European narrative, its seeds have been germinating over the past half century in an ad hoc fashion, through a learning process that led Europe to accept and then embrace its distinctive approach to international affairs. Increasingly, Europe's Kantian approach is not utopian, or second best, but a deliberate choice, the most effective strategy it has found based on hard experience. In short, Europe is no longer Kantian because it is weak (militarily that is); it is now weak because it is Kantian.

The significance of this distinction should not be underestimated. Historically, relative weakness was a condition forced on countries by either domestic breakdown or external forces, or a combination thereof, as with the fall of Soviet Union. In contrast, European taxpayers have the means to provide themselves with stronger defense capabilities, and they already spend more than twice as much per capita on the military as any other power block except the United States. And although part of the reason for Europe's military weakness is no doubt a lingering belief that Uncle Sam can always come to the rescue, Americans consistently exaggerate the importance of this explanation.

CIVILIAN POWER AND THE IMPERATIVE OF CONSISTENCY

Instead, Americans need to understand how Europeans are revisiting and reinventing their own collective view on power. Yes, Europeans have a problem with power. They care about it but are unable (individually) or reluctant (collectively) to project it bluntly. We in Europe have come up with various labels for the Union reflecting this ambivalence, mitigating the bluntness of the assertion: quiet power, middle power, emancipatory power, postnational power, and, of course, civilian power. The labels are not simply exultations of Joseph Nye's soft as opposed to hard power. Nor are they lofty concepts to accommodate the psychology of weakness. Why would Europeans stop at that? Be they

the arrogant French, the ambitious British, the cosmopolitan Scandinavians, the globally trading Dutch, the idealist Germans, or the Spanish or Greeks with their far-reaching networks, most European nation-states do not restrict their self-definition to the shores of Europe. The European unease with power is part and parcel of a powerful and compelling narrative still in the making: that of a union of postcolonial nation-states slowly and painfully constructing together the instrument of their collective atonement.

Already in the 1960s and 1970s, some saw the European integration project as evolving into a significant international actor of a type different from the two superpowers, one whose power was based on "civilian forms of influence and action," constructive presence, and the force of persuasion. As Francois Duchene famously argued in 1973:

> Europe as a whole could well become the first example in history of a major centre of the balance of power becoming in the era of its decline not a colonised victim but an *examplar* of a new stage in *political civilisation.* The European Community in particular would have a chance to demonstrate the influence which can be wielded by a large political co-operative formed to exert essentially civilian forms of power [emphasis added].[8]

It is of course tempting to dismiss the idea of civilian power as an oxymoron based on myth (peace through trade) and colonial nostalgia, as well as born of frustration at Europe's inability to become a third superpower during the Cold War. Yet the idea that the European Union can "lead by example" and project its relevance worldwide has been tremendously resilient to global changes, such as globalization and the end of the Cold War.

Perhaps the ambivalence of the concept of civilian power accounts for its longevity and its contestation. It is descriptive and prescriptive—valid as a goal even if not attained. It can refer alternatively to means or ends—*civilian* as *civil* means (e.g., nonmilitary) and as *civilizing* objectives (e.g., diffusing habits of peaceful change). Thus even if the alleged "sea-change in the sources of power" from military to economic was in doubt (as it is today), Europe's power would be sustained by its message. But that message too has been ambiguous or at least multidimensional. On one hand, it is about values, the values held by all its

member states and promoted by the European Union, both internally and externally. On the other hand, it is about process. When Duchêne described the Community's "civilian form of influence and action," he not only referred to its economic rather than military strength, or to the democratic credentials of its member states, but also to its precious and transferable experience in intestate cooperation. In short, civilian power is a broader notion than soft power and can be wielded only by a group of states. It rests on the consistency and even synergies between the European Union's *being,* its political essence, and its *doing,* its external actions.[9]

There has been, since the beginning, a straightforward version of this story: the notion of European integration as a model for other regions around the world seeking to engage in deep economic and political co-operation. But with time, the European pretension to universal relevance has been chastised in light of the obvious idiosyncratic character of the whole affair and reaffirmed in light of its success in enlarging to a continent with half a billion people.

Accordingly, the European Union is the entity in the world that has the longest and deepest experience in aggregating collective preferences among nations. It is a grand-scale experiment engaging nation-states who seek on a continuous basis to accommodate each other's interests and reach consensus in two dozen policy areas at once. And somehow, in spite of the haggling, it works. Therefore, shouldn't European habits of cooperation and institutional frameworks be built on, not only in other regional contexts but also in tackling global issues? Why not see the European Union as a microcosmos, an explorer of new kinds of political deals between and beyond states? And isn't EU enlargement, with the concurrent dramatic increase in the differences of size, wealth, and political system within the Union, added evidence for the expansionary potential of the EU model?

Europeans like to argue that their continent is a microcosm precisely because, while European nation-states in the colonial era exported their internal conflicts, Europe has now become the place where many of the world's problems crystallize and get played out: refugee inflows and socioethnic tensions, transnational economic inequalities between north and south, the enlargement between west and east and

the calls for redistribution and the pursuit of justice beyond the state, the controversial balancing of social standards and trade liberalization, the two-edged sword of free movement of people and capital, and the tension between liberal and conservative values in coordinating police and justice systems. So, Europeans have not only the institutional capital but also the substantive know-how to promote a shift in the global agenda toward better management of our commons. In fact, they have credibility.

