

Report of the transatlantic dinner

“Toward an Alternative Transatlantic Strategy¹”

by Hall GARDNER

Let me thank the Prime Minister Jean- Pierre Raffarin, Ambassador Serge Degallaix, the team at the Fondation Prospective et Innovation, and Ginkgo Press for publishing my book, “Toward an Alternative Transatlantic Strategy” and for its excellent translation into French.

The foundation Prospective et Innovation is definitely one of the most active and dynamic think tanks in France that is engaging in conferences, webinars, publications that cover a wide range of topics. Most importantly, the Foundation is sensitive to the major challenges that the U.S. and Europeans are facing.

The “New” Major Power Rivalries

Given its history as a center for Allied dialogue since 1917, the Cercle de l'Union Interalliée is a very appropriate venue for this discussion as *Homo Geopoliticus* is entering a dangerous period that is reminiscent of the periods before both World War I and World War II.

The rise of “new” major power rivalries with Russia and China has thus far resulted in the strengthening of NATO forces, with the rapid entry of Sweden and Finland into NATO, plus the planned defense build-up of NATO’s New Force Model of 300,000 men as early as 2023. As this force is to be primarily formed with European troops, it raises the question as to what extent the Europeans themselves will have a say in NATO’s deployment of these forces.

Such a major troop build-up in Europe will permit Washington to better focus on Russia, China, as well as North Korea, in the Indo-Pacific, with the support of the AUKUS pact of Australia and the UK, and with the support of Japan, and potentially of India (which has thus far been attempting to remain neutral despite its own conflict with China) through the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue.

Washington is also strengthening alliances in the wider Middle East through the Abraham Accords that link Israel and the UAE, and tacitly with Saudi Arabia, in part, to counter-balance Iranian, if not Turkish, power and influence.

Here, the outcome of U.S. and EU Contact Group negotiations over Iran’s nuclear enrichment program may determine whether Iran sides more closely with the U.S. and Europe or else shifts even more closely to Russia and China.

¹ Full text of my Speech, based on my book, *Toward an Alternative Transatlantic Strategy: Biden, the EU and the ‘new’ Multilateralism* (Fondation Prospective et Innovation / Éditions Ginkgo, 2022). The talk was held at the Cercle de l'Union Interalliée in Paris on September 13, 2022). <https://www.ginkgo-editeur.fr/product-page/vers-une-strat%C3%A9gie-transatlantique-alternative>; <https://prospective-innovation.org/>

U.S. and EU Strategic Cooperation

The projected NATO military build-up of European manpower, combined with U.S. efforts to build up forces in the Indo-Pacific, means that the U.S. and European Union must engage in deeper strategic cooperation than has thus far taken place during the post-Cold War era.

The formation of the new U.S. and EU Trade and Technology Council that met for a second time in mid-May 2022 in France represents a positive first step in the right direction. But this Council is not sufficient to deal with all the major tasks at hand.

This new U.S.-EU Council has begun to address issues surrounding the digital economy, artificial intelligence, internet surveillance/ hacking/ disinformation, data governance, climate change and clean technology, alternative energies, access to critical “rare” earth minerals, semiconductor supply chains, export controls to Russia and Belarus, as well as trade challenges and food security, among other issues.

Yet given the vast number of other overlapping issues confronting both the U.S. and EU, I believe it will prove necessary to widen the scope of U.S.-European cooperation in order to prevent, or at least, limit the consequences of, a “Greater Depression.”

This means that U.S. and EU need to deal more effectively with monetary and taxation issues, plus the issue of fiscal paradises, given mounting public and private debt on both sides of the Atlantic. It also means finding ways to better redistribute the tremendous gap in wealth both between and within countries that risks exacerbating domestic social and international political conflict.

Even more fundamentally, the U.S. and EU need to oversee the long-term transformation of the global energy and industrial infrastructure. This is in order to make certain that the transition to a greener economy will prove more creative than destructive. The essentially labor-saving orientation of the new digital economy, that incorporates artificial intelligence and robotics, risks further reducing what were once considered middle class jobs and incomes—and further augmenting the already tremendous gaps in wealth.

