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THE EUROPEAN UNION'S DESTINY AFTER THE IRISH VOTE ON THE LISBON TREATY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. VAISSE: Hi, everybody. I'm Justin Vaisse. I'm a Senior Fellow at the Center on the U.S. and Europe. And I would like to welcome all of you this morning, here at Brookings, for a discussion on the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on the European Union. This conference is part of a series that the Heinrich Boell foundation and the Center on the U.S. and Europe are putting together.

I would also like to acknowledge the generous support of the EU delegation here in Washington for our work on Europe and transatlantic relations in general.

Three days ago, the Irish went to the polls to vote in a referendum on whether Ireland should or should not ratify the Lisbon Treaty. They had been asked pretty much the same question a bit more than a year ago and had said no. This time they said yes, which confirms that if you ask a question enough times, you'll eventually get the answer you want. [Laughter]

Indeed, the reversal is stunning. On Friday, the "yes" won by 67 percent of the vote, with a 59 percent participation -- whereas in June 2008, it had lost by 47 percent, with only a 53 percent participation.

Why the Irish voted this way this time will be my first question to Ambassador Bruton, the former Prime Minister of Ireland we are lucky

to have with us on the panel this morning. I will also ask him, in his current capacity as EU Ambassador to the U.S., if the Irish vote of Friday seals the deal – if we can be confident that it will actually be implemented, or if there is still some political and institutional suspense left.

But before I do so, I would like to offer one short remark.

When the Berlin Wall fell 20 years ago, and the continent was reunited, the challenge for the European Community -- as it was called at the time -- was to integrate central and eastern European countries, without losing its momentum and agility. In other words, a debate between enlarging first, or deepening and reforming first.

The result was more than a decade of debate and controversies about EU institutions, starting with the Nice Treaty of 2001, including the ill-fated EU Constitution which is, as you know, a precursor to the Lisbon Treaty, and which was voted down by France and The Netherlands in 2005. It is hard to dispute that this was, if not a lost decade, at least a time of navel-gazing and introversion, keeping the EU from realizing its full potential in the world.

Well, the Irish vote of Friday turns this page. And I think we should keep in mind that behind the technical aspects of the treaty, it is a truly historical moment, a genuine turning point that we are witnessing. But, of course, how far-reaching a turning point will largely depend on the way the Lisbon Treaty is implemented.

And to discuss this question, we have assembled a first-rate panel, which I will briefly introduce.

After Ambassador Bruton, Federiga Bindi, my colleague here at Brookings, and also an advisor to the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, will give us her perspective on what comes next.

Then I will ask Ralf Fuecks, who is the president of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, to reflect on what the Lisbon Treaty means for democracy in the EU, and also to give us a German perspective.

Then, on the international and transatlantic impact of the treaty, I will ask first Timothy Garton Ash, here on my right, who is a Professor of European Studies at the University of Oxford, and also a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, and then Charlie Kupchan, Professor of International Affairs at Georgetown, and a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. I will ask them both to give us their perspective.

So, without further due, Ambassador Bruton, thanks for -- no, I think we can stay here, if that's fine with you, so as to avoid the maneuvering around the podium.

So this is the last few weeks we have you here in Washington with us. And the Washington foreign policy community is definitely losing a precious element with your departure at the end of the month. So thanks again for being with us today.

Three questions for you: why did the Irish vote “yes” this time? Can we assume that the Lisbon Treaty will actually go into effect? And then, more generally, why is this victory so significant?

AMBASSADOR BRUTON: Well, to give a good answer to the question as to why the Irish people changed their mind I needed to draw on people who were participating in the campaign. And I’m very glad that we have here present somebody whom I discussed this with this morning, Marian Harkin, who is a member of the European Parliament for Connacht-Ulster.

And Marian tells me that the important reasons contributing to the change were, one, the anxiety that Irish have about their economic situation and in particular, I suppose, the very large guarantees to the banks the Irish government has had to give in order to not only preserve the Irish but also, I think, the interrelated European banking system.

Secondly, the important guarantees that were obtained by the Irish government on matters such as there being no interference with the freedom of countries to settle their own tax policies, the neutrality of the country being something it would have the option to preserve, and also the fact that every country would continue to have a commissioner. And you can understand that for an island off an island off the mainland of Europe, having somebody at the heart all the time is an important consideration.

I think it’s fair to say, also, that the campaign was more united and more focused this time on the part of the major parties and of civil

society. And the useful statement was issued, I think, by the Irish Catholic Bishops and the Irish Farming Organization.

It's also interesting to analyze that the swing was pretty uniform across the country -- 20 points of the swing, right across the board. Obviously, it just says there were more "no's" the last time in less well-off areas than there were in better-off areas. They still had a slightly higher "no" proportion, but the swing was the same -- 20 points across the board -- with two slight divergences.

One was Donegal, which is in the northwest of the country, and very much influenced by Northern Ireland, where the swing was only 14 points. And the other was in West (inaudible), in North Kerry, West Limerick, and Cork Northwest, which are very strong dairy farming constituencies -- which I think suggests an important influence of the farming leadership in bringing about a yes vote.

As to what happens now -- well, clearly it's a matter now for the remaining countries to decide on the ratification. I understand there's an issue in Finland to do with the Aland Islands. There is an issue, as well, in regard to the signature of the President being affixed to the document in the Czech Republic and in Poland.

In both cases -- in all three cases, this is a matter for the constitutional procedures in each of those countries to be followed. The European Union is, and seeks to be, an ever closer union, but it is a union of sovereign states. And when it comes to ratifying treaties, each country

decides on their own procedure, for themselves, as to how ratification should take place, and the Union respects that. This is a union of 27 sovereign nations working together, voluntarily, under agreed legal agreements. And this is unique in the world in that regard. It's the only example, as I've said here before, of a multinational democracy in the entire world. And it's a voluntary democracy at that.

So I'm very proud of it. But I think proud and all as one has to be of the European Union, one has to have patience with it because of its very nature, being one that obligates us to move rather more slowly than sometimes our friends would wish us to move.

MR. VAISSE: And do you have a -- I mean, probably for you, upon leaving long-standing functions you've had here in Washington with a victory must be a motive for joy, I guess.

AMBASSADOR BRUTON: Well, of course, I mean I'm absolutely delighted. But I suppose I'm even more relieved than delighted. [Laughter] Because the thought of coming here -- and I accepted your invitation long before I knew the result -- the thought of coming here and having to explain what happened if Ireland had voted "no" wasn't a very enticing or appetizing one.

And I do think, as well -- I hope that the remaining countries are able to ratify it -- that it will take this issue of treaty change off the agenda for a considerably long time, and will enable us to devote all our energies in Europe now to the issue that's important to Europeans, which

is restoring the dynamism of our economies, investing in research and development, developing a common rather than differentiated energy policy, having a united approach to the management of the single currency.

We committed in the Maastricht Treaty to conducting our economic policies, each of us, with a view to the interests of all the other members. And it's very important that the energies of our political leadership be devoted to getting a united approach and implementing on economic revival, on energy, on cross-border crime and on all those other things that will be greatly facilitated by the passage of the Lisbon Treaty.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks very much

Federiga, so what comes next? Tell us a bit about, I would say, the politics of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, starting maybe with a sort of challenge to you: what are the main points of the Lisbon Treaty? What substantially does it change for Europe?

