

DEBATE

Steven ERLANGER

I think given time - we have got about 17 minutes - I am just going to you, Elisabeth Guigou and then Jean-Louis and then Stuart. So let's take at least three questions.

Elisabeth GUIGOU

Merci beaucoup. Je partage le point de vue d'Enrico Letta, cela n'étonnera personne. Je pense vraiment que la seule façon de surmonter les divisions internes entre membres de l'Union européenne est de regarder le monde autour de nous.

Il y a la Chine et il y a les Etats-Unis, je n'y reviens pas. C'est certainement, comme le dit Volker, de nous aider à prendre des décisions. Le vote à la majorité est évidemment la meilleure solution. Mais ma question, qui s'adresse à Enrico et à Volker justement, est de dire : comment est-ce que l'on fait pour avoir des alliés à l'intérieur de l'Europe, de l'Union européenne, et des alliés à l'extérieur pour faire ce que nous souhaitons ?

Les alliés à l'intérieur, c'est qu'il faut arriver à trouver des façons d'unir avec notre vision les pays d'Europe centrale et orientale qui ont une autre histoire. D'ailleurs, quand l'essentiel est en jeu, cela marche, on l'a vu avec le Brexit. Et des alliés à l'extérieur face aux Etats-Unis et à la Chine : que doit-on faire avec l'Afrique ? Nous avons tellement de défis communs à relever ! Cela me paraît aveuglant : les migrations, la sécurité, le climat, l'emploi des jeunes, et des complémentarités. Comment l'un et l'autre, si vous permettez, peut-être Ana aussi, verriez-vous cela ? Le problème est comment faire, bien évidemment.

Steven ERLANGER

OK. Monsieur Gergorin ?

Jean-Louis GERGORIN

Sur cette discussion, je voudrais dire une « motion de synthèse », comme on aurait dit dans un congrès radical. Je me sens en accord avec les deux priorités indiquées par Enrico et avec la nécessité absolument vitale d'avoir une politique de sécurité qu'indiquait Volker.

Pour citer un autre responsable allemand que Védrine cite souvent, c'est la fameuse phrase de Sigmar Gabriel, il disait : « *L'Allemagne [mais peut-être l'Europe] est un peu un continent, une union de végétariens dans un monde de carnivores* ». Il faut quand même être un petit peu plus musclé.

On n'a pas parlé – et je trouve que c'est une insuffisance de notre débat – de la Russie. Je ne parle pas de vous, Artem, mais des autres participants. Or, la Russie est extrêmement importante. Son PNB n'est pas celui de la Chine, etc., mais les rapports de puissances, ce n'est pas simplement l'économie, c'est le militaire, il y a des liens profonds, historiques, culturels que nous avons avec la Russie. Faire, comme on dit, « l'impasse » sur la Russie est extrêmement dangereux.

Or, nous avons une opportunité – je pense que le Président Macron en est convaincu, il l'a saisie et proclamée – avec l'évolution de la politique ukrainienne, avec le contexte général, de sortir cette épine du pied, de trouver une solution sur l'Ukraine.



Ne croyez-vous pas qu'il y ait cette opportunité ? Sans se bercer d'illusions de séparer la Russie de la Chine – ce qui est absurde, en tout cas à vie humaine ce n'est pas raisonnable –, mais en revanche en retrouvant de la flexibilité dans le jeu avec une relation séparée et dialectique, si l'on peut dire, de l'Europe, avec la Chine comme avec la Russie et évidemment avec les Etats-Unis, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas là une carte russe à jouer ?

Steven ERLANFER

Merci.

Could you please give the microphone to Mr. Eizenstat?

Stuart EIZENSTAT

Stuart Eizenstat, US ambassador to the European Union in the Clinton administration. I would like to make a brief statement and then ask a question. I have plenty of scars from negotiating with the EU on sanctions and trade. At the same time, when we need a partner for major issues, whether it is sanctions against Russia over the Crimea, or it is getting around the bargaining table which led to the JCPOA, if we had done this with China, where we have mutual interests, we would not have the stand-off we do now. In my opinion, there is a bipartisan majority in Congress and certainly in the public for reviving a partnership that the President has said the European Union is created as an enemy of the US. The question is, is there enough patience in Europe to recognise that whether it is in two more years or six more years, that there is a body of opinion in the United States that wants to restore this partnership for the great issues? Or, will you feel that you have to go your own way and decouple, to use Kevin Rudd's opinion, from the United States, given the fact that we have the greatest trade relationship in the world as well?

Steven ERLANGER

OK, thanks. Before we get an answer, let us get Mr Moratinos, the former Spanish minister and then we will go back to the panel.

Miguel Angel MORATINOS

Very briefly, I fully agree with Hubert and Enrico, we need a European *puissance*. There is no other alternative; the rest is chaos and we do not like chaos. Second, the question is how we create this new European *puissance*. With the founding fathers, today elites can meet in Brussels, but maybe they will not be able to go to the Salon de l'Horloge or the Quai d'Orsay to sign the Monnet and Schuman declarations. Maybe we need the founders' sons, the Erasmus generations, the ones who have benefitted from what Europe has done. Third, I agree with Enrico that we need to create a new narrative and that is my question. What are you going to put in this narrative? Climate change? I would prefer the EDG to be larger and not only will we become ecologists, but there is more ecology in life. We need to have the economy and other things. There is foreign policy, as Volker said, and security. What is the new narrative for you?

My final point is, do all the 27 have to be there? No, we should create new Copenhagen criteria, different criteria that will be required to join this new narrative and the countries that fulfil them will be part of the club. If they do not, they can belong to another group of friends.

