

1989: A Twenty-Year Balance Sheet of that Annus Mirabilis

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Were a Martian to have gazed down to earth in the early fall of 1989, he would have found the following map: One Soviet Union, one Yugoslavia, one Czechoslovakia and TWO Germanies.

There were 38 independent states in what we consider the political-geographic region of Europe at the time.

If the same Martian were to look down on Europe in the fall of 2009, he would find no Soviet Union, no Yugoslavia, no Czechoslovakia and ONE Germany. He would find more than 50 independent states comprising the region called Europe which, of course, is not quite clear in the first place as to where it ends and where its boundaries of all sorts – cultural, political geographic, ethnic -- really lie. And this vagueness – I would suggest -- pertains ONLY to this continent's EASTERN boundaries, never its Western ones. Nobody doubts that Iceland or Norway belong solidly to Europe (even if not the European Union which is irrelevant in the context of this assignation), but there is a huge debate as to whether Turkey is Europe, the Caucasus states might be Europe, Russia is Europe, etc. etc. Someone actually suggested that Europe include everything from Portugal to Vladivostok.

Indeed, in terms of the world of sports (soccer, for instance) and a few other important international dimensions, Israel belongs to Europe – only, of course, because its Arab neighbors exclude it completely, not because the Europeans accept the Israelis (or Israel) as European in any way. They most assuredly do not! The West European consensus of coolness towards, irritation with and downright hostility to Israel – in notable contrast to the East European consensus which is much more favorable – would entail a lecture all its own which I do not intend to give here.

Suffice it to say that the “where Europe begins and ends” has not at all been changed by the annus mirabilis of 1989. If anything, it has been intensified. I think it was the great Habsburg statesman Count Metternich who said that Europe ends and Asia commences at the end of the LANDSTRASSER HAUPTSTRASSE in Vienna’s third district. Many have since surely agreed. Others see Europe’s end further east.

But the point is clear: Belonging to EUROPE (whatever this means) is good and desired. Nobody wants to be EXCLUDED from Europe. Everybody wants to be defined as EUROPEAN.

I would like to argue that this inclusion INTO and exclusion OUT OF Europe only pertains to its Eastern dimension since arguably the Renaissance when THE WEST came to be construed as good, associated with progress, liberty, civilization; and THE EAST with backwardness, despotism, barbarity, Asia and the Orient.

Indeed, one of the consequences of 1989 has been a whole movement in EAST CENTRAL EUROPE to “return to Europe”, to “rejoin Europe” which one seems to have left – or better put -- were forced to leave by Communism and the Soviet occupation.

Somehow the years between 1945 and 1989 seemed to have DE-Europeanized all those Europeans that were in the EAST – the “bad” and backward part of Europe. Hence, note the various nomenclatures that exist pertaining to this unclear region, all there for the sole purpose NOT to be called East European or included in EASTERN Europe:

There was – and still exists – the Friedrich-Naumann-based German term MITTELEUROPA with all its complex connotations, many quite negative in terms of connoting a German co-prosperity sphere to mix metaphors between Axis powers; then there is the EAST CENTRAL EUROPE which would be OK were there a definitive WEST CENTRAL EUROPE which, of course, does not exist because once you are firmly perceived to be in the WEST club, you need no qualifiers of center, middle, this or that. You are firmly EUROPEAN!!!
End of story!!!!

There is, of course, the perennial CENTRAL EUROPE though who exactly belongs to it? Most folks would place the four former VISEGRAD countries of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary in the CENTRAL EUROPEAN category for sure – but what about Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia?

Clearly, there is much more than geography that INCLUDES and EXCLUDES here. It is a mixed and amorphous amalgam of religion (Catholics are

more CENTRAL than Orthodox and Muslims); of external behavior (Serbs cannot claim “Central”, let alone “Western” status by dint of their having played such a detrimental role in all of the post-Yugoslav wars); of internal behavior (corruption indexes, exercise of power by quasi or para or even counter-statist institutions and agents such as mafias and other non-officially-state-sanctioned but often state-tolerated-public entities); of “development” in terms of literacy, economy, “modernity”; of the firmness and legitimacy of state institutions.