MS. BINDI: So you double-challenge me. You're not making me, talking standing up – Okay. I'll try to be easy, because in reality, it's very complicated what it will change.

Now, what you all know is that with the Lisbon

Treaty we're going to have a sort of European Foreign Minister, which is actually the High Representative. And we're going to have a President.

So the first thing an American center should not do is thinking, "Oh, wow, you're going to have a Secretary of State and a President" -- like yours. Nope. Forget it. That is not the way it works.

So on the one side, we'll have more unity and more representivity, but on the other side this is more complicated than it seems. And I'll go back into the details.

There are two things which really matter to an American audience is that the European is going to have an enhanced common foreign security policy, and a European defense policy. All right.

Now, what does it mean in concrete terms? In concrete terms, it means that common foreign security policy, it already exists, but it was what we called a "second pillar," intergovernmental policy. This policy will be moved into the so-called "first pillar." It will become a communitarized pillar.

Why is that? Because finally, the juridical personality will not be of the European communities any more, but of the European Union itself. Because so far we have the European communities and the European Union, which are somehow interconnected -- okay?

Which, in principle would mean, wow, the foreign ministers are going to decide with majority voting and the High Representative will have the possibility to decide and be proactive like a Secretary of State. No, this is not the case.

How actually it will work, it is a matter of negotiation today. Because the Treaty says that there are these two figures, but they don't say exactly what they're going to do, and what kind of role they have.

So what is going on under, I must say, a very, very active Swedish presidency is that basically, the permanent representatives are meeting every day in Brussels, trying to define the commas of what is going to happen.

Now, the first question is the President. Is it going to be a chair, or is it going to be a leading political personality? (inaudible) We don't have (inaudible). But we don't have leading political personality -- at least in the Obama sense -- in Europe. Of course, someone who becomes President of the European Union expects to have some sort of leadership.

But the real negotiations are now on the foreign minister, called the High Representative. The High Representative will be in charge to enact the European foreign policy, given the guidelines of the European Council.

So the first thing which will actually happen is that the heads of state and government will have a leading role, an enhanced leading role in foreign policy. This is something that has been happening in Europe since, I would say, the 1990s. Foreign policy has been less and less in the hands of the foreign minister, and more and more in the hands of the heads of states and governments.

So this process will be enhanced by the Lisbon Treaty, and somehow we will come to a situation which is very similar to the U.S., in terms of division of competencies.

Now, the second question is how the council will be divided. We now have within the Council of Ministers -- we have a Council which is the General Affairs and External Relations Council, where the Ministers of Foreign Affairs sits, and which is headed by, chaired by, the rotating Presidents which, as you know, rotates every six months.

Now, this Council will be divided -- as it used to be before -- so we'll have a General Affairs Council, where the Foreign Ministers will sit, and which will be chaired -- here, here -- by the rotating presidency.

So the fact that we have a President doesn't mean that we will get rid of this system of rotating presidency, and we will have an External Relations Council which will be headed by the High Representative.

Now the bulk of the negotiations today is what goes under the competencies of the External Relations Council, and what goes under the General Affairs. You would say, “Who cares?” Of course, the member states care.

So to give you an idea of how complex this is, Article 133 -- which is commercial policies – is going to be under the care of the External Relations Council. But there will be a permanent delegation that anytime it will be discussing about issues in commercial policy, the chair will move from the High Representative to the Foreign Minister in charge of the rotating presidency. Hmm? We often say that in Europe we talk about tomatoes and potatoes. That is what is happening only because tomatoes and potatoes are important.

Another issue of relevance is where development policy is going to be. Are they going to be under External Relations, or are they going to be under General Affairs?

Now, to any rational mind, they would go under External Relations. But you have a lot at stake there. So now the member states, our ambassadors, are fighting in Brussels where to put it. And on the one side you have the pro-European countries like the Benelux countries, which want it to go into the hands of the External Relations. They are those which want to enhance the High Representative.

On the other side, you have the less (inaudible) European countries which generally want it in the General Affairs. And in the middle you have a number of different countries.

So at least in the beginning, it will be very difficult for the machine to move. So don't expect that -- assuming that the Treaty comes into force on the first of January -- because the date which was initially foreseen, the first of November is, I think, now unrealistic. So on the first of January 2010 don't think all of a sudden you will wake up and have a real foreign policy. It will take a lot.

Plus, you have a number of questions. The High Representative is one. What if he needs to be substituted? Who is going to substitute him? Is it going to be the Foreign Minister of the rotating presidency? Is it going to be an official from the External Relations Service? These are all questions which might seem less important, but are very important, because those who will represent him. Do we have Vice High Representative, and who they are? It's quite important.

Who defines the Council program? The rotating President together with the High Representative and the Chair, or not?

So it is quite complicated how it is going to be designed.

The other issue on which we are discussing now is the European diplomatic service which, of course, you don't call diplomatic

service, because some countries are too sensitive for that, so we call it the "External Relations Action Service."

And I must say I never thought being a diplomat, but if I were, now would be the time. Because this is going to be one of the most interesting things happening.

In the new service, you will have people coming from the Commission, people coming from the Council, and people coming from the member states. So, for instance, in my country, Italy, we are thinking about organizing a diplomatic -- we have a diplomatic (inaudible) -- and for the next five to 10 years, we're going to have 10 extra people being hired, 35 instead of 25 each year, because we will have to devote part of the corps to External Service.

But again, it's not clear if these people want to spend all their time within the EU diplomatic service, or they're going to go back after a while. These are all questions which are for the time being.

And these people are going to master it, because these people are going to share -- you know that you have the Council and you have the Ministers and now, underneath, you have the working groups. These people will be chairing all the working groups which fall under the External Relations Council, which currently are chaired by people coming from the rotating presidency.

So we are talking about nominating people. But the question is do we want people which afterwards relates to the member states or not?

Now, another major innovation will be defense policy. Defense policy came little by little into the European Union life, and will become a policy of its own. So this is a big innovation. The so-called Petersberg tasks, which is a set of security and defense policies, will be enhanced. So now the EU will be able to act, both in civil and military terms, to implement, to accomplish the Petersberg tasks -- this, of course, if we have the real capability to do that.

And there's also the possibility for a number of -- for a select number of states to act in the field of defense to enact one action or the other. We have something similar for our security policy missions -- for instance, we had something in Congo, which was led by France. We had something in Guinea Bissau, which was led by Portugal. We're now discussing about having something under the UK in Somalia, which would be eventually led by Italy. But this is going to be (inaudible), for the first time you really have a European defense policy.

And you're going to have also a European defense agency which is going to deal with research, military capacity and all this sort of stuff.

Now, another thing which stands out of this is that Article 42 foreseeing the fact that member states are now -- well, will be now -- bound by mutual assistance in case of attack in their territory -- something similar to what we have in Article 5 under NATO.

At that point it means -- until now, there was another treaty which only included 10 member states which was the WEU, which had this provision. Now the moment that the Western European Union is entered into force, the WEU, which really never did much, is completely ceasing to exist.

Now, any rational person would say, okay, you have a new treaty with a new article, the Secretary General mandate expiring soon, the WEU basically doesn't exist anymore, but actually it's still there, because we have an assembly of the Western European Union – which is formed by national parliamentarians of the 10 member states plus other 17 observers, and they meet twice in Paris a year. I mean, do you want to take away from our MPs the pleasure of going twice to Paris for, you know, high level important things? But they counter that we can't dismiss the assembly because that would create a democratic deficit.

