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"There are, and will remain for the foreseeable future, two global superpowers: the United States and Europe. Only these two actors are consistently able to project a full spectrum of 'smart power' internationally."

Europe, the Second Superpower

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

It has become fashionable to view the global system as dominated by the United States, China, and India. How often do we hear from leading politicians that "The most important relationship in the twenty-first century is that between Washington and Beijing"? Or that the "rise of the rest" is the great phenomenon of our time? Missing from this equation is Europe. The "Old Continent's" reputation for sluggish economic and demographic growth, political disunity, and weak militaries has convinced most foreign analysts that the future belongs to Asia and the United States.

Indeed, among scholars, commentators, and politicians alike, the conventional view is that the contemporary world is "unipolar," with the United States standing alone as a sole superpower. With the rise of China, India, and perhaps some other nations, the world may become—if it is not already—multipolar. But Europe's role in the geopolitical balance, according to this view, remains insignificant.

Such claims rest on economic, demographic, and military measures of power. European economic growth, it is said, is slow and getting slower. Meanwhile, a Brookings Institution study predicts that the median age in Europe will increase to 52.3 years in 2050 from 37.7 years in 2003 (whereas the median age for Americans will be only 35.4 years). This will have negative effects on Europe's productivity, growth, and fiscal stability. And as long as the United States spends twice as much of its national income on defense as Europe collectively does, it is suggested, the Europeans are condemned to second-tier status. From Beijing to Washington—and even in Brussels—the Old Continent is widely viewed as a spent geopolitical force.

These prognoses of European decline are misguided. In fact, the world today has two global superpowers. One is the United States—the other is Europe. Europe is the only region in the world, besides the United States, able to exert global influence across the full spectrum of power, from "hard" to "soft." Europe is the only region, besides the United States, that projects intercontinental military power. And European countries possess a range of effective civilian instruments for projecting international influence that is unmatched by any country, even the United States. These tools include European Union enlargement, neighborhood policy, trade, foreign aid, support for multilateral institutions and international law, and European values.

Since the end of the cold war, as the world system has become more interdependent, networked, democratic, and freer of overt ideological rivalry, Europe's distinctive instruments of influence have become relatively more effective, leading to a rise in European power. Over the next three or four generations, trends in the foundations of European power—high per capita income, sophisticated economic production, and patterns of global consensus—are also likely to be favorable. If we view power in this multidimensional way, Europe is clearly the second superpower in a bipolar world.

REALISTS VERSUS REALITY

From a theoretical perspective, the conclusion that Europe is in terminal decline as a force in great power politics rests on a traditional "realist" worldview. According to this view, sovereign nations engage in zero-sum competition by mobilizing coercive power resources. Such resources stem ultimately from gross demographic and eco-

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nomic power, which can be converted into relative military advantage.

According to this theory, Europe's global influence—its ability to get what it wants—will decline proportionately with its percentage of aggregate global power resources. Most realists believe the global system is already unipolar, with the United States as the sole superpower (though they differ about the precise consequences of this fact). They believe the system is trending toward one in which the largest sovereign states—the United States, China, and India—will dominate an increasingly multipolar system.

Immediately upon the collapse of the Soviet Union nearly 20 years ago, realists such as John Mearsheimer, Kenneth Waltz, Stephen Walt, and Charles Kupchan began predicting that the decline of an immediate, common Soviet threat would undermine transatlantic cooperation, sow discord among Western powers, weaken NATO, and hurt European cooperation. The Iraq crisis, with its illusion of "soft balancing" against the United States, seemed to confirm this prognosis.

For slightly different reasons, having to do with new challenges coming from autocracies like Russia and China, as well as from Islamic radicals, neoconservatives have predicted disorder, believing, in Robert Kagan's words, that "the twenty-first century will look like the nineteenth." Neoconservatives like Kagan share the realist view that greater military power projection capability is the key for Europe to be taken seriously in the contemporary world. For Europe to reestablish itself as a major global force, or simply to hedge against a wayward America, many have argued that meaningful European defense cooperation and a European defense buildup would be required.

