

The Polish Institute of International Affairs
Transatlantic Leadership Network



Editors

Sławomir Dębski and Daniel S. Hamilton

EUROPE WHOLE AND FREE: VISION AND REALITY

PRAISE FOR *EUROPE WHOLE AND FREE: VISION AND REALITY*

“The goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace remains as vital today as it did in 1989. This important book brings together policymakers and experts from both sides of the Atlantic for a timely discussion of how to achieve that goal for the 21st century.”

—*Madeleine K. Albright*
Former Secretary of State between 1997–2001

“Europe is not yet Whole and Free as we dreamt it would be in the heady days of 1989. But Europe is wholer and freer than it has ever been in its history. Russia and Belarus are the only two countries whose people are denied the right to choose their own government. One day they will have that right which the rest of Europe now enjoys. This volume of essays is essential reading for those who wish to understand the last 30 years; three decades of European history which, whatever the setbacks and disappointments, have transformed our continent and the lives of those who are its citizens.”

—*Sir Malcolm Rifkind*
**served as Foreign Minister and Minister of Defence
in the United Kingdom Government between 1992–1997**

„A great book about Europe’s finest years, a convincing but unfinished strategic architecture.“

—*Volker Rühle*
**served as Federal Minister of Defence
in German Government between 1992–1998**

Europe Whole and Free:
Vision and Reality

The Polish Institute of International Affairs
Transatlantic Leadership Network

**Europe Whole and Free:
Vision and Reality**

Editors:

Sławomir Dębski and Daniel S. Hamilton

Warsaw and Washington, D.C. 2019

Sławomir Dębski and Daniel S. Hamilton (eds.), *Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality*

Copyright © 2019 by The Polish Institute of International Affairs

Copyright © 2019 by Transatlantic Leadership Network

All rights reserved. For information pism@pism.pl

Warsaw: The Polish Institute of International Affairs
Washington, D.C.: Transatlantic Leadership Network

The Polish Institute of International Affairs

ul. Warecka 1a

00-950 Warszawa

www.pism.pl

Transatlantic Leadership Network

1800 M St NW #33161

Washington, D.C. 20036-5828

www.transatlantic.org

Distributed by Brookings Institution Press

Managing editor: Andrzej Dąbrowski

Cover graphics: Dominika Majewska

Proof reader: Brien Barnett

Technical editor: Dorota Dołęgowska

ISBN 978-83-66091-39-9

e-ISBN 978-83-66091-40-5

Printing

Centrum Poligrafii Sp. z o.o.

ul. Łopuszańska 53

02-232 Warszawa

CONTENTS

Preface.....	9
--------------	---

chapter one

ROOTS

Sławomir Dębski Peace without Victory.....	15
Kori Schake The Vision Thing.....	27
Ulrich Speck Making Plan A Work: For Europe, the American Presence Remains Essential.....	37
Julie Smith Europe: From Division to Unity and Back Again?.....	47
James Jay Carafano Democracy's Journey East Continues.....	55
Robin Niblett A Europe Whole and Free: 30 Years On.....	65
Adam Daniel Rotfeld Visionary Concept and Reality.....	75
Sergey Utkin A Chance That Was?.....	83
Robert Kupiecki Europe Whole and Free: Mission Accomplished or an Unfulfilled Promise?.....	91
Lilia Shevtsova Russia: A European Headache.....	101

François Heisbourg	
A Europe Whole and Counterfactual?	111
Michael Haltzel	
U.S. Congressional Engagement with Central and Eastern Europe since 1991: Ending the Balkan Wars and Pursuing NATO Enlargement	119
Dov S. Zakheim	
Europe Whole and Free: What Three Decades Have Wrought	129

chapter two
INSTITUTIONS

Thomas Wright	
After a Europe Whole and Free	141
Sven Sakkov	
30 Years Later	151
Kurt Volker	
NATO Enlargement: Still One of the Best Accomplishments of the 20 th Century.	161
Stephen J. Flanagan	
Sustaining the Promise of Mainz.	171
Ernest Wyciszkievicz	
Predicting the Past and Unmaking the Future	181
Ian Bond	
Has the West Achieved George Bush's Vision or Abandoned It?	191
Anna Wieslander	
Why European Unity and Freedom Still Matter to the United States.	201
Oana Popescu-Zamfir	
Neither Eulogy nor Euphoria: The EU Learns to Live with a World Order Other than Its Own	211
Bruno Tertrais	
The Thirty-Year False Peace: A Mostly Free, but Divided Europe	221
Heinrich Brauss	
A Europe Whole and Free: Vision, Accomplishment, or Unfulfilled Pledge —A NATO Perspective	231

