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I will rather go back to global considerations, avoiding any utopic construction, and without mistaking our desires for realities.

Anyway, I think there is no “world architecture”, and that dates from before the current crisis. I think we had a lot of illusions about this architecture. There is still no international community. It is a very nice term but quite premature. Maybe one day, the world will constitute a “community”, but this is not the case today. In this world there are multiple forces, divisions and tensions.

What looked like a world order before was laid down by winners, for instance the winners of 1815, after Napoleon, at the Wien congress that structured stability in Europe. A stability which worked thereafter for a century. There were also the winners of the world War II. They didn't negotiate with others, they negotiated very hard with each other. They imposed the League of Nations and even then the word League was very optimistic. Nations are much more a jungle than a society. Humanity was very optimistic to believe in such things. But I understand why we want to believe in it. After the World War II, we talked about United Nations. They were not united at all, and besides they immediately divided, in the Cold War, between East, West and Third world. This division lasted for several decades.

In 1991, at the end of the Soviet Union, therefore at the re-emergence of Russia, there was a completely optimistic and at the same time delusional view I think, in the West: the idea that “we” had won and that everything was settled, that our conceptions of the deregulated market economy, of our type of democracy, of our human rights beliefs, all that would impose itself everywhere. All that does makes neither a global organisation nor a global architecture. And the famous international organizations, with which we still live, were created for the most part in 1945, quite well indeed, mainly by the Americans and British during the war.

When we read at the beginning of the UN Charter: “We, the peoples of the United Nations ...”, it is beautiful but “we, the peoples” are 3 legal managers of 3 major powers. It's very well written but we mustn't have any illusions about what it means.

And at the end of the USSR, when Westerners could have behaved differently and said that we were entering a different world and that we were going to renegotiate everything with the other powers, the West showed instead power of hubris. We probably missed an opportunity at that time. We answered by the enlargement of NATO, the spread of democracy, first with speeches and then with bombs. But democracy is a complicated process. At that time, we could have reorganized the UN, the G7, the IMF, etc. We answered by “the market has all the answers.” We are at the climax of this period of thirty years, of which we see the end in front of our eyes, characterized by a blind and complete trust, not in the market economy which is normal because it is the only economic mechanism which works, but in the total absence of rules. Now we see the repeated crises which result from that, food, banking and finance crises, and in the coming years, an economic crisis.

We see the confines of our system. So we cannot idealize the situation of the past several years. On the other hand, we are not in the situation of 1945 or 1918. Meaning that there is no winner. Those who believed themselves to be winners, i.e. Westerners, are not really winners because one train has hidden another: in fact, other powers are emerging, or reemerging. As a result, Western people are in a situation they have never known before. They are not at all prepared, neither intellectually nor politically, to have to negotiate with a bunch of giant powers. The emerging powers, there are not 3 or 4 but 30 or 40. How are we going to do to negotiate with such a group?

The emerging powers have no comprehensive system in mind. There is no proposal from China, India or Russia. In any case these powers don't want a new Cold War but they want to increase their weight in the system with all the political and economic advantages they can get.



Westerners are discovering that they are losing, not their power and wealth which remain immense, but their monopoly. And the Western powers are not ready for that. They can react in a brutal and simplistic way as the Bush administration did. But that does not work. They can react in a completely ingenuous way, as the Europeans did, but this does not work much better in fact. So they are not ready, and they have no common projects in relation to this situation. We talk a lot about architecture, regulation, reform, but each one has its own architecture, each one has its own reform. There are no mechanisms for discussion, no mechanisms of authority.

There is no global system. Look at the example of the financial crisis: everyone is talking about a new Bretton Woods at the moment. But it is not necessarily transferable. At that time the issue was to organize a stable monetary system. But it's another matter to restore global financial and banking confidence. And even if we hold a meeting of this type, we cannot do it with 3 or 4, thus this should be a very large meeting. Besides, President Sarkozy revives the idea of an extended G-8, Jacques Delors had already talked about a G 20 several years before. Sarkozy speaks of a G 13. That is a minimum. This discussion is very complicated, it is multilateralism, which is a better method from a democratic and a political viewpoint but it is a necessarily long term method and in most cases it does not go anywhere. It is a kind of neverending nightmarish meeting of owners. It will take years to decide to repaint the stairs... I am warning against a veneer of easy and false solutions: "You only have to make a new Bretton Woods, you only have to hold the San Francisco conference, etc".

Yet we must do something. I think we should tackle the question, not of overall or global government (that is also an idea that must terrorize people, if there were a world government and if it were bad, I do not know what we would do, so it's not a good idea actually), but of mechanisms, rules, and processes. There are also negotiations by specialized field, such as Kyoto. It is well known that this depends largely on the U.S. government. If the next administration says that it joins the negotiation because it can no longer stay out, China and the others might not stay outside either. There are other subjects. Concerning the consequences of chemicals on health, there is in Europe a Reach directive. Maybe one day there will be a discussion on a global Reach directive. There are other examples. The financial question of course...

Secondly, I think that Europeans who claim to be champions of multilateralism (after doing exactly the opposite for centuries, but at last minds are changing), modern Europeans should implement a real overall plan which would bring about a uniform and global answer to the question of the Security Council, of the IMF, of the World Bank, of the G8, etc. The U.S. administration would have to take it into account. It could not avoid answering. The problem of regulators and remodelers is that, until now, they have never agreed among themselves. So the supporters of the status quo prevail and there are no results, we just go around in circles.

Those who have an idea on what could be the new multilateral systems of tomorrow, knowing of course that emerging countries will have a greater role in them, should come together, and make it a reality. This would provide a plan that should be discussed, that would be more difficult to ignore. Obviously, because I'm French and European, I expect more from European people. And Europeans need to get out from under their contradictions. They cannot spend their lives whining against unilateralism, the evil Americans ... and be unable to develop a real overall plan. It should not be done in panic and improvisation. This should be the work of 3, 4 or 5 successive EU presidencies. It should be said, that in 2010 at the latest, there will be a real European plan on the multilateralism of tomorrow. Then, we will discuss with Russians at Igor Ivanov, and with all our possible other partners. And then this plan will evolve and change. Finally it will exist. At the moment it does not exist.

That is not really unexpected after so many years of dysfunction.