And sure enough these “Western” East Central European states have had a much more “developed” transition to liberal democracy in the past twenty years than their “Eastern” cousins: Thus, for example, in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and East Germany; the former Communist rulers exited very quickly which their Serbian, Bulgarian and Romanian counterparts did not. In Poland, Hungary and East Germany, these former Communist parties rename and re-invent themselves quite speedily, change to a considerable degree – though not totally – and become part of a robust democracy and are integrated as legitimate players into the fabric of their countries as my colleague Anna Grzymala-Busse demonstrates convincingly. This is less the case with countries further east, though to be fair, neither in the Czech Republic nor in Slovakia do the former CP’s really become robust players in their respective countries’ democratic process – though with different histories and for different reasons.

Indeed, I would argue that one of the most profound lacunae of legitimacy that Communism suffered in its 40 plus years of existence in Eastern Europe was its being associated as decidedly NON-European – with the crucial exception of the

German Democratic Republic where it was associated with its being not only profoundly European but indeed German, perhaps THE most important reason why Communism per se – as a set of ideas, of values, even of policies and politics – was not as much frowned upon in that country as it was in the rest of Eastern Europe. I would go so far as to state that by the middle of the 1970s, when I traveled quite extensively in this part of the world, the ONLY real communists that I encountered other than social scientists from Columbia University, UC Berkeley, the Free University of Berlin and the LSE, were in East Germany. I literally did not meet one intellectual or student or any person vaguely engaged in the world of ideas or scholarship in Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and even Yugoslavia who did not have total contempt for anything relating to Communism.

A few apparatchiks lauded communism but only before the second beer at night, after which they really let loose and told you what they genuinely thought of communism. They all viewed it as a sham, a fraud, a complete failure – and worse. Of course, communism also gained legitimacy in East Germany by dint of its being the only viable product differentiation vis-à-vis West Germany which was essential to the regime's national identity that none of the other countries needed since there was no richer and more attractive West Poland nor a richer and more attractive West Hungary, nor West anything threatening them on the NATIONAL dimension the way West Germany decidedly threatened East Germany. (I will say something about nationalism a bit later).

I have always firmly believed the counterfactual that had communism been brought to Europe by the Germans and not the Russians, its fate in the 20th century

would have been very different – and much more legitimate and accepted – merely by its being identified as Western.

Indeed, National Socialism's greater public acceptance by Europeans than Communism's which would have been much greater still had the German occupation not turned out to be so brutal – has, in my view, everything to do with this WEST – EAST divide, with the former being regarded as superior and the latter as inferior.

Thus, I experienced what I have come to call the MARKOVITS categorization of intra-European relations as a young child and which I firmly believe to be valid to this day: You dislike all your neighbors more or less, but those to the EAST (also SOUTH EAST) you really disdain and look down upon as inferior and backward (I do not know whether the Portuguese disdain the Spaniards; nor do I think that the Irish look down on the Brits, even though they dislike them. But on the whole, the Markovits categorization pertains quite well.)

I mean, here was my family, totally ravaged by the Holocaust, all four of my parents' parents murdered in Auschwitz, many of their siblings and cousins and aunts and uncles too; my mother and father literally owing their very lives to the RED ARMY, and whom did I grow up hearing nothing good about in the midst of all that Grimm and Goethe and Schiller and Bach and Beethoven that surrounded my life, but the Russians, these Orientals, these despots – these NON-EUROPEANS.

In fact, until his dying day, my father used the term "Europaer" as his highest form of accolade and compliment for civility, good taste and high culture. Now it is interesting that my father ALWAYS used the German "Europaer", never

the Hungarian “Eropai” even though we almost never spoke German with each other but almost exclusively Hungarian. I will never forget that just before he died in 1990, he called Nelson Mandela a real “Europaer”, as he, of course, had called President Kennedy when we stood in line four deep to see the arrival of the young president at the Soviet Embassy in Vienna’s REISNER STRASSE on his way to meeting Nikita Khrushchev who, of course, was anything but an “Europaer” for my father. And I also remember with what delight and in what awe he always uttered the words “nyugat” and “nyugati” – West and Western – in his conversations about pretty much anything related to politics, culture, ethics, esthetics and public affairs – even sports where it connoted fair play and gentlemanliness; and the dismissive facial expressions and contemptuous hand gestures that accompanied his mentioning the terms “kelet” and “keleti” – East and Eastern.

