

**PARIS, BERLIN, MOSCOW: PROSPECTS
FOR EURASIAN COOPERATION**

The 'core countries' of the European Union, France and Germany, while becoming more inter-connected are finding it necessary to forge a strong alliance with Russia in order to protect their common interests. The growing cooperation between the three states can result in the formation of a Eurasian community, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

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Europe is currently going through a crucial period during which she can either come into her own or fade away. The alternative is straightforward; either Europeans resume control over their security, their foreign policy and the evolution of their demography, thus becoming independent actors on the scene of international politics or they exit from history, gradually melting into a large free trade zone under US strategic protection. We should be grateful to the United States for their brutal, unilateral policies because they have forced Europeans to raise a number of questions regarding the final shape of the EU, its relations with America and Russia, its own borders, its energy autonomy and the dramatic and soon-to-be irreversible demographic condition of European countries. Thus a report on 'World trade in the twenty-first century' prepared under the direction of Philippe Colombani at IFRI on the request of the EU Commissioner Pascal Lamy takes up some of those hitherto forbidden topics, such as the decline in birth rates throughout the old continent. Colombani comes to the conclusion that Europe needs to draw up a strategic partnership with Russia, beginning with the issue of power generation.

That was also the main recommendation of my book *Paris-Berlin-Moscow* published in April 2002. The Italian version came out at the end of 2003 during the final weeks of the Italian presidency of the EU which placed a high priority on Euro-Russian cooperation. Almost a year after it first appeared, the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis took shape in the context of the Iraqi crisis and was heralded by the media worldwide. My book explains how, since the presidency of Charles de Gaulle until today, France and Germany, whenever they cooperate and agree on common objectives, are always able to secure the backing of their European partners. It also explains that forging a strategic partnership between the European Union and Russia would enable Europe to successfully take up the great challenges of the new century, in the areas of energy resources, security, the utilisation of space and the mastery of high technologies.

The case of the common policy adopted by France, Germany and Russia on Iraq reveals the potential of the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis. The troika, as a peaceful engine for Greater Europe is not intended to threaten any other power. However since Halford Mackinder, Anglo-Saxon strategists are well aware that a power gain in any region of the world immediately implies a decline elsewhere. That is why the United States, together with her European confederates will spare no effort to prevent permanent cooperation between France, Germany and Russia as shown in a paper dated August 28, 2003 published by the American Heritage Foundation under the heading 'Cherry Picking: Preventing the Emergence of a Permanent Franco-German-Russian Alliance'.

Franco-German collaboration, which was at a low ebb has been resuscitated again. French President Jacques Chirac put up a resistance to American diktats for which he did not appear to be suited. The new cohesiveness within the French government and in particular the ability and the boldness of Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin have brought about a reversal of France's policies vis-à-vis Russia while redefining Franco-German relations. Since then the arrest of pro-US oil oligarch Khodorkovski in Russia, the resignation of the 'liberal' Kremlin Chief of Staff Alexander Volochin, the establishment of a Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan and the nomination of his envoy to the EU, Mikhail Fradkov as Prime Minister in March 2004 have confirmed President Putin's policy towards the USA while evincing his wish to give high priority to Euro-Russian collaboration, provided the EU acts independently of the USA. However we are still far from a long-term strategic cooperation between these diverse partners. Before facing another major test, allies have be found on the global scene. In France as in most other European countries the faultlines on crucial options run across most party structures. Supporters of a multipolar world are to be found under all political banners. Today France, Germany, Russia, China and India are officially calling for a multipolar world. The intensifying economic war between Europe and the USA on the one hand, and between Asia and the USA on the other, the strategic divides which keep widening both across the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, and the common strategic, economic and cultural interests of Europe and Russia, all bolster the case for extending the growing economic and strategic cooperation within Europe to the whole Eurasian continent.

ECONOMIC WAR AND GEOSTRATEGIC DIVERGENCE BETWEEN EURASIA AND THE USA

In an interview granted to journalist Georges Marc Benamou in 1995 the then French President, Francois Mitterrand had said: "France does not know it but we are at war with America. Yes, a permanent, vital, economic war, a war without dead, apparently Americans play very rough; they are greedy, they want undivided power over the world."

The USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have put in place a network of electronic listening stations called 'Echelon' to eavesdrop on non-military targets. After the demise of the Soviet empire, the system was reorganised to focus on economic espionage. The National Security Agency, whose official annual budget of some ten

billion dollars is larger than the CIA's, intercepts everyday, through its satellites and land-based facilities all telephone conversations, faxes and e-mails. C Fred Bergsten claims that since the end of the Cold War, America's security, already threatened by 'the so-called Rogue States', requires that an economic war be conducted on two fronts, in Europe and in Asia. The two-front war is perilous for the hegemon, particularly when on occasion Europe and Asia act together, as was the case at the Seattle meeting of the WTO in 1999.

Since the Second World War, the USA has established her dominance over much of the Eurasian continent by turning the nations they defeated into protectorates in the West and the East (Germany, Italy, South Korea, Japan) and weaving bonds of vassalage with the other Western European countries and certain Oriental states. However the post-war order has been cast into question after the fall of the Berlin wall and the disintegration of the USSR. A newly sovereign, reunited Germany since the 4+2 treaty of 1990 is drifting away from America while increasing her cooperation with France whose foreign policy has recovered Gaullist overtones. Even in Britain political elites are openly denouncing Tony Blair's decisions and rethinking their country's strategic choices. Japan, gradually and prudently but firmly is distancing herself from Washington. With the rise to power of the neo-conservatives in the USA, the disputes have flared out in the open. American unilateralist policies have proven to be mostly counterproductive and have led to the isolation of the USA. Even one of the foremost official champions of US imperialism Zbigniew Brzezinski has acknowledged it in the *Washington Post* of November 12, 2003 (in an op-ed entitled 'Another American Casualty: Credibility') by pointing out that in the last two votes of the UN General Assembly on the Palestine-Israel issue, Washington found itself alone (with the Marshall Islands, Israel and Micronesia) against all other countries, including its traditional allies.

GEOPOLITICAL DATA ABOUT EUROPE AND THE USA

The denizens of the USA claim the name of the entire continent as 'Americans', though they only occupy a northern portion of it. The precise geographical counterpart of the United States in the northern hemisphere is Greater Europe, spreading from Brest at the tip of French Brittany to Vladivostok on the Pacific, flanked on the sides by the British and Japanese archipelagos. The gigantic Eurasian continent gathers most of the world's population and wealth. Western Europeans dwell on its narrow Western appendix, the 'Finis terrae' of that continent. As a Brittany of Eurasia, France is a concentrate of Europe and the only country which partakes of both its northern and southern climes, enjoying natural borders on three sides whereas to the east she commingles with Germany with bilingual regions that were once parts of Lotharingia, the realm of Charlemagne's eponymous grandson (French Flanders, Belgium, Luxembourg, Alsace-Lorraine, Switzerland). The ocean fringes the continent's natural western border and to the Orient, beyond the 'Old Europe' derided by Donald Rumsfeld, Europe gradually merges with Asia. The Urals are a border for geographers but have never been a political or cultural divide.

To the south, on the other hand across the Mediterranean and beyond Istanbul, the boundaries of Europe are clearly delineated and the cultural transition is much sharper, even though Spain, southern Italy and the formerly Turkish Balkans have been powerfully influenced by the Arab-Islamic civilisation whose components are natural economic partners of Europe.

The United States is a seabound, seafaring power; whereas continental Europe is shaped by her landmass. As a result of the European civil wars of the twentieth century, the USA has by and by assumed the succession of the paramount seapower England. The US civilisation was forged by trade to which it makes all human relations and activities subservient. For continental European nations war was traditionally an inter-state activity conducted for political and territorial ends. Sea powers on the other hand, fighting for commercial gain, attempt to strike at the trade and economy of their rivals by resorting to embargoes and blockades, primarily targeting civilians, especially the weaker sections of the populace. That is indeed typical of US policy.

