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THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

– A CRITICAL APPROACH

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It's an honor and a pleasure to be here again, in this city of Warsaw, the capital city of a people that, due to Geography but also to History, due to temper and will, has been on the front line, on the *limes* of the West. A martyr city and a city of martyrs, but also of resistance fighters and victors. And, I believe, an example for Europe – for a “New Europe”, our subject today.

In an essay published in 2019, *Born to Fail*, Professor John Mearsheimer discussed the rapid rise and fall of the so-called liberal international order. This order, now in crisis, emerged at the end of the Cold War, after the fall and fragmentation of the Soviet Union, and of the Soviet ideological Empire – an empire raised by Stalin at the end of the Second World War, with the benevolent complicity of the Western Allies.

The Baltic States, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and part of Germany were then forcibly integrated by the occupying troops (with the complicity of local communists) in the Communist Soviet Empire. Thus began a period of captivity that would only end more than 40 years later, with the implosion of the Soviet Union, a collateral result of Mikhail Gorbachev's liberalization. More than liberalizing, Gorbachev removed *Fear* out of the political equation, from the center to the periphery of the Soviet Union.

Fear was the key element in communist societies – as Zamyatin and Orwell pointed out in their dystopic novels *We* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*. But Poland, like Hungary, perhaps because of their experience in modern History as “captive nations”, were agents, symbols, and protagonists of a resistance that, from the fifties to the eighties of the 20th Century, helped to shake up the communist autocracy.

In the eighties, a vast coalition of political powers, like Reagan's America and Thatcher's UK, were determined to fight-back the Soviet Union. But there were also other forces, spiritual forces – above all, the force of the Faith, a Pope, a Saint in St Peter's Chair in Rome, Saint John Paul the Second, the head of the Roman Catholic Church. It was the coalition of these spiritual and material forces that defeated the Evil Empire of Communism.

A key element for the fall of communist tyranny was the resistance inside communist controlled countries, which began in the 1950s – in June 1953, with the East German uprising, and in October 1956, with the Budapest uprising, so brutally repressed. And in the summer of 1980, the revolt of Polish workers against the government due to the economic situation – a government that, ironically, ruled in the name of the workers. It started in Gdansk Shipyards, with the Solidarity trade union initiating a civil resistance movement that felt the taste of the Communist State repression, that culminated in December 1981 with the martial law of general Jaruzelski.

The fact that, by the time, in the West, there were people like John Paul II and Ronald Reagan – people who were in convergence for the defense of the Christian values and weren't afraid of neither the Soviets nor the liberal progressive minds – caused Moscow to ease up slightly on the repression. Far from Stalin's approach, or Khrushchev's and the Hungarian communists' brutal style in Budapest, in 1956.

The resistance of the Poles went through. Later, Gorbachev came along with his “Sinatra doctrine”, stating that Moscow would no longer send troops to help the communist regimes of the Warsaw Pact repressing local intellectual and popular dissidence; and in 1989 Hungary opened its borders, allowing East-Germans to pass through to West-Germany.

And so the collapse began, the implosion of the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union itself, as the members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, having started to be able to leave the Union, didn't want to stay.

Fear and repression were the cement that kept together the Soviet Empire. Without these instruments – the political monopoly of the Communist Party and the fear of State Security – the Soviet Union could not survive.

When, with the fall of Communism, the international order collapsed, the victors, misleading the reasons for their success, tried to impose a new world order, which they called the Liberal International Order.

As other winners have done in past conflicts and victories, they tried to globalize their political values and institutions, maybe forgetting the part that History, Culture and Tradition play in the making of political values and institutions; and that the Anglo-American political tradition had basic cultural differences, even from the continental European tradition. Above all, with their enthusiasm for Globalism, economic and political globalism, they forgot the importance of nations, identities, borders.

The Clinton Administration was inspired by this globalism. But let me make a point on the difference between globalism and globalization: globalization is an economic “fact of life”, due to technological progress in communications, physical transportation of goods, easier circulation of people, use of market opportunities for the improvement of the economies; it is not a faith or an ideology. Globalism, on the contrary, is an ideology – a very old one – that aspires to unite Humanity, removing borders, cultures, states, identities, nations.

In the after Cold-War, in the U. S., the Democratic Administrations of Bill Clinton and Barak Obama, and the neo-conservatives in George W. Bush Administration (under the shock of Eleven-Nine) cultivated this belief in Globalism, both as an ideal and as a useful instrument of U. S. hegemony. Intellectuals developed adequate theories to serve this belief, like the famous “End of History”, a neo-Hegelian profession of Faith in markets and liberal democracy, by Francis Fukuyama.