chapter three

FUTURE

Krzysztof Szczerski	
Four Challenges and One Solution for the Unity of Europe	245
Daniela Schwarzer	
“A Europe Whole and Free”: Where We Are and What Still Needs to Be Done.....	255
Justyna Gotkowska	
We Are at the End of One Era and at the Beginning of Another	265
Heather A. Conley	
A Europe That Is No Longer Whole and Free	273
Andrey Kortunov	
How Can Russia Get Back to Europe?	283
Vladimir V. Kara-Murza	
A Europe “Whole and Free” Is Possible When Russia Returns to Democracy	293
Hryhoriy Nemyria	
For Europe to Be Whole and Free, Ukraine Must Be Whole and Free, and at Peace	303
Michael Carpenter	
Europe’s Struggle Against Illiberal Oligarchy	313
Vygaudas Ušackas	
Advancing Europe Whole and Free: A Baltic Perspective	323
Jana Kobzová and Tomáš Valášek	
Europe Un-whole and Unfree: What if Things had Turned Out Completely Differently?.....	333
Daniel S. Hamilton	
Europe: Whole and Free or Fractured and Anxious?.....	339

* * *

George H. W. Bush	
“A Whole Europe, A Free Europe” Delivered on 31 May 1989, Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany.....	353
Notes	363
About the Authors	375
Index of name	397

Preface

In his May 1989 speech in Mainz, Germany, U.S. President George H.W. Bush announced that Europe and the world faced a great opportunity. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, there was a chance to end political and ideological rivalry, remove the Iron Curtain, unify Germany, and restore freedom to the peoples of Central Europe:

In Poland, at the end of World War II, the Soviet Army prevented the free elections promised by Stalin at Yalta. And today Poles are taking the first steps toward real elections, so long promised, so long deferred. (...) As President, I will continue to do all I can to help open the closed societies of the East. We seek self-determination for all of Germany and all of Eastern Europe. And we will not relax, and we must not waver. Again, the world has waited long enough.

Indeed, Europe had been waiting for this moment since the end of World War II. 1945 brought freedom and peace to the peoples of Western Europe. However, the eastern part of the continent was choked with the iciness of the Cold War, cut off from the free part of Europe by an Iron Curtain, and incorporated into the Soviet sphere of influence. As the Hungarian poet Sándor Márai wrote about Central Europe's experience:

Soviet soldiers freed our lands, but they could not give us freedom because they themselves did not have it.

Europe had been divided because of divisions about Germany; the Iron Curtain was built as an outcome of the German problem. Therefore, the future of Europe, the dreams of its unification, and the freedom of nations left in the Soviet sphere of influence after Yalta were all associated with the need to overcome the division of Germany.

On the 40th anniversary of the Yalta conference, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote:

Yalta is unfinished business (...) Thoughtful Europeans realize that the future of Europe is intertwined with the future of Germany and of Poland. Without spanning, in some non-threatening fashion, the division of Germany, there will not be a genuine Europe, but continuing Russian domination of Poland makes Russian control over East Germany geopolitically possible. Thus the relationship between Russia on the one hand and Germany and Poland on the other must be peacefully transformed if a larger Europe is ever to emerge.¹

In May 1989, the president of the United States invited all political forces in Europe, including former rivals from across the Iron Curtain, to build a new community: *Europe whole and free ... whose creation was to guarantee peace and optimal conditions for development.*

Thirty years after presenting this vision, it is worth considering the significance of Bush's vision for the history of transatlantic relations, for Europe and for the whole world. Only from the perspective of time can we assess how prophetic it was, what it really changed and to what extent it could be realised.

The reality is that 30 years on, despite tremendous progress, Europe as a continent is not entirely whole, free, or at peace. Some parts of the continent are more secure than at any time in the previous century. Others face conflict or are war zones. European borders have once again been changed by force. Vast parts of the continent are no longer under the thumb of domestic autocrats or foreign overseers, but Europe is not fully

free. Europe is no longer divided as it had been, but new divisions have emerged, which means the continent is not entirely whole.