It may be that such an ambition to act as a model beyond Europe can serve to compensate for the danger of the overly introverted nature of the EU. But the notion of "model" is too one-dimensional to capture the spirit of civilian power, at least in its sophisticated version. Such Euromorphism also makes many inside and outside Europe ill at ease. There is a fine line between ambition and arrogance, and arrogance is especially embarrassing when the model suffers all too many defects. As Clyde Prestowitz wrote about his own *Rogue Nation,* "a good mythology can cover a multitude of sins."[10]

How can its narrative of projection be reconciled with the postcolonial character of the EU project? In part, by systematically banishing the kind of dual standards that underpinned colonialist thinking, even on the part of such enlightened figures as Alexis de Toqueville. In his *Travail sur l'Algerie* (1841), the same man who explored with exquisite insight the requirements for a truly democratic polity on either side of the Atlantic came to advocate, albeit as a necessary evil, crop destruction, the kidnapping of children, and mass terror—in short, "total domination" and "devastation"—in the lands beyond civilization. More than a century later, the European Community would be the vehicle not only for solving Europe's internal security dilemma but also for addressing, modestly at first, the continued fallout from this historic shame and schizophrenia. The European Community both inherited the postcolonial guilt of its member states and provided an institutional venue to assuage that guilt, a venue that would be less vulnerable to accusations of neocolonialism than individual member states' diplomacy. Irrespective of the relevance of the EU model for the rest of the world, the narrative of projection associated with civilian power refers to the praxis of the European Union and the exigency of

anti-Tocquevillian consistency between norms of internal and external action. Duchene saw the European Community's raison d'être "as far as possible to *domesticate* relations between states including those of its own members and those with states outside its frontiers. This means trying to bring to international problems the sense of common responsibility and structures of contractual politics which have in the past been associated almost exclusively with 'home' and not foreign, that is alien, affairs." Treating abroad as home could be taken as the ultimate promise of civilian power thinking in the post–Cold War era.[11]

The imperative of consistency helps highlight the commonalities and the profound differences between European and American exceptionalism, their respective sense of being in a unique position to guide humanity toward a better future. There is of course a common "Western agenda" in the spread of a political model, whether or not its dominance has heralded the end of history. Indeed, historians like to point out how the most intense transatlantic rivalry, that between France and the United States, is rooted in their similar sense of mission, of being the upholders of political and philosophical models for the world through the avowedly universal reach of their respective eighteenth-century revolutions. Both the United States and the EU think of themselves as normative powers promoting externally the adoption of their internal norms of democracy and human rights. Although there may be significant differences in their respective versions of these norms, their views of state-society relations, of secularism, or of the acceptable limits of institutionalized violence like the death penalty, it can be argued that these differences are but variants of shared core beliefs.[12]

Nevertheless these two competing exceptionalisms are of a different kind. Their respective founding myths—the escape from despotism and the escape from nationalism, tyranny from above and tyranny from below—led both entities to elevate commitment to the rule of law as their core. But this was domestic law in the United States, supranational law in the European Union; this meant checks and balances between branches of government on one side, between states on the other. While the United States progressively became a federal state, the European Union, admittedly still in its infancy, is braced to remain a federal union of nation-states.[13] In the past two decades, while the United States and

the European Union have been fertile grounds for exploring "sub-sidiarity" and multilevel governance, the European Union alone has ex-plored ways of doing this without coordination by a centralized state, through methods that might one day be relevant to global governance. U.S. exceptionalism is a national project; European exceptionalism is a postnational one.

As there were two Kants, there are also two Fukuyamas, and Europeans are closer to the pessimist one: the need for mutual recogni-tion and separateness endures. The European Union's real comparative advantage lies less in engineering convergence among its members' policies and more in its capacity to manage enduring differences be-tween nations. At its core, the European Union is about institutionaliz-ing tolerance between states.[14] A byword for the European project may be empowerment, mutual empowerment by all actors in the system. This is why contrary to the United States, the European Union is less interested in exporting democracy in ready-made packs than in seeking ways to empower local actors to determine their destiny, even if and when they mess it up. And this is why, although the European Union could never hope to rival the United States in effectiveness and deci-siveness, it can surpass it in legitimacy.

We are back to the old adage: the medium is the message. Americans believe that their example is so powerful that the use of soldiers and guns to implement it is legitimate. Europeans believe that their exam-ple is so powerful that its promotion requires neither soldiers nor guns.

One may in the end dismiss it as a product of weakness, but one must first do justice to this European narrative of projection. It is on the basis of its own trajectory that the European Union can claim or aspire to in-fluence international relations. And this trajectory in turn may be about curbing the capacity of states to do harm. But it is not beyond power. There is no doubt that this half-century affair has accustomed Europeans to the belief that pooling sovereignty with other states is not only a constraint but an empowerment. Yet, to describe the European Union as having taken Europe into a post-Westphalian era devoid of power politics is closer to myth than reality. In the European Union, power is mediated—not eliminated. Institutions mandated to pursue the common good have been created to balance those where the size of a

member country's budget, population, and, indeed, army, matters. And European multilateralism does not easily work without leadership, be that of the Franco-German couple, of a Tony Blair or of a Jacques Delors.