Working with UN Contact Groups

In terms of global geopolitical strategy, *Toward an Alternative Transatlantic Strategy* argues that it will also prove necessary for the U.S. and Europeans in working through UN-backed Contact Groups to engage in joint diplomatic strategies in the effort to resolve other burgeoning disputes much as has been the case for dealing with Iran’s nuclear enrichment program.

These joint strategies include ending the war between Russia and Ukraine as soon as possible, while also seeking to resolve quarrels between Greece and Turkey; Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran; North and South Korea; as well as China and Taiwan, among other regions, where possible.

Such an approach can prove to be a win-win for both the Europeans and the Americans. The possibility of the joint U.S.-EU implementation of what I call “multilateral peace and sustainable development communities” in key regions, such as Central America, the Euro-Mediterranean, North and Central Africa, can help offset immigration flows from the Global South to the US and EU by providing jobs and boosting incomes of peoples in these often historically “de-developed” regions.

On the domestic side, joint U.S. and European development efforts to foster growth in a number of key regions in the Global South could also help to offset populist and nationalist voices in the U.S. and EU that are using the immigration issue to undermine democratic governance.

The U.S. and EU Legitimacy Crisis

Both the U.S. and European democracies are confronted with a major “legitimacy” crisis. This means the U.S. and Europeans need to re-build their democracies by seeking ways to make both societies much more representative and participative in both public and private spheres.

Here, for example, as I argued in *World War Trump*, the U.S. should consider the option of a single term Presidency, as once supported by Woodrow Wilson and Jimmy Carter, in addition to engaging in other significant structural governmental reforms, as a means to make American democracy more representative². The use of multi-option voting, as opposed to “simple” or “weighted” majority voting, can additionally help make our democracies more participative.

In the private sector, the U.S. and EU should also back different forms of “economic” or “workplace” democracy ranging from differing degrees of employee management and ownership, to employee representation on Boards of Directors, to Employee Stock Ownership Plans, among other democratic options that could be implemented more extensively.

On the international front, instead of seeking ‘democratization’ and regime change abroad, as was the case in the post-Cold War era with respect to Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, among other countries, the U.S. and EU need to double down on safeguarding and reforming democracy at home, while emphasizing “good governance” and human rights for non-democratic states abroad. The U.S. and EU need to lead by example—and not by the use of force.

What is needed is a new EU-U.S. Strategic Council, whose mandate is broader than the Trade and Technology Council, in order to better manage and coordinate the overlapping multi-dimensional geostrategic, technological, political economic, and domestic socio-cultural crises and conflicts—with which both the U.S. and EU are confronted.

I was not fooled by Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History” narrative that promised global peace through the democratization of authoritarian states and the ostensible rise of democratic movements around the world. By contrast, my book, *Surviving the Millennium*, forewarned of the possibility of major power war if the U.S. and EU could not work with Moscow to forge a new post-Cold War European and global security order. Moreover, I argued that the essentially liberal democratic American, and the social democratic European, forms of governance are not panaceas and not always compatible. Both need to engage in significant reforms if they are to survive the coming storm³.

² Hall Gardner, *World War Trump: The Risks of America’s New Nationalism* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2018).

³ Hall Gardner, *American Global Strategy and the War on Terrorism* (London: Ashgate, 2005; revised and updated, 2007). See also my critique of Fukuyama, Hall Gardner, *Crimea, Global Rivalry and the Vengeance of History* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2015).

Fukuyama had criticized my book in Foreign Affairs in 1995 and yet I think *Surviving the Millennium*⁴ has proved much more accurate as a title and as an argument than his *The End of History and the Last Man*⁵

The Russian-Ukraine War

Toward an Alternative Transatlantic Strategy had been written, in part, in the hope that it was possible to implement a joint U.S.-EU diplomatic strategy to prevent the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

As I have been warning about the possibility of a war between Russia and Ukraine leading to a major power war in my most of my books since *Surviving the Millennium* (1994), I nevertheless argued that such a war was preventable—that is, if the U.S. and EU had worked more closely with Gorbachev and then Yeltsin, as well as with Medvedev and Putin—in the effort to address both Russian and eastern European security and political economic concerns.

