

**EUROSTRATEGICS REVISITED**  
**THE BIG EUROPEAN STATES' STRATEGIC CULTURES**  
**IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT**  
**AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

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**Abstract:** The article examines the strategic cultures of major state actors in Europe, i.e. Great Britain, France and Germany. Using strategic theory we attempt to highlight the strategic role of these hegemonic powers throughout history, especially their antagonism and their attitude towards the project of European integration.

**Keywords:** strategic theory, stability, internal balancing, external balancing, antagonism, security dilemma, European integration

I shall focus on Great Britain, France and Germany in relation to strategic balances, strategic stability and strategic instability in Europe. The vintage of insights is strategic theory, especially as regards great powers' diachronic role, position, postures and antagonism in international politics. I shall put forward a twofold assumption:

First, stability in contemporary international relations is a function of balance in terms, *inter alia*, of capabilities, geopolitical outlooks, alliances, economic factors and possession or control/access to resources. Internal balancing (reinforcement of internal power indices) and external balancing (alliances) relate to perceived, real or potential threats. Great powers' strategic calculus relates to the distribution of power, threats and the evolution of the "balance of threats".<sup>1</sup> The aim of all rationally functioning states is the fulfillment of national interests as defined at the state level. Survival interest, in this regard, is crucial. Perceived and real or potential threats owing to uneven growth are the principal source of security dilemmas.<sup>2</sup> Examining the distribution of power and the prerequi-

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1. On the balance of threats concept, see: Stephen Walt, *The origins of alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell university press, 1987).

2. This is Thucydides' s fundamental axiom as regards the causes of war. For a

sites of balance and stability in the multipolar world of many great powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one could not possibly exclude nuclear capabilities. Relying on strategic theory's vintage regarding the relation between economic strength and power status we shall reflect on such issues as distribution of power on Eurasia in time and in space, threat perceptions in the post-Cold War era following the ongoing redistributions of power and the Alliances' pattern in this respect. We consider Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer and St. Walt as principal sources of insights as regards strategic trends relating to power alternative power configurations. Among others, their theoretical insights established adequate substantiation based on historical experience both before and after the nuclear era. Walt's central assumption as regards the "balance of threats", shortly described refers to factors such as geography, aggregate power factors, offensive capabilities and demonstrated aggressive postures. The balance of threats is an important cause leading to alliances. Aggressive intentions that generate such postures could be real, estimated and projected or perceived owing to not easily calculated uneven growth and security dilemmas. Just to note that the "balance of theory" is considered to be a modification of Kenneth Waltz's structural theory to which we shall also refer below.

Second, it is crucial to stress at the outset a strategic fact which is the principal shaping force during the Cold War and in the post-Cold War epoch: After WW2 the strategic stabilizer was and still is the United States.<sup>3</sup> At the outset of European integration as well as before WW2, the geopolitical outlooks of the

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thorough research on this issue, see: Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1981).

3. Josef Joffe described this fact as follows: "What is widely neglected, however, is the protector's role as pacifier-as the key agent in the construction of an interstate order in Western Europe that muted, if not removed, ancient conflicts and shaped the conditions for cooperation". Josef Joffe, "Europe's American Pacifier", *Foreign Policy* 54 (1984): 67-8. During the transition as Cold War was fading Josef Joffe revisited America's stabilizing presence and posed the same questions. See: Josef Joffe, "After Bipolarity: Eastern and Western Europe: Between Two Ages", *Adelphi Paper* 247 (London: IISS, 1989/90). Commenting this essay Kenneth Waltz pointedly remarked: "Europe and Russia may for a time look on NATO, and on America's presence in Western Europe, as a stabilizing force in a time of rapid change. In an interim period, the continuation of NATO makes sense. In the long run, it does not. The presence of American forces at higher than token levels will become an irritant to European states, whose security is not threatened, and a burden to America acting in a world that is becoming more competitive politically and economically as it becomes less so militarily". Kenneth Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", *International Security*, 18 (2) (1993): 75.

big European powers were profoundly and fundamentally diverging. European integration, in fact, became possible because the strategic interests of United States, France and Britain converged.<sup>4</sup>

In order to link theory and trends as we move in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we shall now briefly revisit persisting diachronic strategic outlooks that continue to be determinant factors of the big powers' strategic calculus. The analysis as it evolves shall stress both diachronic trends and the post 1990 strategic calculus related to the major redistribution of power caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany.

After WW2 at issue in Western Europe, in reality, was not some sort of unfeasible assimilating unity based on economic determinism but a re-orientation of national strategies so as to converge in order to face the strategic mutations

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4. Hedley Bull's figurative analysis of 1984 poses fundamental questions regarding war and peace in Europe as long as we have a state-centric international sub-system. Referring to the European Community in his celebrated "civilian power revisited", Bull wrote: "A Europeanist policy is not viable unless the nations of Western Europe can develop some appropriate form of political and strategic unity. This is the greatest uncertainty of all. There is no supranational community in Western Europe but only a group of nation-states (moreover, if there were a supranational authority in Western Europe, this would be a source of weakness in defense policy rather than of strength; it is the nation-states of Western Europe - France, Germany, Britain - their capacity to inspire loyalty and to make war - that are the sources of its power). Their history is one of endemic mutual conflict, and if they have recently acquired a habit of collaboration, this has been under the shadow of the American presence and the threat from the East. Even the idea that Western European nations constitute a "security community" or area of peace is mere wishful thinking, if it means that war between them could not happen again, and not simply that it has not happened in recent decades and would not make sense. What we do have in Europe is a concert of states, whose basis is an area of perceived common interests among the major powers, and which is reinforced by wider processes of consultation involving the smaller powers and international organizations; most notably, the meetings of the European Council (the heads of government of EC countries), the coordination of foreign policy in relation to a number of political issues by the foreign ministers of nine EC countries, and the unity of the EC in international trade negotiations. This concert of Western European powers, however, has not yet addressed itself to strategic or defense policy as such". Hedley Bull, "Civilian power Europe: A contradiction in terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 1-2 (1982): 163. As regards the statecentric physiognomy of European integration Hoffmann's influential 1966 is verified daily ever since. See: Stanley Hoffman, "Obstinate or obsolete? The fate of the nation-state and the case of Western Europe", *Daedalus* 95 (3) (1966).

and principally in order to deal with the gigantic re-distribution of power following decolonization and the rise into prominence of the two superpowers.<sup>5</sup> The strategic structure, in fact, was set up soon after 1945. The original hesitations of the US gradually receded and the interventionist policy was incarnated in the containment strategy after 1947.<sup>6</sup> Following the Berlin crisis, the Soviet military threat and the stalemate of the efforts for the creation of a defense and political community (EDC/EPC),<sup>7</sup> the Atlantic Alliance was established in 1949. Gradually, America's physical presence with hundreds of thousands of soldiers and tactical nuclear weapons developed into the single most important strategic determinant of the post-WW2 epoch.<sup>8</sup> For at least a decade well until flexible response was introduced as the official doctrine of the Alliance in the 1960s, USA's massive retaliation doctrine was securing adequate strategic deterrence against the Soviet Union. The crisis of the early 1960s over the MLF project led to France's veto over Britain's entry into the Common Market. France accelerated its own independent nuclear deterrent and Great Britain swiftly signed the Nassau agreement with the USA that incarnated the two countries' special relationship.<sup>9</sup> This was a structural chasm which determined the Eurostrategic balances thereafter. Simply stated, the diverging strategic outlooks before and immediate after WW2, became, during the 1960s, an established pattern that created an ever-evolving differentiated strategic environment in Western Europe. This differentiated European strategic structure was co-existing with the parallel process of European integration whose development became possible because of USA's extended deterrence. In fact, what we had was some sort of "strategic greenhouse" which secured deterrence in Europe leaving ground for economic integration to flourish.<sup>10</sup> This strategic fact is crucial and determinant

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5. See Andrew Moravcsik, *The choice of Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1998). Also, the same author in "Preferences and power in the European Community: A liberal intergovernmentalist approach", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31 (4) (1993).

6. The Eurostrategic issues during the post-1945 era were examined in: Panayiotis Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and European Security dilemmas. Towards an Autonomous European Defense System?* (London: Gower, 1988). Many points hereafter regarding institutional, historical and strategic issues draw from the analysis and conclusions of this early book whose focus was Eurostrategic issues.

7. Ibid ch. 2.

8. For the evolution of USA's strategy towards Europe and the strategic doctrine of the Atlantic Alliance see ibid ch. 3-4 and ch. 10-20.

9. See ibid ch. 24 entitled "British and French nuclear policies and European defense".

10. Ibid ch. 25-29.

if one wants to comprehend the post-Cold War dual structure of economic integration and strategic differentiation. In the parallel process of economic integration neo-functional economic determinism foster utopian thinking. That is, expectations that material integration and spillover would have given growth not only to a supranational economic community<sup>11</sup> but also to a prospective supranational community in high politics (“externalization hypothesis”<sup>12</sup>). A careful examination of this debate –of the theory of European integration– during the 1950s and 1960s reveals that strategic thinking was absent from this debate. For all practical purposes the process of integration moved independently as if nothing happened at the strategic level<sup>13</sup>. Economic integration flourished but at the same time the absence of a European strategic structure proper resulted to an organic strategic dependence to the United States. Furthermore, and as a result of this peculiar situation historical geopolitical divergences among the big European powers were frozen. Just to stress, at this point, that during the period 1989-1992 when Germany was reunified, we witnessed a revival of security dilemmas and balancing acts which fully reflected the hitherto dormant geopolitical divergences. Intra-European relations were stabilized only when the Atlantic

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11. Suffice to refer to Ernst Haas’s hypothesis that material spillover owing to the integration progress could lead to transfer of loyalties from the national to the supranational level giving birth to European Union. See: Ernst Haas, “International Integration: The European and the Universal Process” in *European Integration*, ed. Michael Hodges (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972). Also, Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe* (Stanford: Stanford university press, 1958), esp. 16. Later on after Stanley Hoffmann’s “Obstinate or obsolete? The fate of the nation-state and the case of Western Europe”, op. cit., he reverted and accepted that he underestimated high politics in the integration process among distinct nation states. See: Ernst Haas, “The study of regional integration: Reflections on the joy and anguish of pre-theorizing”, *International Organization* 24 (1970).