Is the vision of a united Europe still attractive? For whom? What else should be done to bring it closer to fruition? What does it depend on today? To address these questions, we turned to a group of several dozen outstanding American and European experts dealing with European issues, transatlantic relations, strategic problems and security. Some are practitioners, people who at various stages and in different capacities participated in attempts to implement the vision of Europe whole and free. Others constantly deal with issues that interest us and often face challenges associated with implementing Bush's vision. Some authors are rising stars, experts who may in the future be responsible for the shape of the Old Continent, may influence the policy direction of their own countries and may participate in global debates on the nature and condition of peace and the means of its defence.

The authors we invited represent very different political perspectives and viewpoints. Everyone, however, is without exception bound by the conviction that overcoming divisions in Europe is a path toward the security of the continent and one worth seeking in the name of peace.

We thank our authors for their contributions and their insights. The views and opinions they express are their own and do not reflect or represent those of any institution or government.

To assist the reader, our authors' answers have been grouped into three thematic sections: Roots, Institutions, and the Future. Citations are found in the endnotes, along with an index and short biographies of the authors. We also include as a key reference George H.W. Bush's original Mainz speech.

This project was initiated and completed with the support of The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) and the Transatlantic Leadership Network. Special thanks go to Andrzej Dąbrowski of PISM, who put a tremendous amount of work into coordinating this project. And a thank you to Dorota Dołęgowska, who heads the PISM publishing house, for watching over the publishing process.

We hope you enjoy the book.

Sławomir Dębski, Daniel S. Hamilton

Europe: Whole and Free or Fractured and Anxious?

For a quarter-century following the end of the Cold War, the prevailing paradigm in the United States and much of Western and Central Europe was of a magnetic, largely unchallenged and gradually expanding Western-led order in which the U.S. would continue as an affirmative European power, where Eastern Europe and eventually Russia could potentially find a place, where military tensions and military forces would be reduced, and where growing interdependencies and open borders would lower conflict and generate greater security and prosperity.

Much was achieved during this period. A Euro-Atlantic architecture of cooperative, overlapping, and interlocking institutions enabled a host of countries to walk through the doors of NATO, the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, the OECD, and other organisations in ways that were not at the expense of other states or institutions. Europe was not fully whole, but it was no longer divided. It was not fully free, but vast parts of the continent were no longer under the thumb of domestic autocrats or

foreign overseers. It was not fully at peace, but it was more secure than at any time in the previous century.

We have every right to be proud of these achievements. But we should have the courage to admit that we grew complacent. As time marched on, the vision of a Europe whole and free became more slogan than project; the business of knitting the continent together was left undone. And now a conflation of crises has so shaken our smug assumptions about the evolution of European order that the original vision could become a paradigm lost.

Moscow's interventions in Georgia and Ukraine jolted many—although not all—Europeans out of their dream that the future belonged to “civilian powers.” Vladimir Putin's three-fold message is clear: hard power remains important; borders can indeed be changed by force; and, Russia is not somehow “lost in transition,” it is going its own way.

European anxieties were further enhanced by the 2008 financial crisis and ensuing Great Recession. Traditional left-right divisions have splintered into new tensions between those who continue to champion open societies and open markets and those who seek to shield their societies and markets from what they perceive to be the excesses of globalisation and intrusions into their sovereignty.

The next shock wave emanated from an unlikely source: the United Kingdom. Brexit's message is two-fold. First, “ever closer Union” is not inevitable and the EU may not be forever. Second, European countries that appear to be models of stability, tolerance, and moderation can reveal themselves to be volatile, fragile, and fiercely divided.

The migration crisis made it further clear to many European citizens that the “Europe of institutions” is unprepared to tackle down-home challenges, and that the slogan “more Europe” is not a ready-made answer to every European question.

The reaction to the migration crisis, in turn, has made it clear that the remarkable quarter-century alignment of liberalism and nationalism in service to the European project is over—and not just in Central Europe.

The result is a Europe that has turned from being an exporter of stability to an importer of instability—a Europe that is less settled and more fluid, less capable and more turbulent, less Merkel and more German

at a time when more Germans are also questioning predictable answers to unpredictable challenges.