Of course, to my father, a Habsburg European – a Central European if there ever was one – “Europaer” remained the ultimate accolade, but even Europe’s West had become insufficient in terms of providing safety and succor and enlightenment and liberty and all the good things in life and politics after the Holocaust: that had become the sole bailiwick of an overseas, transatlantic European West called the United States of America. It was one thing to listen to Bach and Beethoven and revel in truly European culture; it was quite another to trust the “Europaer” to give us safety and succor.

I remember how my father and I listened to the radio broadcast of the World Cup Final from the WANKDORF STADION in Bern (Switzerland) between Hungary and West Germany in 1954. The Hungarians were the huge favorites, the

great ARANY CSAPAT (golden team) with the likes of Grosics, Bozsik, Hidegkuti, Kocsis, Cibor and – most of all – the rotund Hungarian Army major and ball wizard Ferenc “Oecsi” Puskas. The Hungarians were the very first team ever to beat England at home at Wembley, they had destroyed the likes of Brazil and Uurugay; they had beaten everybody in the world, including the Germans by the score of 8 – 3 earlier in the tournament. The “golden team” was the pride of Hungarians – though not my father’s. Of course he did not root for the Germans either and in fact just before the game he sat me down and told me – all of five and a half years old – that the only thing that was important on this day for us (us Jews? us Westerners? us “Europeans”?) us who? I do not know) was the fact that this day was the birthday of the United States of America – the FOURTH OF JULY!!!! This was my first introduction to America, the Fourth of July; the REAL West – right there in the middle of Timisoara or should I say Temesvar (or perhaps even Temesburg) in still-Stalinist Romania of 1954.

I cannot elaborate here why the term EUROPE only conjures up positive notions and zero negativity in global discourse other than in the crucial context of colonialism where, of course, it invokes nothing but negative images; and why AMERICA at best stimulates very ambivalent associations, but I would place the crucial difference in the context of “EUROPE” as an entity not being identified with one overwhelming power whereas “AMERICA” has most assuredly been precisely so, certainly throughout all of the 20th century which also means that REAL-EXISTING EUROPE remains much more elusive and amorphous than the REAL-EXISTING AMERICA. Henry Kissinger’s famous request to be given one

telephone number for Europe comes close to the crux of this essential difference between EUROPE's unblemished image and AMERICA's much more ambivalent one. It is easier to idealize elusive and vague players than real ones. After all, were one country in Europe to have become identified with the entire continent and share its name, I am sure that the idea and concept of "Europe" would be similarly ambivalent, flawed and even hated, as has been the case with "America" which stands for a continent as well but also – in common parlance and general understanding, at least – for one country on that continent, and, of course not by chance, its most powerful one. The fact that America, as Europe's creation, came to challenge the old dowager, has a lot to do with this difference as well, but this will lead me too much into the topic of European anti-Americanism on which you kindly allowed me to elaborate here on September 15, 2005 and which led to numerous publications that will most assuredly not happen with this lecture, trust me.

The post-1989 shifts merely in terms of the number of new countries and new political sovereignties have been massive.

Now add to this the COMPLETELY altered political landscape:

In the fall of 1989, all of these countries were governed by various forms and manifestations of a Marxism that owed its legacy to the Leninist heritage in which I also include the allegedly different Yugoslavia that varied from its neighbors only by virtue of having been spared the Stalinist variant of this Leninist compact. Sure there were differences, indeed massive ones, between say the Gulash Communism of the Hungarians led by the pragmatic Janos Kadar which he commenced already in

the early 1960s on the one hand, and the quasi-Maoist lunacies of the Enver-Hoxha-led regime in Albania; between the relatively lax Polish version of this Leninism (at least until the arrival of the brutal military junta of the 1980s), rendered so by repeated worker uprising commenced in 1956 and then continued in the 1970s culminating in Solidarnosc, without any question the single most popular and assuredly working-class movement in this 40-year period of Leninist desolation and repression (real proletarian revolts against an allegedly proletarian state); and the megalomania of Ceausescu-ruled Romania, a bizarre mixture of family-controlled despotism with a fine dosage of modern 20th century totalitarianism.