12. See: Philippe Schmitter, “A Revised Theory of Regional Integration”, *International Organization* 24 (1970). Philippe Schmitter, “Further Notes On Operationalizing some Variables Related to Regional Organization”, *International Organization* 23 (2) (1969). Philippe Schmitter, “Three Neo-Functional Hypotheses about Regional Integration”, *International Organization* 23 (1) (1969). The failure of the “externalization hypothesis” is examined in: Panayiotis Ifestos, *European Political Cooperation. Towards a framework of supranational diplomacy?* (London: Gower, 1987).

13. Some like Spaak pointed out that the Soviet threat had an impact as an “external federator”. See: Paul-Henri Spaak, *Combats Inachevés, De l’Indépendance à l’Alliance* (Paris: Fayard, 1969), 249, 250. To a certain degree and to the extent that the economic impact was tolerable for them, USA was also favoring integration as a force of unity of the Western.

Alliance was prolonged, hence the perpetuation of America's strategic presence in Western Europe. At the level of the European Community, a precarious balance was created when EMU was adopted by the end of 1991. EMU, properly seen, was imposed on Germany by France with the expectation that the monetary committee would have secured a European supervision of Berlin's monetary policies in a way that it could have checked the rising power of Germany owing to reunification.<sup>14</sup>

The preceding brief outline of some principal characteristics of the Cold War period and the way they influenced the formation of the strategic environment in Europe, underline the need to highlight those strategic aspects which explain the post-Cold War strategic relevance of the Atlantic Alliance and the underlying determinants of the strategic calculus. That is, we shall now outline some persisting diachronic geopolitical considerations which as we shall see are part and parcel of Eurasian geopolitics in an evolving multipolar world.

During the balance of power phase (1648 well until WW1) stability was a function of a balanced distribution of power that discouraged the challengers of the status quo. Britain was the balancer all along. Experience is telling and diachronic: Balancing as regards continental Europe is a deeply rooted culture of Great Britain related to London's security perceptions related to the survival of the British islands. For Foreign Office everything else is secondary and or instrumental<sup>15</sup>. France, before and after Napoleon was and still is a power which is positioned in between continental and maritime powers. The sense of suffocation or being squashed in power competition and the doctrine of national independence which after WW2 was accompanied by a nuclear deterrent were, and still are, postures reflecting France's geopolitical position and France's historical experience<sup>16</sup>. During Bismarck epoch the German Chancellor's sense of balance and his wise strategy that discouraged anti-German alliances favored stability on the continent. Shortly stated, Bismarck's departure was followed by an almost inescapable downfall that led to WW1<sup>17</sup>. In fact, Bismarck's tenet when he was saying: "I cannot sleep from the nightmares of anti-German alliances" was an axis of his strategy that secured three decades of strategic stability on the continent.

Political utopia of the interwar period brilliantly analyzed by Edward H. Carr in his *Twenty-Year Crisis*, made WW2 practically inevitable. Appeasement which

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14. For detailed case studies regarding this transition and the strategic meaning of the decisions taken in 1990-1992, see: Panayiotis Ifestos, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Great European Powers, France, Germany, Great Britain* [in Greek] (Athens: Piotita Publishers, 2000).

15. See: Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and European Security dilemmas*, ch. 24.

16. See: Ibid ch. 21-23.

17. See: Ifestos, *Diplomacy and strategy of Great European Powers*, ch. 5.

is a corollary of utopia and runs contrary to the intrinsic need of all anarchical interstate systems for balance as a condition of stability, was the political input that generated the big conflict<sup>18</sup>. Ever since we witness three parallel and interconnected developments<sup>19</sup>. First, decolonization caused a decline of the relative position and role of the European powers. Second, in Eurasian and global strategic terms, the dominance of the United States in the context of the Atlantic Alliance and Kennan's containment doctrine were and still are the principle features of European and world politics. Third, whilst France and Britain, the one or the other way, safeguarded certain margins of independent diplomatic freedom – the former in the context of its special relationship with the United States and the latter in the context of its independent nuclear deterrent– Germany, the defeated power of WW2, was divided and was effectively kept under total control by acceding in the institutions of the Western Alliance and especially to institutions at the European level such as the Council of Europe, EU and WEU. In fact, properly speaking, during the Cold War the biggest and strongest European power was lacking full political sovereignty, was divided and for all practical purposes, walked on a rope on the borderline of the East – West dividing line<sup>20</sup>. Shortly stated, before WW2, during the Cold War and in the post-Cold War epoch, at issue is how other powers see the position and role of Germany in the center of Europe and how they perceive its strategic orientations. At issue is also the question as to how contemporary Germany sees itself, especially after reunification. Admittedly strategic issues are not a popular field of academic and public debate in Germany itself. Still, Berlin's geopolitical outlooks as we move ahead in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it shall be argued below, are influenced, first by its growing economic strength (contrary to French expectations in the early 1990s when EMU was adopted) and second, by the way the distribution of power in Europe and in the world influences the strategic calculus of the existing and rising great powers, including Germany.

As a matter of fact in course of the post WW2 period all European states acceded to American geopolitical thinking as defined by the needs of USA's extended deterrence not only in Europe but also in the perimeter of Eurasia and

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18. See: Edward Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939, An Introduction to The Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, St Martin's Press, 1940).

19. For contextual analysis, see: Ifestos, *Diplomacy and strategy of Great European Powers*, ch. 1-2. Also: Panayiotis Ifestos, "The role of state power in the post-colonial statecentric world of the 21st century" [in Greek], last modified March 13, 2015, <http://www.ifestosedu.gr/130strategyandStatePower.htm>.

20. Regarding this important aspect, see: Ifestos, *Diplomacy and strategy of Great European Powers*, ch. 5.

the remaining parts of the world<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, during the crises in the Balkans in the 1990s, in North Africa, in the Middle East in the 2000s and in Ukraine in the 2010s, it is consecutively confirmed that the members of the EU lack a common worldview (*weltanschauung*) that could lead to a common strategic calculus or to some sort of Alliance, much less to a common European Defense system and its corollary Political Union<sup>22</sup>. These successive regional crises at the doorstep of Europe, moreover, reveal a continuous pattern of strategic divergences among the states of the EU. Highlighting this pattern, we shall consider four phases. Before 1945, from 1945 to 1955, from 1949 to 1989 and from the period since the end of Cold War in 1990. Our brief comparative analysis shall highlight the geopolitical outlooks of Britain, France and Germany, that is, the main strategic actors at the European level. Let us stress three principal diachronic aspects. Politico-strategic outlooks, politico-economic outlooks and related conceptions of space and time<sup>23</sup>.

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21. If any doubts regarding this fact evaporated when the strongest supporter for the deployment of USA's "Euromissiles" in the 1990s was France. This case made abundantly evident the importance of the USA as a strategic stabilizer of Europe and in a broader sense of Eurasia. For a full coverage of the Euromissile issue see: Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and European Security dilemmas*, ch. 13.

22. With regard to this point, it is interesting to read the way the leading American analyst Kenneth Waltz sees the intra-European strategic calculus: "The Community's external policy thereby becomes nearly a cipher. Germans may ultimately find that reunification and the renewed life of a great power are more invigorating than the struggles, complications, and compromises that come during, and would come after, the uniting of Western Europe. Despite severe difficulties, three factors may enable Western Europe to achieve political unity. The first is Germany, the second is Japan, and the third is the United States. Uneasiness over the political and economic clout of Germany, intensified by the possibility of its becoming a nuclear power, may produce the final push to unification. And West Europeans, including many Germans, doubt their abilities to compete on even terms with Japan and America unless they are able to act as a political as well as an economic unit. Indeed, without political unification, economic unity will always be as impaired as it is now. If the EC fails to become a single political entity, the emerging world will nevertheless be one of four or five great powers, whether the European one is called Germany or the United States of Europe. The next section asks what differences this will make in the behavior and interaction of states". Kenneth Waltz, "Structural realism after the Cold War" *International Security* 25 (1) (2000): 70.

23. For geopolitical analysis focusing on Europe, see: Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and European Security dilemmas*, ch. 7-9. The analysis that follows constructs on the insights of these chapters.

At issue is the constellation –in space and time–, of power, capabilities and chances to benefit or lose as redistribution of power, real or estimated and potential, takes place. Status quo powers aim at maintaining a certain distribution of power that favors them. Rising powers work out plans to change it. Smaller states struggle to survive in view of this perpetual antagonism of big states for power, resources, role and position in international hierarchies. As a matter of fact, historical experience is telling: Geopolitical considerations is the foundation of geostrategic considerations of states and alliances. That is, a central input in state's strategic thinking, strategic planning and strategic action in short, medium and long term. Geographical considerations and correlations to power and power distribution is always to be found in history. Napoleon's quote that "the strategy of all big powers is related to geography"<sup>24</sup> is found in most modern texts of strategic theory and is deeply rooted in the minds of political leaders.

Mackinder<sup>25</sup> and Spykman<sup>26</sup>, two thinkers that influenced decisively anglo-saxon strategic thinking, supported that power is determined to a great extent by geography and natural resources. Let us shortly define principal terms and concepts<sup>27</sup>. Geography describes the earth and its life, especially the distribution of land, sea, air, plant, animal life, including anthropology and man activities such as industry and agriculture and resources. Political geography deals with those and other elements and factors in relation to the interstate setting, the position, strength, capabilities and role of state actors, their communications and exchanges and the juxtaposition of factors such as geographical location, economic structures, demography, political traditions, cultural factors and certainly religion. In a broader sense, moreover, it encompasses metaphysical norms and structures in all their politically related spiritual consequences. Geopolitical analysis is the next step whereby we enter into the dynamic correlation of those and many other related factors to the purposes of states and alliances. If combined in one analytical framework provide clues for power, security, prosperity,

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24. Cited in: Nicholas Spykman, *America's strategy in world politics, the United States and the balance of power* (New York: Harcourt, 1942), 41.

25. See: Halford Mackinder, *Democratic ideals and reality* (New York: Norton, 1962) and Halford Mackinder, "The round world and the winning of peace", *Foreign Affairs* 21 (1943).