Few short-term predictions in social science are as clear as these—and few have been, thus far, so unambiguously disconfirmed. Over the past two decades, Europeans, both among themselves and in the transatlantic relationship, have experienced extraordinary amity, cooperation, and policy success. The continent has been pacified. The EU has enjoyed an astonishingly successful run: It completed the single market; established a single currency; created a zone without internal frontiers ("Schengen"); launched common defense, foreign, and internal security policies; promulgated a constitutional treaty; and, most importantly, expanded from 12 to 27 multicultural members, with a half dozen more states on the list to join eventually.

Far from falling into disarray, the EU has emerged as the most ambitious and successful international organization of all time, pioneering institutional practices far in advance of anything seen elsewhere. At the same time, despite its lack of any military buildup, Europe has established itself unambiguously as the world's "second" military power, with combat troops active across the globe.

Its military operations, moreover, are conducted almost exclusively in close cooperation with the United States. No Euro-Chinese "balancing" alliance has emerged. Instead, America and Europe have drawn closer together (the Iraq crisis constituting the single major exception). Meanwhile, the EU's distinctive tools of civilian influence have gained in utility vis-à-vis hard military power. The EU's enlargement may well be the single most cost-effective instrument to spread peace and security that the West has deployed over the past 20 years.

How can most great powers be "rising" at once? This is a puzzle only for realists, who assume that the aims of governments conflict.

To understand why realist predictions were so wrong, we need to turn away from realism to a liberal theory of international relations. "Liberal" does not refer here to a theory that stresses the role of international law and institutions, nor left-of-center or utopian ideals, nor unbounded belief in *laissez faire* economics. What is meant instead is a theoretical approach to analyzing international relations that emphasizes the varied underlying national interests—"state preferences"—that governments bring to world politics, and which are transmitted from society to decision makers via domestic politics, societal interdependence, and globalization.

In the liberal view, these varied social pressures are the most fundamental cause of foreign policy behavior. Zero-sum security rivalry, military force, and power balancing are not ubiquitous conditions. They are only a few among a number of possible circumstances—in fact, they are rather rare. Increasingly, international interactions are positive-sum, such that the rise of more than one country or region can be complementary.

Liberals argue that the realist view of power, whereby global influence is grounded in population and aggregate national income, which feed

into military mobilization and spending, may not be entirely irrelevant, but it is no longer central to most issues in world politics—if indeed it ever was. Instead, most global influence today rests on various forms of "civilian" power: high per capita income; a central position in networks of trade, investment, and migration; an important role in international institutions; and the attractiveness of social and political values. All of these are areas in which Europe is and will remain preeminent for the foreseeable future.

VENUS AND MARS TOO

Europe's comparative advantage lies in its projection of influence via economic and civilian instruments. But Europe is also a far more formidable military power than most observers acknowledge. The reason is that a major military force is, in the modern world, a luxury that can be mustered only by countries with a high per capita income, technological sophistication, and a long legacy of military spending. Europe enjoys unique advantages in these areas.

Many observers write off European military power entirely. Kagan's catchphrase, "Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus," is often believed, even in Europe. Yet Europe accounts for 21 percent of the world's military spending—a good deal less than America's 43 percent, to be sure, but still considerably more than China's 5 percent, Russia's 3 percent, India's 2 percent, and Brazil's 1.5 percent.

Europeans, moreover, do not just equip forces; they use them. European states have had 50,000 to 100,000 troops stationed in combat roles outside their home countries for most of the past decade. They provide the bulk of non-US troops in global operations. Listening to criticism of Europeans for their failure to do more in Iraq and Afghanistan might give one the impression that only Americans are engaged there. In fact, 24 allied countries, of which 21 are European, are involved in Afghanistan. Military interventions and peacekeeping operations, if they are not led by the United States, tend to be led by Europeans—as in Sierra Leone, Lebanon, and Chad.