There were occasional moments of hope and respite – none more so than the ill-fated but valiant Prague Spring of 1968 – but on the whole these were one-party-dominated dictatorships led by old men in ill-fitting grey suits and their drab apparatchik allies in the party bureaucracy, the armed forces and pretty much every important decision-making body of state and society which, of course, were totally intertwined. The only reason that these regimes existed was by dint of military power either solely based on the home forces or in combination with Soviet troops. None of these regimes would have lasted any length of time without this military repression. Indeed, come 1989, they did not.

From the Martian's macro vantage point, a single textbook on how these countries were governed and what politics in them was like would have sufficed for a relatively good understanding of their quotidian reality.

This textbook, however, would have been quite deficient in informing our Martian about the meso and micro differences among these countries that – in my

opinion – were the major vehicles why the macro layer of Leninism failed and was torn asunder twenty years ago today. Indeed, the question still remains for me in that I still do not quite know: How Romanian was Romanian Communism? How Polish was its counterpart in Poland? And how did this manifest itself in other countries?

And I do not here mean the force of nationalism but the NATIONAL characteristics of different communisms.

Still, far and away THE most important ingredient of these differences was NATIONALISM.

It was that force – and that force alone – that altered the map and created ONE Germany while giving us at last count SIX successor states to the former Yugoslavia, seven if one includes Kosovo as an independent country and quite possibly eight or even nine if one looks at the reality on the ground in Bosnia where Serbs really live in their own country with Muslim Bosnians and their Croat co-citizens also living in ethnically segregated entities. As to the countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union, all of them did so with national identity being their most salient raison d’etre, including even Belarus. What made this renewed manifestation of nationalism as the most important identity-builder in the creation of sovereign countries so unique in this period was the paucity of violence that accompanied it. With the exception – and that is a HUGE exception – of the Yugoslav situation, Romania, Lithuania and some post-Soviet areas like Moldova and Transnistria but most notably the Caucasus region in which Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Abkhazia and Ossetia have engaged in violence and continue

to do so (the violence in Chechnya and Ingushetsia is, of course, much related but could be classified and intra-Russian affair), this re-affirmation of nationalism as the pre-eminent axis of political legitimacy and identity occurred peacefully.

I did not engage in any serious historical analysis to test the uniqueness of this phenomenon, but my cursory knowledge of European history leads me to believe that such massive shifts in sovereignty and state-creation were accompanied by a much greater amount of violence in the past.

To add further to the tectonic shift that re-arranged the region, there are two completely new supra-national players that emerged and that were literally unthinkable twenty years ago today: I am, of course, speaking about the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

I am not sure which of the three following statements would have committed one to an insane asylum in 1989 but stating all three would most decidedly have done the job:

1. Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia will be independent countries.
2. Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia will be full members of the European Union.
3. Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia will be NATO members.

Now why did these regimes topple?

Why did 1989 happen?

As a social movement person, I always want to accord developments “from below” definitive pride of place. But then as a student and admirer of Theda Skocpol’s work, I also believe that none of the “below” stuff matters if nothing develops “from above”.

A brief word about both:

As to the “below” stuff, I really think that my earlier comments about the low legitimacy of anything emanating from the East explains quite a bit as to why Soviet-imposed communism was bound to be hated and thus fail. Add to this the persistence of local nationalism, and the formula for regime failure was high. In one of her many superb works on all of this stuff -- pre-1989, 1989, post-1989 -- Anna Grzymala-Busse informs us about the immense staying power of mass pre-Communist schooling demonstrating conclusively – at least for me – that if you had a well-functioning education system and a relatively high level of literacy BEFORE the arrival of the Soviets, the latter simply had no chance of winning you over to their side. *“The Communist Exit is more likely to occur where the literacy preceded the onset of communism,* “she writes emphatically. The education systems succeeded – often even despite themselves – to reinforce national pride; to solidify local ideological and cultural opposition to those “Eastern” foreigners by extolling what the Poles called *przedwojenny* or prewar, “an adjective used to describe lost excellence in everything, from buildings to scouting associations to fruit preserves,” as Anna writes so elegantly. There must have been something about preserves as the proper measure of antinomy against Soviet hegemony and as an important medium to express one’s dissatisfaction with Soviet rule since my beloved aunt Mancini, too,

many miles away from what Anna described in Poland, bemoaned the passing of the good old pre-Soviet days in Timisoara when the fruit preserves were so much better and so much more authentic. This sentiment – this huge deficit in legitimacy – was ubiquitous to all of Eastern Europe. Even what the regime did well got lost in this complete process of de-legitimation.