26. See Nicholas Spykman, *The geography of peace* (New York: Harcourt, 1944).

27. The definitions that follow draw from: Raymond Aron, *Paix et Guerre Entre les Nations* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1962, 1984) and Pierre Celerier, *Geopolitique et Geostrategie* (Paris: PUF, 1969). For contextual analysis on a broader perspective see Colin Gray, *The Geopolitics of Superpower* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988). Colin Gray, *The Geopolitics of the Nuclear Era: Heartland, Rimlands and the Technological Revolution*, (New York: Grane, Russak and Company Insu., 1977).

real and potential power, capabilities, role and position in an *a priori* antagonistic international system.

It should never escape our attention that in the interstate system, we do not have a world government or a "government of the governments" or at least international institutions gifted with jurisdictions socially legitimated so as to make it feasible to define morally founded prerogatives which could define changes of the international order. Much less, of course, to define the prerogatives of a world distributive justice system. In such circumstances all states and Alliances continuously construct strategies which fulfil the national interests or the converging interests of the states participating in an alliance. Therefore, by focusing our attention on factors of enduring importance geopolitics we refer to the relation of international political power, to the geographical setting<sup>28</sup> and we consider the security problems of a country in geographical terms in such a way so as to reach conclusions which could be useful to the statesmen whose duty is to set up strategies which fulfil a state's national interest<sup>29</sup>. Raymond Aron gives a broader definition when he writes that "geopolitical analysis combines a geographical schematization of the political and diplomatic relations with geographical and economic analysis of the resources, in a way that also provides interpretations of diplomatic behavior in correlational-functional terms to the life and the environment"<sup>30</sup>. Geopolitics is thus some sort an analysis that explores the structure of policy problems without necessarily prescribing policy action<sup>31</sup>. It is precisely when we analyze national interests and alternative strategic options that we come to geostrategy. Certainly, the two concepts, geopolitics and geostrategy are the two sides of the same coin. Geostrategy does not just correlate geopolitical factors alone. In addition, it introduces and combines planning, strategy, tactics, relating dynamically military power, diplomacy and political purposes.

Certain geopolitical concepts influenced strategic decisions in ways that marked European politics after WW2. Mahan and Mackinder though the first more than the second stressed the important of sea power, the tenets of both define Britain's naval strategy and substantially so the American high strategy from 1947 onwards (until today). Spykman's thesis about the importance of the perimeter of Eurasia emphasized the evolving post-WW2 power structures on the continent and provided the foundations of the subsequent containment strategy of the United States after 1947. By and large USA's post-Cold War strategy evolves along the same lines.

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28. Cohen, cited Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and European Security dilemmas*, ch. 7.

29. Spykman *ibid*.

30. Raymond Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Paris: Calman-Levy, 1984), 196-7.

31. Gray, *The Geopolitics of the Nuclear Era*, 19.

Mackinder is by and large the thinker that described Great Britain's strategy during the balance of power phase and stressed the strategic importance of continental land masses, as opposed to seas and oceans. Mackinder's "central area" concept and the corollary tenets which stipulate that none should control the "core of the earth" (Heartland)<sup>32</sup>, is identified with Britain's role as the balancer of the balance of power relations during the balance of power system from the 16 century onwards. It influenced and continues to influence British postures as regards Germany, Russia and the claim for a more unified continental Europe, an idea that after 1957 is incarnated in the process of European integration. Before the two world wars, after WW2 in alliance with the United States and currently as a free rider or by trying to influence Paris and Washington, London tries to regulate the distribution of power in accordance to its high national strategic purposes.

In fact, after the Cold War geopolitics in central Europe are strikingly similar to the set-up prevailing before WW1: Many powers are contesting for influence and presence in Central Europe. Based on diachronic British outlooks one should expect that Britain's principal preoccupation is the correlation of forces among Germany, France and Russia and whether any one of them prevails as a regional hegemon. French leaders, on the other hand, were always sensitive to what happens Eastward<sup>33</sup>. The French post-war power calculus watches carefully the fluctuations of the American strategic commitment to Western Europe and to the strategies of the continental powers when and if they attempt to establish a regional hegemony. Previously Russia, then Germany, then USSR and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century prospectively so Russia or reunited Germany. For Paris, Germany which is positioned in the middle of the continent is a cause of concern when Berlin either tends to act independently, be neutral or ally with Russia. Typical examples are the so called Stalin plan in the 1950s and the Euromissile crisis when in the mid of huge demonstrations president Mitterrand warned Germans for the grave consequences of not adhering to the 1979 two track decision of NATO<sup>34</sup>. French geopolitical thinking is by and large defined by its geographic position which in geopolitical terms is historically squeezed between maritime and continental powers. For all practical purposes, modern geostrategic thinking

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32. Mackinder supported, inter alia, that: "who rules East Europe commands the Heartland. Who rules the Heartland commands the world island. And who rules the world island commands the World". Halford Mackinder, *Democratic ideals and reality*, 150.

33. For a typical statement along these lines see a speech of former defense minister Charles Hernu, The Defense of France and Europe, speech at the Assembly of the WEU, in *Europe Documents*, no 1234, December 22, 1982.

34. For analysis and references, see: Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and European Security dilemmas*, ch. 9.

that flourished around de Gaulle's dominant role in post war French strategic thinking incorporated successfully the twin element of national independence and the nuclear deterrent. Historically, now, we witness an uninterrupted interest of the British diplomacy with power formations on continental Europe and broader on the Eurasian continent. As already hinted above, British diplomacy always takes care to prevent any power or alliance of continental powers from dominating the continent, especially Germany, Russia, or an alliance between them. This attitude emanates from British insular geopolitical position and by and large explains post-war British reluctance to favor integration on the continent. Debating UK's accession into the Common Market in 1958, for example, Macmillan put this argument forcefully to President de Gaulle in 1958. All along the period even since, and more so as a member of the process of European integration, London's reluctance to deepen integration is consistent and continuous<sup>35</sup>. Britain's Transatlantic orientation which is described in Mackinder's revised thesis written in 1943 for the "Atlantic pivot of power" is incarnated in post-war special relationship with the United States and the Atlantic Alliance (which by all means was a "child" of British diplomacy and which was worked out from 1946 until 1949 when it was established in parallel to similar efforts on the continent regarding a EDC/EPC). The continuous hitherto pro-Atlantic posture that is compatible to this fundamental British strategic culture does not leave much room for a European Alliance<sup>36</sup>. We saw it when London have chosen America as its nuclear partner in the 1950s, during the MLF debates in the early 1960s, in the words of the British prime minister in the speech of Margaret Thatcher in Brugge in 1979, British approach regarding European Political Cooperation (intergovernmental diplomatic coordination after 1970), the Maastricht decisions in the early 1990s and all agreements thereafter. In fact, in view of the British pro-Atlantic orientation and the corresponding French doctrine of "national independence" (and its corollary nuclear deterrent) the chances for a European Alliance were all along and still are practically nil<sup>37</sup>. Coming to Germany's geopolitical outlooks, Ratzel, is often considered the father of political geography and the thinker that in the past influenced considerably German thinking by introducing the concept of "space" in geopolitical analysis in a way that stresses physical factors and the position of a state. He also stressed biological factors and the controversial view that "some people have capacities to master the space" more than others<sup>38</sup>. Other German theorists especially Haushofer,

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35. Ibid ch. 7,8.

36. This posture is fully confirmed from 1947 hitherto. Indeed, there is no explanation as to why during the 1970s, 1990s and 2000s so few were unaware of this reality.

37. Ibid ch. 24.

38. See: Gray, *The geopolitics of the nuclear era*, esp. 20. Also, Jacques Sopelsa, "Geog-

gave rise to the so-called German school that later on were used as a framework for a whole philosophy of history and the nature of the state that gave rise to the magic concept of space and to doctrines for territorial expansion<sup>39</sup>.

Before and after 1945 as well as after 1992, the underlying potential anti-German alliances was and still are one of the diachronic dominant features of strategic calculus of the other European big powers. These trends tend to be strengthened whenever arise signs that the united German state, by all means the strongest power of Europe after 1990, could become a hegemon in central Europe, that is, of the "Heartland" as Mackinder described it.

Given the above historical facts, it is only natural that from the outset of European integration until today the geopolitical outlooks of the big European powers were and still are diverging. Thus, at issue after WW2 was not some sort of unfeasible assimilating unity based on economic determinism but a re-orientation of national strategies. A re-orientation to converge in order to face the strategic mutations and principally the gigantic re-distribution of power following decolonization and the rise into prominence of the two superpowers. Those fundamental structural factors were by and large set aside in both academic research (in Europe<sup>40</sup>) and in political discourse. Often, in fact, owing to utopian idealism<sup>41</sup> and economic determinism the strategic reflexes in post-war Europe

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raphie et strategie", *Defense Nationale* 40 (1980): 40.

39. See: Spykman, *The Geography of peace*, 5, 37.

40. Strategic thinking concerning Europe was the privilege of American academics and government officials. In France, strategic thinking, especially regarding geopolitical analysis and nuclear deterrence was developed by officers of the French army. Raymond Aron, though against the French nuclear deterrent, is consider one of the best thinkers of post-WW2 Strategic theory. No surprise, Aron, attracted more attention in the United States and less in Europe.

41. Power relations, projected estimations as regard redistributions of power and power calculus of existing and evolving hegemonic states necessitate pragmatic thinking and are closely related to strategic stability or instability. For example, political utopia and intrinsic power disequilibrium as it evolved during the interwar period made WW2 practically inevitable. There is no need to elaborate further since we do have the brilliant analysis of Edward H. Carr in his "Twenty Years Crisis". What matters to stress here is that appeasement which is a corollary of utopia and runs contrary to the intrinsic need of all anarchical interstate systems for balance as a prerequisite of stability, was by and large the political input that generated the big conflict of WW2. See: Edward Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939, An Introduction to The Study of International Relations*, op. cit. Reflecting on Carr's insights regarding utopian thinking and strategic rationality is a must reading as regard the 21<sup>st</sup> international politics.

were diminished to such an extent so that, as it became evident after 1990, a rational strategic re-orientation which would have established a single European strategic posture became impossible<sup>42</sup>. In this regard, we should sketch the background and indicate what Europe really misses after the Cold War.