What are you talking about?

So -- but that gives you a little bit, you know, the type of disputes which are going on right now.

Last thing very quickly, and we can go back to that -- who is going to do what? Which is a big question.

The two major positions are, of course, the new President and the new External Representative.

The new President, there were -- and we have already elected -- selected, not elected, selected. One was elected the other selected -- two people: the President of the European Commission, Barroso, was reelected, was confirmed. I mean --

MR. FUECKS: Without enthusiasm.

MS. BINDI: Exactly. He doesn't do any harm, and this is why he was -- well, he does do harm by not doing any harm, that's my view. [Laughter].

So he was unenthusiastically reelected, and he has this glorious (inaudible) program. Wow. And we have the President of the European Parliament who was elected, who is Polish, so you have a Portuguese Christian Democrat and a Polish Christian Democrat there. And you also have to take into consideration we have a Danish, Secretary General of NATO who was elected, and a Norwegian Secretary General of the Council of Europe who was elected. So all these things are related. So who are you going to have?

One is Tony Blair, he was unimpressive in his Quartet job. So he seems to be left out because of that.

Felipe Gonzalez is really hoping to become the new -- he's now the head of the (inaudible) section, but was really hoping to become the next President. It could be.

Some are talking about Pat Cox. I don't know if you know anything about that? The former President of the Parliament. Actually, I hope Pat Cox will not be elected, because I would like to see him in the place of the High Representative, which of course you want comment, I know it.

But Carl Bildt, which was a very good candidate looks unlikely. And the same thing seems to me is Olli Rehn, because you would have too many Nordics in top position. But they're two among.

Franco Frattini was mentioned by the Polish, but I don't think he's interested in the job. So this is really an open question, and I wonder if any of you really have any input from that point of view.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. I should add, you're probably not in favor of Frattini, right?

MS. BINDI: Well, you know --

MR. VAISSE: Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

MS. BINDI: -- I would actually love Frattini if he were to go there, because that would be the time I would go to Brussels, actually.

MR. VAISSE: Right.

Ralf, I would have two questions for you. One relates to democracy. Is this second vote a victory or a defeat for "European democracy" I would say.

And second, if you can spare a few minutes to talk about Germany in particular after the results of the 27th of September elections, is the referendum a second victory for Angela Merkel?

MR. FUECKS: Okay, thanks. Maybe we could start with the latter issue and then quickly return to the European affairs.

Again, of course, its a victory for Angela Merkel to be reelected -- and especially she's the first German Chancellor after the Second World War who managed to be reelected in a new coalition. She changed coalitions.

But I would say it was a kind of Pyrrhic victory, if you are looking to the numbers of the Christian Democrats over the last elections you have a steady decline. Also, Angela Merkel personally is quite popular, well respected, has a lot of authority across parties in Germany, but she acted as a Chancellor more as a kind of president, non-partisan politician, and this was the way she ran the campaign, too.

And to say a little bit, with a little dose of irony, I would say it was another proof that a large part of the German society desires to have a social democratic government by a Conservative Chancellor.

So don't misread this election. This was not a sharp move to a right-wing or a neo-liberal agenda. Also the liberals, which won with a, I would say, a soft neo-liberal agenda, are now part of the government, but don't expect major changes, both in terms of domestic and international policies of Germany.

And maybe the most interesting thing is that this election was another step in a very long-term developmental kind of erosion, a meltdown of the former (inaudible) – the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats.

In the '70s, in Western Germany, these two major parties gained about 90 percent of the votes in the elections, and then we had, in these times, we had participants of around about 90 percent of the population, of the citizens. And now they are down to 57 percent. And the former small parties, the Liberals, the Greens and the left Socialists, the post-Communists, are close to 40 percent.

So you have a real new political landscape in Germany, much more (inaudible), much more diverse, reflecting the growing social and cultural diversity of the society. And I don't expect that we will have a kind

of return to this classical left-camp, right-camp polarization in the political system. Also, there is some risk that things will go for some years in that way -- which I, personally, would find quite unfortunate because I don't think that really major reforms, fundamental changes, which are needed in different dimensions are really possible in such a polarization mode.

So I expect more continuity than changes in German politics. But, of course, there are some hard-to-predict developments ongoing. We have this dramatic increase in public debt, which in Europe, and especially in Germany, seen differently than in the U.S.A. You are still quite confident that you can grow out of public debt. That's not the case in Europe, and especially not the case in Germany, against the background of demographic change and a shrinking -- and aging society. So public debt is a huge problem which the new government has to fight with.

We are still not out of the economic crisis. Unemployment rises. And the problem is of tax cuts, which has been the common political promise of the Liberals and the Christian Democrats, there is very, very little space to do that. It will be the other way around. The new government will to have cut spending, and will to have increase funds. So we will face interesting times -- maybe to the consequences on foreign policies and transatlantic relations, we will have the opportunity to come back to that later.

So, but now to -- and maybe a last sentence about the Greens, because I am representing the Green Heinrich Boell Foundation. We never have been so disappointed about a reasonable success -- you know, growing to 10.7 percent of the votes. In a lot of major cities, the third party, very close to the Social Democrats, up to 20 percent and more, but without governmental option. And we will have to look over the next years to change that.

So -- European democracy, that's, you know, a very tricky thing, because of this extremely complex and very specific character of the European Union. With the two comments of my predecessors, you already learned how strange that construction of the European Union is, especially from an American perspective.

It's still very much a multi-level, multi-polar institution, with a complex balance of powers. And John Bruton highlighted, in his initial statement, the character of the European Union as a union of European states.

Okay, that's true to a certain extent but, of course, that's not all -- by far, that's not the whole picture. At the same the EU is a kind of union of citizens, represented by the European Parliament, which is constituted by directly elected representatives.

So, in terms of democratization, I think the Lisbon Treaty will bring some substantial improvements. It will upgrade the position of the European Parliament in terms of co-decision, but still the European Parliament is far away from a full-fledged legislative body. It doesn't have the right of political initiatives. The real legislation of the European Union is the European Council, so the council of the member states. And the initiative right lies with the, or goes with the European Commission.

So, again, this is an illustration that we should not look at the European Union as a kind of enlarged national state. That's not the case at all, and that will not be the case for the medium and maybe for the longer future. But still it's more than just a union of states.

The Lisbon Treaty, in addition to that, will introduce a new instrument of European citizens' initiative. So this will give a little bit more space for civil society initiatives on a European level. Two million European citizens signing a kind of petition will have the opportunity to put a political issue on the agenda of the Commission and the Parliament -- but not to decide on it, of course.

And it will -- which is quite interesting -- strengthen the role of national parliaments vis-à-vis their national governments. So national parliaments will be more involved in the process of decision-making by the European Council.

But at the end, we will even have more this complicated checks and balances. And I guess that decision-making will not become really more effective and more uncomplicated. Also we will have more political issues decided by simple majority in the European Council.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. Do you have a last word on this, Ralf?

MR. FUECKS: Yes, I find, maybe just a final deliberation. I think we still have -- there is a feeling in the European public that at the same time we have more and more decisions on the European level, but the lack of democratic control and influence by the European public. And that will be an issue over the next decade. Yes.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. Thank you very much.

