

Using International Law, Institutions and Anti-American Stereotypes To Gain a Global Competitive Advantage

The following article excerpt reflects how the EU uses international law and international institutions to gain global influence and to secure a competitive economic advantage vis-à-vis the United States. It also more than suggests that promotion of Anti-Americanism is helpful in this endeavor.

Imagine a world of peace, prosperity and democracy. A world where small countries are as sovereign as large ones. *A world where what matters is that you obey the law* — rather than ‘whether you are with us or against us.’ A world where your democratic values are more important than what you have done in the war on terror this week. And a world where you can be a country with a population of just 400,000 — and still be an integral part of the biggest economy in the world. What I am asking you to imagine is the ‘**New European Century**’...By keeping a low profile at home and *working through international structures* Europe has managed to spread its wings without attracting much hostility. As it becomes a force to be reckoned with on the world stage, it can act in the same way.

When *European troops* go overseas, they rarely wear European uniforms. *They often serve under the flags of NATO — or the United Nations. Where Europe has established protectorates, such as in Bosnia and Kosovo, its special representatives do so in the name of the United Nations* as well as the European Union. *European power has a low profile even in the economic sphere.* The EU economy is the same size as that of the United States. The EU also has comparable levels of capital investment in the economies of other countries. And yet, that economic muscle — in many respects greater than that of the United States — just isn't noticed in the same way. *Anti-globalization is almost exclusively an anti-American phenomenon*, even within the United States itself. In contrast, *its antithesis — globalization — is just as much a European phenomenon*.

The strength of the European Union is that it is not a state. Europe does not have a single phone number, but a network of centers of power that are united by common policies and goals. This enables Europe to give its members access to the largest market in the world — but keep their national identity and control over the policies they care about the most — taxes, crime, health, education and pensions. Europe's structure as a club has allowed it to reverse the very idea of the balance of power. As its strength grows, its neighbors want to join it rather than balance it. The EU doesn't change countries by threatening to

invade them. *Its biggest threat is not intervention, but withdrawal of the hand of friendship and especially the prospect of membership*

...*The EU's secret weapon is the law*. Military power allows you to change the regime in Afghanistan or Iraq, but *the EU is changing all of Polish society, from its economic policies to its property laws to its treatment of minorities. Each country that joins the EU must absorb 80,000 pages of new laws on everything from gay rights to food safety*. Military power allows you to impose your will almost anywhere in the world, but when your back is turned, your potency wanes. But once drawn into the Eurosphere of law and institutions, countries are changed forever - and they never want to get out.

Through continued enlargement and the EU's new neighborhood policy, nearly a third of the world's population has come under the influence of a zone of peace, prosperity and democracy. But *the European model has an impact beyond the Eurosphere — it is spreading around the world like a virus*. Countries around the world are drawing inspiration from the European model and nurturing their own neighborhood clubs, from ASEAN and Mercosur to the African Union and the Arab League. *Most dramatically, the Chinese are embracing multilateral institutions on a global level — and they are looking at how the European experience can be tapped to build an East Asian Community in their neighborhood*” (emphasis added)..

Mark Leonard, “The Project for a New European Century”, The Globalist (5/27/05), at: (<http://www.theglobalist.com/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=4464>).

A provisional final result posted by Dutch news agency ANP shows a comprehensive 61.6 percent of voters were opposed to the charter, while only 38.4 percent approved. A final result will be known on June 6 after postal votes are counted. . . Shortly after polls closed, a disappointed Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende conceded defeat for the referendum he supported. . . *Supporters in the Netherlands made their final appeal to voters Tuesday, saying the constitution would streamline decision-making in the union, and create a single foreign minister to give Europe more sway in international affairs*” (emphasis added).

“Dutch Reject EU Constitution”, CNN.com World (June 1, 2005), at: (<http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/europe/06/01/dutch.poll>).

The following article excerpts demonstrate how French socialist voters perceived the EU Constitution as an American plot to take over Europe.

“[A] large part of the "leftist" opposition in France to the EU's proposed 'constitutional treaty' ...and some of the 'rightist' opposition...has known of no better argument against *the treaty/ 'constitution'* than to say that it *is too 'American'*. To the degree that this charge is ever fleshed out, it typically makes allusion to one of two aspects of the treaty. The first is *the treaty's alleged 'neo-liberal' inspiration, i.e. inasmuch as 'neo-liberalism' in this style of discourse is essentially reduced to the connotation of free trade and free trade is supposed to be either the cardinal sin of "the American way of life" or the secret weapon for establishing American hegemony or (confusedly) both*. The claim that the treaty is "neo-liberal" in inspiration rests on a myth. The European Union has never constituted a free trade area and there is nothing in the "constitutional treaty" that will make it be one in the future. The EU involves rather a *customs union* and customs unions are by their very nature protectionist, i.e. with respect to third parties - as, for example, in the present case, the United States. So: no "secret weapon" (emphasis added).

John Rosenthal, “The European Constitution as American Plot” Transatlantic Intelligencer (March 15, 2005), at: (<http://trans-int.blogspot.com/2005/03/european-constitution-as-american-plot.html>).

