

About the Society
Statement of Principles

Support the Henry Jackson Society

Our work is only possible through the generosity of private philanthropy. Find out how you can support our mission and can contribute to our work.

Donate to HJS

Become a Member

HJS Mailing List

Join the HJS mailing list and keep up to date.

Subscribe now!

MEMBERS' LOG IN

Gold and Silver Members of the Henry Jackson Society can log in here to access exclusive members-only content.

Username
Password
Remember Me
Log In

EVENTS

Past events

EDITORIAL

Tweet 0 Share 0

August 31, 2009

Two rival visions of Europe

by Henry Jackson Society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The drive toward a centralised, federal Europe must be resisted by the presentation of an alternative vision of European unity – one that respects national sovereignty and does not exclude a large part of the continent.

2. Champions of a broader, more inclusive, more outward looking EU must highlight the ethical failings resulting from the EU's obsession with consensus and disregard for national sovereignty, for example over Georgia, Macedonia and Croatia.

3. Champions of such an EU must make the case for Turkish membership of the EU, something that would halt the drive toward a centralised federal Europe while strengthening our position vis-a-vis Russia, Iran and the Middle East.

4. The myth that national sovereignty and European unity are at loggerheads with each other needs to be challenged: the two are complementary, not contradictory.

The likelihood that Ireland will vote in favour of the Lisbon Treaty in its referendum this October brings a federal Europe one step closer. In the probable event that the Conservative Party wins the next general election in Britain, it will then be in a quandary over how to respond to this reality. Now, more than ever, is the time to evaluate – not whether we are for or against the EU, but what kind of EU it is that we want. And the sad truth is that a more centralised EU is likely to result in weaker, not stronger European intervention in world affairs.

The Lisbon Treaty will create the posts of President of the European Council and High Representative for Foreign Affairs, in theory promising a more unified voice for EU foreign policy. Yet there are reasons to be skeptical about whether 'unified' means the same as 'good'. Despite the notorious claim by Luxembourg's Jacques Poos following the outbreak of the war in the former Yugoslavia in 1991, that 'the hour of Europe has dawned', the EC/EU proved itself wholly ineffective in bringing an end to the fighting, which dragged on for another four years. The war was finally ended, not by the European states getting their act together – which never happened – but by the US under the Clinton Administration reluctantly assuming leadership of Western intervention in the crisis, and imposing a more robust policy than the Europeans were ready to adopt on their own initiative. The negotiation of a peace settlement for the Bosnian war in Dayton, Ohio, by US diplomats in November 1995 was a US triumph that put the Europeans to shame.

The European failure over Bosnia in the first half of the 1990s cannot be put down solely to poor leadership, although this was clearly a major factor. There are, rather, structural factors why the EU, as a body, is unlikely ever to play as robust a role in global affairs as the US. With 27 members favouring different policies, EU policy inevitably must essentially be that of the lowest common denominator. Even though 22 out of 27 EU members have recognised the independence of Kosovo, including all the larger and West European members except Spain, the fact that five members have not done so has prevented the adoption of a common EU policy on Kosovo's independence. Yet even a single member, if it is sufficiently stubborn, can impose its will on the whole of the rest of the Union, if no other member feels particularly strongly enough to oppose it. Thus, the accession of Croatia and Macedonia to the EU is being held up by Slovenia and Greece respectively. Slovenia would like to annex part of Croatia's sea territory while Greece would like to force Macedonia to change its name, and Slovenia and Greece are obstructing the EU accession of their victims until their demands are met. Even though this amounts to outright blackmail and abuse of the accession process, there appears to be no way in which the EU can bypass them given the absence of will to do so on the part of other members. Thus, EU expansion is held up by a couple of troublemakers. It is very difficult to pull EU foreign

TOPICS

- 9/11
Arab Spring
Boko Haram
Defence
Democracy & Development
Economy
Energy Security
Environment
European Union
Extremism
Far-Right
Human Rights
ISIS
Islamism
Israel/Palestine
Media
Middle East
Religious Fundamentalism
Terrorism & Security
Trans-Atlantic Relations
War in Afghanistan
War in Iraq
Women's Rights

REGIONS

- Africa
Algeria
Libya
Morocco
Niger
Nigeria
Somalia
South Africa
Sudan
Tunisia
Zimbabwe
Asia
Burma
China
India
Japan
North Korea
Pakistan
Taiwan
Europe
France
Germany
Northern Ireland
Poland
Portugal
Russia
Scotland
Spain
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom
Middle East
Egypt
Iran
Iraq
Israel
Jordan
Lebanon
Palestine
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Syria
Turkey
Yemen
North America
Canada
Mexico
United States

policy forward decisively, but very easy to drag on it until it slows to a snail's pace.