Arguably, European interventions in low-intensity situations are more effective than those of the United States. Certainly no region or country, save America, possesses a portfolio of military capabilities and a willingness to use them comparable to Europe's—nor is any likely to challenge European preeminence soon. China's military remains a largely landlocked, labor-intensive force still focused on Taiwan and internal security. Russia, with far greater military assets than China's, does little more than project power into renegade provinces like Chechnya, or a few hundred miles over the border into the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

THE POWER OF ATTRACTION

Its considerable hard power notwithstanding, Europe is, in contrast to the United States, a "quiet" superpower. It specializes in the use of economic influence, international law, "soft power" (the capacity to attract others to your way of thinking), and "smart power" (matching military with civilian forms of influence). In fact, Europe today is more effective at projecting civilian power globally than any other state or non-state actor. And Europeans have demonstrated, contra realist claims, that such instruments of power can be extremely influential. Some of these tools are wielded by a unified Europe, some by European governments acting in loose coordination, and some by European governments acting unilaterally.

Accession to the EU is the single most powerful policy instrument Europe possesses. Since 1989, Europe's "power of attraction" has helped stabilize the polities and economies of over a dozen neighboring countries. Enlargement has created a focal point and a set of incentives around which moderate domestic forces have organized. And the effects are visible well beyond the 12 members that have joined most recently, with European influence powerful in Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, and even Turkey. EU enlargement has almost certainly had far more impact—and in a less provocative way—than NATO enlargement. The United States, China, India, Japan, and other major powers enjoy no comparable instruments for projecting regional influence.

In addition, Europe pursues an active "neighborhood policy," intervening diplomatically to resolve conflicts and promote political and economic reform in its neighborhood, backed by Europe's economic, financial, legal, and military might. The EU has signed association and free trade arrangements with many countries in the broader region. Europeans have taken the lead in recent successful diplomatic initiatives—and not just with states that are candidates for EU membership. Even where membership is only a distant possibility, as with Ukraine, Moldova, or Albania, or an essentially nonexistent possibility, as with Morocco, Libya, and Israel, there is evidence that

EU initiatives have had an impact. For example, quiet EU diplomacy toward Morocco—backed by trade, immigration, security, and human rights ties—has been credited with encouraging political and economic reform in that country.

More fundamentally, European governments are the strongest and most consistent supporters of international law and institutions across the board. The EU is the single largest financial contributor to the UN system. Europeans fund 38 percent of the UN's regular budget, more than two-fifths of UN peacekeeping operations, and about one-half of all UN member states' contributions to UN funds and programs. EU member states are also signatories to almost all international treaties currently in force.

Europeans are overrepresented compared to their population in many international organizations. Those who favor institutional reform of highly symbolic elite international leadership bodies such as the UN Security Council and the G-groups, presumably with the aim of integrating and socializing some larger developing countries into responsible statecraft, have been critical of European obstruction. Yet Europeans did not block the Group of Eight's evolution into the G-20, and they have favored integration of developing countries like China into functional organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Many believe that, with US cooperation in recent years, a deal would have been possible on Security Council reform as well.

The EU has emerged as the most ambitious and successful international organization of all time.

A GLOBAL ECONOMIC FORCE

In trade and investment affairs, Europe is a global economic superpower larger than the United States and far ahead of countries such as China or India. And in some respects, Europe is institutionally better able to exploit its economic position. What motivates countries outside the EU to participate in its enlargement or neighborhood policies, after all, is not primarily an idealistic desire to be part of "Europe," but rather a desire to enjoy the enormous economic benefits of membership in (or association with) the EU. Europe dominates its neighborhood economically, trading more with each Middle Eastern country (except Jordan), and nearly all African countries, than any other single trading partner.