Today, the defenders of European order are either exhausted or are fighting revisionists within their own ranks who are questioning the elite bargains and social underpinnings that have sustained that order. For a quarter-century, the European agenda was about how to transform one's neighbours. Now, it is about how to avoid being transformed by those neighbours. The expansive vision of a Europe whole and free is at risk of being replaced by the narrow notion of a "Europe that protects" some Europeans from other Europeans.

Revisionist Challenges

As the post-Cold War order faces unprecedented challenges, the influence and activism of revisionist states, groups, and even individuals have grown dramatically. Europeans clinging to their quarter-century of stability are simply flummoxed by the fact that their major external protagonists—Russia, China, and even the U.S.—have each in their own way become revisionist powers.

Russia under Putin seeks to undo the post-Cold War settlement, control its neighbourhood, and disrupt Western influence. Not only has Moscow intervened with force in Georgia, invaded Ukraine, annexed its peninsula of Crimea, and has troops stationed in five of the EU's six Eastern Partnership countries, it is exploiting fissures within EU member states and other European countries to generate uncertainty about the European project itself. Moscow's direct interference in the election processes of democracies across Europe and in the U.S., efforts to intimidate European energy consumers, launch cyberattacks in Estonia, Ukraine, and other countries, proclaim a duty to protect ethnic Russians in other countries regardless of their citizenship, and conduct provocative military activities, including simulated nuclear exercises and snap conventional force alerts, as well as violate the air, land, and seascapes of a number of EU and NATO member states, are all examples of the Putin regime's challenge to the prevailing European order. Putin seeks to anchor Russia as a Great Power

pole in a multipolar world. His model is Yalta, not the Helsinki Final Act; it is Metternich, not Monnet.

European apprehensions have been enhanced by the dawning realisation that China has also now become a power in Europe. For too long, too many Europeans worried about America's supposed "pivot" to Asia while ignoring the fact that Asia—especially China—was making its own very real "pivot" to Europe. Beijing's engagement has taken various forms: strategic infrastructure investments in either poorer European countries or those afflicted by the financial crisis, from Portugal, Italy, and Greece to the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe; creating a special "17+1" mechanism with Central and East European countries and using the promise of investment deals connected to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to undermine common EU positions on issues important to Beijing; acquiring high-tech companies and stealing proprietary technological secrets; and, targeted funding for European universities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and think tanks.

Russia and China are both revisionist powers, yet each poses a different challenge. While Moscow loudly smashes the rules, Beijing quietly erodes them. China is a rising power. Its economic reach, rapid technological progress and growing military capabilities, global diplomacy geared to very different norms, and its vast resource needs render it a systemic challenger. Russia, in contrast, is a declining power. It does not have China's resources. It is, however, more desperate. This can mean that in the short- to medium-term it could also be more dangerous.

The United States: From European Power to Power in Europe?

The stakes for Europe have been rendered higher by the surprising realisation that the most unpredictable actor in this mix may in fact be the United States. The advent of the Trump administration has not only shaken European assumptions about the steadiness and reliability of their major ally, it has exposed the painful reality of their continued dependence on what many fear to be an erratic and reckless superpower. Europe's irritation

with being dependent on Donald Trump is almost as great as its fear of being abandoned by him.

Abandonment is not a likely scenario. The U.S. remains deeply engaged in European security. The Obama administration quadrupled U.S. defence spending in Europe following the Russian intervention in Ukraine. It sent U.S. troops on a rotational presence to the Baltic states, Poland, and Romania. The Trump administration has enhanced that spending, bolstered the U.S. presence on NATO's Eastern Flank, and supported a new Mobility Command and a new Atlantic Command for NATO. Moreover, recent European rhetoric about "strategic autonomy" has yet to be given any real substance despite EU efforts to develop a more robust defence identity. And in terms of ultimate security guarantees, NATO and the U.S. will remain indispensable for a long time to come.

But a more nuanced shift in U.S. approaches to Europe is underway, and it did not begin with Trump. Stated simply, the U.S. is drifting from being a European power to a power in Europe. That simple turn of phrase carries significant implications for transatlantic relations and European security.