Pushed to its ultimate logic, the European Union is less a model to be emulated than an experience, a laboratory where options are explored for politics beyond the state, a toolbox for non-state-based governance, a pioneer in long-term interstate community building. In this vision the European Union is one of the most formidable institutional machines for peacefully managing differences ever invented; there is no reason to think that nothing in this experience is relevant to other regions, or indeed to governance at the world level.

This does not mean that Europeans should display moral certainty about their "gift" to the world. Actually, their enterprise is predicated on a great degree of moral and political doubt. For the imperative of consistency between "who we are" and "what we do" is a tall order—as Americans have come to better recognize since their abroad came home to haunt them on September 11, 2001.

Indeed, Europeans are far from having taken such a postcolonial vision of their role in the world to its ultimate logic. This would entail that the internal development of the European Union be guided by the kind of inspiration it wants to provide. It would also mean that everyone of its internal decisions be checked and corrected for its external impact, starting with its agricultural policy. It would mean granting significant voice in our own affairs to those most affected by our actions, thereby implementing a philosophy of reciprocal intervention and mutual inclusiveness with our partners around the world. It would mean setting an example in the global politics of mutual recognition.

Ultimately, absolute consistency is about our treatment of others as we move from our relationship with the "other" European to our relationship with the non-European "other." It is grounded on the cosmopolitan belief that there is no radical separation between a national, European, and universal community of fate, even if there is indeed a gradation in the amount and range of common uncertainties to be faced and managed. Europeans are not there yet, but they have the potential, through the European Union, to move beyond the relationships of

dominance and exploitation with the rest of the world that have characterized much of their history.

CIVILIAN TOOLS AND TIES

As they stand today, the European Union's external relations (as distinct from that of its member states) pertain more to the biology of reproduction, contagion, and osmosis than to the physics of force, action, and reaction favored by the United States. Consistency requires that the European Union follow its own guiding principles when acting beyond its borders: integration, prevention, mediation, and persuasion. It tries, more or less, consistently.

In the EU lexicon negotiated integration through free trade is the tool of choice, but it leads to and is predicated on other types of integration—between regulators, judges, administrations, political parties, trade unions, and civil societies. Integration also has meant giving structural aid to poorer regions to compensate for the pains of adjustment to a common market. The European Union has similarly structured its external relations. Although still wanting, its growing aid budget, technical assistance, and nation-building programs reflect the expectation of its citizens that the state should fulfill a wide range of socioeconomic and political functions—abroad as well as at home.[15] Enlargement, perhaps the most successful instance of EU foreign policy, has been predicated on the combination of selective aid and the forging of multilevel partnerships with potential new members. In its so-called wider neighborhood, the European Union has sought to apply its model of multifaceted integration including through the forging of a Euromed region—which admittedly has fallen pray to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Beyond, it engages in preferential trade deals with political significance, from the Lome conventions renewed since the 1960s to its latest free trade initiative toward least developed countries, "Everything but Arms" (everything except, of course, agriculture). And its approach to integrating markets through mutual recognition of norms and regulations has become contagious worldwide, largely through its own proselytizing zeal supported by conditional access to its 8 trillion euros interval-market.

Second, like the United Nations, the European Union was invented as a conflict prevention machine. On the external front, it has been engaged in developing civilian capacities capable of preventing conflicts and managing their aftermath, using diplomacy combined with economic and technical assistance to avert crises (because the highest predictor of future conflict is the occurrence of past conflict, the latter can be considered as part of the overall strategy of prevention). The civilian element of the EU's defense policy—exporting capacity in policing, the rule of law, civilian administration, and civil protection—represents a sophisticated attempt to anticipate the requirements of nation building in conflict-prone regions. The EU's expertise in monitoring compliance is a key to the success of conflict prevention regimes, be they related to arms trade, weapons of mass destruction, or money laundering.

Third, the EU's reputation as a civilian rather than military power makes it a mediator of choice, where peacekeeping forms part of a more integrated mediation process. Its claim to impartiality (if not always neutrality) is the more credible given that European states have often found themselves on different sides of a conflict on historical grounds, whereas the European Union is seen as having incorporated and transcended these differences. Moreover, this reputation is strengthened by the rising prominence and access to decision-making on the part of "development" nongovernmental organizations in the European Union (which funds three thousand of them) and their insistence that intervention abroad reflects ethical and sustainable development imperatives. In the past decade EU representatives have engineered new approaches to bottom-up national reconciliation processes in a number of war-torn societies, from the Balkans to Central America and the great lakes of Central Africa, through inter alia the funding of institution building and action by nongovernmental organizations on a previously unprecedented scale.