Europe's continuing economic influence extends to the global level. Even excluding intra-regional trade, the EU is the largest exporter and importer in the world. Of the top nine exporting countries in the world, five are European: Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Germany alone exports roughly as much as China every year, and its goods have far more value added. Europe trades more with China than the United States does, and its bilateral balance of trade is stronger. Yet trade statistics actually understate the importance of European centrality in the world economy.

If we measure intra-firm trade, investment, and research and development—increasingly the true drivers of modern international economic activity—then Europe remains an order of magnitude more important than China or India. Often, trade statistics are cited in the United States to illustrate a shift from Atlantic to Pacific economic activity. But if we look not at trade but at investment, US affiliate sales, foreign assets, and R&D—which are more profound measures of modern economic activity—transatlantic economic exchange is far more robust than trans-pacific exchange. Europe accounted for over 57 percent of total US foreign direct investment from 2000 to 2008, while total US investment in China, India, Russia, and Brazil *combined* was only 14 percent. In this same period, US firms invested $26.4 billion in China—less than half of US investment in Ireland alone. And Europe is still far and away the most important global R&D destination for US companies.

The EU's common currency, the euro, is the only serious alternative to the dollar as a global reserve currency. Although the euro will not supplant the dollar any time soon, in part because of the greater depth of American capital markets, it has established an important secondary position. At the end of 2008, some 45 percent of international debt securities were denominated in dollars, compared to 32 percent in euros.

European policy on tariffs and other basic trade issues is unified, due to the EU's status as a customs union. The EU negotiates as a bloc at the WTO. While it is true that developing countries are playing a stronger role today, and the trading world is slowly growing more multipolar, the EU and the United States remain dominant forces

within the WTO. China, by contrast, has accommodated itself to Western terms in order to enter the trading system.

Meanwhile, even with a recent increase in US aid, EU member states and the European Commission together dispense about 50 percent of the world's foreign aid, while the US share amounts to about 20 percent. Europe is second to none at delivering development services. And, contrary to popular belief, the EU even exceeds the United States in disbursement of private aid.

Europe's political and social values are certainly no less important a support for its global influence. Both polling and practice suggest that European social and political models are more attractive worldwide than US alternatives. Apparently publics around the world favor generous social welfare and health policies, parliamentary government, adherence to international human rights standards, and a smaller role for money in politics—all associated with Europe. Very few countries in the so-called third wave of democracies have copied major elements of the US Constitution.

Taken together with its military activities, Europe's civilian capabilities, economic importance, and political attractiveness render it a full-spectrum power, wielding a wide range of instruments for regional and global influence.

EUROPE'S FUTURE

Of course Europe's civilian as well as its military power derives ultimately from a highly productive economy. Policies like EU enlargement and association agreements with neighboring states are attractive to others because of the massive pull of the European economy. Aid, education, trade, the European social model, and other aspects of Europe's foreign policy portfolio must be funded. Moreover, the informational, educational, and legal sophistication of European policies are byproducts of highly developed economies.

This has led many to ask whether sluggish demographic and economic growth rates will undermine Europe's role in the world. A 2008 assessment by the US National Intelligence Council (NIC) is typical. The NIC suggested:

> The drop-off in working-age population will prove a severe test for Europe's social welfare model, a foundation stone of Western Europe's political cohesion since World War II. Progress on economic liberalization is likely to continue only in gradual steps until aging populations or prolonged economic stagnation force more dramatic changes. There are no easy fixes for Europe's demographic deficits except likely cutbacks in health and retirement benefits. Defense expenditures are likely to be cut further to stave off the need for serious restructuring of social benefits programs. The challenge of integrating immigrant, especially Muslim, communities will become acute if citizens faced with a sudden lowering of expectations resort to more narrow nationalism and concentrate on parochial interests, as happened in the past. Europe's strategic perspective is likely to remain narrower than Washington's. Divergent threat perceptions within Europe and the likelihood that defense spending will remain uncoordinated suggest the EU will not be a major military power by 2025.