What are the persisting diachronic trends in Europe and the World? Comparing post-Cold War epoch with historical experience during the post-1648 Westphalian era, we underline the fact that during the balance of power phase (1648 well until WW2) stability was a function of a distribution of power that discouraged the challengers of the status quo<sup>43</sup>. Let us be more specific as regards enduring strategic trends by summing up specific strategic doctrines which marked post-WW2 politics, and which are projected to the post-Cold War era. As stressed above, Great Britain was the "external balancer" all along. Time and again for the diplomats of the Foreign Office everything else, as we underline above, seems to be secondary and instrumental<sup>44</sup>. France, before and after Napoleon, was and still is a power which because it is positioned between the continental and the maritime powers its leaders geopolitically speaking often have the sense of being pressed between continental and naval powers. In fact, the competition among the maritime and continental powers was a central input in France's political-strategic planning after WW2. It influenced the evolution towards the aforementioned doctrine of "national independence", a concept mainly referring to France's claim for independence in diplomacy, strategy, its relations with Germany and nuclear weapons. After WW2 "national independence was the one side of the coin the other being the acquisition of nuclear capabilities, or as de Galle called it a "power equalizer". National independence in these terms, moreover, was and still is, a strategic approach that correlates to France's deeply rooted traditional geopolitical outlooks. By and large the concept of national independence gained consensus in domestic politics and defined its strategic postures hitherto. In this context, it is expedient to link these French strategic outlooks to Chancellor Bismarck's sense of balance as

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42. Evidence is abundant. For example, no coherent common European posture as regards instability in the Balkans in the 1990s, diverging postures as regards the crises in the Middle East in the early 2000s and the instability in places such as Libya, Syria and Iraq in the 2010s. In these and other cases the United States was the strategic actor and European states, at best, acting as an auxiliary actor, mostly in civilian power missions such as peace keeping troops.

43. The aim of the powers was a balance of power that discouraged or checked revisionism. Fluctuating alliances were securing that imbalances owing to redistributions of power were re-establishing a viable balance.

44. For analysis of these themes, see: Ifestos, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Great European Powers*, esp. ch. 5.

regards continental power equations. Bismarck's postures wisely discouraged anti-German alliances among the remaining continental big European powers and favored stability on the continent (Bismarck's "nightmares of anti-German alliances" mentioned earlier). Shortly stated, Bismarck's departure was followed by an almost inescapable downfall that led to WW1 and subsequently WW2<sup>45</sup>. To put it otherwise, Bismarck's "nightmares of anti-German Alliances" and his wise diplomacy that discourages them is a posture that constitutes a prerequisite of stability on the Continent. Whenever these prerequisites do not exist, sooner or later instability is most likely to erupt. As we shall support below, an important difference compared to Bismarck's era is that the nuclear balance is an inherent factor of power relations in post-war Europe. It is even more so to the extent USA's center of strategic gravity may shift drastically East ward depending from redistributions of power at the level of the planet. On this issue, John Mearsheimer rightly observes we are in a fluid transition whereby regional balances are in the making and the American strategic postures during the post-Cold War era depend on trends of the distribution of power as it evolves: "Even though the Soviet threat has disappeared, the United States still maintains about one hundred thousand troops in Europe and roughly the same number in Northeast Asia. It does so because it recognizes that dangerous rivalries would probably emerge among the major powers in these regions if U.S. troops were withdrawn. Moreover, almost every European state, including the United Kingdom and France, still harbors deep-seated, albeit muted, fears that a Germany unchecked by American power might behave aggressively; fear of Japan in Northeast Asia is probably even more profound, and it is certainly more frequently expressed. Finally, the possibility of a clash between China and the United States over Taiwan is hardly remote. This is not to say that such a war is likely, but the possibility reminds us that the threat of great-power war has not disappeared"<sup>46</sup>.

The post-Cold War epoch should be seen in connection to the power mutations of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The new bipolar power structures and roles were in fact frozen during the Cold War until the major redistribution of power in the early 1990s. Despite this major mutation in the international system, one may observe that a new «Congress of Vienna» which could set up a "network of communication and understanding" among big powers –not necessarily a concert of powers but at least a channel of communication regarding equilibrium and balance, war and stability in areas an issues where the states have common

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45. See: *ibid* ch. 5.

46. John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 2.

national interests— did not take place<sup>47</sup>. The dominant superpower, existing regional powers and rising regional powers after 1990 were set into an ambivalent balancing trajectory in conditions of American strategic predominance. At the same time the main concern of Great Britain, of France and of other members of the European Union was marked by short term if not shortsighted arrangements to contain the reunited Germany by creating EMU. By the mid-1990s in addition to the perpetuation of the Atlantic Alliance German reunification was conditioned by repeating the agreements of 1950s when the Federal Republic of Germany was established. Moreover, in the regional conflicts soon after the Cold War USA was the principle actor. Projecting European power at the regional level was impossible or ineffective. This is the lesson of the experience gained from the interventions and crises in Iraq and the Balkans in the 1990s and later on in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere on the periphery of Eurasia. United States was and still is the only state that could project power worldwide. In addition, whilst France and Britain in the one or other way, safeguarded certain margins of independent diplomatic freedom —the former in the context of its special relationship with the United States and the latter in the context of its nuclear deterrent— Germany, the defeated power of WW2, was divided and kept under total control by belonging in the Western Alliance and to the other institutions including WEU and EU<sup>48</sup>. Precisely, understanding the post-Cold War politics in the Western part of Eurasia it is necessary to comprehend fully this strategic paradox: Owing to historical circumstances during the Cold War the biggest and strongest European power was lacking full political sovereignty and for all practical purposes was squashed on the borderline of the East – West confrontation. Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the single most important question is how the other powers on Eurasia, especially in the Western part of Eurasia,

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47. This is implied in Kissinger's much debated book "World Order". Wolfgang Ischinger in a book review pointedly notes: "Kissinger's secret wish might be to stage a Congress of Vienna for the twenty-first century. And although world politics is complicated by a host of factors that don't fit easily into the Westphalian model— transnational identities, digital hyperconnectivity, weapons of mass destruction, global terrorist networks—Kissinger is still right to insist that the management of great-power relations remains of paramount importance. Indeed, there should not need to be another Thirty Years' War to provide the impetus for a new Westphalian peace and a world order that is at once legitimate and reflective of the new geopolitical realities. Kissinger's book is a gift to all of those who care about global order and seek to stave off conflict in the twenty-first century. No one else could have produced this masterpiece". Wolfgang Ischinger, "The World According to Kissinger. How to Defend Global Order", *Foreign Affairs* (March April 2015).

48. See: Ifestos, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Great European Powers*, ch. 5.

view German economic power. What is the economic, commercial, technological strength of Germany and how it evolves? How are other powers perceiving the economic superiority of Germany owing to the dynamisms of its industry and its technological advancements which could easily give rise to its military strength? What is consequently Germany's strategic position and role in Europe and worldwide? What are the margins of German strategic maneuverability?<sup>49</sup> In the context of these and similar questions, what is the power calculus of other European powers after unification? What are, to use Walt's term cited earlier, the perceived "balance of threats" among the big European states. As explained above in footnote, by modifying Waltz's balance of power theory, Walt supported that the "balance of threats" is the single most important factor in forming or changing alliances. More importantly Walt established that the perceptions of threats are determined by geography, aggregate power factors, offensive capabilities and uneven growth that cause security dilemmas. At the present historical juncture and given that the fundamental character of the Westphalian state-centric system is as anarchic as ever it was, one could only formulate questions, examine persisting geopolitical outlooks, examine vested interests in economic interdependence owing to European integration and consider these and many other similar factors in the context of the fluctuating balances at the level of Europe and the planet.

At this point, we sum up by reminding that the disturbance of the geopolitical balances after Westphalia led to the First and Second World Wars. The geopolitical outlooks of the big states were and still are the underlying determinants. That is, the same issues which for centuries were at the core of European politics and which influenced the political thinking and the political decisions of the European project when it was launched immediately after WW2 –and which shaped all aspects of the institutional and strategic structures thereafter– after 1990 are there alive and fluctuating. Still, there is a determinant difference if compared to pre-1945 epoch: On the one hand thought American strategic presence have frozen intra-European security dilemmas did not eliminate them. On

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49. Kenneth Waltz, the leading scholar in strategic theory, pointedly remarked that "the candidates for becoming the next great powers, and thus restoring a balance, are the European Union or Germany leading a coalition, China, Japan, and in a more distant future", Russia" ... "The European Economic Community was formed in 1957 and has grown incrementally to its present proportions. But where is the incremental route to a European foreign and military policy to be found? European leaders have not been able to and it or even have tried very hard to do so. In the absence of radical change, Europe will count for little in international politics for as far ahead as the eye can see, unless Germany, becoming impatient, decides to lead a coalition", Kenneth Waltz, "Structural realism after the Cold War", 30, 32.

the other hand, by creating economic and institutional inter-dependence many expected could lead to Europe being one actor and the European states gradually being integrated in one regional supranational social and political framework. This task, it was presumed in both theory and political discourse, would had been achieved by constructing a pan-European political anthropology corresponding to an integrated utilitarian economic structure. Political Union, it was wrongly assumed, follows. The latter remark makes it necessary to sketch the outcome of the integration process six decades after the Messina and the Treaty of Rome. In the best case we have a fragile mix of intergovernmental and supranational structure working over and above a socially, politically and economically differentiated environment. To put it succinctly, the political anthropology is by all means national not supranational. The utilitarian links, as it is very evident after the crisis of 2008-9 prove extremely fragile. Furthermore, we do have a European superstructure in the utilitarian sector and an intergovernmental process in diplomacy and security which was and still is a dependent variable of the global strategic interplay where USA is the dominant actor<sup>50</sup>. EMU, in addition, which was adopted in 1992 –and which by all means executed a gigantic jump into a social, economic and strategic vacuum–, was based on the (basically French) on assumption that monetary links would had caused a supranational political anthropology. It failed and the consequences are felt two decades afterwards<sup>51</sup>. To put it differently, during the major strategic transition from 1989 to 1992, when the new European project was launched, by deciding monetary arrangements without the slightest chance for proper economic or political union, strategic and socioeconomic determinant factors were disregarded. Moreover, geopolitical divergences which were intrinsic and determinant but dormant during the Cold War, were not dealt with in a rational and coordinated approach which would had led to a new political, institutional and strategic setting reflecting the post-Cold War situation in Europe and on the planet. Much more importantly, the preoccupation of the European powers with low politics that was renewed when in 1992 the monetary arrangements were imposed on Germany –basically by France–, were accompanied by strategic developments towards a multipolar world not adequately taken into account. A new “Con-

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50. The intrinsic features of this structure were examined in: Ifestos, *European Political Cooperation* op. cit. and Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and European Security dilemmas*, op. cit. Also, in many Greek monographs, inter alia, Ifestos, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Great European Powers*, ch. 6.