Steven ERLANGER

Another bit of blasphemy, it is wonderful. Let us go back to the panel but try to be brief because I would like to take one more round of questions. Would anyone like to deal with the Russia question, Ukraine, Macron; I do not know whether it is actually a rapprochement?

Hubert VEDRINE

La question qu'Elisabeth posait sur les alliances est cruciale. Je pense qu'il y a eu une erreur en Europe au moment de l'élargissement, et après. On a tenu un discours un peu, en deux mots, néocolonial, en imaginant qu'en entrant - je parle des pays d'Europe centrale et orientale - ils devenaient comme nous sur tous les aspects.



Cela a été une erreur colossale. Il fallait tenir compte de différences qui viennent de l'histoire. Je crois aujourd'hui très important de rebâtir avec eux, quelques-uns d'entre eux, un discours adapté.

Je demande le témoignage de Jean-Claude (Trichet ?) ,sur le côté gauche de la salle. Avec Thatcher, on a fait un deal : « *Tu n'entres pas, mais tu ne nous empêches pas d'avancer.* » Je ne sais pas si le deal a été fait d'une façon aussi nette mais en fait, cela revient au même. Je pense que sur quelques sujets, cela doit être fait comme cela. Ils peuvent devenir potentiels alliés de cette dynamique.

Sur les alliés extérieurs, je suis d'accord avec toi sur l'Afrique, c'est une des raisons d'être de cette conférence. Je pense que là, en tant qu'Européens, on hérite d'une décennie d'erreurs. Je suis plutôt optimiste sur la prochaine commission Josep Borrell, qui a l'Afrique dans le cœur, il sait ce que c'est et va faire, j'en suis sûr, un très bon travail sur ce sujet.

Quant à la Russie, la question de Monsieur Gergorin est essentielle. Je suis parmi ceux qui voient un petit pas en avant dans ce qui s'est passé il y a quelques jours. L'accord de Minsk a été fait et parce que la France et l'Allemagne ont joué un rôle moteur. L'Europe doit encore jouer encore un rôle.

Enrico LETTA

My final point about this is I am very pessimistic. I just have to say very clearly that the next November 2020 elections will be decisive for Europe and for the transatlantic relationship. I cannot imagine another four years of Trump leaving the European Union and the US thinking that they would have a rendezvous in 2024. I think it would be complicated and a new China-Europe deal would be the consequence of a Trump re-election. This is why I think it is so crucial to have a different result next November.

Ana PALACIO

Just a footnote to what Enrico is saying, I think that there is still a critical mass in Europe that would abide by Madeleine Albright's idea of the indispensable nation. We believe that the United States is crucial for us, the system of international institutions, for the system of the rule of law. The US is the architect of all this. However, I would add another pessimistic point of view to that of Enrico. I think that the United States has changed. We may have a bipartisan agreement here, but the United States is no longer there, which is why Trump got elected. The last note of concern from a European voice is that this change started before Trump was elected. I think there has been a change in the engagement, the idea that was mentioned of engaging and shaping and just hedging. Obama's foreign policy was already a precursor of what we are seeing in foreign policy. It would be better in formal terms, in terms maybe, if you allow me, of just a well-behaved President who does not insult the European allies. Being an ally of yours has never been easy and it started to be extremely difficult under the Obama administration and frankly today it is impossible. And unless there is change...

Steven ERLANGER

However, Ana, it has always been fun.

Ana PALACIO

Depending on where you were sitting.

Volker PERTHES

I guess, for many of us it was more difficult under the George W. Bush Presidency, than under the Obama Presidency because the Iraq war not only was a major transatlantic issue, it was also an issue that threatened to split up the EU itself.

I would like to combine the answer to Stuart, Jean-Louis and Elisabeth. We certainly do not want to decouple, but there is an enormous fear that we are being decoupled. It is not a question of patience and whether we are patient enough to



wait for another year or another five. It is whether in another five years, too much would have changed in the rest of the world to simply bring things back to where they were eight or ten years ago. That will not happen. Always trying to be a positive dialectician here, I think we have to be a little bit thankful to President Trump that he woke us up here in Europe to get our act together. If under the impact of the Trump Presidency, we manage to get security and defence right in Europe, we will have a better starting position for a more symmetric and better partnership with a new President in the US. That is what I am looking forward to, but that is not a question of patience, I think we should be a little bit more impatient with ourselves and probably also with our allies.

As to the carnivores and the vegetarians, I think the vegetarians that survive best are those with teeth. It is not about trying to do everything the Americans have been doing in the alliance before. It is not about a European strategic deterrent, but my priority would be about having a credible intervention capability for Europe in its own geographic environment. We can go on saying that we are for peaceful solutions and we are, and that there is no military solution in Syria, which we had been saying for eight years until there was one, though not one that we wanted. We can continue to say that, but it would be much more credible if we had the capability to also force another solution. Then we can do much more credible work for peaceful solutions.

Elisabeth, I think your question needs an answer. How can we also win back allies in Europe? Let me give one example where I think that the current French President, trying to do the right thing, still did not jump far enough. During the summit in spring this year between the Chinese and French Presidents, Macron did a big and good thing by also getting Juncker and Merkel to attend. I think he should also at least have tried to get one of the Visegrad four to be there as well. That would have made allies inside Europe for something where we know we are not totally on the same page but easily could be. I think that is a way to say: 'If we do not want the 16 out of the 16 plus one to tell us, the Germans and the French, if you are having your own bilateral relations with China, why should we not?' So let us integrate them when we address the Chinese President at the highest level.

Steven ERLANGER

Thank you, Volker. I am afraid we are out of time. My apologies to those who wanted to ask a question; I tried to give time for questions, but it is never enough. We are running late, and I am under strict instructions to just ask you to thank the panel and thank you as well.