Now I'm going to turn to my colleagues and friends Timothy Garton Ash and Charlie Kupchan, to ask them: you know, one of the big innovations of the Lisbon Treaty is, as Federiga described, the fact that it will be better represented abroad, and probably more effective in its dealings with the rest of the world.

And so I'd like to ask both of them questions about this more specifically.

Timothy described in several of his *Guardian* columns the fact that the EU often resembled more "Greater Switzerland" than a world power like China or the U.S.

And so the obvious question that comes to mind that I would put to him is will these changes help the EU become less of a “Greater Switzerland” and more of a world power?

And, Timothy, if I may, if you could also spare a few minutes toe address the situation in the U.K. There is considerable concern among the EU circles that David Cameron’s Tories will either undo the Lisbon Treaty when they come to power, or that they will somehow undermine the EU. So I would have a side question which is, how worried should we be? And then if you could move to the question of EU as a global power?

MR. GARTON ASH: Thank you, Justin.

Well, I think that getting our act together in foreign policy is one of the five most important things that Europe has to do in the next decade -- and possibly the most important. And the Lisbon Treaty, and the institutional changes are clearly a necessary, but by no means a sufficient, condition for doing that.

Without the political will of the member states -- particularly of the larger and medium-sized member states, but actually states *tout court* -- you would have a European foreign policy with the best possible machinery. So actually, the question about Britain is not so much of a side issue after all.

I'm afraid the news is: we have a British problem -- again, or still, or however you want to put it. Because you cannot make an effective European foreign policy without active participation by Britain. But Britain's likely next Prime Minister, David Cameron, and other British Conservatives, do not want an effective European foreign policy. That is very clear.

He is Euro-skeptic. The likely Foreign Secretary, William Hague, is Euro-skeptic. The Parliamentary Party is Euro-skeptic. The new likely intake of MPs are Euro-skeptic – grandchildren of Margaret Thatcher. The Conservative press is Euro-skeptic, and therefore influencing the Conservative public.

That's a real problem for people like me. That's a lot to be up against. So that frankly, analytically, I think this will be one of the major obstacles for the nest few years in making European foreign policy.

Are there any reasons to be slightly less pessimistic?

Well, number one, nothing in politics is certain. I think it would be something close to a miracle if Gordon Brown won the election. I would bet a very large -- several magnums of champagne -- that he won't. [Laughter]

But it is more possible, if you look at the electoral arithmetic, that we would have a hung Parliament. In one possible constellation, that

would mean that the Conservatives depended, to some extent, on the Liberal Democrats for forming a government. That is to say, the most pro-European party in British politics, and the most anti-European would be strange bedfellows. That would change the balance somewhat. How it would work, don't ask me.

Number two -- realism. In the end, British Conservatives are also realists. And the story of the last 50 years has been that when Conservatives get into government and face the realities of making foreign policy, then they realize that they can't achieve their goals without, at least in part, working with European parties -- particularly if, like David Cameron, you're concerned with big global issues like climate change.

Third reason for, as it were, modified pessimism, or very cautious optimism, is actually not in Europe at all. It's just down the road in Washington.

What is the most important single factor that will influence David Cameron's position on this question, it is the attitude of the United States. And if Barack Obama says to David Cameron -- and I hope he will -- in the most emphatic terms, "We, the United States, want to work with a united Europe in making foreign policy. We love you dearly, we have great sentimental ties. We like coming to Westminster and going to Windsor Castle and Oxford and so on. But so far as the real business of

foreign policy is concerned, we want to work with the European Union -- " -- and says that very emphatically, I think that would have a major, perhaps the most important, impact on Conservative policy. I think it's the single most important factor that would change their position.

Can I just add one word about the machinery of making European foreign policy -- which Federiga talking about? And I can put it somewhat provocatively, like this.

I don't want Tony Blair to be the so-called President of the European Union. And I don't want Tony Blair to be the so-called President of the European Union not because I don't admire Tony Blair, because actually I do very much genuinely admire Tony Blair. But because I want the spotlight to be on the High Representative. The High Representative is the key to creating an effective European foreign policy.

The so-called President -- I emphasize "so-called' -- it's a misnomer. The European Union already has two presidents who are not, in fact presidents. The last thing we need is a third. "President," in this case, is a kind of -- if I may say so, Justin -- a mistranslation from the French. You are, as we know, in French, the "president" of this session. But you are not, I think, our President.

In other words, what this office actually is, is a chair. What we need is a strong, significant, consensus-building chair -- not someone who

wants to strut and fret upon the world stage. I say I think it's a significant job, but I want it to be a strong chair.

The High Representative is the key post for making European foreign policy, and here I would like to see a real big-hitter, who has a double task. The first is to shape something that does not exist, which is the apparatus for making European foreign policy.

And it's technical staff -- as you'll have gathered from Federiga -- that is very important, how you make the European External Action Service. Does it get good people? What are their powers? Does it control one of the biggest aid budgets in the world? How does it relate to enlargement policy, competition policy, trade policies? These are very important issues, to which there will be huge bureaucratic resistance in Brussels.

At the same time, someone to whom President Obama or Premier Wen Jiabao, will actually want to pick up the telephone -- someone who is a significant enough political figure to play on the world stage.

So if you want me to name a name -- I mean, I'd love to have Carl Bildt, but I think the Scandinavian issue has been mentioned, and possibly Carl, himself, does not always -- how shall we put it? -- suffer fools gladly in all contexts, which may be a disadvantage in this case.

But, for example, someone like Joschka Fischer, who has constantly insisted he doesn't want a job, which is usually a good indication that someone does, would, I think, be terrific person. You know, a German from a big country, a big-hitter. Someone who can knock heads together both in Brussels and in the world outside. It may not be Joschka, but someone of that type.

But my key point is: if we really want to create a European foreign policy over the next three, four, five years -- and it will take that long -- the spotlight should be on the High Representative, not the *soit disant* President.

MR. VAISSE: Thank you very much, Timothy.

Charlie, last word is yours. So -- same question.

Do these changes that the Lisbon Treaty will bring make the emergence of Europe as a world power more likely?

And the other question I would have for you is: what do you think will be the impact on transatlantic relations?

MR. KUPCHAN: As the final speaker, I'll try to summarize a little bit what I've heard on the panel. And the short answer to your question is: we don't know what impact Lisbon will have.

And I think we don't know because there are two contradictory forces at play in Europe today.

One I would call the “forces of aggregation,” and that’s represented by Lisbon. And the other are the forces of re-nationalization, which is the politics in Europe of late -- let’s say the last five years or so -- has been going downward, not upward. Politics has been getting more national and less European, and indeed more local and less national.

And so I think that the big question is, of these two forces, which will win out? Which will end up over this coming decade being more powerful?

And I would say, if I had to put money on it, that the forces of aggregation may just edge out the forces of re-nationalization. But I’m more worried about it today than at any point in my career as an observer of Europe.

So let me just back up a little bit and talk about those two contradictory tendencies.

I think if you take Lisbon at face value, it could prove to be a -- as I think you put it in your opening remarks -- a turning point, in that if you think historically about either states or unions, they hit this moment when they go through a period of institutional centralization. And that moment, then, enables them to do things externally that they could never do before.