51. This key issue was examined contextually in Ifestos, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Great European Powers*, ch. 6. The crisis after 2009 caused social strains at the level of some member states that could not compete, and the economic and social price paid in some of them is inestimable.

gress of Vienna"<sup>52</sup>, as pointed earlier, did not take place and the strategic calculus of other European states as regards Germany was guided either by Cold War criteria or by persisting pre-War perceptions as regards the role and position of Germany in Europe<sup>53</sup>.

Still, as we advance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the international system shifts from unipolar to multipolar and Germany's position in the evolving structures is crucial if not determinant for the balance in the Western part of Eurasia. Likewise, redistributions of power and capabilities as it is only natural shape the coming power structures and each power's role and position. Moreover, for Europe seen as a group of nations attempting to integrate and act a single actor, it makes a big difference the fact that in the evolving multipolar structure the power calculus shall be influenced by developments in regions where Europeans could not possibly influence. Decisions in 1990-91 and during the following two decades did not establish the prerequisites for either a collective independent European role or capabilities by any one of them or a coalition of them to project power and influence events at the regional level<sup>54</sup>. Still, what we witness in Eastern Eu-

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52. Stability can be achieved either by a balance of power strategy of the states involved or by an attempt (admittedly not always successful) to develop an understanding among the states involved. Westphalia era started with a Treaty by balance was more a strategic and less a legal issue. The Congress of Vienna represents a more framed attempt for a common understanding among the big powers. Yalta similarly attempted an understanding among the victorious powers as regards sphere of influence. The establishment of the Security Council of the UN is a formal attempt to develop an understanding and even common postures regarding "international order and security". Still, the right of veto of the big powers and the Cold War friction did not allow a common worldview among the powers.

53. Mearsheimer notes: "System structure, we know, is a function of the number of great powers and how power is apportioned among them". He then goes on to describe the pre-War situation: "The list of European great powers for the two centuries under discussion includes Austria, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Russia. Only Russia, which was known as the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1990, was a great power for the entire period. Austria, which became Austria-Hungary in 1867, was a great power from 1792 until its demise in 1918. Great Britain and Germany were great powers from 1792 until 1945, although Germany was actually Prussia before 1871. Italy is considered a great power from 1861 until its collapse in 1943". Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, 347.

54. The intervention in Libya in the early 2010s whereby France and Great Britain originally had the initiative in both political and military terms –whilst Germany was reluctant and hesitant– proved that the military mission could be accomplished only after the United States played an active role.

rope and in the Middle East as we move ahead in the 2010s is, by all means, the beginning of attempts of regional powers to establish regional hegemony and of external powers to execute off shore balancing in order to deter any country becoming a regional hegemon.

Outlining the above we could conclude by saying that in 1991-2 geopolitical considerations which are intrinsic in interstate relations in Europe, were swept aside, in order to establish an economic institutional framework over a socio-politically and socio-economically differentiated European inter-state system. The United States on the one hand continued its strategic presence<sup>55</sup> and –in a way as a compensation for this presence– assented to the transformation of the Atlantic Alliance in order to secure an auxiliary European role in “out of area” interventions<sup>56</sup>. France’s purpose to control German monetary decisions proved abortive already by the end of the 1990s. Most importantly, as it was only natural and expectable, Germany’s reunification in a situation where there is a deficit of appropriate steps towards economic and political union –which some would argue are anyway impossible given the absence of a pan-European society–, led to uneven economic growth that gradually establishes an indisputable German economic predominance. Furthermore, the careful study of attitudes and postures a quarter of a century after EMU was adopted reveals that nobody suggested a new strategic setting that could secure stability and balance relations with Eastern powers. Neither were any signs reformation of the system in the domains of low politics so as to stop uneven growth that, as we all know, is the main source of security dilemmas and eventual conflict. Consequently, European integration which as aforementioned from 1945 until 1990 was evolving in some sort of “American strategic greenhouse”, is for all practical purposes moving into a classical power vacuum which in history was always the source of instability and conflict. Even more, in the absence of any signs of strategic negotiations among the Big European states, macroeconomic decisions which by all means are high politics –because they determine social structures, social distributive systems, social hierarchies, social cohesion, social stability, economic efficiency and economic strength–, are handled by a bureaucracy that objectively speaking inevitably lacks adequate democratic legitimization at the European level. At best, democratic checks and balances take place at the level

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55. Most points that follow are developed in: Ifestos, “*Diplomacy and Strategy of Great European Powers*”, ch. 7.

56. The insistence of France from 1990 onwards to develop autonomous European defense capabilities and use NATO resources receded by 1995 when France was accepted as a full member of the “nuclear club”. In the Berlin conference of the Atlantic Alliance in 1996 positions were stabilized when it was decided that any use of NATO resources need a decision of the Council of the Atlantic Alliance.

of the state and only indirectly at the intergovernmental institutions. Given the intensification of strategic antagonism in Eastern Europe and the adjacent energy rich peripheries, EU is simply absent, or its members act individually or auxiliary to the United States.

As redistributions of power take place on the Eurasian continent the single most important issue seems to be the relations of Germany and Russia. This is so because it relates to –to use Mackinder’s term– Eurasia’s “Heartland”. Consequently, in line with diachronic geopolitical patterns, it relates to East – West balances and the over balance on Eurasia and on the globe. Would they be antagonistic or converging? Much would depend from the combination of economic factors and military factors at the level of each state and the resulting distribution of power between them and with the other two big European states, France and Great Britain. The relation between Germany and Russia, moreover, is important as regards the future strategic postures of both Russia and the United States in Eurasia. Inter alia, an antagonistic relationship between Russia and Germany and if the former feels weak and threatened may make Russia to lean towards China, a potential development which may change dramatically the balance of power not only on Eurasia but also at the planetary level<sup>57</sup>. If any one of the two –Russia or Germany– tends to become a regional hegemon other big powers including the United States would most likely develop strategies to stop such a development. If none of the great powers of Europe is able to become a regional hegemon this means that we have balance and stability in which case the most likely outcome is a shift of the center of gravity of American strategy East ward<sup>58</sup>.

Shortly stated, if the experience of the Balance of Power epoch is the guide and depending from the evolving distribution of power, stability is a function of balance, the perceptions of the big states regarding the evolving balance of threats and the resulting strategic calculus. If America is absent and Russia is by far the strongest regional actor, then Germany, France and Britain would most likely align to deter her (in which case as in the 1950s by Eisenhower Germany’s nuclear status may be on the table<sup>59</sup>). If Germany is strongest than Russia and consequently acting independently tending towards regional hegemony, then one should expect Russia, France and Britain in an anti-German Alliance. This sort of strategic calculus and strategic decisions is inescapable if one accepts

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57. Seen in this broader perspective, the events in Ukraine and the de facto conflictual situation between Russia and the Western powers may have unforeseen (by the Western powers) effects.

58. The most elaborated analysis in this regard is to be found in: John Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, esp. ch. 10.

59. See: Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power politics*, 57.

the “balance of threats” as determinant of the future strategies of old and rising great powers. We stress, in this regard, that the single most important factor is the strategic calculus of the United States. If USA's interest for Europe diminishes owing to developments in Far East and to a drastic shift of the center of gravity eastwards, depending from the orientations of Berlin an anti-German or anti-Russian alliance in Western Europe are most likely alternative outcomes<sup>60</sup>.

European integration proper seems to be absent at the level of strategic calculations. In the best case it is a vulnerable dependent variable of strategic decisions of external powers but also of the strategic decisions of its own big member-states, namely Great Britain, France and Germany. At the level of the European integration proper, none seems to have a vision of the strategic dilemmas facing Europe in the post-Cold War epoch. The established institutions since 1992, moreover, have neither the jurisdiction nor the mandate to reflect on strategic issues. Even if they had the jurisdiction it would had replace substance by process since the prerequisites do not exist: The nation states reserve for themselves the privilege to combine geopolitical considerations, the purposes of national interest, the means they possess and the strategies that fulfill them. Certainly, the nuclear deterrents of France and Britain exemplifies this fact. In addition, as already stressed, since 1992 we are in a nebulous transition owing to the economic imbalances created by EMU and the big European states in the best case behave spasmodically or follow a nationally minded “wait and see policy”, probably watching and waiting the next American strategic move. The crisis in Ukraine in 2013-5 is a case in point that confirms the absence of common strategic outlooks. In fact, at the level of Europe we have a strategic stalemate and a complete lack of common strategic orientation. Both at the national and the supranational levels there are no signs of a nucleus of coordinated substantial –that is, related to what is in reality at stake at the strategic level after 1990– strategic debate among the members of the EU. Certainly, because the river of history never stops flowing, developments in the broader international system may cause imbalances, security dilemmas, instability and even conflict. Definitely, as it became obvious during the economic crisis of the 2010s the functional hypotheses for a European supranational political anthropology on the base of an eschatological economic determinism, seem to have no future whatsoever. As economic and military capabilities evolve at issue during the coming years is the strategic calculus of the big European powers, namely Britain, France, Germany and Russia.

