



ABOUT PEACE, WAR AND FREEDOM
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Somehow – was it a historian’s luck? – I happened to visit several places at very critical moments: in 1961 I was in Berlin a couple of months before the Wall was built, and again shortly after traffic and communication between West and East Berlin had become very difficult; Berkeley, Calif. at the heyday of the student revolution, Prague in August 1968 a few days before the communist brethren invaded, Warsaw just before the Polish president declared martial law. But the most awesome and impressive was being in Manhattan in September 2001. Most Europeans only witnessed the “events” from afar, and for them it’s difficult to understand what they meant and still mean to many Americans.

When we arrived in Berlin in October 2002 I expected that the German government would not disappoint us in organizing excitement and fascination. And certainly it was

fascinating to watch how the year at the Wissenschaftskolleg became a period in which many new orientations have been tested in the laboratory of German *Außenpolitik*; above all it was intriguing to see how the transatlanticism of the last fifty years was being remodeled. Not all the tests or experiments were, as far as I could observe them, completely successful, but that is after all characteristic of most experiments.

The Wissenschaftskolleg is an excellent institution, with a very good staff; especially the library service has been a great help to me. (But why did so many new books have to come from Bavarian or other southern libraries? I hope the Berlin libraries will again receive funds to buy those books as well.)

I have found the contacts with our Asian, African and Eastern European colleagues in particular quite rewarding and a help in overcoming the well-known EU inward-looking provincialism.

For us, Berlin in general is now a comfortable place to live in. But it took us some time to get emotionally adapted to this city, overloaded as it is with countless symbols that refer to extremes: from the highest human achievements in the arts and science to the worst type of 20th-century suppression of human freedom.

In the quiet, unpolitical Wiko environment, I tried during this hectic year to deal with three problem fields of international politics:

1) General aspects of the opaque European integration process, 2) The present transatlantic crisis, and 3) Recent changes in German foreign policy.

1. The Manifold Paradoxes, Inconsistencies, Self-Contradictions, and Absurdities of European Integration

What makes it so hard to get a grip on “Europe”, why are there so many misperceptions of the EU? So many misunderstandings, even among so-called experts? It is because of the many inconsistencies, paradoxes, and even absurdities that have characterized the EU until now. These not only make it hard to understand what exactly is going on, they also interfere with selling the project to the citizens.

The EU is “an unidentified political object”, as Commission President Jacques Delors once called it. Everything in Europe is trial and error, in a permanent state of “being in the make”. The EU is less an institution than a process: Always moving on, redrawing the map, never finished, totally hybrid, yet providing a kind of unity of aim in strong diversity. Balancing acts are the EU’s specialty, just as in-betweenness is its main characteristic.

The EU is performing a juggler's act to keep three or even four balls in the air: region – nation – Europe – world. After many years, it is still a fragile construction.

Some elements are changing so rapidly that further theorizing would be presumptuous. The EU resisted most theories and generalizations; it is a rule-breaker of the theory game. Integration is a sort of post-everything development, as Robert Kagan and Robert Cooper stated (unfortunately the latter gave it – in an otherwise brilliant paper – the totally misleading qualification “postmodern”).

The project EU can be accomplished only *without* a well-defined ultimate goal or limits: by avoiding clear answers to questions like how far integration should go and what the final political boundaries should be.

However, the program as such is goal-oriented, evolutionary in character: for tomorrow, the promise is more integration than we have today. From its beginning, the EU has been the top-down work of a political upper layer, with little democracy, though it was meant as a coalition of free democratic countries. The choice was: integration or a strong voice of the people in the member states.

After the Cold War, complex historical ballast is playing its stronger role in the foreign affiliations of the different countries. After 1990, we can see a general return of historical patterns. It's not that history is repeating itself; there is just a notably stronger impact of the “dead hand of history”, which started with the revolutions of 1989–91. Integration is also an attempt to exorcise that history, an attempt at modernization, to remove the skeletons from the closets. And in that respect, integration has played its role quite successfully. Europe used to be a warring continent, but now, for nearly fifty years, it has known peace. Alas, the Balkans destroyed this postwar image of Arcadia.

Some of the paradoxes I have dealt with are: The concept of “Europe” may originally have been mainly cultural; but from the beginning, culture has been left out of the integration programs. The founding fathers had good reasons to leave culture out as a means of integration. How to integrate a polyglot Europe remains a crucial problem in the EU.

The security issue is particularly urgent because of the present transatlantic crisis, since Europe is surrounded by zones of instability, to put it mildly. The EU ideal of a civil society is: law above power as the main principle of the EU. The EU has a “common – based on common interests of the member states – but not a unified (*einheitliche*) foreign policy” (Chris Patten).

“Borders go down, walls go up.” When the EU is enlarged to the east next year, lots of borders will be removed (e.g. between Poland and Germany), but other borders – those to the east of the new member states – will become more sealed off.

2. The Present Transatlantic Crisis

In an essay titled “How the US and the EU lost common ground, and how the EU lost much of its cohesion”, I discussed several theses, including: “A new era in world politics”. 9/11 underscored the fact that the unreal nineties had definitely come to an end. The End of the Cold War has weakened the glue of the old alliance. Europe is no longer geopolitically contested and thus has ceased to be a principal cockpit of international relations. America’s interests lie elsewhere now. From now on, Europeans are relevant only to the extent that they support common endeavors in the Middle East and beyond.

The so-called Neoconservatives tend to believe that we live in a special moment of history, one characterized above all by America’s unparalleled military power and the opportunity to expand the boundaries of democracy around the world. They believe that expansion would make the world safer and that this is the time for a grand strategy to assert a Pax Americana. In their view this is the decisive decade for human liberty.

So, in world politics we now encounter a growing American hegemony – of a US that, however, turned out to be very vulnerable – while on the other hand the influence of international law and all its matching institutions seems to be increasing – but still cannot cope with a real crisis. As the German political scientist Herfried Münkler said: “Die entfesselte amerikanische Macht muss normativ wieder eingefangen werden.” (which approximately translates as: the unbound American power should be bound again with norms).

Is the EU really going to strengthen its military power? That would, however, be a very costly business. And in the present period of serious cutbacks, political support for such a huge extra expenditure is very weak indeed.

Europe is still and will remain far removed from an “eigener weltpolitischer Gestaltungswillen” or strategy (H. Münkler).

Its lack of power divides Europe: some states try to strengthen their ties with the US, others – like France – keep hoping for a powerful European role in a multipolar system.

3. Recent Changes in German Foreign Policy

Another essay dealt with the questions: “How reliable does the Federal Republic remain as a partner in international politics after the recent *Alleingang*? *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik? Oder besser: Wohin wird die Bundesrepublik jetzt getrieben?*”

These questions lead to the broader *Frage*: How successful in general has the foreign policy of the Schröder government been? Has there been a shift in the relationship between *innere und äußere Staatsräson*? To what extent do the budgetary crisis and the *Reformstau* affect Germany’s foreign policy? What did the chancellor mean when he spoke of an “independent Europe”? How can the “detached cordiality” that used to exist between Berlin and Paris, – in spite of all their diverging interests, be restored? Did Germany’s influence in the EU-networks – especially with regard to East-West relations – diminish due to the present transatlantic crisis? To what extent are there changes in the emphasis on “peace” and “freedom” in political and ethical discussions in present-day Germany? How can German discussions be steered away from the interpretation of “historical lessons” of the Second World War as leading to a moral emphasis on Germany as an exclusively civilian power?