There are three main reasons why this sort of conventional pessimism about Europe's future is misguided. First, demographic and economic estimates of European decline are greatly exaggerated. Europe constitutes a bloc of countries that, whether or not they are explicitly coordinated, generally take similar positions. And the size of Europe's population, as a whole, is quite significant in relation to that of other great powers. It will remain so for generations.

The European share of global economic activity has been stable over time. Even evaluated by the traditional measures of aggregate population and GDP, Europe's relative slice is declining only very slowly. Analysts often overlook that even the direst prognoses project Europe's share of global GDP declining from 22 percent to 17 percent over the next generation—hardly catastrophic. And these scenarios rest on the historically unprecedented assumption that Asian growth rates will continue at around 10 percent for over 30 years—an unlikely scenario given demographic, environmental, and political hurdles facing Asian societies.

The second reason that the conventional view of European decline is misleading is that aggregate population and GDP are the wrong measures of power. The linear relationship between global power and gross population and GDP is an analytical anachronism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Liberal theory is highly suspicious of any such simple relationship, in part because the extent of underlying conflicts of interest among states is a variable rather than a constant: Rivalries can occur, but the zero-sum situations assumed by realism are relatively rare.

When most governments had few social welfare demands, could reliably control colonial territory,

and planned for wartime mass mobilization, as during World Wars I and II or the cold war, population and aggregate GDP were perhaps plausible determinants of great power geopolitical influence. Yet today the primary imperative for most governments—not least those in Beijing, New Delhi, Brasília, and other major emerging country capitals—is to maintain legitimacy by providing adequate economic growth, social mobility, and public services. Interstate war of any kind, let alone total war decided by the total commitment of population and thus aggregate GDP or demographics, has become exceedingly rare among great powers.

Indeed, for poor countries, a large population can be as much a burden as a benefit. Consider China. One often reads alarming statistics about the sheer size of the Chinese population, economy, or military. But China would be far more capable internationally without the political imperative of caring for 700 million poor Chinese in the hinterland—the welfare of whom constitutes the paramount political issue for any Chinese leader. Were this not enough of a headache, Chinese and Indian leaders face opposition from unruly national minorities across their vast multicultural spaces. The need to devote resources to internal priorities imposes a fundamental constraint on military spending and foreign policy adventurism.

Europe today is more effective at projecting civilian power globally than any other state or non-state actor.

This is not to deny that Europe may face difficulties allocating resources in the future, or that the relative size of the United States, China, and Europe counts for something. But crude demographic and economic size is less important than high *per capita* income—and in this area the long-term structural trends still greatly favor Europe.

Per capita income not only measures the existence of a surplus that can be used to fund international power projection. It also indicates (in non–resource-based economies) the complexity and modernization of a society aiming to support sophisticated civilian power instruments. Effective forms of global influence these days—not just advanced military technology, but also education, sophisticated legal mechanisms of cooperation, foreign aid, complex trade and investment arrangements, advanced political institutions, effective diplomatic engagement, and inward immigration—all suppose high per capita income.

High per capita income, moreover, generates cultural influence. Again, consider China. Certainly Chinese economic influence is growing in East Asia, and with it the number of people speaking Chinese, studying in China, and perhaps even appreciating things Chinese. But China and its culture do not have nearly the preponderant weight that Japanese or Korean culture enjoys in the region—let alone the extraordinary impact that EU legal norms have had in "Europeanizing" the other end of Eurasia, or that Anglophone language and culture enjoy across the globe.

THE COOPERATIVE GIANT

The third and most important reason that the conventional view of European demographic and economic decline is misleading is that governments increasingly interact on the basis of reciprocity—peaceful, negotiated exchange of concessions—unrelated to traditional material coercive capabilities of any kind. Europe is well placed to take advantage of this shift, because underlying material and ideological conflict between Europe and other great powers is decreasing. The cold war is over. Fundamental ideological alternatives to regulated capitalism are disappearing. Democracy is spreading. Nationalist conflicts are disappearing, particularly in the immediate proximity of Europe. As most global relations become more positive-sum, and great power war becomes rarer, the value of Europe's portfolio of civilian power instruments will be multiplied.