The International Liberal Order brought along the export of liberal democracy to areas like Sub Saharan Africa, where, in the absence of a consolidated nation, tribal ethnic loyalties are still the dividing line of political parties. On the other hand, the global market, even though it has improved living conditions in China and Mexico, has brought deindustrialization to areas of the United States and Western Europe, as multinational industrial companies, looking for low salaries, left to other latitudes. This helps to explain the rise of populist or popular movements and parties in Euro-America.

Covid 19, with its restrictions on movements of people and goods, had a serious impact on globalization and globalism; in February 2022, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia destroyed the optimistic idea in the West that war was only possible in the poor peripheries of the civilized world.

The liberation of Eastern Europe from Communist repressive systems was perhaps the greatest benefit of the end of the Soviet Union. But unlike what happened with Nazism in Germany and collaborationists with Nazi occupation in Europe during the war, former communist leaders and their accomplices were neither punished nor morally marginalized.

And an interesting feature uncovered by the political evolution of the region was that societies previously submitted to communist regime, had not experienced the so-called progressist and libertarian evolution of their Western homologues, particularly after the *sixties*, from California to Paris May 68.

So, 30 years ago, at the time of their liberation, the liberated people were more conservative and patriotic than their homologues in the West. They kept religion and family values (in a police state you trust the Church and the family); and, being subject to a foreign power – Russian-Soviet domination –, they became more committed to national independence and more sensitive to foreign impositions. So, when they entered the European Union and Brussel’s political and bureaucratic elites begun to impose their Agenda of political correction, like Wokism and gender ideology, they were faced with significative resistance;

During their long captivity, throughout the Cold War, the peoples of MittelEuropa looked to Western Europe as a Promised Land, the land of Freedom, Hope and Progress. Now this has changed. Today Western Europe, like the US and Canada, is a Land where popular classic writers like Roald Dahl and Agatha Christie are subject to a ridiculous rewriting by gangs of psychotic consultants like “Inclusive Minds”; a land where Disney movies and characters are transmuted in woke puppets; and not even James Bond, the conservative spy hero, escaped becoming a leftist hero fighting against ultra-right conspiracies. And Brussels wants to force all EU member states to endorse this crazy Orwellian Agenda, just as former Imperialists used to do with their captive nations.

Having suffered for nearly half a century the brutality of a foreign power, old nations like Poland and Hungary that have been for the most part of their modern history subject to foreign domination – from Berlin, Moscow, Viena – were not happy to sacrifice again their identity and independence, regained in pain and struggle, to the nice smiling legislators and bureaucrats from Brussels.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the founders of Modern Political Philosophy and State Science – Niccolò Machiavelli, Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes – concluded, sovereignty means a power *Legibus Solutus*, that has no superior power, not even the Law, above it, a power that is not subordinated to any other one. And the entity that represents this sovereign power is the State, the political organization of the Nation.

The late German-American political philosopher Carl J. Friedrich wrote that the nation and the State are like Siamese twins, one always looking for the other when the other is missing.

Historically, in most European countries, the State and the political will of the State created the Nation; but we also have States without nation and nations that existed before the correlative United States, like Italy and Germany. And there were also captive nations, old, ancient nations, held captive by warring empires.

The so-called Critical Humanists like Machiavelli, understood that borders and States were a better guarantee for personal freedom than imperial big States, or the pre-Statal anarchy. Also, religion and intermediate communities, like family and local powers, helped to balance the central power.

The long tradition of European and Western ethical and political values is built on these foundations. From the Bible to Homer epic poems, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, these values persisted as characteristics of a long tradition, as they were also consistent and consequent with the foundations of the Roman Republic.

These values emphasized transcendency and homeland, family and loyalty among family members and fellow countrymen. Of course, the gods of the Olympus are

not the God of the Bible, nor were Greek Classic values equal to Christian values. But those men and women had a sense of transcendency; Hector fights for Troy and his family; Odysseus has passionate affairs with Circe and Calypso but goes back to Ithaca and to Penelope; and Penelope is the great model of fidelity and waiting capacity for a long-time missing husband. These values continued in medieval poetry, from the Chivalry romances to the Northern Sagas, they are present in the works of the greatest poets and writers – Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes. And the European political tradition, in its evolution, always kept God, Country, Family as permanent values; lasting values in European and western tradition, even if under institutional different forms of govern, from the monarchy of the *Ancien Régime* to the 19th century Liberalism, or the 20th century democracies.

