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I would like to say something about that but also about the subjects discussed previously.

Generally, when someone says “Europe”, I’m not too sure what it means. In geopolitical, strategic terms, it is more of a statistical aggregate. In the reality of the world, what is called the crisis – which is not, for that matter, a crisis because we will not get out of the crisis by returning to the previous situation, it is more of an immense transformation – I think that it has accelerated the redistribution of power in the world.

The emerging countries have gained five to ten years, even if they are in competition with each other on the whole. We have seen confirmation of the fact that Westerners have lost their monopoly on power in the world, which is now shared up differently. We are not in a stable multipolar world. It is all unstable. Some countries are on the rise, some are on the wane, and others are trying to find their place. As for the emerging countries, there are not just the BRIC countries, there is a good fifty of them. So it is a very complex situation to analyse, always changing. There is no longer anyone with the power to impose their own solution, not even the US, even though it will remain the number one power for a very long time. Otherwise there are plenty of conflicts around the world which would have been sorted out a long time ago! Starting with the conflict in the Middle East.

And China, even if we have been astounded by the speed of its development since Deng Xiaoping, is not able to impose its own solutions either. But it can block. Nor do I believe in a G2. They are interdependent, economically linked. But, even if we combine the two countries, they cannot solve the majority of the problems which arise in the world. So it is kind of like a world without a master, except with rules, and we will have to see which rules.

I have long had quite a negative opinion of the European strategic question. I think that Europe has abdicated all strategic thinking. In certain respects that may be good, it avoids any risk of getting caught up in wars but, at the same time, it is now becoming a handicap.

Some European countries try to maintain strategic thinking. They are in the minority. As a body, Europe has no strategic, economic, ecological or technological thinking, and far less military thinking, which it has left to the US since 1949. The European-American Atlantic alliance has been so effective that it has rendered any defensive spirit in Europe unnecessary. That is one of the subjects dealt with in my report, which Professor Kaiser mentioned.

I would like to add something on the other aspects of the crisis and say that I am relatively optimistic about the situation in the eurozone, but not very optimistic about European politics in general. Not for the same reasons as the usual speakers, perhaps for the opposite reason.

I am relatively optimistic insofar as the crisis, the issue of over-indebtedness which had to be dealt with, is forcing us to create right now, albeit with difficulty, the much vaunted economic government of the eurozone. That is a good thing and will be very good as long as Germany does not try to single-handedly impose its policy on everyone – which would, for that matter, be dangerous for Germany – especially if it’s a policy which is focused exclusively on austerity and has not sufficiently integrated growth.

In Europe, the issue is that of future growth, including in technological terms, including in ecological terms. And this economic government will also have to dare to discuss the monetary issue, in other words, the exchange rate. Because if we stick with the current euro policy, fairly soon there will not be any industry left in Europe. Except in Germany! That is unacceptable. I am for economic government of the eurozone, with a broad agenda.

And an economic government which is not just a disciplinary body supervising Member States’ budgets. I am in no way disputing the goal of stabilising public finances, of course it has to be done, but at an intelligent speed which is socially and politically bearable. Which is not the case at the moment. Everyone is going to realise that. The fact that it will be

an election year in Germany might help it to become more realistic. So we can be quite cautiously optimistic compared to what we feared three or four years ago.

On the other hand, why do I say that I am not very optimistic about political matters? Because it seems to me that there is still the same division between the elite and the ordinary population. That has not changed at all since 2005. The elite have not learned anything from the referendums in France and the Netherlands. Former Chancellor Schröder has said several times that if there had been a referendum in Germany, the answer would have been no. If there had been referendums everywhere, the answer would have been no in eight countries out of ten. Probably not in Poland since that is a specific and interesting success story.

But the elite have not budged. Their only response is always the same: more Europe, more integration. It is a popular term in forums such as this, but not at all publically. More federalism? But that is a hugely ambiguous word. Is it the ideal federalism of the law books, a supranational entity which is bound to be better than the horrid nation states? Is it the federalism imposed by the Allies on Germany after the war to weaken Germany? Or is it the federalism talked about now to strengthen Europe? Is it what the French economic press said at the start of the Greek crisis, "We need to be more federal"? Which meant that Germany should automatically pay? Which, understandably, caused Germany to reply: "If you want to be federal, very well. But it is the Bundestag and the Karlsruhe court which will control everything". A good riposte. How can we use the same word to mean all that?

How can we base ourselves on a word which has so many contrary meanings?

I don't think it is by stirring up images of utopias, like the "United States of Europe", since the history of the United States is special. When the Americans created the United States, they gathered together Americans. Like when Bismarck gathered together the Germans. There will never be any comparison with Finland, Portugal, Greece, etc. I say that, but at the same time I know how sincerely attached the European elite is to this type of federalist response, because it does not actually have any other.

Meanwhile, the ordinary European population, in almost every country, has become "Eurosceptic", but not in the sense that the media uses it, in other words not "Euro-hostile". They are not against Europe; they think that what has been done is pretty good. They cannot really tell anymore if it is helping them, they were quite in favour of it, but they do not believe in it much more. So they have become sceptical in the proper sense of the word.

But I think that they can change back. But where I am very much in the minority is that I do not think we are going to make them change their minds by having the institutions blindly forge ahead. We will make them change back if they see a concrete demonstration of the effectiveness of the European system on a subject which affects them. It could be border management, as discussed by the Polish minister, and I agree with what he said. It could be the relationship with China.

If, for example, the European system is able to say, "Long live China, you have done extraordinary things. There are also things which do not please us but everyone looks out for their own interests, that is normal. And lastly there are things that we do not accept and we are going to oppose them. You threaten us with terminating contracts? You would be wrong to do so. We want to build an international system with proper rules, that is also in your interest".

So the treaty is important, of course, so that things work well, but it is not the only answer. De Gaulle – Adenauer, what was the treaty? No one remembers anymore. Giscard – Schmidt, what was the treaty? No one remembers anymore. Kohl – Mitterrand – Delors, what was the treaty? No one remembers anymore. Where I think I am in the minority is in saying to you that I think that relaunching a mechanism leading to a new treaty would be a major political error because in the countries where a referendum would be necessary, the answer would be no. Even in the countries where it would be passed by parliament, given the problems which the European countries are struggling with, it would be horribly difficult. And I think we have better things to do than waste our energy on that.

As for those who talk incessantly of a new advance, a new leap, in integration, of a federal leap, they would have to resist the temptation of the *fait accompli*. They must explain better, in advance, who ultimately would decide what in



their federal system? Who would have the last word, for the French, German, Italian, and one day Polish budgets? We have to be honest with the European people or we will never get them back.

My whole argument comes down to that: how can we bridge the gap, which is turning into a chasm, between the elite and the people. That would lead me, in the phase we are still going to be in for a few years, to say: "Let's do everything we can do in the framework of the existing treaties, by going as far as possible, and doing the best possible, without any changes to the treaties." And if we manage to give convincing answers on economic, international and other matters, the people of Europe will say: "Good, this European system is good for me." At that moment, we could come back to the institutional questions. But I do not think that it should be done now.