Far from a more unified EU resulting in more decisive European intervention globally, such an EU will increasingly tie the hands of those states that do wish to act, forcing them into line alongside more dovish, do-nothing members. Though Britain's response to the Russian assault on Georgia last year was among the more forthright, Britain was ultimately forced to remain in step with the French and Germans, who quickly made it clear that they would not allow Russia's misdeeds to get in the way of their burgeoning cooperation with Moscow. For the problem with the EU is not that it has too many members, but the way in which some of its members behave. The EU has grown up around its Franco-German core, yet France perennially chafes against Anglo-Saxon leadership of the Western alliance, while Germany is intent on developing its partnership with Russia. The dominance of the Franco-German axis within the EU therefore militates against the adoption of forward and progressive foreign policies by the Union as a whole; ones that would strengthen the Western alliance while promoting democracy and human rights globally.

At issue are two rival visions of what the EU should look like. Proponents of a federal Europe, or of extreme vertical integration, favour increasing centralisation and homogenisation of an inward-looking, geographically limited Europe. They will not sacrifice this centralisation for the sake of horizontal expansion beyond a certain point. They seek to exclude Turkey from the EU, in part because because the inclusion of a not very rich or sophisticated country of over 70 million would render their vision of a homogenous, federal Europe unachievable. With a geographically restricted Europe increasingly centralised, its separation from the rest of the world sharply increases. European countries excluded from EU expansion – such as Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and perhaps Moldova – would form a buffer zone vis-a-vis Russia, which would be a natural partner – Fortress Russia in collaboration with Fortress Europe. An EU built on this model would itself increasingly serve as a buffer zone between Russia and the US, restraining US intervention worldwide.

The alternative vision is of an EU that looks outwards instead of inward. Such an EU would eschew excessive centralisation in favour of expansion to take in Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, and ultimately perhaps Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan as well. Indeed, there are no natural limits to its possible expansion, something that might one day stretch to include countries such as Cape Verde, Israel and Morocco. Rather than being a Fortress Europe, such an EU would be accessible to new members, consequently a catalyst to democratisation in all Europe's surrounding areas. Rather than collaborating with an authoritarian Russia, a Europe built on this model would seek ultimately to incorporate Russia within the democratic world. The incorporation of more East European countries and Turkey would strengthen the EU's Atlanticist element and dilute the domination of the Franco-German core. Such an EU would promote the democratisation of the world, rather than hinder it, as the first version of Europe would.

The second vision of Europe is more in keeping with the sentiments of the political classes and publics of the more Euroskeptical countries, such as the UK, which are uncomfortable with the excessive transfer of power from their own parliaments to Brussels, as well as with those of former Communist bloc countries that are deeply unhappy with the readiness of the Western alliance to appease Russia, an unhappiness indicated by the recent [open letter](#) to the Obama Administration on the part of a stellar panel of Eastern and Central European statesmen. It is these countries to which Britain should be looking for allies within the EU, as counterweights to the more pro-federalist and pro-Moscow states of Western Europe.

But resisting the drive toward a federal European super-state is not simply a matter of seeking allies; it is also a matter of putting forward winning principles. If it wants to resist this drive, Britain can and should highlight each and every one of the EU's ethical failings – over Croatia, Macedonia, Georgia and so forth - which stem from the politics of the lowest common denominator and the obsession with consensus and not rocking the boat. In each of these cases the principle of national sovereignty is under attack, for the EU's politicians and bureaucrats have repeatedly made clear that the national sovereignty of Croatia, Macedonia, Georgia and in principle any state is expendable in the interests of internal EU harmony and pacific foreign relations.

The British government must also point out the national and geostrategic importance of including Turkey within the EU. Turkish EU membership would halt the drive toward the federal Europe so out of tune with the British public's aspirations. It would also lock this strategically crucial and economically and culturally vibrant state within the Euro-Atlantic democratic framework, halting its slide toward alignment with the hostile states of Iran and Russia. Rather than keeping Turkey out of the club and watching as it backslides on its democratic reforms and pro-Western orientation, the inclusion of Turkey would secure one

South America

Argentina

Cuba

of the world's most important countries for the democratic bloc, strengthening our position in Iraq and vis-a-vis Iran and the Arab world. British public opinion has traditionally been receptive to Turkey's EU membership, and it would be a terrible defeat for British policy if we were to allow this receptivity to be eroded by ill-informed fears about greater immigration and Islam.

For too long, the Euro-federalists have been allowed to get away with pretending that they are the only true 'pro-Europeans'. Yet any vision of Europe that permanently excludes a large part of the continent's population cannot rightfully be considered 'pro-European'. It is the supporters of a broader, more inclusive, more outward-looking Europe – and the supporters of national sovereignty within the EU – that are the true pro-Europeans. True European unity and national sovereignty are complementary, not contradictory. Only by making this point, loudly and consistently, will we achieve the Europe that we want.

*Marko Attila Hoare is European Neighbourhood Section Director for the Henry Jackson Society*



[Copyright & Reproduction](#) [Privacy policy](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Contact Us](#)

The Henry Jackson Society is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company number 07465741 and a charity registered in England and Wales under registered charity number 1140489.

© 2014 The Henry Jackson Society. All rights reserved.

designed by [nabumedia](#)