Finally, with its culture of compromise and debate (to the point of indecision), the European Union is bent on acting through persuasion. Even internally it operates increasingly through publicity and emulation rather than mandatory law (a process know as the Open Method of Coordination). Similarly, externally, persuasion is at the heart of

constructive engagement. For instance, the European Union has become a norm setter through multifaceted persuasion campaigns in the past few years, using its financial muscle to give a voice to transnational civil society—such as in the case of its multifaceted campaign for the abolition of the death penalty, which has already claimed success in several dozen countries.[16]

Obviously, none of these policy tools are specific to the European Union. More often than not its dealings with the rest of the world are a reflection of asymmetric power, rather than a cosmopolitan ethos that would require significant sacrifices in the name of global solidarity. Nor does the European Union's increasingly assertive role as a mediator and peace builder within states reflect the notion that the rights of people must now trump the rights of states internationally. Nevertheless, the European Union is unique precisely because it brings to its relations with the world the multiple ties borne by its different member states, cultures, and histories. Beyond the panoply of civilian power tools, the EU's claim to the title of normative power may just about withstand its colonial connotation if the core norm it seeks to promote through negotiated integration and mediation is that of peaceful coexistence between groups or nations.

A HOBBESIAN WORLD?

Meanwhile, Americans cannot be faulted for dismissing the European Union when European leaders are only now coming to recognize what an effective European foreign policy could and should look like. And it would be naive to believe that strategies of integration, prevention, mediation, and persuasion are always enough.

In tragic-realist mode, Kagan argued that consistency between who we are inside and what we do outside is a luxury, reserved for those who have removed themselves from our Hobbesian world, a world in which practicing the kind of double standards the United States is accused of practicing is a matter of survival. In such a world a lone policeman cannot afford to behave in civilian ways. Negotiation gives way to coercion, and multilateralism gives way to unilateralism. Those who analyze the world in this way pride themselves on realism—their ability to see and understand what is really going on out there. But the

European approach is not less realistic; it is simply predicated on a different diagnosis about the world and how to deal with it.

To be fair, Kagan is not an absolutist. He sees the coherence of concurrent worldviews by strong and weaker powers. It is true that Americans and Europeans disagree on the nature of the threats, not only on the ways to address them, as wishful thinkers would have it. It is true that Europeans may discount threats they feel powerless to address. It is true even that Europeans tend to focus on failed states whereas the United States focuses on rogue states. But does this mean there is no fact of the matter here? Does this mean that neither side is ready to argue for the validity of its understanding of the world? Kagan did not go that far in his relativism. Realities of the world beyond are not all in the eyes of the beholders. In the end the United States must be relied on to deal with the real threats to us all: "only the hammer sees the nails."

There is an alternative liberal-institutionalist view, a view that is not only European. Accordingly, the current U.S. government has become focused in a curious Schmittean way entirely with the exceptions, those relatively few states that flaunt totally the norms of the international systems. Yet although Iraq, North Korea, and Zimbabwe make the headlines, the simple fact of the matter is that the number of countries in the world where relationships cannot be managed through the rule of law has been shrinking since the end of the Cold War. Our world is not a Hobbesian landscape beyond the Kantian European island, full of rogue states bent on destroying the civilized West. Instead, democratization, even if imperfect, even if too often illiberal (as if mass elections alone could mean democracy), has been the trademark of the past decade. A great majority of countries in the world have affirmed their commitment to European arguments, particularly about the importance of international institutions and international law. They must at least be given the benefit of the doubt. In short, and in this third millennium, much of the world has embraced, if not mastered, bourgeois politics—a politics beyond violent death.[17] The progressive socialization of governing elites as well as the growing interconnections between civil societies around the world has meant that zones of democracy by contagion and democratic peace coexist with zones of chronic instability. And indeed, conflict and instability in these zones are more often than

not due to the idleness and despair spurred by the chronic poverty, un-employment, and corruption associated with failed states and corrupt governments than to the provocations of rogue states. The revolt of the alienated, which defines our era like so many others, cannot be put down with guns.[18]

Of course, this does not make the threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction less real. For the current U.S. administration, this Schmittean focus on the exceptions is justified because the greatest danger to humanity today are the few hard cases the United States is bent on tackling by force if need be. Clearly, Europeans must recognize more explicity that rogue states and other Hobbesian realities need to be dealt with. But they are right not to see these threats in isolation. Having learned from their own historical experience, they fear negative spillovers and the spread of conflict as much as they value positive spillovers and the spread of cooperation. They imagine scenarios—as many did in the case of Iraq—in which our very actions in these cases contribute to an enlargement of the Hobbesian zones. Acting as if the world is Hobbesian can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, increasing the likelihood that it would be so. Their fears may sometimes be misplaced, but they are not unrealistic. It was wrong to forecast an explosion of the Middle East after the war in Iraq, but instead Americans have created a magnet for terrorism.

Moreover, even when dealing with rogue states, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction, civilian tools are of central importance. Rogue states often start as failed states, captured by dictators and thugs, and they become failed states after their downfall. As the situation in postwar Iraq amply demonstrates, the challenge of rebuilding societies takes more than military force. And here too the European Union's ex-perience, the design of loose federations and the concept of limited sov-ereignty, refined over the years by the very states who invented sovereignty four centuries ago, can inspire the reconstruction of trou-bled countries and regions.[19]

In this debate suspicions of false consciousness can be turned onto the United States. Do Americans (or at least some in the U.S.) need to overemphasize the new terrorist threat and the Hobbesian quality of the world because with the end of the Cold War they lost that "other" that

was necessary to their own unity? Do they need to undervalue the effectiveness of international institutions because classical external sovereignty is the only collective cause they can agree on? How is it that the pursuit of moral certainties happens to never contradict American economic and geostrategic interests? The world may indeed look different seen through the lenses of power or weakness, but power does not buy lucidity.

