

EU NEW MEMBER STATES (NMS) AND THE FUTURE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP

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Talking Points

1. The real **post bipolar world order** is being born right now; it is not there yet, but we begin seeing how it **takes shape**; we do not live yet in a **new world**, but among the **ruins** of the **old** one ... (same **major actors**, same **international architecture**, same **rules** of the game...);
2. The major factor in this big change is not
 - a. The dis-satisfaction of **Russia** with the post Cold War world,
 - b. Its skillful exploitation by **China** to attain superpower status,
 - c. The erosion of the **EU** exactly when it needs to become a major political and security actor on the world scene

But the fact that the main architect of the Post War World Order, namely the **United States**, started to **dismantle** it ...

3. The main **fault line** of this change of dramatic proportions is between **multilateralism**, which is gradually abandoned and **unilateralism**, which is rapidly adopted instead...
4. The current US Administration seem to feel **constrained** by the inevitable **rules** making **multilateralism** work and prefer **bilateral relations** in which, due to their sheer size and power, will always prevail irrespective of partner/adversary – hence the description of the current phase as the one of revived great power competition.
5. As a consequence, the **transatlantic relationship**, the bedrock of the Post War world order, has been **affected** too; the US seem to see in their European allies more of a commercial competitor than a political partner ... (I really wonder what is distinguishing, if anything. Steve Bannon and Vladimir Putin, when it comes to the EU?)
6. With the **exception of Britain**, which thought that it still has what it takes for such renewed competition and felt constrained by its EU membership (a dream slowly and painfully abandoned these days, as it

seems), **no other NATO/EU member state, “old” or “new”, does consider that it is properly “equipped” for this “new brave world” of renewed great power competition ...**

7. This is particularly true for the New Member States in both NATO and the EU, which
 - a. Wanted to get away from the a space dominated by sheer **power politics** – namely the Eastern part of Europe, previously dominated by the Soviet Union – and join the **secure space** of both NATO and EU, dominated by respect of individual interest and clear rules.
 - b. And saw **NATO** and the **EU**, from the beginning, as the two sides of the same coin, with the former providing the necessary **security** allowing for **prosperity** through **development**, while the latter, providing the **means** ensuring for that security.
8. The real problem, after the admission of the NMS in both NATO and the EU has been their **incomplete integration** (as regards NATO, the operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan/Iraq have emphasized only their **military** enrolment in the Alliance, and, as regards the **EU**, the financial and economic crisis has practically **frozen** their integration, making their different perspectives even more pregnant).
9. In respect to **NATO**, let us remember that, in the early days after the Cold War, while the **old members** wanted a **new NATO** (read less US dominance), the **new members** wanted the **old NATO (dominated by the US, perceived as the only guarantee against the traditional European pattern of Western powers dealing with Russia at the cost of the states lying in between)** [Remember the talk about the new and the old Europe, used by former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld]
10. In respect to the **EU**, to my mind, the difference in **historic experience** and, hence, **expectations** between the Western old members and the Eastern new members has proved, at least until now, insuperable. The proof is, among other things, in:
 - a. The incomplete integration of Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia. deprived of Schengen status and saddled with the MCV extended “ad infinitum”.
 - b. The inferior quality of the goods sold in Eastern markets.
 - c. The adoption of important legislation favoring the old members over the new ones (see the mobility package, for instance).
 - d. The multiplication of statements related to the necessity of adopting a two-speed Europe.

11. To conclude, right now, the NMS are caught between a rock and a hard place, namely between the **commercial interest of the old EU members** and the **strategic interest of the US** (which, on the one hand, is not satisfied with the EU and, on the other, have a “mysterious” relationship with Russia, not permitting to clearly define between **cooperation** and **confrontation**).
12. One last word about Canada. This country has been – and continues to be – one of the NMS main supporter in NATO, a committed member to the old NATO we wanted to join in the first place, ready to provide security support to us, given our recently increased vulnerability, in the face of Russia’s threatening activism. Thank you, Canada!