So, in the case of the United States, we were arguably a great power by the 1870s, 1880s, but we didn’t translate those resources into

external ambition until the late 1890s. And that occurred because the institutions of governance in the United States became centralized. Power shifted from the states to the Federal government and from Congress to the so-called “imperial Presidency.” And once that happened, we could build a high-seas fleet. We could send a Great White Fleet abroad. We could engage in World War I. We could never do that without those institutional changes.

I think you could make the same argument about England. England became a great power only as a result of the English civil wars, which enhanced the role of Parliament, created the post of Prime Minister, merchant marine became part of the State apparatus.

And so you can go through and find these moments when the light bulb goes on, institutions centralize, and then political actors have the wherewithal to assert themselves. So that’s one reading of what’s happening in Europe today -- that this moment could be the counterpart of the 1890s in the United States.

The reason that I worry about that is that, as I said, I think beneath the surface, politics has been going in the opposite direction -- that European political debate isn’t animated by the European project in the way that it used to be. It’s much more about national issues. Look at the recent German election. It was all about kind of taxation and issues

very much about Germany, and almost nothing about Europe or beyond Europe.

And I think that this is not just a passing phenomenon, that there has been a kind of turning inward of European politics that's stemming from the enlargement fatigue, Muslim immigration, globalization -- lots of different things. But it's pushed politics downward.

And I wonder -- and maybe I'll throw this to the European panel, since I'm the only American up here -- is the traditional European model of integration losing steam? And that model of integration, it seems to me, to be that Europe has always been about geopolitics, but geopolitics has been hidden behind economic integration.

And so the first move was the coal and steel community, but it wasn't about coal and steel, it was about preventing war between France and Germany. But you had to hide it in economic integration. And I would say the same thing from there onward: the European Defense Community stalled because Europeans weren't ready to get it together on geopolitics, so instead they integrated single-market to single-currency, and the geopolitical issues were hiding behind them.

Now, it seems to me, the geopolitical issues are on the agenda. As you put it, perhaps it's the most important issue for the EU, to get its act together.

But I'm not sure Europeans want to do that. And so when you change the narrative of Europe from single-market and single-currency to projecting European power abroad, it's not clear to me that you're going to win over votes and citizens and leaders.

So to sum up, I would say that I'm going to remain somewhat agnostic about what is going to happen over the next decade. I think it's entirely plausible that despite Lisbon, we will end up in the year 2020 with a British Europe -- a Europe that is primarily a Europe of nation-states in which there hasn't been the aggregation of capability that many of us would like to see.

And I don't think that that's a disaster. It's fine. I just, as someone who's pro-European, would be disappointed. Because I think the world desperately needs Europe.

The U.S. is in trouble up to its eyeballs. All right? We are going to, come hell or high water, to retrench over the coming decade. And it seems to me if we're going to solve climate change, if we're going to pacify Afghanistan, if we're going to deal with development in Africa, the world desperately needs a Europe that aggregates its capability.

Because otherwise Europe is going to gradually fall off the radar screen. Germany alone, Britain alone, France alone just isn't big enough to cut it.

And so I hope that Lisbon turns into the Europe that I think many of us hope it will. I fear that it might not.

MR. VAISSE: Timothy?

MR. GARTON ASH: Just a quick comment on what Charlie said, which I totally agree with. By the way, I think a British Europe would be very bad for Britain, apart from everything else.

[Laughter]

You're right, there has been a re-nationalization of European politics. And the most important example of that is Germany -- 20, 30, 40 years ago, the great motor of European integration.

Now, if you look at the positions Angela Merkel takes, they're quite different from those taken by Helmut Kohl -- much more willing to talk very explicitly about German national interests, for example, in the energy relationship with Russia. Someone put it rather well. They said, "The Federal Republic today is a second France" -- i.e., putting your own national interests first.

Why I think this is not necessarily the end of the game is for the following simple reason. Most of the national interests of most European countries, most of the time, are actually very similar in today's world. So even if you start from a cold analysis of your national interests, you can arrive quite calmly at a position where you need to pool your

resources -- which is actually what France classically has done, and what Germany and Britain could do.

And if it works, that will be how it works. Because starting from the analysis of national interest, you reach the conclusion that you do need to aggregate, to pool your resources, and you need the mechanism to aggregate.

MR. VAISSE: Ambassador Bruton, you had a --

AMBASSADOR BRUTON: I was about to agree with what Timothy has just gone and said.

I think, even directly, I would say to Charles that the aggregating forces in Europe were always internally driven. Avoiding a war between France and Germany was an internal issue in Europe. Creating a single currency was an internal issue in Europe because of the suffering from the variations of currencies that had occurred before, and they needed to create a zone of stability.

And if we're looking for the forces that will drive aggregation in the future, I think energy-dependence on Russia is one. Climate change has driven -- the fact that Europe is taking the lead on climate change is in part driven by the need to try to minimize that external dependence.

I think managing the Euro is going to become quite a challenge, because there is a risk as the global imbalances are sorted out

that the Euro could be into an appreciation, relative to other currencies, which could be very difficult for a Europe that needs to promote its exports. And that will have to be managed.

Likewise, I think, cross-border crime -- most crimes internally committed in Europe now have a cross-border element. So we will be required, if we're to have open countries in Europe, which I think we're going to continue to have, to have common approaches to crime, and common approaches to immigration.

So I think all of the factors that will actually drive us towards having a common external policy are, in fact, going to be internal and national-interest based -- to use Timothy's phrase.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

Fed?

MS. BINDI: Just a couple of comments.

First, on Charlie -- is the traditional model of integration is losing ground? No, not actually, in the sense that this balance and contradiction between intergovernmental and integrationistic forces have always been there. So there's nothing new under the sun. It's only that we have more states. But the system is always the same.

The second comment would be that I couldn't agree more with what Timothy said. And on the High Representative, I think that

everybody's agreeing with what you say, at least at the European level. And the proof is that in this very tight negotiations that are taking place in Brussels, they are all concentrating on the High Representative and the External Relations. So from what I see, there is basically nothing on the President.

So I think, yes, that the chair is one of -- a prestigious chair. In that sense, Tony Blair wouldn't be bad for it. Because like he did with the Quartet -- prestigious chair, did nothing.

So, but -- yes, and the External Service will be the key.

Now, from that point of view, my hopes are really high. Because one of the forces which is actually draining Europe backwards are, with all due respect, diplomats. They're very jealous of the national prerogative— "I'm going to chair this little, you know, working group, you chair this other one," (inaudible) among European diplomats, on these stupid issues. It's huge.

Now, the moment we start to have a European External Service, and a part of our national diplomats will be spending a substantial part if not all part of their life in Brussels, I think this is going to be a turnaround -- together with the fact that the new generations coming up is beginning.

I mean, in here we are all relics of the Cold War. But when I look at my students, for my students in whatever -- whatever their family situation, social situation, whatever, Europe is a fact. You know, the fact that when they go to another European country they have to change money, it's something that doesn't even cross their minds. The fact that you have to present, you know, documents, it doesn't cross their minds.

So I think that all these factors together -- we might have a difficult now because we don't have a real leader. But I think that in the long term, the -- we won't have a British Europe, we'll have a European Britain.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

Ralf?

MR. FUECKS: Three short comments.