I remember distinctly bringing eye glasses from Vienna to various folks in Hungary and Romania in the 1970s even though the eye glasses produced and provided for locally were actually quite good and passable. But they were not Western. In the wonderful play by Ulrich Plenzdorf called “Die Leiden des jungen W” in which he tells the story in the mid 1970s argot of the GDR about a young adolescent who – in reading Goethe’s classic “Die Leiden des jungen Werthers” – encounters many parallels between his own malaise as a young man and that of the young Werther’s 150 years before – the protagonist explains the difference between “real” – i.e. “Western” -- jeans and their pathetic Eastern imitation which, of course, anybody worth his salt would disdain and never wear.

Of course, these regimes suffered mightily simply by dint of ruling over poorer countries and less prosperous economies that could not produce all the consumer goods that the richer Western countries did as a matter of course. The (West) Germans called this economic difference and material envy, “Alles Bananen” – it is all about bananas. But it was more than that. It was mainly the fact that regular folks felt that they had no exit and voice options which meant that they withheld big-time on their loyalty options to the regimes which they saw as tainted

by dint of its Eastern-ness (and thus non-European-ness); and by dint of their own nationalism kept alive and well by their functioning education system.

But I fear that – even though we intellectuals would always like to feature the “below” stuff, the heroics of folks like Havel and Michnik and Walesa, in other words folks like us and if they are not like us, then at least members of the glorious working class – the “above” weighs more heavily as to why such momentous occasions happen as did twenty years ago.

Put differently, I am quite convinced that we would not be having this lecture and this anniversary were it not for Mikhail Gorbachev and the decision “from above” not to resist and not to call in the tanks. I still have no idea as to why this did not happen. As we know from Mary Sarotte’s fine recent study appropriately simply called *1989*, the Berlin Wall’s opening was not planned but was the immediate consequence of a bungled press conference by an East German official. In other words it still continues to baffle me why the will to rule at all costs was abandoned by the leadership in Moscow and beyond, although that varied from capital to capital with some most decidedly willing to call in the tanks had the Soviets approved of this such as the East Germans who were actually planning a Tiananmen-style repression against demonstrators in Leipzig, while other regimes were much less willing to do so.

Were the costs too high?

If yes, how so?

More important still, why were they so high?

It seems quite obvious to me why Communism never attained any legitimacy in Eastern or East Central or Central Europe – choose your preferred designation. But why did it also lack much legitimacy in the Soviet Union where it had a much longer shelf life, where it was associated with the defeat of fascism, where it stood for becoming a global power and was synonymous with a huge dosage of nationalism?

Was it in fact because of the latter – meaning that Russian nationalism was simply insufficient to create a workable umbrella for other Soviet peoples to identify with and actually like the regime? Or was it perhaps the opposite, in that the Russians could not abide seeing other nations and ethnicities get some respect and perks by the Soviets, as was certainly the case until the 1930s?

In other words, did the Soviet Union and its communism also succumb to the immense and centrifugal powers of nationalism?

After all the readings that I have done on this topic and related ones over the past two decades, I still have no clue as to the real reasons for the implosion of the Soviet Union. Somehow I do not quite buy the notion that it was the Reagan arms build up that ruined the Soviet empire. But there are many folks in this room who know a good deal more about this than I do.

Where does this all leave us?

Let me start with the positive tally:

Budapest has become almost a suburb of Vienna. I actually know folks who live in the latter but work in the former – and vice versa. This is amazing!

There are lots of EXIT options, and people take advantage of them. They can travel – and they do. And even if they do not, the knowledge that they could and do not live in a prison, makes a huge difference. The increased EXIT option has also increased the VOICE and the LOYALTY options considerably.