At the heart of these reflections are questions such as following: a) Could we

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60. As John Mearsheimer put it in his monumental analysis regarding Great Power competition: “Alas, the claim that security competition and war between the great powers have been purged from the international system is wrong.” *The Tragedy of Great Powers Politics*, 22.

possibly foresee the strategies of Germany and Russia as powers and capabilities of both states evolve? b) In case there are signs of convergence between Russia and Germany or of an independently behaving Germany, what could be the strategic postures of London and Paris? c) If the center of gravity of American strategy shifts depending from the distribution of power among China, India and Japan, how this could influence power relations in Europe? d) If Russia attempts a decisive step towards regional hegemony what could be the postures of Germany, France and Britain and what could be the nuclear status of the former? Depending from the answer to these or similar issues, the question arises whether the fluctuating redistributions of power at the level of the planet and at the regional level, could cause a drastic shift of strategic alliances in Europe in the area which extends, to use de Gaulle's expression, from the Atlantic to the Urals. The question of Germany's nuclear status is de facto linked to the perceptions in Berlin as regard the future balance of power and the balance of threats in the region, especially with regard to the capabilities and strategies of Russia<sup>61</sup>. In history the survival of states is less an institutional or legal issue and more an issue of establishing balances that deter real, perceived or potential threats. Thinking about the strategic position of Germany in Europe in the context of the geopolitical factors analyzed above, one should remember moments of the recent past such as the Stalin plan for German neutrality in the early 1950s and the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922. In this context, it is worth stressing the principal question as regards the balance of power and stability in Europe. In a world of many big and nuclear powers in actual or potential antagonism, German nuclear status shall not depend upon conventional viewpoints which immediately after 1992 tended to disorientate political thinking in Europe resulting to "vacuum in strategic thinking". It is a question whose answer is linked to the distribution of power, to the strategies of the other big powers and the way each actor sees its "survival interest". Historical experience is telling: Big power's principal concern ultimately is survival and everything else follows.

The borderline of strategic balance and strategic imbalance at the level of

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61. The acts of Russia in Ukraine, said the defense minister of Germany in February 2015, fostered the preparation of a new strategic approach under preparation to be declared in 2016. As she put it, the forthcoming strategic doctrine is influenced fundamentally the security architecture in Europe. German strategy, she went on, shall take into account Kremlin's attempts to use force in order to change the geo-strategic situation in Europe. The minister pointed out to other developments that shall be taken into account such as the Middle East developments and Cyberwar. It is remarkable that the declarations regarding the new strategic doctrine had by and large not a European but a national tone. The declarations were reported press reports in February 2015.

the planet in an evolving multipolar international system is thin and fragile. It depends from instant redistributions of power and the fluctuating convergences and divergences among the big powers which relate to real or potential threats<sup>62</sup>. In this context and with regard to Eurasian strategic structures as they evolve, let us here proceed with a set of assumptions embedded in strategic theory vintage regarding the prerequisites of stability and the causes of instability.

As long as the structure of international politics shifts towards a multipolar system and as long as Germany increases its economic capabilities –and corollary as long as there are demands for an analogous international role for Germany– dragging down into great power antagonisms would be inescapable. At issue is not an anticipating prediction but relying on sound strategic theory, to reflect as to how and what could be the trends of the new pattern of Alliances in a multipolar world. Stability is related to balance. Historical experience, again, could be a guide: The rise of a country into an economic and commercial great power status and in a way that this country is deprived of corresponding power indices which the other great powers possess, is a source of strategic uncertainty and security dilemmas. In an anarchic international system self-help as regards

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62. Historical experience could help us highlight this issue. Stability and instability is a function not only of conditions of balance at any certain moment but also of trends that potential power indices create trends that could disturb this balance by fostering perceptions of an emerging potential hegemon: “whether a multipolar system contains a potential hegemon like Napoleonic France, Wilhelmine Germany, or Nazi Germany has a profound influence on the prospects for peace. Any time a multipolar system contains a power that has the strongest army as well as the greatest amount of wealth, deadly war among the great powers is more likely”. Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, 359. With regard to this crucial point, similarly drawing from historical experience Kenneth Waltz wrote: For a country to choose not to become a great power is a structural anomaly. For that reason, the choice is a difficult one to sustain. Sooner or later, usually sooner, the international status of countries has risen in step with their material resources. Countries with great-power economies have become great powers, whether or not reluctantly. Japanese and German reasons for hesitating to take the final step into the great-power arena are obvious and need not be rehearsed. Yet when a country receives less attention and respect and gets its way less often than it feels it should, internal inhibitions about becoming a great power are likely to turn into public criticisms of the government for not taking its proper place in the world. Pride knows no nationality. How long can Japan and Germany live alongside other nuclear states while denying themselves similar capabilities? Conflicts and crises are certain to make them aware of the disadvantages of being without the military instruments that other powers command. Kenneth Waltz, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics”, 66.

security is a tenet to which all states adhere, especially states that are great powers or wish to become great powers. France during three decades after WW2 is a case to point<sup>63</sup>. As regards Germany and Japan in the post-Cold War epoch, it is probably worth citing Kenneth Waltz's thesis when he wrote: "In a self-help system, the possession of most but not all of the capabilities of a great power leave a state dependent on others and vulnerable to those who have the instruments that the lesser state lacks. Even though one may believe that fears of nuclear blackmail are misplaced, will Japan and Germany be immune to them? In March of 1988, Prime Minister Takeshita called for a defensive capability matching Japan's economic power. Whether or not he intended to, he was saying that Japan should present itself in great-power panoply before the nations of the world. A great power's panoply includes nuclear weapons<sup>64</sup>." More importantly, Waltz added: "one may wonder how a state with the economic capability of a great power can refrain from arming itself with the weapons that have served so well as the great deterrent<sup>65</sup>." An attempt of Germany to become a "big power" in traditional terms is thus directly linked to stability or instability in Europe. By "traditional terms" it is meant the expected claim to pursue a strategic status similar to the other big states in Europe and the planet and to claim the right to possess power capabilities that secure her vital and survival interests. Inter alia, to become a member of the Security Council of the United Nations and depending from the way Bonn projects threats to acquire nuclear weapons<sup>66</sup>. Regarding the latter, taking as a fact Germany's economic, commercial and technological

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63. One should remember that this was France's posture as regards this issue and led her into a controversial course. The rationale of acquiring a nuclear status by putting forward arguments for the necessity of independence and a nuclear status in the 1960s also meant exiting the Atlantic Alliance's military organization.

64. Kenneth Waltz, "Structural realism after the Cold War", 64.

65. Ibid. In another essay earlier in the 1990s he wrote: "If the leaders of a country understand the implications of nuclear weapons, they will see that with them they can enjoy a secure peace at reasonable cost. Because nuclear weapons widen the range of economic capabilities within which great powers and would-be great powers can effectively compete, the door to the great-power club will swing open if the European Community (EC), Germany, China, or Japan knock on it. Whether or not they do so is partly a matter of decision: the decision by Japan and Germany to equip themselves as great powers or, in the case of Western Europe, the collective decision to become a single state. But in political as in other realms, choices are seldom entirely free». Kenneth Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", 54.

66. At this point it is worth mentioning that when in the early 1990s this issue was being debated the main opponents were London and Paris whilst Russia was not opposed.

status and the fact that we live in a world that big powers possess nuclear weapons, rational strategic reflection makes imperative not to bypass this issue. Reflecting on big power "status factors" nuclear deterrence is an unavoidable part of the syllogisms. Moreover, there are no many ways to reflect on this issue. If Germany feels that the projected balance of threats poses dangers to its survival it most probably shall seek an independent national nuclear deterrent force. One could not possibly predict the impact on stability because the variables are too many, including the postures of the other big powers of Europe. The other "possibility", indeed remote, is to have a constituting conference among the big European states that shall consider the issue of equilibrium on the continent including nuclear equilibrium. Earlier we implied that it could be some sort of new "*Congress of Vienna on strategic equilibrium among the European big powers in the era of nuclear weapons in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*". This said it should be underlined again that in a nuclear world that big powers' status and their security is inescapably related to deterrence, balance, stability and instability, reflecting on these issues needs detachment from conventional wisdom and have as a guide the vintage of rational strategic thinking, especially since 1945. In the real world, rational and irrational is neither decided sentimentally nor in terms of conventional rhetoric which is often unrelated to facts and historical experience.

Going even further in this unconventional line of thinking, at issue, is not a world without nuclear weapons since there are no signs for such a development in the foreseeable future<sup>67</sup>. At issue are the fears of relative gains and the security dilemmas that this fear give rise. This is a crucial issue worth highlighting. Our experience since 1945 as regards strategic stability in a nuclear world, it is based on second-strike capability (which as already mentioned was the element that one could find in France's proportional nuclear deterrence: If France is attacked shall still be able to attack with punishing strike, thus, the potential aggressor is deterred). Certainly, already in the 1970s and 1980s technology gave rise to thoughts and possibly to plans for possible capabilities for a first disarming nuclear strike<sup>68</sup>. However, since 1940s and 1950s when more big powers possessed nuclear weapons, we have no experience as regards the use of nuclear weapons in purposes other than deterrence. Moreover, not only thinking otherwise -that is, considering a nuclear first strike as an act that could possibly serve political purposes- is irrational, but it also, many would support, makes no sense for a country's strategic doctrine no matter how it is conceived (always

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67. The best analysis which goes deep into this issue is a book written in German and translated only in Greek. Panajotis Kondylis, *Theorie des Krieges. Clausewitz, Marx, Engels, Lenin* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988).

68. This issue is examined extensively in: Panayiotis Ifestos, *Nuclear strategy and European security dilemmas*, ch. 11-20.

in terms of cost and benefit of alternative postures). Thinking otherwise it reverses Clausewitz's widely accepted tenet that "war is a continuation of politics by other means". Causing the death of millions or even destroying the planet including the country that attacked in the first place, could not possibly serve any political purpose<sup>69</sup>. Ever since proliferation increased the number of states possessing nuclear weapons, the only experience we have about them and the only conceivable political purpose among nuclear powers is deterrence. These dilemmas would not arise any more, only if and when nuclear weapons disappear in which case states shall revert to conventional deterrence. What is then, comparatively speaking, the dialectical relationship between fears for relative gains in a situation of nuclear balance and in a situation of conventional balance. It is indeed a subtle issue and certainly a not straightforward one. Though balancing behavior in nuclear relations is not eliminated, it could be determinant in defining strategic rationality in either case. At issue is again stability and instability. Kenneth Waltz importantly noted that basing our analysis on experience since nuclear deterrence among great powers exists, balancing is easier and safer: Nuclear weapons, he wrote, "do limit force at the strategic level to a deterrent role, make estimating the strategic strength of nations a simple task, and make balancing easy to do"<sup>70</sup>. More importantly, Waltz makes the following observation that is crucial for the evolving multipolar world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: "Multipolarity abolishes the stark symmetry and pleasing simplicity of bipolarity, but nuclear weapons restore both of those qualities to a considerable extent. Nuclear weapons have yet another beneficial effect on the relations of the nations that have them. Conventional states shy away from cooperating for the achievement of even large absolute gains if their uneven division would enable some to turn their disproportionate gain into a military advantage. Because states with second-strike forces cannot convert economic gain into strategic advantage, an important part of the relative-absolute gains problem is negated. And since nuclear countries cannot make important gains through military conquest without inviting retaliation, the importance of conventional forces is reduced"<sup>71</sup>.

