The EU is bound to revisit its foreign policy in order to integrate major political trends that are here to stay. This does not mean, however, that we should seek confrontation or containment (Part I). The EU also needs to communicate better about its values and achievements and stop whipping itself about international failures it is not responsible for, or at least, not the only one responsible for (Part II). Still, to become a global and strategic actor, the EU will have to do its own cultural revolution. A few suggestions are proposed in that sense (Part III).

I. Major preoccupying trends

1/ Not many "Atlantists" left in the US
Talk to NGOs, staffers, US companies. "There are not many "Atlantists" left in the US" and this has nothing to do with President Trump. This means more tensions in the years to come on 5 topics: trade (aggravated by the spill over effect of the confrontation with China), climate change, security (proliferation), energy and extra territorial sanctions. That will not change, whatever the next President, impeachment or not;

2/ The EU will not catch up on key technologies before years if not decades
Dominance of China and the US on key technologies or raw material will not evaporate anytime soon;

3/ Disinformation gangrening our democratic values will only increase
Russia legitimacy will continue to rest on political warfare and disinformation (a compensation for economic and security structural weaknesses);

4/ EU influence in our neighbourhood (East and South) will be increasingly challenged
Growing presence of China and Russia in the Balkans, in Africa, in the Middle East have a cost on regional stability and on migration of course

5/ Does it mean we should side with the US and contain or confront others?
Some still think we have to choose sides. And that the natural side is the US. I will tend to disagree. Despite historical background with the US, despite shared historical values, the "new normal" is that we do not have to choose sides. Neither the US, nor China or Russia need to be described as friends or foes. We have entered a new time where "flexibility, anticipation and reactivity" are the key words. Flexibility of our alliances according to the values and the interests we share with the US, but also with Russia and China on a specific issue where we have to defend our strategic interests (climate, proliferation, trade sanctions, competition, digital). This will be a sea change to our current approach.
II. Communicating better about EU achievements

We need to stop EU self-bashing. There are values and international outcomes we should be proud of:

Our values first: Christian, Enlightenment, human right values. There are at the heart of our principles of multilateralism. The UN is not just a tall building with too many floors as John Bolton said. It is our legal and political chart.

Achievements: we have to stop self-whipping. EU has played a decisive role of coherence and unity on many strategic issues: climate change, nuclear deal with Iran, more generally on proliferation issues just to quote a few. It has deployed 16 crisis management missions for 4000 soldiers and civilian officers in the world. It has achieved remarkable success on defence cooperation, bringing EU MS to unparalleled achievements. It has a huge leverage on trade matters (Trump noticed it last summer, when President Juncker went to Washington D.C, he will notice it again in the coming months).

We have developed strong alert systems on cyber, on disinformation, new regulations on investment screening. Of course, on major international files, we could have done better, be it Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Sudan, Mali, or migration. But frankly, who has done better, who among EU MS can claim real success alone on these files faced with severe confrontation between Russia and the US? Who else has spent the energy and the funding to try new options, new scenarios like the EU did on migration. No one. If there is a failure of EU Foreign Policy, it has been a European failure if not a global failure.

III. A cultural revolution to become a global strategic actor: possible suggestions

It is one thing to say that the EU cannot be blamed for everything, it is another thing to say that the current posture is the right one. Key changes need to take place for the EU to become a global and strategic actor.

To do that, several steps are required. We need:

1/ A more serious understanding of the culture of our strategic partners (in particular China) in order to better apprehend their strengths and weaknesses;

2/ Developing stronger strategic alliances with countries with whom we have much in common: Japan, Australia, South Korea, Canada, in particular on connectivity and cyber which will be the corner stones of European strategic autonomy;

3/ Breaking institutional silos, not only financial silos (see next MFF) but also more structural ones that exist in the working methods of the Commission, the Council and the EEAS. To do that, we need working across institutions (see ECFR proposals in that sense);
Becoming more assertive in the defence of our interests and priorities.

What does it mean becoming more assertive in the defence of interests and priorities?

It means:

a/ **Keeping ahead on issues where we are strong or becoming stronger** : on defence on PESCO/CARD/EDF, on energy/climate (with the new Commission Green Deal), on space (with Copernicus, Galileo but also with the SATCEN). That will only be possible if we reinforce EU own Intelligence gathering and monitoring;

b/ **Caching up and making hard choices on issues where we are lagging behind** : EU becoming a Digital power (with the Global Tech Panel) and now local tech panels, EU taking measures to contain extra territorial effects of sanctions (INSTEX) or taking stronger measures to screen foreign investments (from mere coordination to compulsory mechanism);

c/ **Projecting abroad, through EU Delegations/Embassies, not only our values but also our interests**. European ambassadors need to become, as President Macron said, diplomatic entrepreneurs. Cooperation with third countries has to be a two way street (promoting the Euro’s full role on the international scene, developing Tech panels with local companies, increasing the role of the EIB/EBRD).

*In conclusion*, some will claim that none of this will be possible because EU MS have profound divergences among them and their interests are far from being aligned, to the contrary (Visigrad Group). This is true. Dedicated meetings on political and strategic issues at PSC and Council level + further use of majority vote for CFSP matters may help. But this will not be enough. The EU needs to be more daring on the Foreign Affairs front. This is what happened with the Iran file, with the climate file with the proliferation file on NPT. The EU is not the mirror of EU MS. It is more than that. It has to become a responsible international actor.

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**P.-S.**

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