And – this is extremely important – with the enduring conviction that individual rights and liberties are better preserved and safeguarded in a society based on the values of God, Country and Family.

The Founding Fathers of the European idea and institutions – like Jean Monnet, Robert Schumann, Alcide de Gasperi or Konrad Adenauer – were men of Christian catholic convictions, who, I suspect, would be seen in today's Brussels by the updated progressist politicians and bureaucrats as reactionary, patriarchal and paleoconservative.

This is the central question of the current situation, the issue of the so-called cultural wars. About thirty years ago, in some US universities started a movement that we call political correctness, a movement that wants, in the utopian way of the fathers of the Progressive Enlightenment, to revolve the foundations of western Christian civilization and change human nature itself: they are closer to Sade's obsessions against God and Family than to Voltaire's rationalism or Rousseau's egalitarianism; they are internationalists who see Family as a repressive patriarchal invention. Above all, they apply the Marx dualism of exploiters and exploited, oppressors and victims, to everything that moves, according to their conveniences and agenda, and want to end with all forms of "oppression", disparaging the works of Western great thinkers as racist products of "dead white men".

They are, in a way, at least in Methodology, the heirs of the Frankfurt School's neo-Marxists, of the thesis of Gramsci on cultural power, of Herbert Marcuse or Louis Althusser, and other western Marxism revisionists that, in the sixties, understood that the "real socialism" of the Soviet Union was no longer attractive for western masses and that the labor movement was becoming conservative and bourgeois. So, they picked and indoctrinated, as new instruments for their cause and mediators of the new message, the "intellectuals", the academics, and the university students.

It's extraordinary how the Left, this new radical Left, has managed to successfully whitewash its ideology and history, presenting their ideas as new and alien to all the Soviet, Chinese, Cambodian and other communist experiences. And they manage to do this thanks to the complicity of the academic and media community and, above all, of the pseudo-Center, always ready to label any national and conservative option as "Ultra-Right" or "Extreme-Right", while always available to look at the leftwing radicals with benevolent, exculpatory and sympathetic eyes.

This attitude can be seen in the way current powers in Brussels – the Commission and the Parliament – have been endorsing the political correctness Agenda, in all its absurd divorce from biology, human nature and reality, attempting to impose to conservative countries and societies, both in Europe and Africa, LGBT+ and Woke rules, and retaliating with financial sanctions against those who dare to resist.

With this audience, I guess I don't need to go into a detailed description of the inquisitorial madness of this so-called inclusive culture. It is a culture of cancelling and

ensorship wrapped up in a misleadingly benign Orwellian New Speak that invaded popular culture – editing, distorting or suppressing classic texts, imposing absurd rules and codes on institutions, private companies and mass communication, expelling scientists and academics who “get out of line”.

It's a crazy world, people say, but it's also a dangerous world, where our freedom of speech, our freedom to defend our values is in mortal danger. And this doesn't require lamentations, but resistance, active resistance, and reaction.

In conclusion, I think it is important to address the crisis of the international liberal order, this new order of the post-Cold War world. After the 2008 financial crisis, came Covid-19, and, last year, the invasion of Ukraine.

The idea of imposing Euro-American political values and institutions everywhere has clearly failed. Especially when Euro-American political values and institutions are what they are today. Liberal democratic institutions need nations and national identity, which take a long time to form and to consolidate, and significant parts of the world, like the Middle East and vast regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, have not yet reached national identity or the national State. Moreover, the local ruling elites are not comfortable with importing the western political system, and their populations are prone and fated to be more focused on survival and economic development than on individual freedom and political rights, let alone on the increasingly peculiar and misguided western catalogue of “human rights”. Instead of a unipolar world under the domination of one hegemon, the USA, we find ourselves now in a kind of interregnum to what that tends to become a multipolar world, with reference poles in Washington, Beijing, New Delhi, and elsewhere.

But we, in Europe, do have nations, national States, which are the best instruments to preserve our religious and family values against all the hegemonic agendas that utopian and globalist forces want to impose on us.

In Europe, today, the *populus*, the people, the community of national citizens in each independent State, tends to be better and more dependable than the social, political or academic elites.

Today's Poland, an old nation that resisted to, and survived through, different captivities, is a good symbol of a Europe of independent nations –integrating, where appropriate, economic, fiscal, and even financial institutions, united under Christian and popular values, but respecting borders and identities built with effort, bravery and suffering over the centuries. What better model for a New Europe?