Instead of pushing for NATO enlargement, one option would have been to strengthen the NATO Partnership for Peace initiative and back Ukraine, Georgia and other states as “neutral” states *within larger peace and sustainable development communities with overlapping security guarantees*⁶.

Preventing Major Power War

Now, however, that the Russia-Ukraine war has broken out, it is essential to prevent it from intensifying in brutality and from causing even more dangerous incidents like that at the Ukrainian nuclear plant at *Zaporizhzhia*. In addition, this war needs to be stopped before it widens to countries such as Georgia, Moldova, as well as to Bosnia/ Kosovo in the Balkans, among other possible regions.

I do not believe that Russian President Putin has played all of his cards—despite the fact that he clearly overestimated the Russian army’s ability to crush the valiant Ukrainian resistance—an overestimation in part due to the exaggerated belief that he could seize much of Ukraine as easily he had annexed Crimea in 2014.

At the same time, however, given the extent of U.S. assistance to Kiev in intelligence and advanced weapons systems, Moscow is now convinced that Russia is in a *de facto* war with the US despite the fact that Ukraine is not a NATO member. This means that Moscow will begin to recalculate its tactics and objectives on a more global scale.

On the one hand, the Head of the German armed forces, General Eberhard Zorn, has warned that Russia has not yet used most of its air force and naval potential. On the other hand, Putin has turned to North Korea in an apparent quest to obtain significant supplies of conventional weaponry to make

⁴ Hall Gardner, *Surviving the Millennium: American Global Strategy, the Collapse of the Soviet Empire and the Question of Peace* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994). See also, Hall Gardner, *American Global Strategy and the War on Terrorism* (London: Ashgate, 2005; revised and updated, 2007).

⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Free Press 1992)

⁶ Hall Gardner, *Dangerous Crossroads: Europe, Russia, and the Future of NATO* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997).

up for the degradation of Russian military capabilities in the face of significant Ukrainian territorial advances.

In addition to a quest to obtain arms and military assistance, President Putin's vow to expand relations with North Korea appears to represent a strategic gambit to divert American attention to the Far East while concurrently seeking to draw a reluctant Beijing into closer support for Moscow's strategic goals.

In effect, if South Korea and Japan, backed by the U.S., continue to augment their defense measures in response to North Korea's expanding conventional and nuclear weapons capabilities, China could, in turn, further augment its defenses to meet the Japanese "threat."

In other words, if Putin's gambit creates greater military tensions in the Far East by boosting Japanese and South Korean defense spending in response to Pyongyang—in accord with what I have called the "insecurity- security dialectic"⁷—Russian support for North Korea could then press China and Russia even closer together—assuming Beijing cannot persuade Putin to pursue an alternative strategy. Much as Washington played the "China Card" versus the Soviet Union, Moscow could play the "North Korean card" against the US and its allies.

The question remains: How will Moscow respond to the recent Ukrainian offensive if Kiev continues to regain territory and then tries to retake Crimea, Kherson (along with the [North Crimea Canal](#) that supplies water to Crimea), plus other supposedly "pro-Russian" areas near the Donbass region? Will Putin take the domestic risk of a national military mobilization? Or will he take other drastic measures in order to offset hardline criticism of his failure to rapidly defeat Kiev?

On the one hand, a solid defeat of Russia by Ukraine could result in a *coup d'état* in Moscow, given the fact that dozens of municipal deputies from Moscow and St. Petersburg have called on Putin to resign. But even if Putin is forced out, would such a coup be led by those who seek peace? Or by those who want to more efficiently and violently prosecute the war?

If the U.S., by strongly backing the Ukrainians, and Russia continue on the path of "brinkmanship," there is a real danger that any unforeseen incident could draw Russia and NATO into a more direct confrontation given the fact that new techniques of "hybrid warfare" have largely undermined the myth of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). Assuming hardliners increase their influence in Moscow, the Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief, Valery Zaluzhny, has warned that Russia could use tactical nuclear weapons—regardless of the dangerous consequences.