FROM MILITARY TO EMANCIPATORY POWER

The question remains, Where do Europeans stand on waging war? Their version may differ with Americans' version of a Hobbesian world. But the wars in Yugoslavia and beyond in the past decade have served as a stark reminder of the Hobbesian faultlines that the European Union cannot ignore. As a result, the end of the Cold War has led to a profound rethinking of the civilian power concept, stretching its elasticity and ambiguity to its limits, without yet making it obsolete.

Here, as elsewhere, let us not exaggerate change over continuity. Individual member states such as France, the United Kingdom, or Greece have never eschewed military power, commensurate of course to their size. The postcolonial echo, whether in Africa or the Middle East, has led to continued arms sales and military agreements with countries around the world, including on the part of states such as Germany. In the past decade, the defense establishments in European capitals have been willing to deploy military forces to respond to humanitarian needs or state failure, such as Sierra Leone or the Ivory Coast. And they have been largely supportive of the U.S. line on fighting terrorism—as witnessed by NATO's invocation of Article 5 after 9/11.

The real *new* question today for Europeans lies with their common post–Cold War project, the EU banner. The European Union pertains to a different logic than that of member states, even if it is the result of their interaction. During the Cold War it anchored Europe to the United States by serving as its regional pacifier.[20] By channeling existing disagreement among member states (often France versus the rest) as to the extent to which Europe should rest content to play second fiddle to the United States, it enhanced the predictability of its member states'

foreign policies providing not only the European but also the transatlantic glue. We have come to a historical juncture, however, where this logic is reversed, and it is the very existence of the European Union that is making the prospect of Europe as an autonomous power a plausible proposition. Europe's new constitutional treaty is one more small step in this direction. Should it worry Washington?

To be sure, there is no consensus in Europe today on the necessity of giving the EU the capacity to defend itself outside NATO—a European Article 5—not only because there is still a majority of governments in Europe who believe that the United States is and should remain a European power but also because direct threats to the territory of European states seem so remote. At the same time, most of the political spectrum in Europe (even formally neutral member states) calls for a greater capacity for autonomous military intervention around the world, a view shared by a majority of European public opinion. Indeed, as of 2003, the European Union did have its own rapid reaction force (even if falling short of its own headline goals), as testified by its presence in Macedonia and Congo.

It is therefore more urgent than ever to ask how can the European Union's broader civilian mission to tame the capacity of states to harm others born from Europe's pre-1945 history can be made compatible with the use of force in the twenty-first century. Only with the aftermath of 9/11 has this question been conflated with Europe's relationship to the power of the United States.

Obviously, Europeans have not reached a collective answer and are not likely to for some time. Nevertheless, the terms of their debate do not boil down to an old pro-autonomy versus a new pro-American Europe. Most Polish supporters of the United States in Iraq would welcome a European defense, whereas many Europeans opposed the war in the name of pacifism, not anti-Americanism.

Arguably, the most important divide in Europe today is between those loyal to civilian power thinking who view any European military involvement beyond peacekeeping with suspicion and those among European elites, especially in Britain and France, who extrapolate from today's incipient common security policy and envision the European Union moving beyond the confines of civilian power altogether:

l'Europe puissance, or superpower Europe. For the latter, as for Kagan, civilian power was but a second best, and the European Union should now learn to behave like a military power and magnify the power of its member states—be it to supplement and restrain (i.e., the United Kingdom) or balance (i.e., France) American power.

Is there a middle way? Can enhanced military power be compatible with civilian power?[21] Indeed, it is hard to see how the projection of credible military power would not entail the kind of collective exclusivist identity, power hierarchies, and unified centralized leadership eschewed until now by the European project. Europe is not and should never become a state writ large. But too many in Europe still confuse their *exigence d'Europe* with such a goal. In this regard, the current constitutional moves to provide the European Union with a president is exemplary of a trend to replicate the national model on a European scale and put at its apex a *directoire* of big states à la de Gaulle: a trend worrisome to smaller countries in the European Union as well as to those among us attached to the unique nonstatelike character of the union.[22]

And yet, spurred in great part by the schism within Europe over Iraq, all sides of the debate recognize the need today to try to forge a common EU strategy, a response to the annual *National Security Strategy* of the United States. "As a union of 25 States with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's GNP," affirmed the first ever EU security strategy paper, "the European Union inevitably is a global actor… it should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security" and address the main threats of our era, namely, "terrorism," proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failed states and organized crime.[23] While an early mention of "pre-emptive engagement" was replaced in the final draft by a milder appeal to "preventitive action," the new strategy paper signalled a definite commitment on the part of the EU not to shy away from forceful intervention. How should this be done in the spirit of civilian power? For one, it can be done by making military means one among a panoply of means, and in fact derivative. The document advocated widening the EU's spectrum of missions in addition to the Petersberg task (peacekeeping and reconstruction), including "joint disarmament operations, support for

third countries in combating terrorism, and security reform in the broader context of institution building."