This prediction is consistent with liberal international relations theory. Liberal theory treats the level of convergence of and conflict between nations' underlying social interests as a variable that shapes international relations. Contrary to realist predictions, Europe and the EU have been *rising* in regional and global influence over the past 20 years. And this is not only because, as we have seen, Europe's civilian instruments of power projection have become more appropriate. It is also because the extent to which any given nation can project influence depends on the extent to which its interests converge with those of other, particularly neighboring, great powers. The greater the level of consensus, the greater the slack resources available to a state. Where underlying

preferences converge due to trade, democracy, and ideological convergence—the trends we have observed over the past two decades—we should expect to see widespread opportunities for cooperation with interdependent, democratic, modern states, such as those of Europe.

Looking to the future, three specific types of converging international interests are likely to be particularly advantageous for Europe, augmenting its relative global influence. First, Europe is increasingly *a quiet region*. European countries face an ever-smaller number of security threats within their region. Now that Balkan security threats have died down, the closest live threats are in the Caucasus, in the Middle East, or perhaps across the Mediterranean. This permits European governments to focus efforts "out of area." By contrast, Asian powers face a far more hostile immediate environment. One player's rapid ascent in that region is more likely to provoke alarm among its closest neighbors. So, even if Asian powers were to increase their military power in the future, it is less likely that they would be able to project it globally.

A second advantage enjoyed by Europe is a felicitous shift in the preferences of major governments around the world. Most European policy goals involve efforts to encourage ongoing long-term reform of countries in the direction of democracy, economic development, and cooperative international relations. Most great powers—most notably China and Russia, for all their problems—have made enormous strides in this direction since the end of the cold war. This reduces the useful range of (American) high-intensity military capabilities, while increasing the utility of European civilian power instruments. As more countries become market-oriented, democratic, and free of expansionist ideological claims, we should expect European policies to be better suited to advancing the regional and global interests of European countries. European preferences on major global issues are increasingly compatible with median views of the global community. Europe should find itself closer to the consensus point of global bargains.

Finally, Europe's relationship with the United States, whatever tensions there may be, contains less conflict than at any time in recent memory. This is even true in the area where realists and neoconservatives alike have predicted the least agreement, namely military intervention "out of area." Far from being a source of greater transatlantic conflict compared to during the cold war, military intervention today is a matter of near total Euro-American consensus.

There is of course the fact that coalitions of Europeans and Americans are fighting together in the periphery, including forces from a much broader range of countries (such as Germany, as well as the Eastern bloc countries) than ever were involved during the cold war. Even more striking is the high level of current transatlantic consensus about the proper purposes of such interventions. Since the end of the cold war, a period that has seen well over a dozen major military interventions by Western powers, fundamental disagreement has arisen in *only one case*: Iraq in 1998–2003. (I set aside tactical disagreements over the timing and mode of Balkans interventions, which were in any case eventually resolved.)

The "war of choice" in Iraq is truly an exception that proves the rule, since it is now widely viewed in retrospect as a policy error—of a sort that would be unsustainable as an instrument of US policy more than once in a generation. Post–cold war transatlantic consensus with regard to the use of force contrasts strikingly with relations during the last 25 years of the cold war, during which the United States and Europe disagreed on almost every major unilateral military intervention after Korea. In many cases Europeans voted against their US allies in the UN or even funded US enemies, as in Latin America.

Liberal theory's emphasis on the convergence of state preferences as a precondition for cooperation, rather than the realist focus on power balancing, leads to the prediction that US-EU cooperation is likely to persist.