For 70 years, the U.S. has been a European power. It has been integral to the intra-European balances and coalitions that comprised both Cold War and post-Cold War Europe. It has been actively involved in all of the continent's mechanisms and institutions, from NATO, the Partnership for Peace, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the OSCE, to the U.S.-EU relationship, the OECD and the G7/G8. It cultivated bilateral and regional partnerships, from the Northern European Initiative to the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, across the whole continent.

It did so not just out of hegemonic impulse but due to a number of fundamental understandings. The first was the realisation that Europe alone was still unable to deal with its own civil wars. The second was that Europe remained turbulent and unfinished. Advancing a Europe whole and free was deemed both important and urgent to U.S. interests. Third was the understanding that European order was a linchpin of world order. The U.S. also engaged as a European power because it realised that after two world wars in which Europeans destroyed their continent, it must play a role as Europe's pacifier. By aligning its security with its allies, it helped those allies

build their security together, rather than against each other. NATO offered an umbrella under which the European experiment could flourish.

When the Cold War ended, Americans were tempted to step back from Europe. President Bush's vision of a Europe whole and free was prescient and bold. Yet, it was not clear at the time whether the U.S. would commit to its realisation. The domestic mood was decidedly inward-looking; there was talk of a peace dividend and retrenchment from global exertions. As Cold War divisions faded, it was tempting to say that it was high time that the Europeans worked out their problems themselves while Americans turned first to problems at home.

It was only when it became clear that Europe's inability to contain the fire spreading from the Bosnian conflict in the continent's southeastern corner could endanger the broader peace in Europe that the U.S. re-engaged in a comprehensive manner. The Balkan wars returned the U.S. to its role as an affirmative stakeholder and shaper of European and Euro-Atlantic architecture. The dangers were as apparent as the opportunities were historic. The wild *mélange* of posters and placards borne by the many thousands of people who had jumped into their Skodas, Ladas, and Trabants and taken to the streets of Gdansk, Budapest, Prague, Leipzig, Bucharest, and other Central and Eastern European cities in the late 1980s essentially carried one message: "We want to return to Europe"—to be part of a Europe to which they had always belonged, and yet had been prevented from joining because of where the Red Army stopped in the summer of 1945. Their message shook the continent and its institutions. Their message was both opportunity and obligation: the opportunity to build a continent that was truly whole, free, and at peace with itself; and the obligation to see it through.

The U.S. engaged anew, working with Europeans across the continent to extend the space of stability where war simply does not happen, where democracy, freedom, and prosperity prevail. These achievements have been significant. We can be proud. But we cannot be complacent.

Today, the U.S. is once again tempted to step back from Europe. Trump personifies this shift, but the temptation to retrench is both broader and deeper than him. Most of my compatriots wonder why 500 million Europeans still depend on 330 million Americans for protection and

diplomatic initiatives that are essential for Europe's own security. As other world regions both beckon and threaten, and as problems pile up at home, Americans are tempted to ask why Europeans can't tackle their own problems, why America is still needed to the same degree it was in the past, whether Europe matters as it may have in the 20th century, and why Europe's challenges should be more relevant and pressing than problems at home or elsewhere in the world.

These are reasonable questions. The answer depends on whether one believes that in the new world rising a Europe with less America is likely to be more stable than a Europe with more America.

The New Era

Once again, Europe finds itself between strategic epochs. The post-Cold War period has come to an end. A new era has begun—more fluid, more turbulent, more open-ended. This new landscape is strange, unformed, yet forming fast. Familiar landmarks are changing before we can adjust our thinking. Revisiting those landmarks will help us better navigate this new landscape and better understand the viability of a Europe whole and free. Which markers still provide useful orientation? Which should be discarded in favour of new points of orientation more attuned to Europe's contemporary realities?

The post-Cold War paradigm posited that Europe's 20th-century earthquake had ended. Things had stopped shaking. Europe's new architecture could be built on stable ground. According to this perspective, turmoil in the Balkans, festering conflicts in Eastern Europe, and Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine were episodes to be resolved. Tragic, but peripheral and fixable.