Western European States, in the first place Germany and France have built progressive social welfare legislation which Anglo-Saxon liberals find backward and restrictive for private initiative. Neo-liberalism as practised in America appears mostly unacceptable to continental Europeans who are generally anchored in humanistic social traditions. President Putin of Russia for one, often cites as an example the ‘social market economics’ of the late German Chancellor Erhard. Mercantilism, monetarist theories and the first central bank all arose in Great Britain. After the 1688-89 revolution, John Locke participated in the reform of the monetary system and, in 1694 was instrumental in the creation of the Bank of England modelled after the Bank of Amsterdam chartered in 1604. Today American supremacy rests mostly in the use of the US dollar as a reserve currency by the world’s central banks. Almost two centuries after Locke, banker Paul Warburg spearheaded a campaign for the establishment of an American central bank which led to the foundation of the Federal Reserve System in 1913. In 1914 Warburg became the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. It is no accident that the earliest critiques of mercantilism, authored by the French magistrate Boisguillebert and the Colbertist economists came from continental Europe. As the EU Commissioners Chris Patten and Michel Barnier (now French Foreign Minister) point out, the UK and the USA prefer the inductive reasoning method while France favours the deductive process. The former is heavily tainted with empirical materialism while the latter breeds intellectual rationalism, often championing law and culture over business.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND RUSSIA: COMMON STRATEGIC, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS

The EU and Russia have a vital stake in the emergence of a multipolar world order. Since the USA seeks total planetary dominance, the conflicts started by them have multiplied: Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Afghanistan while others in Iran, Korea *et al.* are looming. A multipolar world alternatively would maintain a better balance. The theory of equilibrium was developed by David Hume in his book ‘*On the*

Balance of Power: “In all Greek polities the concern for the balance of power is quite visible and the ancient Historians refer to it very specifically; the politics of balance obeys rules of commonsense, it flows from the prudence required of States eager to protect their independence and unwilling to fall at the mercy of a State endowed with irresistible means” (translated from the citation in French by Raymond Aron in *Peace and War Among Nations*).

Energy is the major commodity for the new century. According to experts such as Norman Selly and John V Mitchell, in the years 2010-2020 crude oil production will reach its peak before falling off. That is why control over the petroleum and alternative power sources like nuclear fuels is a vital strategic need. In the first months of 2002, Russia became the world’s largest oil producer before Saudi Arabia. She also owns the greatest reserves of natural gas, and along with France, the Russian Federation is the only continental European State to master civilian and military nuclear technology. For the EU, Russia is hence the ideal energy partner.

As historian Fernand Braudel put it: “Russia is increasingly turning towards Europe. During the centuries since she entered the Modern Age up until 1917 and even afterwards that is her history’s crucial feature ...”. However this European tropism was and is still balanced out by the country’s symbiotic relationship with South and East of Asia, reflecting Russia’s position as a bridge thrown across Eurasia.

Economically one must find ways of collaborating in scientific fields where there is shared expertise, such as space exploration and defence research, as well as areas where knowhow is globally spread, i.e. pharmacology and biotechnology. France, Germany and Russia have complementary economic and commercial structures and human potential. The transport corridor number two (Berlin-Warsaw-Minsk-Moscow) could be extended up to Paris or even Brest on the Atlantic, as is being done for the railway line which will connect Brest, Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, Minsk, Moscow. An agreement between Euronext (the consortium of stock markets of Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris) and the Frankfurt Borse would give the continent a decisive advantage and pave the way for bringing in the Moscow Exchange. While helping to finance Russian companies, such an agreement would benefit European businesses and confer the critical mass in financial volumes that stock market activity demands.

Paris and Berlin could also charter together a European Continental Bank. As opposed to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) whose seat is in London, the new bank could be entrusted with the mission to finance industry in areas where there is a Russian competitive advantage. The promotion of Russian scientific capabilities might be ensured through the foundation in Russia of a Franco-German-Russian Technopolis modelled on those which exist in Bavaria for IT, in France at Sophia Antipolis and in the US in the Silicon Valley. Such a Technopolis, helping to find commercial outlets for Russian scientific discoveries might turn the flow of intellectual activity eastwards which now tends to head West, thereby stopping the old continent’s brain drain towards the USA

VLADIMIR PUTIN'S EUROPEAN POLICIES

It is well known that President Putin personally conducts the country's foreign policy while the Foreign Minister implements the President's decisions. In an interview given before his election in March 2000 to a Russian newspaper, Putin stated that in foreign policy matters, his model was General de Gaulle. He wants to rapidly develop economic relations with the EU, settle the problems of the country's foreign debt, cooperate in the area of high technology R&D and lower custom duties and trade barriers. The agreement for partnership and cooperation signed between the EU and Russia and implemented since December 11, 1997 is regarded in Moscow as largely insufficient. The Kremlin is shooting for a preferential accord, similar to those in place with Latin American States and Africa. Russia often feels that Brussels seeks pretexts to put bilateral economic cooperation on hold. Vladimir Putin hails from Saint Petersburg which is a symbol of Russia's openness to Europe. On September 25, 2001 he maintained before the German Bundestag, in German: "I believe that Europe can, in the long term, establish her reputation as a powerful, independent centre for global politics only if she combines her assets with the manpower, the territory and the natural resources of Russia and also with the latter's economic, cultural and military potential."

