
The CAFP's vision

The main particularity of any country, of any region of the world, of any civilization as a whole, slowly sinking into decline, is that it is completely oblivious to reality. In the best-case scenario, it means getting lost into navel-gazing; in the worst-case scenario, this can lead to indulge in a dangerous xenophobia, in the rejection of others in the name of race, religion or culture. And since the end of the Cold War at least, it is clear that Europe is losing its former influence at the international level.

Competition dominates international affairs. The Cold War had at least one advantage: to freeze some conflicts through its rigid bipolar rule of the world. Nowadays, in more ways than one, we are back to *Realpolitik*: states are competing with one another for resources and influence, in order to protect their own national interests. And most of the time, it is a zero-sum game. When one state wins, it means that others are losing, at least some of them. Of course, nowadays, the world is a complex place that cannot be reduced to violent competition alone. But globalization does not mean that rivalries between States are going to disappear anytime soon, and that the common interests of the international community will lead the world to perpetual peace. This point of view is simply naïve. There was already a pre-1914 “globalization” and it did not stop the First World War, which was one of the bloodiest massacres of modern History.

Being aware of such facts already means being on the path towards true understanding of contemporary foreign affairs. But it is not enough. It is necessary to ask this question: where do we stand, as Europeans, in this post-Cold war world?

In short, it is appalling.

And as Europeans, we have no excuse; we were not recently decolonized like a major part of African and Asian countries; on the contrary, we dominated the world for centuries, acceding to foreign wealth, influencing the world politically, intellectually, and economically. And yet...

The Yugoslavian upheavals during the 1990s have proved that Europe is unable to stop massacres and political chaos at its doorstep.



The Iraq War in 2003 has shown that Europeans were easily manipulated, and unable to counter the desires of another great power. Even if in this case, the latter made the choice of destabilizing a strategic part of the world for European interests and security.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the proof that there is no such thing as a “European” great power yet. Indeed, in this conflict that might ignite the situation in the Middle East as well as in our societies, only the United States is able to have an impact as the main Western mediator. Despite the fact that Europe has had far more Historical links with the Jewish world and the Arab nations than the Americans.

The rise of China, India and other countries like South Korea or Brazil, confirms that the world is moving on without us.

As for the economic situation of the European Union in this early 21st century, it is deplorable. The growth rates have been desperately weak for the last twenty years. Countries are affected by mass unemployment, high levels of deficit and debts that reduce the room for manoeuvre, but above all, they endanger the Monetary Union and increase the risks of bankruptcy.

Hence it is reasonable to talk about the decadence of the European countries here.

Who is to blame? Not the US, nor Russia, or any other country. Our answer is very simple: the national elites from the “baby-boom” time. They have been the ones in power, from the 1970s to this day. They have been the ones who have been unable to make of this Union a true European power, who have been unable to win the peoples’ support for this great project. Because of their desire to protect their own petty interests, sometimes using “patriotism” as a weak excuse, they have been faint-hearted in building the European Union. They have been the ones being satisfied with dealing with day-to-day matters only, rather than conducting long-term European policies with a strategic vision, in order to offer a common destiny to countries that are so close historically.

Becoming a great power in the 21st century, in a Union to be defined, is the way to go to save Europe. Seeking power is related to a precise objective, it is not a goal by itself: it means ensuring our own survival, guaranteeing our independence and our security in reaction to threats and to external influences. The promotion of a true European power is related to a “defensive” approach: it is all about protecting a way of life, and our common values. In its

History, Europe has framed ideals that have to be protected. The other objective is “offensive”: the 21st century will be a time of great geopolitical rivalries; new great powers will emerge, others will weaken, breakdown and fall. In the decades to come, there will be winners and losers. The old European elites, who have been asleep during the Glorious Thirty and the American protection during the Cold War, have prepared us for a future during which Europe would be nothing more than a big museum, a playground and a brothel for non-European tourists. The European power that we wish to see emerge will put us on the winners’ side, not the losers’.

The CAFP is a pro-European, realist and generational think tank.

Being pro-European does not mean to be euro-complacent. Among the “baby-boomers” who govern(ed) us, many of them are obsessed with Europe and refer to Europe any chance they have. De Gaulle rightly criticized them. The fight is not between Eurosceptics and pro-EU analysts/politicians. Such an approach is a fool’s game: some politicians and thinkers, considered pro-Europe and wrongly so, were given the moral high ground, whereas they have been, in many ways, the true destroyers of a useful and strong Union on the international stage. The real opposition is between those who support a European power and the others who fold upon their ethnicity, their culture, their country and even their limited regional territory. Hence it is in no way essential to know if such European power should be “federal” or “confederal”: the most important is that a real European power will come about in this century! The CAFP’s goal is to promote ideas helping such result to happen.

The CAFP is following the **realist approach in international affairs**. It means we look at the world the way it is, not the way we wish it to be. We live in a world where there is a fierce international competition, and where there are many risks that will need to be tackled during this century. We, as Europeans, have to acknowledge this situation, defend ourselves against such dangers and do everything possible to win in this international competition. Hence CAFP will not limit its analysis to European affairs. In order to become a real European power, we need to understand the world.

Last but not least, we are a **generational** think tank. CAFP does not reject anybody. To be young and eager to help Europe become a great power is a state of mind before anything else. But this think tank has been created by those, and thought for those, who pay the consequences of bad political, economic and diplomatic decisions made by our elders who



lacked political vision and who were driven only by their petty ambitions. This new generation, born in the mid-70s and after, is on the losing side of History without having a say about it, because of the choices of others, often still in power in the different European capitals. Nowadays, these baby-boomer elites who enjoyed the benefits of their dominant position in politics, economy and analysis are not taking responsibility for their bad choices. They only fall into conservatism and pessimism. According to them, a European power is a fantasy. For the CAFP, European power is an ideal to be defended, as it is the only way to avoid Europe becoming nothing more than a big museum.

Many European countries have suffered from the consequences of the 2008 crisis. Self-doubts, xenophobic fears and the incapacity to have positive common objectives threaten not only the European Union, but also peace and prosperity in each of the European nations. For all of us as European citizens, there are only two choices: we can accept our Historical decline in a mix of conspiracy theories and bitterness. It can only lead to anti-Americanism, a stupid way to understand the world, and hatred against ethnic/religious minorities, which can only lead to tensions and even civil wars. The second choice is to defend our political ideals and keep an intellectual standpoint stating that we are not done yet, that we can rise again as Europeans following values linked to self-confidence, humanism, and the desire to have a positive impact on this world. CAFP is defending the latter position.

The CAFP Team