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European Perspectives on the EU: Part II

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Note: This article is the second part of an interview by Philip Chivily on the European Union. He interviewed two residents of the European Union, Chiara Bondi and Gabriele Fett, both attending Hamilton College.

Do you have any criticism of the European Union?

Chiara Bondi: Oh, yeah. From a cultural point of view, the EU is excellent. Politically, I think the EU has created a sense of dependency for most of its members, because now it is hard for them to assert their autonomy or leave.

To give you an example, Spain entered into a conflict with Morocco in 2002 because a group of Moroccan soldiers took over the small Perejil Island between Spain and Morocco.

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The island is extremely tiny, about the size of Hamilton College. The fact that Spain felt the need to contact all the other countries in the EU to fight Morocco for an island the size of a peanut says a lot about what a country feels like it can do. Spain didn't want Morocco to control it because they didn't want Morocco to get any closer. The idea that it had to call upon the EU for support and aid to kick Morocco out of this island says a lot. The EU should be a last resort after trying every other option.

Another example is: In the 2010s, France suffered many terrorist attacks. The culprits were people who immigrated there from non-Schengen countries and had lived in France for a long time. Immigration policy should be 95 percent France's decision, and the EU should not really step in. Immigration policy in Spain is Spain's decision, and immigration policy in Italy is Italy's decision.

A situation like a radical minority of immigrants launching terrorist attacks on French soil is a local issue, and I don't see the point of bringing in the EU. To rely on the EU to solve terrorism problems related to immigration would be like the U.S. calling on NATO to solve its mass shooting crisis. I think the EU is just really outdated in that sense.

Gabriele Fett: I'm overall pro-EU like most Europeans are, but with some criticisms. The reason there are many anti-EU movements now is the perception that many of its bureaucrats are disconnected from

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reality, distant from most people, making a lot of money compared with the average citizen. That they are making rules no one understands, with no logic behind them, and that when people criticize them the critics are called populists and racists. Not to say there are not racists and populists.

We have definitely seen things such as skinheads in Northern Europe and Poland, and many people in these places being very anti-immigrant. But there is a distinct difference between someone who admires Hitler, or says

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America's Response to War in Europe

By PHILIP GOW
STAFF WRITER

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is one of the most historically significant foreign policy actions since the turn of the century. Many will die, and the ramifications of President Putin's actions will affect the world for years to come. The Biden Administration and NATO are facing a momentous task. They have acted diligently so far, but political pressures will only grow for our world leaders. The United States has a notably steep road ahead.

Observe the private sector, Congress, and the media carefully going forward. To start with the private sector: despite early dropoffs in the stock market, war should be terrific for our economy. History serves as our guide here; World War II lifted us from the Great Depression, while the more recent Russian invasion of Crimea resulted in an initial market selloff, followed by a market surge. The media motivations behind emboldening war cries are just as clear: more conflict equals more viewership, and therefore more money. With most politicized media outlets facing ratings slumps of late, media executives would welcome flashy updates about the "War in Europe" to their 24-hour cycles with open arms.

Looking to Capitol Hill: keep in mind that wartime presidents and Congresses are very popular. Be prepared for politicians on both sides of the aisle to advocate for increased military action against Russian aggression. They have "skin in the game," although not compared with the soldiers who could be Europe-bound in no time flat. Democrats will use Ukraine to divert attention away from their inflation-enabling economic policies, while many hawkish Republicans will use this

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“get the brown people out of Europe,” and a concerned Italian citizen saying “I’m not sure if we can afford bringing this many people here. Do we have the resources, and do they have the skills?” It seems that EU bureaucrats treat those two groups of people the same, which is very dangerous. It’s like the difference between a racist person voting for

Trump and a person who is not racist at all voting for him for economic reasons – and you are lumping them together in the same category, which could not be further from the truth. It’s a dangerous precedent. I guess the criticism is that the bureaucrats can’t take criticism.

AMERICA’S RESPONSE . . . cont.

opportunity to further bolster national defense and American troop presences across Eastern Europe.

To the credit of this White House, President Biden has adamantly confined punishments of Russia to targeted sanctions. He understands that Ukraine is not a NATO ally, and that a war between nuclear powers over Ukraine’s sovereignty remains highly undesirable. But even so, those unpopular Democrats and hawkish Republicans will emerge

first outcome appears more likely, as Russia is a petroleum (and natural gas) country and the best way for Biden and NATO to cause real economic damage is by targeting Russian energy production capacities. If this is indeed likely, we should prepare for average gas prices to surpass four dollars per gallon in a short time. The policy prescription for Team Biden here is simple: the administration needs to ignore the progressive wing of his party and bulk up our energy infrastructure.

While I am not advocating untested foreign policy approaches toward an aggressive nuclear power, Biden’s national security officials must be more creative with their strategies and keep our adversaries guessing.

Mike Tyson once said, “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face.” No one knew how Putin would strike Ukraine, while few seem to have expected him to invade so broadly and quickly. There will be confusion in NATO countries about how to

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in short time – against the wills of their constituencies – and Biden will have an increasingly difficult time ignoring their calls to arms.

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The Biden Administration enacted flawed energy policies and they need to reverse course fast. The United States now imports between 12 and 26 million barrels of oil from Russia each month, after losing our energy independence status last year. Will Biden sanction Russian oil companies, thereby raising domestic fuel prices even more, or does he leave those companies untouched? The

We are not in peacetime anymore, and “climate czar” John Kerry’s excessive energy gambles unacceptably threaten the American people.

Biden’s foreign policy team is utterly and woefully predictable. Between President Obama and the West forfeiting Crimea in 2014, Biden forfeiting Afghanistan last year, and refreshed American dependencies on Russian oil, Putin considered weak targeted sanctions as his worst-case scenario. With President Trump, Putin never knew what he was going to get; this seems to have resulted in a four-year Russian imperial hiatus. But the hiatus is now over, the establishment foreign policy bureaucrats are back in charge, and their playbook has been predictable since the end of the Cold War.

respond, amplifying the importance of clear direction from President Biden and European leaders. The West has just been punched in the face, and our leaders are now in the game of damage control. Let us hope that they will lead and represent the free world well.

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CONVERSATION

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