Since the end of February 2002, one notices a clear-cut change in the policies of Russia towards the countries that are perceived as inimical or troublesome by the USA. At that time, Putin sent to Iraq Evgeny Primakov, the promoter of the strategic triangle Russia-China-India and a leading expert on Arab affairs. Moscow and Beijing coordinated their policies on Iraq during the February 28 meeting between Jiang Zemin and Igor Ivanov when the issue of economic and power cooperation was also broached. The projects for joint Russo-Chinese development of eastern Siberia could upset the economic equation in the Pacific region to the detriment of the USA. Since then the Kremlin, which hitherto would not or could not openly challenge Washington has muted its verbally unconditional support to the American 'war on terror' and reinforced its bonds with Eurasian powers — from Paris to Tehran via Beijing — which do not toe the line of White House.

PARIS AND BERLIN CAN RESHAPE TOGETHER THE EU'S POLICIES TOWARDS RUSSIA

At present neither the European Commission nor the EU Council of Ministers are willing to make Russia a permanent strategic and privileged partner of Europe. Bilaterally, Berlin has embarked on a close economic and commercial cooperation without agreeing so far to enter into strategic discussions. In 1949, during a Press Conference, De Gaulle said "I say that Europe must be built on the basis of an agreement between the French and the Germans. Once Europe is structured on that foundation, then we can turn to Russia. Then once and for all, we can try to build Europe as a whole with Russia included, should she change her regime. Here is a program for true Europeans, here is mine."

It is now possible, provided we have the will, to build the Greater Europe of his dream. J P Froehly, an expert at the DGAP noted: “France and Germany should avail of the opportunity provided by the coming to power of Vladimir Putin to reshape the European architecture, together and in concert with Russia.”

Current political trends in France, Germany and Russia are conducive to their coming together. Before his reelection in 2002 Jacques Chirac was almost systematically critical of Russia. Since then however he has chosen to turn around French policies towards Moscow and then Foreign Minister Villepin was a most efficient force behind the new diplomacy. Chirac made the first official foreign visit to Russia during his second mandate. On July 19, 2002 he met with President Putin at Sochi on the Black Sea. The summit had been prepared by a large French ministerial delegation in Moscow. The coordination of Paris and Moscow’s positions regarding the US Security Council resolution on Iraq was an outcome of these talks. The dialogue on energy issues which was the focus of the Franco-Russian Inter-Government conferences of November 2002 has finally begun and the major Russian order for airbus planes signed in the presence of the prime ministers of both countries is most encouraging. France has played a decisive role — which Germany for obvious reasons could not assume — in working out the Kaliningrad (Koenigsberg) compromise during the EU-Russia summit. The three States have started conducting regular consultations and issuing joint declarations, whether on the occasion of official visits or informal working sessions between their foreign ministers, with the participation of external experts, such as the one held in October 2003 in Moscow.

A CRUCIAL PERIOD FOR EUROPE TO PREVAIL OR DISAPPEAR

Paul Kennedy in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* had discussed the decline of the USA. The notion was picked up by his colleague Immanuel Wallerstein who had predicted in 1980 the geopolitical inevitability of the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis. The end of the Atlanticist status quo is the major development in German policy since the end of the Second World War. At present Todd’s book *Après l’Empire* (After the Empire) is a best-seller in Germany together with Michael Moore’s *Stupid White Men*. The collapse of the USSR has left the USA in a position of dominance unequalled in history but time is not on the side of the Americans. Hence, they must attempt to consolidate by force, as quickly as possible, their provisional advantage. In the medium term Russia could challenge their supremacy if she recovers fast enough, provided sustained oil prices help her to do so. In the longer term however China is their most formidable rival and is already depicted as a potential foe in US policy papers. The Americans feel they cannot afford to use kid gloves either with their allies or their adversaries. It goes without saying that their policy-makers have all factored in their planning the relative but rapid fall of US power.