Most important, there cannot be "war ends" or war aims per se for today's Europeans. Instead, military force must be used only to increase the international community's capacity to pursue civilian ends, as in the case of Kosovo, after all other means in the aforementioned panoply have been tried. This is what Europeans mean when they speak of force "as a means of last resort." The European divisions over Iraq obviously reflected different national attitudes toward American power; they also reflected different assessments of such a "last resort" threshold: Had all other means been exhausted? If war was the only means left, for what ends? Would it not be more legitimate to frame this intervention as humanitarian, even if international law lagged behind?

Some of us may never reconcile ourselves with the fact that more on either side of the debate did not see the issue of war in Iraq as a truly agonizing choice. Nevertheless, lessons from this crisis will continue to be drawn for years to come as the consequences of the war unfold. How much transatlantic convergence can there be on the use of force? Can the two sides agree that military means make sense when (for Europeans), if and only if (for Americans), they constitute the only way to create a space for meaningful civilian presence and the pursuit of goals largely shared locally and internationally, and that the judgment involved in determining last resort must be validated by the international community, lest it be tainted by the narrow pursuit of narrow geopolitical or economic self-interest?[24] The EU must stubbornly keep on the table the core bargain eschewed by the United States in the case of Iraq: acceptance by the United States on limitation of its power in exchange for legitimation.

Just as Americans may come to admit that it is impossible alone to label a war "liberation" and to win the peace, Europeans will wrestle with that other possible world without regime change where Iraqis would have continued to be tortured en masse. Were Europeans right to derive an uncompromising antiwar stance from the rightful precept that democracy cannot be imposed by force, should "come from below" and be earned and learned collectively? Or on the contrary, is war not sometimes necessary to unlock the door for democracy, create the possibility

of home-grown democracy and the rule of law? Either way, the right—
and, beyond, the duty—to intervene, the fragile emerging notion that
sovereignty must be deserved, is too precious to be left hostage to our
well-founded distrust of American motives.[25]

But if the crucial issue for Europeans is not the use of force per se
but its legality under international law, then they must do something
about the law, not about the use of force. In this vein, bringing together
the human rights and security wings of the United Nations, adapting the
need to use force to circumstances not foreseen in 1945, would be cen-
tral to a future global European agenda.[26] Actually, Europeans should be
the first to applaud a thorough revisiting of the Westphalian principles
of sovereignty under the UN aegis as they have done under the aegis of
the European Union. But will Americans contemplate institutionalizing
a concept of limited sovereignty they would never apply to themselves?
And is the international community likely to embrace this agenda? Let
this then be the European Union's lone battle.

In fact, Europeans, if consistent, cannot rest content even with such
prospect. It is not enough for intervention to be blessed by a multilat-
eral stamp in order to qualify as nonimperial. Its results, its substance,
matter. If truly postcolonial, Europeans must continue to render sym-
metric the relationships established by intervention, military or finan-
cial for that matter, to systematically free such intervention from
elements of domination. If the European response to American liberal
imperialism is to become an emancipatory power, whose goal is to
allow peoples beyond its shores to forge their own destiny, it must de-
fine (or redefine) power as the capacity to empower others.

But then again, the most fundamental divide between Europeans and
Americans no longer concerns constraints on the use of force but on its
possession. Today, just as Europeans converge toward American as-
sessment of significant threats, the U.S. government has already moved
on to declare its plan to build up beyond threats. Europeans ask: Is this
the way we can agree to be jointly responsible for global security? Is
bailing out of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic
Missile Treaty, or obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty the
most effective way to guard against a resumed nuclear arms race? The
transatlantic security community symbolized by NATO should still be

the core of world order. But as Europeans see it, it is not their own de-
sire for some modest autonomy but the American insistence on its own
immunity that is shaking its foundations.

LIVING WITH OUR DIFFERENCES

Contrary to the cries of many Americans in the wake of the Iraq war,
Europeans have not forgotten World War II. But in non-American eyes,
there is a world of difference between the righteous might of
Roosevelt's era and the self-righteous might of George W. Bush. At the
very least, as the Clinton administration understood so well, style, rhet-
oric, and due process matter. More substantively, well-intentioned lib-
erals on both sides of the Atlantic have been right to insist on the shared
values and interests that must continue to guide transatlantic coopera-
tion on all fronts. But what the European story of civilian powerhood
also suggests, even in its latest version, is that differences between
Europe and the United States must be valued, and reinforced, if we are
to counter the challenges facing us in the decades ahead.

Geographically, the global impact of progressively expanding the
European Union's zone of peace and prosperity cannot be underesti-
mated. This does not mean confining the European Union to a local
role: both the United States and the European Union are global actors
with regional strategies. Indeed, the prospect of EU membership for
Turkey would constitute the most powerful signal yet that the European
Union is a world partner that will not banish the Muslim world as
Europe's "other." And clearly, the European Union bordering Iraq and
Russia is not irrelevant to the supply of global order. Beyond enlarge-
ment, the construction of a Euromed region constitutes the best hope for
the peoples bordering the *Mare Nostrum*—notwithstanding the crucial
role of U.S. arbitration in the Middle East in the immediate future.