The following article excerpts demonstrate how French rightist leaders played the Anti-American card as they sought to ensure French ratification of the EU Constitution. But it apparently backfired as more French citizens were concerned about U.S. neoliberal economics than U.S. military power.

“Anxious to restore momentum toward European Unity while placating voters wary of Brussels, [French] President Jacques Chirac named Dominique de Villepin as France’s new prime minister – a choice fraught with diplomatic and economic risk in the wake of the country’s rejection of the European Union’s rejection of the European Union’s proposed constitution. In a bid to shore up his own power and his nation’s influence, *Mr. Chirac has selected an aristocratic technocrat who as foreign minister two years ago enraged the U.S. administration of George W. Bush by traveling the globe to rally opposition to the Iraq invasion.*

...As France’s new prime minister, *Mr. de Villepin is expected to put a brake on the pro-business policies of this predecessor*, Jean-Pierre Raffarin. Mr. Raffarin became deeply unpopular during his three-year

tenure by pushing through a number of measures aimed at reviving France's sluggish economy and slimming the country's generous welfare state....***Opposition to free-market, U.S. style economic policies was a central plank of the 'no' camp in the campaign leading up to Sunday's French referendum. Surveys showed voters especially worried about the outsourcing of French jobs because of the EU's recent eastward expansion...***

...On the trade front, Mr. de ***Villepin's outspoken nationalism is unlikely to facilitate a negotiated solution to the U.S.-EU spat over aircraft subsidies***...The defining moment of Mr. de Villepin's career was his February 2003 speech to the United Nations Security Council, in which he challenged the Bush administration's march to war in Iraq...Mr. ***Villepin's cabinet is expected to continue the same foreign policy, which promotes the notion of a multi-polar world in which Europe acts as a counterweight to U.S. power***" (emphasis added).

John Carreyrou and Dan Bilefsky, "Chirac Rolls the Dice – Choice of Villepin as Prime Minister Poses Risks For France, EU", Wall Street Journal (June 1, 2005), at p. A18.

"François Baroin, a prominent member of a somewhat less non-descript formation of the French "Right" – namely, Jacques Chirac's Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) – and a partisan of a "yes" vote, had this to say in yesterday's Le Figaro: *Who is going to be happiest about a victory of the "no" vote in France? Le Pen? [French Socialist critic of the "constitution" Laurent] Fabius? Villiers? [Communist Party Chief Marie-George] Buffet? No. It's Bush. To say "no" to the Constitution is to say "yes" to Bush.* It is interesting to see ***Philippe de Villiers in Baroin's list, since the founder of the "euro-sceptical" "Movement for France" is perhaps the most prominent "rightist" voice to reject the "constitution" as a form of "vassalage" to the United States.***

... ***François Baroin was, incidentally, an advisor to Jacques Chirac's 2002 presidential campaign.*** From February 2003 to April 2004, he was the UMP spokesperson. (For these and other biographical details, see [here](#).) He is currently one of two "Political Advisors" in the UMP hierarchy..." (boldface italicized emphasis added).

John Rosenthal, "Bush Wins Either Way! Francois Baroin on the European Constitution", Transatlantic Intelligencer (March 23, 2005), at: (<http://trans-int.blogspot.com/2005/03/bush-wins-either-way-francois-baroin-on.html>).

“I have to admit that when I first heard a few weeks back that Jacques Chirac was going to take to the airwaves to save the EU “constitution”, I was not overly impressed...In short, Jacques Chirac is a president who enjoys extremely meager democratic legitimacy and has little claim to be considered popular. I was highly skeptical, then, that anything he might say about the proposed EU “constitution” could sway voters in its favor, rather than perhaps repel them.

Nonetheless, as our friends at GeoPoliticalReview brought to my attention, *there was indeed something of significance in Chirac’s televised April 14 chat with French youth: namely, the openness of the hostility to America and the “Anglo-Saxon” world reflected in it. That Chirac should choose to play the anti-American card is hardly surprising...one of his party’s top political advisors was openly advocating doing so already in March. But the specific terms by which Chirac chose to express his hostility deserve, nonetheless, to be considered more closely – especially since the traditional mainstream media managed somehow to ignore or suppress the most brazen indications of where Chirac stands towards the US and alleged “Anglo-Saxondom” more generally.*

According to an AP report...for instance, *“Referring to competition from the United States, Chirac said he opposes an ‘Anglo-Saxon, Atlanticist Europe’”*. *But Chirac referred to more than merely “competition” from the United States to explain his hostility to an “Anglo-Saxon, Atlanticist Europe”*. The more correct term would be *rivalry* – and it is clearly he who rejects “Atlanticism” who must be held responsible for casting transatlantic relations in such terms, not he who embraces it. The NY Times April 15 report...did not even provide as much as the AP’s timid hint of the antagonism toward the US and Atlanticism expressed in Chirac’s performance. It said nothing whatsoever about it” (bold-face italicized emphasis added).

John Rosenthal, “Do Allies Talk Like This?” Transatlantic Intelligencer (April 25, 2005), at; (<http://trans-int.blogspot.com/2005/04/do-allies-talk-like-this.html>).