Proliferation of nuclear weapons certainly relate to memories and strong sentiments owing to past experiences among the nations of Europe in epochs that nuclear weapons did not exist. However, coming to big power competition in the nuclear epoch other factors may prove much more decisive and put national strategies on another track. This is why no matter how sensitive it is in political terms; descriptive strategic analysis could not possibly overlook it. In the

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69. See *ibid* ch. 12 where nuclear weapons, politics and strategic doctrines are examined in relation to Clausewitz.

70. Kenneth Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", 74.

71. *Ibid*.

first place, when strategic calculus touches upon questions of national survival evolving power relations and the perceptions for the balance of threats against survival interests, we have a strategic calculus that is very similar for all great powers. Certainly, internal postures and other power's threats influence a state's strategic calculus. For example, acts and postures such as the preventive attack of Israel against nuclear facilities in 1981, USA's attack against Iraq in 2003 when the fear of nuclear proliferation was mentioned, USA's negative attitudes and even threats as regards India's nuclear capabilities in the 1960s and Korea during the 2010s. Except for Iraq, however, in most cases proliferation was not deterred.

On this issue, Kenneth Waltz, extends his much-contested position as regards the "spread of nuclear weapons"<sup>72</sup> in Europe by noting that "Americans treated the prospect of China's becoming a nuclear power as almost unthinkable. Yet China and other countries have become nuclear powers without making the world a more dangerous one. Why should nuclear weapons in German and Japanese hands be especially worrisome<sup>73</sup>? Nuclear weapons have encouraged cautious behavior by their possessors and deterred any of them from threatening others' vital interests. What reasons can there be for expecting Germany and Japan to behave differently? Some countries will fear the effects that may follow if Germany or Japan go nuclear, but who will try to stop them"?<sup>74</sup> This line of

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72. See, for example: Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better", *Adelphi Papers* 171 (1981). Kenneth Waltz is not alone. Many would argue, John Mearsheimer included, that realistically speaking by having mutual nuclear deterrence a war between nuclear powers become impossible or a very remote eventuality.

73. To comprehend the dialectics of diachronic power relations and power calculus in Europe we should always have in mind that stability after 1945 was founded on strategic arrangements in the Transatlantic area that intended to deter USSR. The eventual accession of West Germany in virtually all western organizations and the clauses regarding its military situation including its non-nuclear status did not mean that the power calculus of the superpowers was totally excluding the possibility of its nuclearization. Still the Truman administration was split over the expediency of divided Germany and in the 1950s President Eisenhower "sought to end the American commitment to defend Western Europe and to provide West Germany with its own nuclear deterrent. This policy, which was never fully adopted, nevertheless caused significant instability in Europe, as it led directly to the Berlin crises of 1958-59 and 1961" Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power politics*, 57.

74. Kenneth Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", 67. Waltz also writes: "Japanese and German nuclear inhibitions arising from World War II will not last indefinitely; one might expect them to expire as generational memories

thinking could go further and be linked to the already existing and continuously developing aforementioned strategic vacuum as long as Germany remains an economic giant and a strategic dwarf. Germany by all means a big power in economic strength could be a source of instability, if the political and strategic prerequisites of regional strategic relations are conducive to irrationality, that is, strategic miscalculations that could lead Germany and the other big powers towards a misleading strategic calculus. More specifically, regional strategic relations could tend being irrational if both in Berlin and in the other European states' security dilemmas grow owing to intrinsic developments in power structures which could not be foreseen or be checked. This said, we should also stress that answers regarding the possession of nuclear weapons was never easy or a straightforward matter. The relation between the "haves" and the "haves not" was always and still is tense. On the one hand predominant strategic thinking would support that nuclear weapons are defensive weapons, on the other hand the "haves" never recognize such a right to others and the transition to the acquirement by the "haves not" is full of dangers. Nonetheless, one cannot not bypass historical experience and established strategic tenets: Past experience tell us that a defensive reflex is an intrinsic characteristic of proportional deterrence. Hypothetically speaking, a defensive nuclear German state –irrespective of whether depending from the circumstances this is strategically rational or irrational, given the experience we have since 1945 as regards the attitudes of other European states it seems indeed a remote possibility,– is in accordance to mainstream strategic thinking: It could logically lead to less uncertainties in relations among nuclear powers and cushion fears of relative gains in the field conventional capabilities and other power factors.<sup>75</sup>

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fade. The probability of both countries' becoming nuclear powers in due course is all the higher because they can so easily do so. There is only one nuclear technology, and those who have harnessed the atom for peaceful purposes can quickly move into the nuclear military business. Allocating costs between nuclear and conventional armaments is difficult, the more so since some weapons systems have both conventional and nuclear uses. Everyone agrees, however, that nuclear weaponry accounts for the lesser part of a country's defense budget" ... "One may wonder whether Japan, now stockpiling plutonium, is already a nuclear power or is content to remain some months or moments from becoming one. Consistently since the mid-1950s, the Japanese government has defined all of the weapons of the Self-Defense Forces as conforming to constitutional requirements. Nuclear weapons purely for defense would be deemed constitutional". Ibid., 66-7.

75. This position was worked out, inter alia, by both Kenneth Waltz in "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better" and John Mearsheimer in *The tragedy of great power politics*.

Speaking in a strictly hypothetical and “abstract” way, still in line with mainstream strategic thinking as regards deterrence, our problematique as regards power relations, stability and instability could go even further: If we refer to the power equation between Russia and Germany a nuclear balance a) reduces conventional security dilemmas and b) eliminates irrational appeasing syndromes (appeasement is always a source of eventual instability for all involved and is related to the aforementioned western fear of the possibility of an alliance between Russia and Germany). Moreover, logically, it weakens Great Britain's tendency to act as a balancer of continental Europe in alliance with the United States leaving space for intra-European strategic calculus that reflect the realities of intra-Eurasian power structures in its western part. In this case all big European powers –Russia, Germany, France and Great Britain– could tend towards prudent and moderate alliances that prevent any one of them becoming a regional hegemon. If any such trend develops, as we implied earlier, an external balancer be it the United States or another big power, shall attempt off-shore balancing in order to prevent any one state becoming a regional hegemon. To bring the argument further, German regional hegemony would for all practical purposes be virtually infeasible and any such trend shall rather easily be faced out with an alliance of the other three European powers. Eventually, stability and absence of conflict is in the interest of everyone. Nuclear forces and the dangerous consequences of radical shifts of power that lead to imbalances is always a good reason of prudent diplomacy. Interdependence in the economic domain, including energy between Russia and Germany, could so function as not to lead to acute security dilemmas among the other powers<sup>76</sup>.

Now, if security dilemmas are either reduced or stabilized in the medium and long run, European “integration” (material cooperation and supportive institutions acting as assignees of the intergovernmental bodies) may become more feasible and viable. In fact, if regional cooperation is deprived unrealistic functionalists' preoccupations with supranationality and if the nation-state is properly considered as the source of political rationality, integration in many domains in the context of an intergovernmental framework could be more feasible contributing positively to balanced relations. As it is often argued, interdependence could be a source of absolute gains. However, it could also be a source of instability if relative gains of the stronger state cause uneven growth and security dilemmas. These crucial issues, however, as already argued above, were bypassed or neglected owing to the presence of the “American stabilizer”. It is appropriate to underline, in this regard, the fact that almost three decades after

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76. This is an argument of both scholars *ibid* and also evident in the experience gained in the nuclear era. See: Panayiotis Ifestos, *Nuclear strategy and European security dilemmas*.

the end of the Cold War one needs not to try hard to explain that supranational utopian thinking founded on obsolete economic determinism already failed both East and West. Its perpetuation owing to the momentum of conventional thinking could only be a source of future politico-economic irrationality in Europe. As regards European integration more specifically, whatever form it takes, drastic reforms are unavoidable and could reflect the state-centric nature of the European Community. Intergovernmentalism, is objectively speaking the appropriate system for a state-centric area. In this regard, there is a stock of rational political thinking founded on both the realistic political philosophy of President de Gaulle and the way it influences European integration towards consensual decision making after 1966. The rational and realistic tenets of Gaullist thinking call for effective supervision of the intergovernmental bodies over the supranational institutions and unanimity (“consensual decisions”) in decision making. A pre-condition of political, economic and strategic rationality, moreover, means that the reform of the EU should include both the scope and the structure of EMU. A common monetary and macroeconomic approach necessitates a pan-European society which if it is not feasible the logical course is either a drastic reform that allows national fiscal / financial flexibility or an agreed orderly and gradual disassembling of EMU and a prudent return to national currencies in combination to monetary cooperation as it deems necessary. States’ uneven growth is intrinsic and common macroeconomic decisions was and shall continue being a source of instability if they generate imbalances. Dealing with uneven growth and the related security dilemmas could only be dealt with in the context of rational interstate frameworks tending to balance arrangements, cautious politico-economic cooperation and elaborated common policies which relate harmoniously with existing common policies. Last, but not least. in a balanced international sub-system in the Western part of the Eurasian continent one should revisit de Gaulle’s concept of Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic. In a balanced environment Russia’s position is one of equal among equals and a potential partner. To put it succinctly, strategic rationality on the Western part of the Eurasian continent depends much from the question whether Russia and Germany function in a strategic environment that tends towards balance in a way that fosters prerequisites which weaken security dilemmas and discourages appeasement tendencies. Europe, moreover, shall not be very vulnerable to the constant shifts of the center of gravity of the strategy of the United States. In this connection one should take into account that in the evolving multipolar world the most crucial issues are the balance of power among China, India, Japan and probably other states in Far East. To the extent that relates to the overall balance, it is important whether Russia would lean towards an alliance with China or in a *modus vivendi* in conditions of balance with the powers in Western Europe.