These assumptions simply do not correspond to Europe's realities. Unfortunately, Europe's 20th-century earthquake did not end in 1989 or in 1991. Europe's East is less secure and less at peace than it was at the beginning of this decade. The Soviet succession remains open-ended, and it is still shaking the European landscape. Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine were not isolated episodes, they were symptomatic

of deeper currents. While Ukrainians bear significant responsibility for the dysfunction and turmoil that has gripped their country, their drama is only part of much broader and deeper tensions that beset the entire region.

The post-Cold War paradigm also posited that the magnetic qualities of the EU would exert an irresistible pull on countries to create conditions by which their integration into the Union could be possible—resolving bilateral disputes and ethnic tensions, engaging in true political and economic reforms, respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, working together rather than standing apart.

The new reality is that for more and more Europeans both inside and outside the Union, the European experiment, while still ground-breaking and attractive in many ways, has lost its power to induce transformative change. They only want “more” Europe when it can address their problems more effectively than local or national remedies. There is also greater sensitivity to the fragility of Europe’s grand experiment at integration, and a greater caution when it comes to potential “Eurocratic” overreach.

The reality is that Europe’s vast eastern spaces will remain turbulent, and sporadically violent, for the foreseeable future. Those lands are not just challenged by Russia; their volatility derives as much from their own internal weaknesses. Corruption and crony capitalism, kleptocratic elites, and festering conflicts continue to drain resources from countries that are already fragile and poor. Moreover, vast swaths of Europe’s East are still beset with historical animosities and multiple crises, including a number of conflicts that affect the entire continent. Tensions over Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Crimea and eastern Ukraine, which some euphemistically label “frozen” conflicts, are in reality festering wounds. They inhibit the process of state-building as well as the development of democratic societies. They offer fertile ground for corruption, organised crime, trafficking, and terrorism. They foster the proliferation of arms and a climate of intimidation. They are a major source of instability within these countries and the broader region. These conflicts severely undermine future prospects for these countries, while giving Moscow major instruments for leverage on domestic policy and to question the sovereignty of these states.

The combination of Western Europe's internal preoccupations, America's retrenchment, Moscow's revisionism, and Eastern Europe's volatility is a combustible brew. Putin has openly rejected the rules of the road in European security, and in Eastern Europe, beyond the EU and NATO, there are neither rules nor roads. Broader institutions that include all post-Soviet states, like the OSCE and the Council of Europe, have been weakened by Western disinterest and by the ability of Russia and other states to undermine reforms and undercut decisions. European-wide mechanisms built up over decades to increase transparency, predictability, and de-escalation, including through arms control, have lost priority. Europe's nuclear security architecture, which has brought stability over many decades, has eroded to the point of collapse. The danger is high of accidents or miscalculation among planes in the air, ships at sea, or troops on the ground. Disruptive challenges to critical societal functions have grown across the continent.

Unfortunately, despite this deterioration in Europe's security, the new reality is also that Europe's West is less confident and prepared to reach out in any significant way to Europe's East than at any time in a generation. An EU whose societies are once again defining and delineating themselves from each other is not a Union willing or able to integrate additional societies knocking on its door. The EU's Eastern Partnership, which was launched over a decade ago as a well-meaning effort at transformative change with six East European countries, has become the very embodiment of the EU's debilitating ambivalence about its relationship to its eastern neighbours. Over time, it has become more about holding countries off than about bringing them in. Does the EU seek a compensatory regionalism intended to mollify neighbours who will never be offered membership? Or does it seek a truly transformative regionalism that would tackle the priority challenges of the region and then work to align and eventually integrate these countries into the EU and related Western institutions? It doesn't really seem to know.

If a Europe whole and free has any chance of becoming reality, the EU must change course. It must stand by the Treaty of European Union's language that any European state that respects EU values "and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union." It should

differentiate between those for whom political association, economic integration, and eventual membership is a goal (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and most of the Western Balkans) and those who are interested in cooperation short of membership (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Belarus). Economic, technical, and financial cooperation with each country should address its most urgent needs and its specific capacities. Urgent needs should be tackled vigorously on their own merits without tying them to an unwieldy mechanism that has little meaning in the countries concerned. Only when fundamental needs are addressed and capacity is built can both sides hope to address more comprehensive efforts to address all aspects of the EU's *acquis communautaire*.¹

Affirming the principle that the door to Western institutions remains open should not mean lowering standards. Those who seek to join our institutions do so because our norms and values mean something. Neither we, nor they, are served by diluting those standards. Realistically, that makes a membership perspective for the countries of wider Europe a generational challenge. The issue is not whether there can be a consensus on membership for any particular candidate today, it is whether those who are determined to take their countries into the European mainstream can create conditions in which the question of integration, while controversial today, can be posed positively tomorrow.