Functionally, there is nothing wrong with Europeans continuing to
invest in reconstruction and stabilization when the United States is not
up to it. Good cop–bad cop routines can be effective, as can competi-
tion in winning hearts and minds. Why shouldn't Europeans accept
doing the dishes if Americans consult on the menu? At its best, the
United States can create worthy recipients for Europe's constructive

engagement. At its worst, it will alienate more renegades whose impulses the European Union can seek to moderate.

Crucial to their respective roles, the United States and the European Union also have different temporal horizons. Europeans are turtles, Americans are hares. The long-term horizon is the European Union's comparative advantage, and ongoing preventative action is its response to the U.S. strategy of preemptive strike. Whereas Americans like to drop by, Europeans have staying power (there is widespread acknowledgment in the Middle East that it is the Europeans' long-term presence on the ground that prepared the ground for the Quartet and American public diplomacy). Since the measure of success in the prevention field is that there is nothing to report, this strategy is not likely to win many votes. Similarly, microinvolvement and assistance requiring the acquisition of detailed local knowledge is unglamorous and painstaking. But the less-democratic European Union can afford slow and discrete results. Its machinery is subject not to short-term unionwide electoral cycles but to the long-term constraint of its own civilian logic. And even as the European Union becomes more accountable with time, European public opinion might stay more patient.

What do these differences amount to? How should they be translated politically? Perhaps it is best to take an external viewpoint when addressing these questions. And indeed, seen from the rest of the world, transatlantic rows must appear very parochial.

There is no single "rest of the world," of course. But it is fair to assume that most countries know what they do not want the U.S.–EU relation to be: allout rivalry or western hegemony. Heighted and continued rivalry between them would be bound to spell global instability. It would weaken the reach and effectiveness of international organizations – above all, the UN – which would most probably be increasingly deemed irrelavant by the U.S. And on an issue-by-issue basis, most countries usually resent being asked to take sides as we have seen with the disput over the International Criminal Court.

At the same time, there is little appetite in the developing world for the kind of "western hegemony" that characterized the heydays of neoliberalism. The combined economic power of the two sides already overwhelms the rest of the world. And while the U.S. does not need the

EU on the military front, the latter's growing military capacity is not ir-relevant to NATO. The prospect of the U.S. and the EU "making up" through exclusive trans-atlantic economic deals, or of NATO supplant-ing the UN (or filling the vacuum) in the role of global policman, con-jures up a world entirely shaped by "western" interests.

A European strategy must be inspired by the imperative of avoiding these two pitfalls, destructive rivalry and hegemonic arrogance. But the diversity of issues and actions involved make it impossible to presc-cribe a magic formula to encaptulate such a middle strategy. Insead, and most likely, the European strategy that is likely to develop in the near future will oscillate between two poles for the European strategy—call this schizophrenia, ambivalence, or simply differentiation. On one hand, our longstanding transatlantic partnership will need to be revis-ited based on a multifaceted division of labor between the two sides that draws on our complementary strengths and inclinations.[27] On the other hand, and to satisfy the yearning for a new kind of international rela-tions inspired by a Kantian Europe, the European Union should not hes-itate to take stands as an alternative to the United States, with its different methods, policy concerns, and priorities and its own ways of making friends and indeed enemies: parallel with the United States "port of call" rather than with or against. At its best, this alternative would lend its know-how and resources to the advocacy and imple-mentation of alternative approaches to social, economic, and political management, as is currently the case in the genetically modified organ-isms affair under the World Trade Organization. It would preferably not refer to itself in terms of power at all, but as an intervener, a global part-ner, a "vanishing mediator."[28]

There is little doubt that these two middle strategies will continue to coexist in Europe, along with the more extreme temptations of rivalry and Western hegemony. They will coexist not only because some mem-ber states are more inclined toward one or the other or because, in fact, the choice between them needs to be issue specific but because the em-phasis will depend, to no small extent, on the attitude of the United States. In any event, actors who shape the European Union's role in the world are far from having articulated the meaning of this "European al-ternative," a global role for the EU that does not aim to replicate

traditional parameters of powerhood. The test here for Europeans lies not with U.S. appreciation but with their ability to do their own thing in a world characterized, whether they like it or not, by U.S. hegemony. Upholding the values of pluralism and multilateralism in today's world order requies no less.

Nonetheless, those in the United States intoxicated with the prospect of a new American century, this time of unconstrained global power, may want to pause for a moment and consider the cunning of their European cousins. What if the new transatlantic division of labor was based on the same basic logic that governed the U.S. presence in Europe during the Cold War: the shaping of institutions of governance and justice beyond the state, under an American security umbrella, but this time beyond Europe? That is, the new U.S. liberal imperialism, turned wittingly or unwittingly into the instrument for the extension of Europe's model to the rest of the world—while the United States dealt with the spoilers at the margin of the system, the European Union would progressively position itself as the alternative power, treating its many partners as equals engaged in a dialogue on the ins and outs of global governance, whether in the World Trade Organization, the UN Security Council, or the International Criminal Court. Thankfully, even the most messianic among Europeans do not dare articulate such a scenario!