At this point, we could underline that an analysis such as the one in the preceding pages could only be descriptive and certainly not prescriptive. Prescriptiveness at the academic level is mere propaganda and a source of political irrationality. Descriptiveness could contribute to a balanced and rational conceptualization of the problems and dilemmas and the way stability or instability is influenced. Stability, of course, was never and would never be guaranteed. It is a function of good understanding of the international system as it evolves –this is the principal mission of strategic theory– and of statesmanship. Descriptive strategic analysis could contribute to rational decisions and fewer mistakes. Thus, ending this essay we could attempt to sum up the fluctuating strategic logics of the balances in Europe. Both in terms of academic analysis and in political discourse, it is a very slippery endeavor. Still, we live in a nuclear world and in the minds of statesmen nuclear power is closely linked to big states' status, their role in international politics and their survival. Shortly stated it is an inescapable fact of contemporary international relations. What are the prerequisites of stability in a fluctuating multipolar and nuclear world of many big powers? The only strategic culture that could influence an academic essay, it is claimed above, is balance. Balance relations deter war and secure stability. There are two ways to reflect on great power relations. One is that we expect big powers to function in accordance to what is provided in international institutions and international law. The other is that security dilemmas are a permanent dominant feature of strategic calculus and strategic decisions. Abundance of examples<sup>77</sup> provide little or no evidence as regards the first case. Regarding the second case, a point to reflect is Mearsheimer's warning that "great powers fear each other. They regard each other with suspicion, and they worry that war might be in the offing. They anticipate danger. There is little room for trust among states. For sure, the level of fear varies across time and space, but it cannot be reduced to a trivial level. From the perspective of any one great power, all other great powers are potential enemies"<sup>78</sup>. Mearsheimer's thesis should be taken deadly seriously since it was tested over many centuries and it was by and large confirmed: Security dilemmas among great powers are intrinsic owing to

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77. The Cold War by itself, Vietnam, Afghanistan, various paternalistic interventions in the "third world" and two decades after the Cold War following ambivalent and controversial interventions in the Balkans, the Middle East and elsewhere, the evolution towards a power struggle in many regions in Central Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. Moreover, one should take into account that Collective Security in the context of the Security Council of the UN, especially as regards permanent members, have no application. Simply any punitive sanctions against them are negated a priori since they have the right to veto all decisions.

78. Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, 32.

a number of causes principal of which is the fear of projected power and the perceptions of the resulting threats.

The argument put forward earlier about strategic stability in intra-European interstate relations and the fact that conflict since 1945 was avoided owing to a balance secured by America's strategic presence, could not be overlooked. It is a determinant fact which as explained above highlights the evolution of strategic relations from 1945 to 1990 and which should be a base of reflection and comparison for Eurasian politics as we advance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We argued that experience since 1945 shows that security dilemmas among the great powers of Europe were reduced and stabilized but did not disappear<sup>79</sup>. At times, when we had tensions and crises, American role was dominant in minimizing effects and favoring new institutional and strategic arrangements<sup>80</sup>. In conditions of international anarchy and if the role of the "American stabilizer" for whatever reason is weakened or disappears, the European sub-system, especially in rela-

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79. This was a central conclusion of the relations among the great powers of the EU after examining the post-WW2 period in: Panayiotis Ifestos, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Great European Powers*. Security dilemmas, as already mentioned, became abundantly evident from 1989 to 1991, a transition during which Germany was reunified.

80. For example in the 1940s when difficulties for Alliance forming were solved out by establishing the Atlantic Alliance in 1949, the controversy for British entry into the Common Market in the late 1950s and early 1960s when the MLF (Multilateral Force) was proposed, the handling of the German question all along including ostpolitik, the Euromissile crisis when appeasement trends in Western Germany created conditions of crisis among France and Germany and foremost in the early 1990s when fears in Western Europe owing to German reunification peaked resulting to the perpetuation of the Atlantic Alliance. These and other topics are examined in context and in relation to the question as regards intra-European security dilemmas in Panayiotis Ifestos, *Nuclear Strategy and Security dilemmas*, esp. ch. 21-29 and Panayiotis Ifestos, *Diplomacy and strategy of Great European Powers*, esp. ch. 4,5,6. For the consequences of the fact that despite economic integration the European the premises of the European sub-system remains fundamentally the same as anywhere else with regard to security dilemmas, peace and war, see the analyses of Bull, Joffe and Hoffmann cited above. We stress again the crucial fact often bypassed in the political discourse and academic analysis that the transition 1989-92 that let to German reunification, the Maastricht Treaty, the EMU and the perpetuation of the Atlantic Alliance was a fragile process during which security dilemmas surfaced. In December of 1991, President George Bush stated, in this regard, that "we are pleased that our Allies in the Western European Union . . . decided to strengthen that institution as both NATO's European pillar and the defense component of the European Union." Cited in: Kenneth Waltz, "Structural realism after the Cold War", 21.

tions among its big powers, is bound to function like any other region: Given actual anarchy, "there is no mechanism, other than the possible self-interest of third parties, for punishing an aggressor. Because it is sometimes difficult to deter potential aggressors, states have ample reason not to trust other states and to be prepared for war with them ... This point is illustrated by the reaction of the United Kingdom and France to German reunification at the end of the Cold War. Despite the fact that these three states had been close allies for almost forty-five years, both the United Kingdom and France immediately began worrying about the potential dangers of a united Germany. The basis of this fear is that in a world where great powers have the capability to attack each other and might have the motive to do so, any state bent on survival must be at least suspicious of other states and reluctant to trust them".<sup>81</sup> The distribution of power on the continent after 1990 is related to two major developments. First, the shrinkage of Russian power following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, the rise of power of Germany owing to both reunification and the adoption of a process of economic and monetary union initiated in 1992. Expectably a common monetary policy that lacks legitimate institutionalization of its distributive effects continues to favor the strongest economy in the system<sup>82</sup>. The configuration of the great powers in Europe depends from the evolution of the correlation of power owing to these two developments. In his much-debated article "The emerging structure of the international system" of 1993, already quoted above, Kenneth Waltz, noted, inter alia: "In a shorter time, the Soviet Union fell from the ranks, making the structure of international politics hard to define in the present and difficult to discern in the future. This section asks how the structure of international politics is likely to change. The Soviet Union had, and Russia continues to have, impressive military capabilities. But great powers do not gain and retain their rank by excelling in one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score on a combination of the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence<sup>83</sup>." The argument that in power calculus relating to

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81. John Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, 32. Mearsheimer goes on to observe that "Apprehensive about the ultimate intentions of other states, and aware that they operate in a self-help system, states quickly understand that the best way to ensure their survival is to be the most powerful state in the system. The stronger a state is relative to its potential rivals, the less likely it is that any of those rivals will attack it and threaten its survival". John Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, 33.

82. This fact was sufficiently evident if one sees trade surpluses and the causes of the economic crisis two decades after EMU was adopted.

83. Kenneth Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", 50. Mearsheimer

national security and national survival, economic power matters, is also a central conclusion of Mearsheimer's research on this issue. Mearsheimer underlines that economic strength is straightforwardly related to military might: "Not only because it enhances the general welfare, but also because it is a reliable way to gain a military advantage over rivals"<sup>84</sup>. He then goes on to refer to Max Weber's position that "national self-preservation and economic growth are two sides of the same coin". The states also calculate relative economic potential: "The ideal situation for any state is to experience sharp economic growth while its rivals' economies grow slowly or hardly at all. Parenthetically, great powers are likely to view especially wealthy states, or states moving in that direction, as serious threats, regardless of whether or not they have a formidable military capability. After all, wealth can rather easily be translated into military might"<sup>85</sup>.

We conclude by observing that based on historical experience and the related strategic theory's vintage, it is only obvious that in post-Cold War Europe coexist incongruous, contradictory and potentially destabilizing trends related to Germany and the fact that this country is the strongest economic power in the Western part of Eurasia. The distribution of power trends as regards capabilities and the balance of real or perceived threats on the continent is the determinant consideration in the years and decades ahead: On the one hand is Germany's growing power indices in the fields of economy, trade, wealth and technological advantage. On the other hand there is a power vacuum and an imbalance as regards the remaining power indices because the other big powers possess them but not Germany.

In the preceding pages, we were very careful by limiting the analysis to strictly descriptive references and by underlying dilemmas and orientations of trends, especially as regards the distribution of power. We also attempted a description of the typology of standard strategic calculus at the level of great powers or of rising great powers. It is supported that this calculus is directly linked to Walt's "balance of threats" concept -real, projected or perceived- and

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summing up his conclusions regarding the relation between power and economic potential, remarks that wealth underpins military power and it is a latent power that the others watch carefully: "a brief look at the rise and decline of three European great powers during the last two centuries buttresses my claim that wealth underpins military power and that wealth by itself is a good indicator of latent power. The profound change that took place in the balance of power between France and Germany (Prussia before 1870) during the nineteenth century, Wealth and Power as well as Russia's changing position in the balance of power between 1800 and 2000, shows the crucial role of wealth in determining power". John Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, 67-8.

84. Ibid, 143.

85. Ibid, 144.

the related underlying security dilemmas. The mission of academic description and interpretation, precisely, is to highlight dilemmas, problems, prospects and national orientations. Decisions concern politics and are taken at the level of interstate and intrastate political interaction. Suffice to underline emphatically once again that owing to preoccupation with low politics there is a deficit of descriptive analysis as regards strategic issues and geopolitical trends that shape them and eventually influence stability and instability. Balance favors stability. Imbalance leads to instability.

Lastly, as regards the *acquis Communautaire* in trade, economics and law, it is *de facto* a dependent variable of strategic decisions. Otherwise stated, the future of European integration in the fields of economics and trade depends upon the existence of a balanced and stable strategic environment in the Western part of Eurasia. As supported above the crucial determinant is balance in the quadrangle at the four corners of which are *de facto* situated Great Britain, France, Germany and Russia. The impression one has is that both in academic analysis and political discourse few or none (at least publicly) reflects in terms of sound and acknowledged strategic theory and in ways that encompasses criteria such as power indices, projection of power trends in terms of capabilities, the prerequisites of balance or imbalance, the prerequisites of stability or instability and the nuclear issue as an inescapable status factor in big power politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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