DECENTRALIZATION WORKS

Europe, it is often argued, must unify in order to become a superpower. Proposals to achieve this include an expansion of majority voting, a centralized spokesperson, mandatory common policies, a common European military force, a European defense industry policy, and so on. Centralization is often taken to be the measure of effectiveness. If centralizing reforms fail, European defense and foreign policies fail as well.

In fact, Europe has centralized a number of important policies: on trade, enlargement, regulation, UN issues, and many more. But many EU policies, particularly the more "political-military" ones, remain essentially decentralized. Is Europe destined to remain, as Henry Kissinger once said

of Germany, an "economic giant and a political dwarf"?

Not as much as it may seem. Europe often functions very effectively as a rather decentralized network of governments—at times more effectively than it would if it were more centralized. During the cold war, European security policy was dominated by the task of establishing a collective deterrent against potential Soviet intimidation or attack. This task required extremely credible common positions. The result was a centralized institutional and ideological apparatus. Considerable pressure was placed on any government that strayed from common NATO policy.

Post–cold war security challenges, by contrast, do not generally involve direct and immediate security threats to Europe, beyond homeland security concerns. The challenge is rather to encourage a subset of countries to deploy a modest force against a smaller enemy in pursuit of a secondary security concern. It is unrealistic to expect the EU or any international organization to "pre-commit" governments to act in such circumstances. And needless to say, governments in Europe are unlikely to relinquish sovereignty to form a common European army. They did not do so during the cold war, when the threat was more serious than it is today. Given the smaller scale and less imperative nature of current operations, it is often unnecessary, even counterproductive, for all nations to be involved in any given action. The more decentralized, "coalition-of-the-willing" form of Europe today may thus be more effective because it is more flexible. Particularly in conditions of incomplete consensus, decentralized institutions may be better suited to the challenges facing the continent.

The Treaty of Lisbon, the compromise conclusion of the European Constitution, though much maligned, in fact has done a good deal to improve the European balance of centralization and flexibility. It has created a European "foreign minister" figure who can set the agenda for EU decision making, represent the EU abroad, and reduce competition among EU institutions. But the treaty also facilitates the use of EU institutions for military activities by subgroups ("coalitions of the willing") among EU countries. In any case, it is unnecessary for Europe to unify or centralize far beyond what it has already done in order to reap the benefits of its power.

RISING IN TANDEM

The world today is bipolar. There are, and will remain for the foreseeable future, two global superpowers: the United States and Europe. Only these two actors are consistently able to project a full spectrum of "smart power" internationally. And European states possess an unmatched range and depth of civilian instruments for international influence. Because the post–cold war world is continuously becoming a more hospitable place for the exercise of forms of power that are, in practice, distinctively European, Europe's influence has increased accordingly. There is every reason to believe this trend will continue.

This is not to deny that a number of other great powers—the United States, China, and India among them—are also on the rise. This may seem contradictory: How can most great powers be "rising" at once? In fact, this is a puzzle only for realists, who assume that the aims of governments conflict in a zero-sum fashion. From a liberal perspective, the notion that more than one country gains influence at the same time is quite natural, as long as the environment is essentially positive-sum and the countries' aims are compatible.

The rise of other powers—the economic success of China, the military prowess of America, the emergence of new partners on Europe's borders—has not undermined Europe's rise; it has enhanced it.

Nevertheless, in Washington, Europe is still widely viewed as a declining region, barely able to take care of its own geopolitical interests, and increasingly irrelevant unless it centralizes its policy making. It is ironic that this should be so at a time when high US officials have unanimously embraced the need for more "smart power"—backing up military power with civilian initiatives—yet the American political system seems consistently unable or unwilling to generate the resources for such an effort.

Rather than discussing the obvious possibilities for complementarity, the transatlantic debate remains mired, as it was 10, 20, and 40 years ago, in discussions of military burden-sharing—today in the form of questions about who is providing troops to Afghanistan for a counterinsurgency mission that US and European analysts agree will fail without a massive civilian surge. This is a failure to learn lessons not simply from history, but from international relations theory. ■