First, on the issue of re-nationalization or continued aggregation. Timothy, I would say it's not only a legitimate, but maybe necessary argument to build up support, political support, for European integration, to say that the EU, transnational cooperation and integration is in the very national interest of the European states, and the European Union is just about the added value of cooperation in a more and more globalized world where the challenges Europe is facing are beyond the leverage of the single nation-states.

So I don't think there is a basic contradiction between this reference to national interest and political -- and continuing this momentum of cooperation and European integration.

And John Bruton was very right that the history of the European Union is very much about building common institutions to deal with common problems -- starting with this European Union for coal and steel, which as was said, was very much a political project to overcome the hostility between, and the rivalry between, Germany and France. The single European market, the single currency.

So I would ask -- what next? What is the next big political project for Europe?

The Lisbon Treaty isn't it. It's just a kind of skeleton, just a political mechanism. But that's not the project of gaining support to engage the European public and to create dynamics for more cooperation and integration.

I would guess it should be much, very much related to energy policy, in terms of energy security but, of course, talking from a Green perspective, in terms of greening the European energy system and the European industry, and making Europe to the most advanced pioneer or a sustainable energy system based on renewable energies. And if we want

to achieve such kind of really ambitious and challenging goals, we can only do it by more cooperation on the European level.

The last point, I see the most critical potential conflict between our two camps, political camps, in Europe. One, putting a clear priority on deepening integration. And the other one, trying to keep some dynamics and speed in the process of enlargement.

That comes back to the catchword of “geopolitics.” And I’m most afraid about that kind of enlargement fatigue in the European institutions, and also in the European public -- neglecting the political necessity to provide a reliable European perspective to the Western Balkans, to Turkey, to Ukraine, to Georgia, to these countries in the neighborhood of the European Union, which otherwise will fall into the political hegemony of Russia again, or will, like Turkey, then start a kind of (inaudible) polity balancing, balancing between Europe, Islamic world, Russia and so on and so forth.

So I would say Europe still has a high -- has a political mission of very high importance to create stability, democracy and security in our neighborhood by continuing our enlargement policies. And this will be the biggest challenge for the next two decades.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

Before we go to the question and answers, Ambassador Bruton, you want to say a word?

AMBASSADOR BRUTON: Well maybe it could be the first question.

I was interested in the decision of the German Constitutional Court, which put certain limits on the further development of the European Union, because it took the view that at European Union-wide level, the European Union was insufficiently democratic. And it said that it felt that there was an irreconcilable tension between the equality of states, which is inherent in a treaty-based organization, and more democracy.

Now, on that I just don't agree with them. I think that we already have developed, as has been said, a substantial democracy at the level of the European Union, through the European Parliament. And I think we could go further by electing some of the presidents directly by the people, rather than having them selected by heads of government. And I think that the German Constitutional Court's concerns about European-level democracy could be dealt with.

But I wonder -- this is a question I'd ask Ralf -- what is the likelihood that that jurisprudence is likely to change in the future? Is it like this country, where the composition of the court can tilt matters in one

direction or the other over time? Or is this likely to remain a fixed position, in light of the rights of the lender who originally agreed to the basic law?

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. I suggest that, Ralf, you keep that in mind, and we open the floor to your questions.

We're going to take three questions in a row, so this time we're going to take only two.

So make sure to introduce yourself before you ask the question, and make sure there's a question mark at the end of your sentence, please.

Sir?

MR. CUSTIS: Thank you. My name is Thomas Custis from Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich. I have a question about the integration.

If you asked me to draw a graph of integration, I would say it's going up to the upper right corner. Sometimes there may be a level where it stays the same for some time.

But I want to ask you on the possibilities of spill-backs in the EU. Do you think that it's possible, or is it just a myth?

Thank you.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

One other question? Julius, here.

MR. FRIEND: Thank you. Julius Friend.

Since Ireland has been guaranteed a commissioner, does that mean that all of the other small states will have one and we'll still be with 27?

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

So we're going to take this round of questions. Maybe we could start with -- why don't you start, Ralf, with the question that Ambassador Bruton put to you?

MR. FUECKS: Very short answer to a long story.

I would predict that the main consequence of the sentence of the Constitutional Court in Germany will be that the national parliament has to be much more involved in European decision-making, especially when it comes to additional transfer of decision rights, transfer of political sovereignty, from the national to the European level.

Because the core of this rule of the Court was that still the European Union is not a full-fledged democracy, so you have to keep some prerogatives which secure that all political decisions at last are under the sovereignty of the elected representatives of the population.

Of course, that's a very, I would say, conservative -- structurally conservative -- attitude, and it now is questioned. We have a

very vivid debate in Germany on that for the first time for a long time. But I don't think that will be the last word.

But what I agree with, that they have to be very aware of these issues of political legitimacy if we don't want to lose the support of the European peoples on the way to a more integrated European Union.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. And I guess the question is more generally one of federalism. And here in this country, of course, whether with the electoral college or with the Senate, we have the same questions or contradiction about how much power to give to the states, even very small ones with, you know, 400,000 people or 500,000 people, compared to 36 million people, like in California. There is an inherent contradiction with the democratic principle as well.

Maybe I'm going to ask Timothy to take up Thomas' questions about integration possibly going backwards?

MR. GARTON ASH: Of course it can go backwards. No alliance, axis, concert, commonwealth, empire in European history has ever lasted forever. That's simply a historical fact. So probably this one won't either.

Do I think the forces of dis-aggregation are gaining the upper hand? At the moment, no I don't. Absolutely not. I think the issue for the next decade -- I mean, there are tests ahead, obviously, particularly in the

case of the Euro. But if I leave that specific question aside, the larger question, the institutions of the European Union, I think the real question is: do we remain at roughly this level of integration, where we're a kind of tight commonwealth -- yes? -- or do we move ahead in certain key areas?

And, for me, foreign policy is the most important of those, not least because if you look at the opinion polls, and if you talk to young Europeans, this is actually one of the things that excites them. They take Europe for granted. What they're excited about is the rest of the world.

So if Europe could show that it matters for development, in relations with Russia, in relations with China, that would be a motivating force.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

Ambassador Bruton, the question on the commissioners?

AMBASSADOR BRUTON: Well, every country will now have a Commissioner. That's the unanimous agreement among the member states, thus they will retain this if the Lisbon Treaty comes into force.

If the Lisbon Treaty had not come into force, there is a requirement that the number of Commissioners would be reduced below the number of current members.

MR. VAISSE: Next round of questions, three questions.

Yes, please?

MS. JONES: Hello. My names is Ava Jones. I'm a recent graduate of American University. And my question is about further EU expansion.

How does the Lisbon Treaty affect new member states like Croatia wanting to join, and their process? Will all new member states be expected to ratify the Lisbon Treaty as a condition of joining?

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

There was a question here.

MS. MOLTO: Hi, my name is (inaudible) Molto. I'm from Spain. I have a question for Mr. Garton Ash.

If David Cameron is the next British Prime Minister, and if this referendum takes place, don't you think that the referendum could be seen, Europe and abroad, as a referendum of the UK membership to the European Union?

MR. GARTON ASH: So -- which referendum?

MR. VAISSE: The Irish.

MS. MOLTO: If the -- I mean, if David Cameron has this referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, don't that referendum could be seen Europe and abroad as a referendum on UK membership to the European Union?

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

And one last question, here in the very back? Yes, the gentleman with the long hair. [Laughter] Could you introduce yourself?