Ukraine is the crucible of change, not just because of its size and location in the heart of Europe but because of its meaning for the vision of a Europe whole and free. Ukraine has always been a critical strategic factor for European and Eurasian security, but today it stands at a critical crossroads between a more open society integrated increasingly into the European mainstream and serving as a positive alternative model to that of Putin for the post-Soviet space; or a failed, fractured land of grey mired in the stagnation and turbulence historically characteristic of Europe's borderlands.

Turbulent Europe

Despite the huge progress that has been achieved over the past 30 years, the hard reality is that Europe remains turbulent, dynamic, and prone to instability. History did not end with the Cold War. Some walls came down, but others remained and new ones have appeared. A more fragile Europe is both more important and more urgent for U.S. interests. Yet, American leaders fail to appreciate this.

This time, the U.S. may finally succumb to its periodic temptation to retrench from European affairs. This time, it is in real danger of drifting from being a European power to being a power in Europe. By that I mean a country that is selectively rather than comprehensively engaged in European affairs, one that is focused as much on shedding burdens as sharing them, a country that is part stakeholder and part spoiler, one that is less supportive of integration and more open to “disaggregation” by playing Europeans off against one another, a country less intuitively convinced that Europe, while important, is also urgent, or that there is any particular link between European order and global order.

That is not the America Europe needs. However, it could be the America Europe gets, unless we can again affirm that enduring American interests—a Europe that is hospitable to freedom, a Europe at peace with itself, a Europe not dominated or threatened by any power or constellation of powers hostile to the U.S., a Europe that can be America’s counterpart, not its counterweight—can be best advanced by an America that is a European power, not just a power in Europe.

America’s debate is more open-ended than Europeans realise and more susceptible to influence than they may appreciate. It could turn on the message Americans hear from Central Europe. Over many centuries, the nature of Europe has been defined by the nature of its centre—often as crossroads, often as battleground. Today, this region of shifting borders and peoples, one whose turmoil has so often rippled across the continent, is once again our frontier of opportunity and obligation—opportunity to consolidate the progress of past decades towards a continent that is truly whole, free, and at peace, and obligation to see it through.

The choice should be clear. Retrenchment means leaving tens of millions of Europeans suspended between a prosperous, democratic EU, a largely authoritarian Eurasia, and a turbulent Middle East. As we know to our sorrow, such “in-between lands” are often cockpits for violence, conflict, and geopolitical competition. Our goal still can be a Europe whole and free. But that means America must act as a European power, not simply as a power in Europe. And it means Europeans must invest their energies in addressing the realities of a new era rather than vainly trying to recapture one that has passed.

... “Our responsibility is to look ahead and grasp the promise of the future. For 40 years, the seeds of democracy in Eastern Europe lay dormant, buried under the frozen tundra of the Cold War. And for 40 years, the world has waited for the Cold War to end. And decade after decade, time after time, the flowering human spirit withered from the chill of conflict and oppression; and again, the world waited. But the passion for freedom cannot be denied forever. The world has waited long enough. The time is right. Let Europe be whole and free.”

George H.W. Bush
“A Whole Europe, A Free Europe”

* * *

“Europe is not yet Whole and Free as we dreamt it would be in the heady days of 1989. But Europe is wholer and freer than it has ever been in its history. Russia and Belarus are the only two countries whose people are denied the right to choose their own government. One day they will have that right which the rest of Europe now enjoys.

This volume of essays is essential reading for those who wish to understand the last 30 years; three decades of European history which, whatever the setbacks and disappointments, have transformed our continent and the lives of those who are its citizens.”

Sir Malcolm Rifkind
served as Foreign Minister and Minister of Defence
in the United Kingdom Government between 1992–1997

* * *

„A great book about Europe’s finest years,
a convincing but unfinished strategic architecture.“

Volker Rühle
served as Federal Minister of Defence
in German Government between 1992–1998



ISBN 978-83-66091-39-9

9 788366 091399