I actually looked at some economic data for this talk and it is clear that folks in this area have many more televisions, telephones (mainly of the cellular variety) and motor vehicles than they did even ten years ago. They still lag behind many West European countries – thus, for example, Georgia and Latvia with 549.5 and 532.2 television sets per thousand persons ranked 15th and 19th in the world in 2007 with Malta, Germany, Finland, Luxemburg, Denmark and France ahead of them, but also with Italy, Austria, Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands behind them. The cluster of these East European states does not occur until the deciles of the 40s, 50s, and 60s, but we also find Greece and Portugal among these latter listings.¹ As to motor vehicles, Slovenia with 488 per one thousand people ranks 17th in the world, not much behind Luxemburg, Malta, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and France and ahead of Belgium, Finland, Spain, Sweden the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Again, Slovenia is a bit of an outlier, with the other Eastern European countries hovering in the 40s, 50s, 60s and higher deciles.² Lastly, in terms of GDP per capita, the richest East European country in 2007 was Slovenia with \$18,674 which made it 37th in the world. Here, most West European countries ranked in the single digits and the teens, whereas most East European countries were in the 40s

¹These data hail from the CIA World Factbook 2003.

²These data hail from The United Nations World Statistics Pocketbook, 2006.

and 60s and above that. So clearly, in terms of this crude measure of economic well-being the East European countries are well behind their West European cousins.

Still, East Europeans have gotten better off economically when compared with their situation in 1989 and 1990. In addition to the GDP Data from 2007, I also looked at equivalent data for 1989 and 1990 to get a bit of an historic comparison: Luxemburg was the richest country in the world in both years -- \$26,350 in 1990 and \$89,563 in 2007; but all East European countries have either doubled, sometime even tripled their annual per capita GDP over these seventeen years: For example, Poland at \$2,188 in 1990, just shy of \$9,000 in 2007. Slovenia at \$9,263 was already the leader of the pack in 1990, now at the aforementioned \$18,674. (Interestingly, there already exist separate data for all the Yugoslav Republics even though they did not become sovereign entities until 1991. The former Yugoslav republics fared better in the year following the collapse than they did 17 years later. There developed a clear polarization between Slovenia and Croatia on the upper end of the spectrum and the other Yugoslav successor states on its lower end.)³ So folks are better off materially today than they were 20 years ago; but are they happier?

And this leads me to the negative side of things:

I have no idea whether one can even measure a nation's – let alone a region's – “happiness” but it is clear from following the politics of this region however cursorily that there are lots of malcontents there – just like everywhere else.

³ All these data hail from the World Development Indicators of 2007; and the CIA World Factbook, 2008.

Somehow we all assumed that with Communism gone, and the Soviet Union imploded, nirvana was going to break out and last forever all over this region. Such unrealistic expectations could only lead to disappointment and disillusion.

Of course, major conflicts arose from the get-go. But let us remember that with the aforementioned exceptions, all the arising conflicts – many of them major – have been resolved peacefully. This is a substantial achievement that should not be minimized.

But clearly, any change -- especially gigantic ones that happened in this region – causes dislocation, fear, disenchantment and creates a major reservoir of what one could call COUNTER-COSMOPOLITANISM to use Kwame Anthony Appiah's apt term: a resentment of cosmopolitan forces, of modernization, of globalization, of Europeanization. Thus, in each of these countries we see some sort of chauvinist (in both senses of that word) force on the right that is, if not explicitly fascist, than certainly of the crypto or quasi variety, often extolling its predecessors from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Even on the left, especially in its little reformed communist variety, one can discern hostilities to Europeanization and other forces of cosmopolitanism that resemble the expressions associated with the right thus fostering a kind of national bolshevism certainly in sentiment, if not necessarily as political parties or coalitions, that I would classify as inimical and negative.

Let me conclude:

Eastern Europe has been a semi-periphery for much of its historic existence: to the Habsburgs, to the Hohenzollerns, the Romanovs, the Ottomans up until the Great War – in the 20th century to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, possibly the

worst cores that one can imagine and wish for as any semi-periphery. That era is thankfully over which we should celebrate unequivocally and emphatically.

But now this region has become yet another semi-periphery – in this case to a Franco-German-led European Union.

But being a semi-periphery does not mean that things are bad. It all depends on what kind of legitimacy the core possesses among the semi-periphery's populace. And I would argue that the current core has a greater legitimacy in Eastern Europe than any that preceded it, including the nostalgically vaunted and much invoked HABSRBURG EMPIRE!

Last time I looked, it was not the EU Army that conquered Romania and Bulgaria and then forced its citizens to join this new entity. An amazing experiment is afoot in Europe that has few, if any, historical precedents: namely the construction of a sovereign entity and authority – call it STATE-BUILDING if you will – that is happening without one shot being fired. Given Europe's dreary history, this is progress beyond words and imagination.

Thank you very much for your kind patience!