

A Europea federal state to give Europe a foreign and security policy

The international framework

The global situation in the last fifteen years, after the end of the cold war, underwent rapid and profound changes. In particular, on the one hand, following the emergence of Chinese power and the emerging prospect of Indian power, a complex transition is underway towards a new multipolarism that is still very unbalanced; on the other hand instability in the Middle East and in different areas of the Asian continent has seriously grown, increasing the problem of security on which the threat of international terrorism and the risk of nuclear proliferation also weigh heavily.

The need for a new foreign and defence policy strategy

Against this new background American interest in developing a special relation with Europe has virtually ceased, precisely because, in view of the new strategic challenges of the Twenty-First century, the European continent is no longer the main battleground. In many cases this also means an increasing divergence between the objective interests of the two areas and it reinforces the need for Europe to create both a true foreign policy for itself, capable of identifying the interests of Europeans even in the long term and of defending them worldwide;

and the need to create its own independent defence policy, due to the inadequacy of all aspects of its military equipment. NATO itself today has become obsolete, but it must be clearly said that a reorganisation of its forces (which the USA is the first to press for and against the background of which Europeans effectively continue to formulate their attempts at military cooperation) would only serve to adapt it to the new American strategic interests, not to the European ones.

Awareness of the increasing gap between American and European interests, however, still does not seem to be clear in the consciousness of Europeans, also because acknowledging this divergence with the USA would involve a responsibility that at the moment our states do not seem to want to take. They prefer to continue to labour under the illusion that there are no threats to the internal security of our continent – without stopping to consider whether the possibility of war within the frontiers of Europe has finally been truly negated – and to delegate the task of dealing with the world situation to the United States. Their irresponsibility is one of the root causes of the instability of the present international order in which an equilibrating role for Europe could be decisive in many cases.

The illusion of being able to provide answers at the national level and within the European Union

The fundamental problem with Europeans is that they are divided and therefore inadequately prepared to face the current challenges that instead require continental solutions. The crux of the matter is therefore the creation of a true European power, the only entity which could be responsible for an effective foreign and security policy. But the member states continue to start from the premise that their national sovereignty is untouchable: they want to keep hold of their decision-making power and therefore Europe remains – more than ever on these issues – merely at the level of cooperation. For this reason the role of the European Union at the international level is weak. On certain occasions the EU deludes itself that it can play a role in international diplomatic negotiations, or member states delude themselves that they can be represented through EU institutions; but the reality is that each so-called “European” position, on those few occasions when it actually manages to be reached, is never the fruit of a political process which allows a true European interest to be identified, but it is only a compromise between the heterogeneous interests of member states, and it is not accompanied by any overall strategy. Europeans, therefore, find themselves powerless before global issues and crises.

The same goes for defence policy. The

process of cooperation underway within the Union of groups of states is in no way leading to, and cannot lead to, the birth of European defence. The essential premise for even the only partial success of these attempts would be a strong homogeneity of political purposes and objectives between the participating states. This homogeneity cannot exist as long as the interest of each country is still evaluated at the level of the nation. One only needs to consider the role Great Britain plays, claiming to be a leader at the level of defence cooperation, also to make up for its absence from the Eurozone. But the British at the same time oppose the birth of an independent European political power and maintain their loyalty to the United States as a point of reference for their own foreign policy. Similar remarks however could be made for all member states, precisely for the fact that as long as foreign policy remains anchored to national power the inevitable tendency is to develop divergent logics, linked to the geopolitical realities of each state. This goes for Spain with its Atlantic bent, for the new Eastern countries, strongly nationalist and hostile to Russia, for France itself – in difficulty within the context of the enlarged union – still jealous of its colonial past and of its own military capacities which are now obsolete, and above all for Germany with its new nationalist orientation in foreign policy, from the Balkans, to relations with Russia and with Eastern Europe, to its

international role.

In the absence of a single guide – that is to say, ultimately, in the absence of a single foreign policy and a single political power – defence cooperation between states cannot even reach the fundamental technical objectives either for the reorganisation of European forces (which have still not been able to adapt to the new strategic requirements after the end of the Cold War and which are therefore unable to carry out anything but the most minor operations abroad), or for modernisation (from the transport to the communications sector), or in order to put more funding into research and development and to boost the European arms industry (impeded as it is by national procurement policies, which no state wants to renounce). The structured defence cooperation programmes between groups of states, provided for, albeit in a confused fashion, by the Constitutional Treaty, and which many invoke as a possible solution, cannot in reality change the present situation. The problem is precisely that of the cooperation between sovereign states as opposed to the creation of a European state framework.

Conclusion

The crucial issue for Europeans is therefore that of sovereignty. Without the surmounting of the national framework nei-

ther a European foreign policy nor a European defence policy can be born. The creation of a true European federal state is the premise for being able to define European interests worldwide, for elaborating an adequate strategy, for equipping ourselves with the instruments of power and the political weight necessary to pursue it.

It is clear that the will to carry through this federal objective cannot arise from the beginning in all the countries of the Union. Only amongst the founding countries are there conditions in place for such an awakening. Notwithstanding the limits of their current national policies they are the only ones to have signed up, in 1950, to the aim of European federation, and within which, with this in mind, they have inserted their political life from the post-war period right up to the Nineteen-Nineties, and which contain a great reserve of consensus for this project both in the political establishment and in public opinion. For this reason, theirs is the responsibility to give birth to the first core of the European federal state, within the largest confederation represented by the enlarged Union, open to any country that wishes to become a member. Only this courageous action can give a future perspective back to a Europe that risks being disintegrated by the new global developments.

Campaign for a European Federal State
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