Toward Peace

Ironically, the war in Ukraine can serve as a catalyst for closer U.S. and European strategic cooperation that seeks to resolve burgeoning regional and global geopolitical, financial, socio-economic, immigration, domestic political, as well as ecological disputes and challenges.

Only engaged multilateral diplomacy can put an end to this conflict. The July 22, 2022 grain accord between Russia and Ukraine that was negotiated, ironically, by the authoritarian NATO member, Turkey, along with the UN, has indicated that even in the midst of war, that steps toward what I have called a multilateral "peace and sustainable development community" are possible and not utopian.

⁷ Hall Gardner, *IR Theory, Historical Analogy and Major Power War* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2019).

This important step, that helps reduce world grain shortages, obviously does not put an end to the conflict, but it does help clear the path. As soon as it becomes politically feasible, the U.S. and EU should press for a diplomatic settlement of the Russia-Ukraine war based upon the February 2022 “15-point peace program” that was previously negotiated in Turkey. In that accord, much as I argued in *Toward an Alternative Transatlantic Strategy*, Kiev agreed to accept the status of “neutrality” if granted security guarantees from major actors (such as UK, Germany and France among others).

Such a peace option can come about, however, only when the U.S., Ukraine and Russia jointly realize that they have hit a “mutually hurting stalemate” so that all sides see that a continuation of the conflict will not bring “victory” but an even greater disaster.

If Kiev’s present military offensive makes Moscow realize that Ukraine will be able to sustain its resistance to Russian efforts to occupy Ukrainian territory beyond areas taken in the Donbass and Crimea—then Moscow could eventually engage in negotiations to determine which side controls which territories and whether international peacekeepers can serve as a “buffer” between Ukrainian and Russian forces.

A unified U.S., European and Ukrainian offer of negotiation *from the present position of strength*, could encourage peace. As Moscow’s forces appear to be retrenching, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov recently stated that Moscow was not against “negotiations.” But such negotiations have not yet been pursued...

The Dangers Ahead

If the war in Ukraine continues unchecked, there is real danger that geopolitical disputes and social conflicts will widen and thereby overwhelm other vital social and ecological concerns.

Given the general rise of energy and agricultural prices, plus problems in supply chains, etc., it will prove relatively easy for Moscow to play on divisions inside Europe, most evidently with respect to Hungary, but not Hungary alone. Moscow can also play on social dissent from the far left and the far right in both the U.S. and Europe.

To prevent the further weakening, if not the further break-up of the European Union after Brexit, Washington needs to provide Europe with a greater diplomatic say in how it seeks to manage its relations with its Russian neighbor. This includes giving Europe decision-making power over how sanctions policy should be applied, for example, and how and when to lift those sanctions.

In addition to further weakening, if not further splintering, the European Union, the dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine war concurrently risk boosting the prospects of a tighter Russia-China Axis in which Russia will increasingly, and I think reluctantly, fall under the hegemony of a rising China.

Historical Russian fears of the rise of China can potentially be used diplomatically by the U.S. and Europeans to draw Moscow away from its embrace with China in order to end the war and then work with Russia toward the implementation of a new European Security Treaty. Europe simply cannot live forever next to a hostile Russia.

At the same time, Beijing, at least at present, does not appear to want to be dragged into too strongly supporting Russia in its conflict over Ukraine, given its concern, among other issues, that U.S. sanctions on Chinese firms that trade with Russia will hurt China’s economy significantly. In addition, multilateral

U.S., EU and UN efforts to reconcile China and Taiwan could at least try to reduce a Chinese temptation to obtain Russian backing for its efforts to unify with Taiwan.

There is, however, a real risk that Moscow will continue to strongly support North Korea while concurrently trying to tighten its defense ties with China, as previously argued. And if China continues to accept a military embrace with Russia due to fears of a more powerful Japan and in an effort to forcibly unify with Taiwan, then such a Eurasian Axis will, in turn, not only threaten both American and European global political-economic predominance, but it could also choke the life out of once thriving democracies—as *Homo Geopoliticus* continues to polarize and militarize into rival alliances and divided societies—at the risk of a major power—if not nuclear—war.