SPEAKER: Yes, my name's (inaudible) and I'm a graduate student at Virginia Tech.

And some politicians in the UK have suggested that last year's election of members of its far right (inaudible) to the European Parliament is largely a result of its PR-based voting system.

Does the panel believe this to be a valid argument? And what, if anything, should be done to address it?

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

So -- would you like to start? Yes, sure.

MS. BINDI: Now, Lisbon is -- I mean, enlargement policy is schizophrenic because, on one side, it is clearly the most successful aspect of European foreign policy. But it's also a very political issue.

So one of the things which have emerged in the current negotiations is that enlargement will be part of the General Affairs Council, which means it will fall under the responsibility of the EU member states' foreign ministers, and not by the High Representative ones. So that is one of things on which the member states were very important -- were very strong.

Now, on the other side, the idea is that the next enlargement will concern the Balkans. And we want to send a strong signal to them. Now the problem is that -- on the side of Germany, maybe you want to say something -- there have been, they just put a block on Albania. Albania has asked for, has introduced its request for membership, and now the Council should entrust the Commission to give its first opinion, which is nothing much, just saying whether it can start thinking about that or not. But that has been blocked by Germany.

We have the issue of Croatia, which is the nearest one. And the pending issue there is the question of borders between Slovenia and Croatia. That's a major -- the major problem, which are starting to solve. But anyway, if there will be an enlargement, that will be on Croatia.

And then next you have Turkey which, of course is a major problem. And one of the reasons our delightful members of the WEU General Assembly that I was mentioning before, they don't want to be dismissed is that they say that Turkey is associated to the EWU, and if you dismiss it, they will feel in a corner which is -- I mean, useless discussion. But it's good that we have this question of Turkey.

Turkey is different, because if Turkey becomes a member, then we'll have to have the referendum in France. And so the question is different.

But that being said, nothing much will change.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

Timothy, could you address the question of, you know, will Europeans soon have to say “Bye-bye, Britain?” from the rest of the continent? [Laughter]

And if you could address the last question that was asked, as well?

MR. GARTON ASH: Sure. And just one word on the enlargement. The strategic issue on enlargement is not the Western Balkans. The strategic issue on enlargement is, a, Turkey, b, Ukraine.

The Lisbon Treaty does nothing to that directly, but indirectly it does in this sense. If, as a result, in a number of years Europe is feeling better about itself, more self-confident, and thinking more strategically, then the case for Turkey and Ukraine is strengthened.

On the British referendum -- so what Cameron says is, “We’ll have referendum if the whole thing is not ratified.” So the Poles and Czechs have got to sign it fast so it is ratified, and then we won’t have a British referendum. Okay.

And the Tories will be awkward customers, but I bet you they wouldn’t come back and have a referendum on a signed and sealed and ratified treaty.

The referendum we should have in Britain -- in my view -- asks the following question: “Do you want Britain to leave the European Union?” This would really put the Conservatives and other Euro-skeptics on the spot. Because this is the question they do not want to answer -- right? And one reason why the BNP -- this goes to your question at the back. I mean, leave aside the PR question -- the BNP and the UK Independence Party is doing so well is because they say clearly, “We want out.” They pose this question.

So I would like to see a referendum in Britain on the question, should Britain leave the European Union? And I think you would find that the majority answers “No.” And that would lance the boil that has been festering for the last 30 years.

MS. BINDI: Though the one time there was a referendum in Britain whether they wanted to stay or to go out, actually the “Yes” won. Because, you remember that --

MR. GARTON ASH: But, I’m sorry, that’s what I just said. “Yes” would win this time. “Yes” would win. “Yes, we want to stay in.”

MS. BINDI: Okay, sorry. Yes, then I do agree with you.

MR. VAISSE: Charlie?

MR. KUPCHAN: Yes, just a quick comment relating this question to the first question about could the EU backslide.

And I think I would agree with Tim that it can, and that it actually might in the sense that I think the Union's past some point at which they become irreversible -- past the point of no return. And I don't think that Europe is there yet.

And in that respect, I would encourage the EU to begin to think about two things. One is how to deal with spoilers, how to deal with a country that does have a referendum that says, "We don't like this anymore," or something of that sort. Or if the German Constitutional Court -- in other words, think to the future of how to preserve what you've got, and not let a stinker come along and screw things up.

And then the second would be to begin to think in a more articulate and progressive way about what are called "coalitions of the willing," or "reinforced cooperation" -- particularly on the defense issue. Because I think if Europe moves forward at the wishes of the lowest common denominator, it can write off foreign and security policy.

If it says, "Well, let's let countries that have the capacity and the interest move forward," I'm much more comfortable about where it will be heading.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

MS. BINDI: Just two technical things.

Actually, the foreign defense, both the foreign policy and defense policy actually foreseen under Lisbon, the possibility for a coalition of the willing to go ahead. And that's a major change. So that is something that actually will be able to happen.

And the other thing that Lisbon introduces in this area that we discussed is the fact that for the first time, the Treat will actually foresee the possibility of secession. Whether that will be easier or difficult to be done is questionable. But the current treaty doesn't foresee the possibility for a member state to secede. The only case we had was Greenland, which was technically part of Denmark and seceded. But with the new treaty, that will be at least juridically feasible.

AMBASSADOR BRUTON: Well, it was always juridically feasible under the Vienna Convention to withdraw from the Treaty, anyway. But it's now explicit.

MR. VAISSE: Okay.

Last round of questions, of three questions.

Yes, sir?

MR. RHODES: My name is Robert Rhodes. I'm from upstate New York. This question pertains to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

What does it mean pertaining to Germany since they, from my understanding, they have three of the top positions currently in the European Union, versus the European Court of Justice?

MR. VAISSE: Here?

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks. Gary Mitchell, from the Mitchell Report.

I want to press a little bit on the forces of aggregation and the forces of re-nationalization, and start by asking Dr. Kupchan whether -- a semantic question, which is you used the term “aggregation” as opposed to “integration.” And I wanted to know whether you see those as interchangeable, or where there’s something significant in the choice of the term “aggregation” that maybe we ought to understand.

And the second piece of that is if one doesn’t think of it just in terms of the European Union, but thinks of it in terms of challenges to governance, period, everywhere -- this is a question to the panel, but it comes from Dr. Kupchan’s framework -- is this notion of aggregation versus re-nationalization the same as or qualitatively different than what we’re seeing in this country today, for example, which we use with terms like “partisanship” and “polarization,” versus “bipartisanship?”

MR. VAISSE: Interesting.

The gentleman just ahead of you?

MR. McPARTLAND: (Inaudible) McPartland's my name. I'm a small-time politician from Ireland. I'm at the county-council level, and I work with Marian Harkin, who is a MEP, who represents about half the land-mass of Ireland and worked very effectively to deliver a "yes" vote.

Going back to Charlie's point about the likelihood of America to put pressure on the UK, on matters of wishing the UK to speak as a unit, including Britain -- while President Obama has, in research, elevated the status and the perception of the United States in Europe -- hugely -- in just the period in which he was elected, America's, the perception of America in most European countries two years ago was zilch. Obama has now brought that up to huge levels of his expectation.

Why would the panel think that America is yet ready to pressure Britain so that Europe can become a power as strong as America in foreign policy? And bearing in mind that we have a real need to get close to Russia, if for no other reason than their energy sources?

