

dominance. The conclusion of World War II found Germany shattered, divided and occupied, controlled by Soviets in the east, and England, France, and the United States in the west.

West Germany was indispensable to the United States and its NATO alliance because of the confrontation with the Soviets. Creating a German army, obviously, posed a problem. If the origins of the two world wars were in the growth of German power, and Germany was encouraged to be powerful again, what was to prevent a third European war? The answer rested in the integration of the German army into NATO—essentially putting it under American command in the field. But the broader answer lay in the integration of Germany into Europe as a whole.

During the 1950s, when NATO was created, the European Economic Community was also conceived. The European Union, which emerged from it, is a schizophrenic entity. Its primary purpose is the creation of an integrated European economy, while leaving sovereignty in the hands of individual nations. Simultaneously, it is seen as the preface to a federation of European countries, in which a central European government, with a parliament and professional civil service, would govern a federal Europe where national sovereignty was limited to local matters, and defense and foreign policy rested with the whole.

Europe has not achieved this goal. It has created a free-trade zone and a European currency, which some members of the free-trade zone use and others do not. It has failed to create a political constitution, however, leaving individual nations sovereign—and therefore never has produced a united defense or foreign policy. Defense policy, to the extent it is coordinated, is in the hands of NATO, and not all members of NATO are members of the EU (notably the United States). With the collapse of the Soviet empire, individual countries in Eastern Europe were admitted to the EU and NATO.

In short, post-Cold War Europe is in benign chaos. It is impossible to unravel the extraordinarily complex and ambiguous institutional relationships that have been created. Given the history of Europe, such confusion would normally lead to war. But Europe, excepting the former Yugoslavia, has no energy for war, no appetite for instability, and certainly no desire for conflict. Europe's psychological transformation has been extraordinary.

Where, prior to 1945, slaughter and warfare had been regular pastimes for centuries, after 1945 even the conceptual chaos of European institutions could not generate conflict beyond rhetoric.

Underneath the surface of the EU, the old European nationalisms continue to assert themselves, albeit sluggishly. This can be seen in economic negotiations within the EU. The French, for example, assert the right to protect their farmers from excessive competition, or the right not to honor treaties controlling their deficits. Therefore, in a geopolitical context, Europe has not become a unified transnational entity.

For these reasons, talking of Europe as if it were a single entity like the United States, or China, is illusory. It is a collection of nation-states, still shell-shocked by World War II, the Cold War, and the loss of empire. These nation-states are highly insular and determine their geopolitical actions according to their individual interests. Primary interactions are not between Europe and the rest of the world, but among European nations. In this sense, Europe behaves far more like Latin America than like a great power. In Latin America, Brazil and Argentina spend a great deal of time thinking about each other, knowing that their effect on the globe is limited.

Russia is the immediate strategic threat to Europe. Russia is interested not in conquering Europe, but in reasserting its control over the former Soviet Union. From the Russian point of view, this is both a reasonable attempt to establish some minimal sphere of influence and essentially a defensive measure. However, it is a defensive measure that will immediately affect the three Baltic states, which are now integrated into European institutions.

Obviously the Eastern Europeans want to prevent a Russian resurgence. The real question is what the rest of Europe might do—and especially, what Germany might do. The Germans are now in a comfortable position with a buffer between them and the Russians, free to focus on their internal economic and social problems. In addition, the heritage of World War II weighs heavily on the Germans. They will not want to act alone, but as part of a unified Europe.

Germany's position is unpredictable. It is a nation that has learned, given its geopolitical position, that it is enormously dangerous to assert its national interest. In 1914 and 1939, Germany attempted to act decisively in