The more pragmatic will simply argue that if only they can learn to live with their differences, exploit their complementarity, and learn to agree to disagree, both the United States and the European Union should be better off for it. Politicians in the United States should not scold but applaud their European counterparts for not having followed the U.S. path after the end of the Cold War. Americans and Europeans should not be surprised by the Iraqi crisis. Both are the order of things to come and a reflection indeed of different worldviews. As they watch their young American cousins fall prey to the attraction of power, Europeans will and must continue to opt for Venus, or the power of attraction.

Notes

1. This article is based on several recent publications on related topics, including, Kalypso Nicolaidis and Robert Howse, "This Is My EU-topia: Narrative as Power," *Journal of Common Market Studies* (October 2002); Kalypso Nicolaidis and Justine Lacroix, "Order and Beyond the Nation-States: Europe's Competing Paradigms," in *Order and Justice in International Relations,* ed. Rosemary Foot (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2003); Anand Menon, Kalypso Nicolaïdis, and Jennifer Welsh, "In Defense of Europe," Working paper, 2003, ESC, Oxford University ; Kalypso Nicolaidis, "Living with Our Differences," in Nikos Kotzias and Petros Liacouras, eds., *EU–ES Relations: Reparing the Transatlantic Riff* (London: Palagrave, 2004). I would like to thank Thierry Fabre, Robert Howse, Andrew Hurrell, Dimitri Nicolaidis Michael Petrou, Simon Saunders, and Keith Thompson for their comments.

2. Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review* 113 (June–July 2002).

3. For a discussion see Etienne Balibar, *L'Europe, l'Amerique*, *la Guerre: Reflexions sur la mediation europeénne* (Paris: Editions La decouverte, 2003).

4. This ultimate twist is more prevalent in the publication expanding on the essay, Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

5. The Pew Research Center, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, (Washington, D.C.: March, 2003).

6. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, eds., *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

7. Obviously I do not mean to say that the end of colonial wars in the 1970s spelled the end of neocolonial politics and wars.

8. Francois Duchêne, "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence," in *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems before the European Communities,* ed. Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (London: Macmillan, 1973).

9. See Nicolaïdis and Howse; for an early post–cold war discussion, see Christopher Hill, "Power Bloc, Civilian Model—or Flop?" in *The Evolution of an International Actor— Western Europe's New Assertiveness,* ed. Reinhardt Rummel (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1990).

10. Clyde Prestowitz, *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

11. Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 235–58.

12. For a forceful argument on this point, see Tod Lindberg, "The Atlanticist Community," in *Beyond Paradise and Power: Europe, America, and the Future of a Troubled Partnership,* ed. Tod Lindberg (New York: Routledge, 2004 [this volume]).

13. See Kalypso Nicolaïdis and Robert Howse, eds., *The Federal Vision: Legitimacy and Levels of Governance in the US and the EU* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

14. For a discussion in the context of constitutional debates see J. H. H. Weiler, "Federalism without Constitutionalism: Europe's *Sonderweg,*" in *The Federal Vision,* Nicolaidis and Howse, eds.

15. The United States may outspend the Europeans on defense by a factor of four, but Europeans (member states and the EU combined) outspend the United States on development aid by a factor of seven.

16. "The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad" 2003.

17. Tod Lindberg, "September 11 & September 10," *Policy Review* 109 (October–November 2001).

18. Chris Patten, Cyril Foster Lecture, Oxford University, January 30, 2003.

19. Robert Keohane, "Ironies of Sovereignty: The European Union and the United States," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 4 (2002): 743–65.

20. Josef Joffe, "Europe's American Pacifier," *Foreign Policy* 54 (Spring 1984).

21. Stelios Stavridis, "Why the 'Militarizing' of the EU is Strengthening the Concept of a Civilian Power Europe " (working paper) (Florence: European University Institute, 2001); Karen E. Smith, "The End of Civilian Power Europe: A Welcome Demise or a Cause for Concern?" *International Spectator* 35, no. 2 (April–June 2000).

22. See Nicolaidis and Weatherill, *Whose Europe: National Models and the EU Constitution* (Oxford, 2003). Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, followed an initiative of the Greek presidency. The paper was approved in its initial version by European heads of states in June 2003.

23. For a cogent defense, see International Development Research Council, *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Ottawa: Author, 2001).

24. An interesting variant would be the setting up of an association of democraticc states which would issue considered opinions on the legitimacy of the use of force against a tyrannical government or refer it to the Hague, not as a replacement but as a support to the UN. See Stanely Hoffman, *L'Amerique vraiment Imperiale? Entretiens sur le vif avec Frederic Bozo* (Paris: Audibert, 2003).

25. Anne Marie Slaughter, "A Chance to Reshape the U.N.," *Washington Post,* April 13, 2003. A. U.N. commission has now been set up to investigate this agenda.

26. See, for instance, Declaration by the Center for International Studies; see also the response by Jacques Delors's Notre Europe in Le Monde.

27. See, for instance, Andrew Moravcsik, "Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July–August 2003).

28. This term is used by Etienne Balibar, op.cit.