For Europe too time is short because her catastrophic demography will soon become irreversible. The fifteen States of the EU with their 375 million inhabitants are all experiencing a fall in population beginning from this decade whereas the population of

275 million citizens of the USA will increase in number during the next thirty years, mostly as a result of the growth of the Hispanic community at the expense of the Anglo-Saxon majority. Europe's situation is not yet fatal but will become so in a few years. For now France enjoys a less ominous demographic state of affairs, mainly due to the steps taken by De Gaulle in the aftermath of the Second World War to sustain birth rates. The policies adopted in Sweden during the nineteen eighties were also successful on that score until they were dropped in the early nineties under the pressure to conform with the EU's 'Maastricht criteria'. Now that the Iraq crisis has helped to reawaken a common European consciousness there must be a 'hard core around which to build a 'Europower' capable of entering into a strategic partnership with Russia.

FRANCO-GERMAN UNION — AN INEVITABLE OUTCOME

The harbingers of the Franco-German reunion are multiplying: joint sessions of both parliaments on the anniversary of the Elysee treaty, holding of Franco-German councils of ministers, projects for dual citizenship, the will to open joint diplomatic missions, plans for a European Army, a common position and maybe a common seat in the UN Security Council. In 2002 in a paper published in the French *National Defence Review* a Franco-German confederation was advocated. Such a structure was actually being studied between the aides of CDU candidate Stoiber (whose party was expected to win the legislative elections) and President Chirac's team. Despite the victory of incumbent Schroeder there is a high level of bilateral collaboration, made possible by a climate of mutual trust between Berlin and Paris.

One relatively unnoticed result of this cooperation was the dispatch of German troops to the Congo under French command — as part of the Artemis mission in Ituri from June to the end of August 2003, according to a UN mandate — only one week after Chancellor Schroeder vowed that he would not send a single German soldier to Iraq. The risk is great however, for the newly found European political will to melt down within a Union of twenty-five members. As envisioned on January 21, 2002 by EU Commissioners Verheugen and Lamy a Franco-German confederacy would have a common army, share embassies abroad and one permanent seat on the UN Security Council. German will become a compulsory language for any person wishing to enter the French public service and French for any German Government servant. The Franco-German Commonwealth, whose political and demographic size would be equal to Russia's, would pave the way for a full partnership with its huge Eurasian neighbour. The Benelux countries (the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) naturally belong to this European core and the last two are already participants in the European Army Project beginning with the Eurocorps.

Since the Middle Ages, France and Germany share a chapter in their history with the Frankish realm which matured into the Carolingian Empire. Indeed the original six-nation European Community fills, with the exception of southern Italy, the exact footprint of Charlemagne's Reich which embodied the long lost European unity. As Igor Maksimychev sees it, the French and German cultures provided the matrix for all modern

European civilisation. In a 1943 conversation with Archduke Otto von Habsburg, the heir to the Holy German-Austrian Empire, General de Gaulle expressed the wish that the 842 AD Verdun treaty, which had rent asunder Charlemagne's domain be abrogated "in order to bring back together at last the Western and Eastern Franks."

There is no doubt that an autonomous continental defence must be built, by duplicating NATO structures if needed. As long as Europe agrees to annually invest only 180 billion US dollars on her military forces while the USA spends more than 400 billion per annum, the security needs will not be answered and yet one cannot rely forever on an outside party to protect one's vital interests for the simple reason that interests are vital only to oneself. Russia could be given an associate status for questions of security and foreign policy and invited to participate in decision-making on common strategies within the COPS (the political and security committee provided for by the treaty of Nice). That arrangement would not entail high costs and should prove to be a strategically and symbolically decisive step. Moscow might also be invited to contribute to the EU's rapid reaction force.

Russia stands in the centre of the Eurasian continent and hence she holds the sway of the great power shift eastwards to the Pacific zone. Europe and Asia can work very practically to construct the regional infrastructure by supporting the ETU (Eurasian Transportation Union) set up on May 16, 2001 by the Russian Shipping Ministry.

Europe, breathing with her two lungs, the Western European and the Russian one, will become increasingly interconnected with Asia and it is in her immediate interest to further her economic and strategic relations with Japan, the two Koreas, China and India.

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