EUROPE NOT TRUMP IS THE PROBLEM

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Relations between the EU and the US are taking a steep downward trend.

There is, simultaneously, a worse situation to this one.

Relations between the EU Countries are taking a steeper downward trend.

Europe is losing its coherence because European Countries are losing the sense of common interest.

The EU emerged from the ashes of its World Wars for two reasons.

To avoid new bloodshed and to face the threat to its common democratic values from the USSR.

The EU grew and thrived, protected from external threats, in the glasshouse created by the American Common Defence System and particularly NATO.

With the external threat contained, The EU approach and solution to all issues has been and is an Economic one.

Up until the demise of the USSR in 1990, the American Defence umbrella protected against the common enemy. Europe bought sophisticated War material, like airplanes, from the US Defence Industry and the System was more or less stable.

The collapse of the Soviet Union eliminated the threat and brought an additional benefit.

Germany was reunited. That was the seed of disruption to the Unification of Europe.

In the key summit of Maastricht in Feb 1992, the Treaty on European Union marked the beginning of "a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe".

The European Union that was established by 12 Nations then, took a number of decisions, many of the tacit, that drastically changed the World geostrategic balance.

The key decision that affected its external Policy was and is that the EU members considered that they were not threatened anymore by any external enemy and therefore they could greatly economize on Defence spending.

The second, that shaped its Economy and created today's mess, was to accept, together with a common currency, the Euro, the German monetary principles.

It must be clear that acceptance, did not also mean the adoption of German Economic rules, for most EU members. This was made easier as the first *Country to break those rules was Germany under Schroeder*.

All Nations aimed at using the EU as a tool to serve their narrow, mainly commercial, interests.

The enlargement of the EU in Eastern Europe, over the dead body of the Warsaw Pact, was commercially a profitable move but brought additional disruption to the EU integration.

All of the above led first to the Economic collapse of the Union.

Southern Countries overspent and Northern Countries turned a blind eye for as long as the Southern Countries used the credit to buy mainly Northern goods.

The Southern Countries would not and could not transform their Economies to the Northern European, essentially German Model.

Their Economies collapsed, only to be supported artificially by the Northern Economies, mainly by Germany, and as a natural consequence, to be politically dominated by the same.

The consequence of German growth and dominance over Europe led to the Political disruption of the Union. The only other nation with which Germany designed to discuss matters was France and that to a limited extent.

The expansion of Germany eastwards and it's increasing Commercial and – to a certain degree – its Political rapprochement with Russia, alarmed

geopolitically the Americans hence Ukraine was the consequence.

Poland, historically torn between Russia and Germany chose one more time a distant ally, this time the USA. It became the first one to disengage politically and economically from the Union, followed by other Eastern European Countries.

Britain, displeased by the Dominance of Germany and its own growing insignificance, in a badly judged reaction, chose to leave the EU instead of re-negotiating its position within it.

The Italians, pressed by poor economic performance, since their Economy is unable to compete under the Euro rules, turned their enormous accumulation of public debt of 2,5 trillion $ USD into a blackmail weapon, threatening to exit from the Euro leading to its collapse unless further credits became available.

The Member Nations do not share anymore the vision of a truly united Europe and, more significantly, their Citizens are disenchanted with and alienated from the EU.

The unusually violent, reaction of Chancellor Merkel to the US policies, highlighted more the present status of European Policy, than a position towards the US.

Italy and Germany – the two Economic extremes of the EU– are in trouble, with the former now officially in recession and the latter close to one.

In any case, for years now, Germany is working increasingly outside the EU for its interests. Germany's traditional "Nach Ost" drive is now directed towards both China and Russia.

The myth of French and Spanish Economies growing, is exactly that, a myth.

In Spain, the debt is 100% of GDP and the primary budget balance is still negative.

In France even if the 2019 economic targets are achieved, which is unlikely, there will still be more budget deficit than GDP growth with the debt touching also 100% of GDP.

The whole European Banking System is rotten. Many Banks are only nominally solvent and some not even that, like recently the cash-strapped Banca Carige SpA and also Germany's NordLB. They will be bailed out by public-sector money, which the Germans previously insisted, that it would not be allowed under EU rules.

The Economies of the EU cannot continue functioning for long under Euro rules in spite of the very brave efforts of Mr. Draghi. The central bank's chief economist, Peter Praet, said recently that: "*the economy is close to a vicious circle*". (Bloomberg)

The very concept of European Liberal Democratic Values is being stressed to destruction.

In the coming European elections, the grand total of "anti-Europeans" from both left and right would come to about 220, close to a third of all seats in the parliament, which is enough to tilt the European Parliament towards a Neo-Nationalism, particularly as its composition will most likely be the most politically fragmented in the institution's history, without a majority wing.

This goes on top of the hostility of the US towards Europe, that will not end with the Trump Presidency, which in any case may easily have a second term.

Quoting Foreign Affairs: "From Trump's ……calling the EU a "foe", no U.S. president since World War II has appeared so distant, even hostile, to European interests….it took a figure as direct and undiplomatic as Trump to wake Europeans up to this new normal…"

Europe is as much responsible for the Atlantic drift as is the United States.

Worse, Europe is responsible for not really implementing the Pan-European vision freely agreed between its democratic nations.

Much now will depend on how Brexit is going to play out. Then it will be Italy's turn.

No European Nation is willing to undertake the painful measures that will establish a genuine European Union. The collapse of the Union is only a matter of time.

Winston Churchill's closing sentence in his History of the Second World War was: "….and this is how the great democracies triumphed, and so were able to resume the follies which had so nearly cost them their life".