Thank you.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

What I'm going to ask to the panel is maybe to take up the questions that are of interest to them, and maybe offer concluding remarks so we can end this. And maybe, Ralf, if you would like to start maybe with the first question that was asked.

MR. FUECKS: Concerning the first question, I'm not an expert in the European law system. I would guess that under the juridical level you have the same, still open, competition between national legislation and European legislation that you had on the political level.

There is competition between these different juridical systems and organs, and I think this is still in the process, in the making. Finally European law will trump over the constitutional law of the states.

But now it's not the case, because when it comes, again, to John Bruton's argument that basically we still have sovereignty of states, and so a strong influence of national constitutional law on European decisions.

But, for me, it's difficult to give a clear-cut answer to that question.

And a last remark. I would not go so far to see the European Union as a global actor in the same way and with the same powerful impact as the United States, because of the very different internal composition of the European Union. But I agree very much that the willingness -- the political will -- to act globally as a European player vis-à-vis the United States, whether it be China or whether it be Russia -- and they are the upcoming, emerging countries -- will widely define the future of the European Union.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks, Ralf.

Fed?

MS. BINDI: Yes, a quick comment on foreign policy and the U.S.

Now, Lisbon Treaty, on the one side, clearly states that the European foreign policy is not going to affect the national foreign policy. But now, I mean, going back to what Charlie said, I completely agree with the fact that I really hope that Obama will make it clear to the British -- sorry, to what Timothy said -- that will make it clear to the British that he wants Europe.

But even if he doesn't in so loud terms, this is a reality what is happening today already. I mean, look at the dynamics between G-8 and G-20. You know, G-20 is replacing G-8 because G-8 didn't make sense. You had what? Four fighting Europeans sitting at the table, and a few others. That was ridiculous. You know, I know that if this is read in Italy they will scream, because they are among those who say, "Oh, no, no, no, we still want the G-8."

You know, there was this meeting organized by Almunia, the European Commissioner, before Pittsburgh, with the Permanent Representative in Brussels. And he said, "Oh, you know, I'm going to

Pittsburgh tomorrow, and there is no sign we're going to move to the G-20."

Hello! Where are you living?

You know, it's -- Iran is going to become a bilateral issue with the U.S. I mean, it's very clear that this President is thinking that either Europe wakes up and acts as one, or it will lose completely its own influence. It's in the acts.

So, in Italian we have this saying, (Italian), "When an old woman needs to go the toilet, she will raise up and run."

I think that will happen with the EU. Because this President is not caring about the fact that -- the disputes about Europeans. Point.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

Ambassador Bruton?

AMBASSADOR BRUTON: The first thing I'd say is I think the challenges to governance in the United States that we saw during August at the town hall meetings isn't something that I think is happening in Europe in the same fashion at all.

It is true that Europeans are cynical about politicians, but I don't think there is the sort of aggression and, indeed, questioning of the legitimacy of Washington, for example. And the fact that you almost have to condemn Washington to be elected to Washington [Laughter] is

something that I don't think you would see in the politics of a European country.

To come to the question of the country I know second best in the European Union, my immediate neighbor, the United Kingdom, I think the first thing to say is, obviously, integration in the European Union is particularly difficult for a country that is itself a union of nations. And there are, as we know, four nations that constitute the United Kingdom.

Now, I think -- and I have, obviously, direct experience of working in the European Council, and in Councils of Ministers, with British Ministers. And I think you see in the British approach to problems a reflection of the difference between Anglo-Saxon legal thinking and continental legal thinking.

Anglo-Saxon legal thinking focuses on pragmatic solutions to problems. It is a case-by-case approach. Whereas on the continent -- and this is the predominant approach in Europe -- one tries to set out general principles, and then one walks down to the practical from the general principles.

And I think one of the reasons why the UK has perfectly understandable problems with the European Union is that the European Union has this "general principles" approach.

But when it comes to the practice, one finds that the British Ministers are more than willing to reach compromises, and that Britain is exceptionally loyal in the implementation of EU legislation once it has agreed to it.

As to whether President Obama -- to answer Counselor McPartland's question -- whether President Obama is likely to be wanting to put pressure on Britain, I think the reaction that Britain would likely find would be one of pragmatism. If they see an issue where they feel that a European approach can add value to the solution of the problem, I don't see Britain, or British politicians have any difficulty with that. If, On the other hand, they're asked to accept a general proposition that in foreign policy you must always subsume your policy in the European one, they won't accept that.

But I think you -- you know, there is more than one way of reaching the destination. And I think one must -- you know, one must rejoice in the diversity and the particularities that make up the European Union. And the United Kingdom is a very good example of that.

MR. VAISSE: Timothy.

MR. GARTON ASH: Thank you for that.

To the Counselor -- I mean, the American interest, it seems to me quite clearly, is that in a century that will be increasingly dominated by

non-European giants, you obviously want a strong partner on the continent which clearly, to a very large degree, shares your values and shares your interests. Americans are not from Mars, Europeans are not from Venus. In fact, with Obama, we're all Venusians now.

As for Britain, I do see a danger to go to what Ambassador Bruton just said, of a little too much short-term pragmatism on the part of the Obama Administration. It seems to me they have a very pragmatic issue-by-issue, can-do approach: "What can you do for us today?" on Afghanistan, or Pakistan, or whatever it might be. If you have too much of that, then you say, "Well, the reality today is we have to go to London, we have to go to Paris, we have to go to Berlin, we have to go to the national capitals."

So I would want him to keep in mind a bit more the strategic perspective for the United States over the next five to 10 years, which I think is to try to encourage Europe to speak with one voice.

American policy, American attitudes have always been a very important catalyst of European integration. And I hope they will remain so.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks.

Last word for you again, Charlie.

MR. KUPCHAN: Yes, I think that I chose the word "aggregation" quite self-consciously, in the sense that it seems to me

there's a sequential process that goes on. The Unions integrate, integrate, integrate, and then they get to a point where they start to aggregate.

And I think Europe, on the economic front, has aggregated so it does hold sway globally in a way that's commensurate with its aggregate GDP and population, but it hasn't become to move in that direction geopolitically. And I think one of the questions this panel has been debating is: is Lisbon going to begin to enable it to aggregate? And I think the panel has basically said, "We don't have any idea."

[Laughter]

The other issue -- you know, which is a very interesting question, and that is: is the re-nationalization that we've been talking about part of a broader phenomenon that is also taking place in this country?

And I think I would disagree a little bit with John, here, and say I think that the governability crisis that has affected the United States is coming to Europe, and that I see, for example, the trends that Ralf talked about in the German elections is indicative that the main parties, the consensus-oriented Germany, is beginning to give way to a more fragmented political landscape.

And so sort of gazing into my crystal ball, I think the big challenges of this coming decade are largely going to be governability ones. And if I sort of say, well, what's going to really trip up Obama? I don't think it's going to be that the Kremlin doesn't want to do arms control with us. I think it's going to be that we will do arms control, and it will go to the Senate, and two-thirds of the Senate is not going to ratify it. And Obama will go and say, "I want the CTBT," and the Senate will tell him to take a hike.

And so I think getting the foreign policies in sync with a very difficult domestic scene is going to be the big story of the coming decade.

MR. VAISSE: Excellent.

That concludes the session. Please join me in thanking all the panelists for their great work.

(Applause)

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