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BLOG POST

War mongers and peace makers:

Trump II's botched peace in Ukraine paves the way for European wars

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Every time they experience a major conflict, the Europeans are faced with the fundamental questions of international relations: when, how, under what conditions and with whom can peace be achieved

This was the case at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815, to put an end to the upheavals caused by Napoleon's conquests and defeats. This was also the purpose of the Paris Conference in 1919, to bring the First World War to an end. The defeated Central Powers had sign the Treaties (of Paris, Sèvres, Trianon) that had been imposed on them. This also governed the Budapest summit in 1994 to organise European security after the end of the Cold War, drawn up with all the successor states to the USSR.

I . The Europeans: expelled from their own security?

War, peace and security of the Old Continent are now being dealt with by non-Europeans: the Russians and the Americans, under the aegis of the Saudis. Faced with a fait accompli, they do not sit at the adults' table but have been consigned to the anteroom, along with the children of international relations. Ukraine and the European Union are being treated like the losers of the World Wars: they are spectators at best, targets at worst and - in any case - expelled from their own continent. Ukraine will even be "fined"

to repay the United States for its military support in the form of advantageous rare earth mining concessions.

What a paradox! Europeans, so often mocked for their pacifism by their American allies, are now vilified for their warmongering. Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin have become the peacemakers! And the Europeans take the role of the warmongers. The inversion of the narrative is dazzling; the subversion of alliances, announced a long time ago, is brutal. And the inversion of values is astonishing: international law, the sovereignty of Ukraine and the sanctions strategy have been denounced as obstacles to peace on the continent. Pending the award of the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize to the two presidents?

II . From botched peace to indefinite war

Yet the talks under way in Riyadh are fraught with future conflict for Europe. What is being discussed in Riyadh is neither a real peace nor even a tenable armistice. Europeans know that there is a long way to go between a transitional "ceasefire" and a full fledge peace treaty.

The absence of Ukraine among the parties to the negotiations is not just a legal scandal but a considerable geopolitical risk: that of the irredentism that has fueled so many European conflicts. If the United States seal the deal(territory vs. peace), the Ukrainians will claim indefinitely that the territories granted are theirs. They will of course be able to cry plunder of their mineral resources if an unequal treaty on rare earths is imposed on them: the scheme is already in place in certain African countries to pay the praetorian guards of the Wagner Group in the past and Africa Corp today.

The timing is also indicative of a deferred conflict. Far from illustrating its talent for negotiation, the Trump II administration is rushing in. All concessions have been made before entering the talks: non accession to NATO, no claims on easter Ukraine, etc. Is this blindness? Certainly not: these positions have long been announced by candidate and then President-elect Trump and his running mate Vance. Are we dealing with incompetence? Probably not, because the Ukraine issue is mobilizing all the brains in the MAGA universe to give Trump II his first success. The start of the negotiations is deliberately unfavourable to Ukraine so that concessions can be obtained on other much less highlighted issues: relations with the People's Republic of China, benevolent neutrality in the event of an American campaign against the sovereignty of Panama and Denmark, etc.

Ukrainians and Europeans are already feeling betrayed: the "stab in the back" is also at the root of many conflicts in Europe (think of Mussolini's revanchism). The American electoral agenda dictates the strategic posture of the Trump II administration: the President is unleashing a trade war (through tariffs), an ideological crusade and a military divorce against his allies. For electoral purpose of course. As much as to say that any agreement forced in Riyadh will only receive a forced assent from the main parties concerned, which is therefore vitiated and ultimately fragile

The content of the discussions is also doomed by short-termism: the strategy of sanctions had been aimed, since 2014, at obtaining concessions from Russia. As in the JCPOA with Iran, Russian de-escalation would have been gradually rewarded by the proportio-

nate dismantling of sanctions. The American negotiators, summoned to succeed quickly, are now rushing ahead to their own detriment and "going all in". A long-term balance of power between the United States and Russia, backed up by carefully measured military aid, would be far more beneficial to American influence in the region. When one of the two parties to a negotiation achieves the essence of its demands and is also granted a "bonus" in the form of the dismantling of sanctions, it is actually encouraged to repeat its initial aggressive tactics. In other words, in view of its gains, Russia is being directly encouraged to move forward as soon as it can. Strength pays...

III . Towards a truly European peace?

Over a few weeks, the Trump II administration is squandering the costly strategy put in place by the United States to encourage Ukraine to remain inflexible. So be it: it is a sovereign choice. It is redoubling its bad faith by placing the Europeans under fire from contradictory injunctions: prepare for war but get out of the peace talks! It's a power play.

But for the Europeans to have ceasefire agreements, an armistice document and a peace treaty imposed on them is quite simply dangerous. The Riyadh talks, shrouded in the halo of MAGA pacifism, are paving the way for a European war from which the United States is exonerated in advance. They are already fuelling Ukrainian irredentism, the arms race everywhere, Russian revanchism and revisionism. Europeans are the real pacifists here, because they know that lasting peace on their continent can only be achieved under certain conditions: the consent of the populations that are the victims of war, a military balance of power that is genuinely blocked or that favours diplomacy, the inclusion of bilateral agreements in systems of bilateral guarantees, etc. The real warmongers and pacifists are not where the Trump II administration wants them to be. The summits held by the Europeans in London and soon in Brussels are reviving an old European adage: si vis pacem para bellum.

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