



# Transatlantic Forum: the future of the West

One year into the war: the aftershocks of  
Russia's war against Ukraine



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Russia's war against Ukraine

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## SUMMARY

### *Welcoming remarks*

Gianni De Gennaro.....	7
Giulio Tremonti.....	11
Shawn Crowley.....	13

### **First Session**

#### *The long war and its global implications*

1.1 Oksana Antonenko.....	16
1.2 Paula J. Dobriansky.....	19
1.3 Kurt Volker.....	22
Q&A.....	26

### *Closing remarks*

Hanna Halchenko.....	32
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### **Second Session**

#### *NATO and the EU: strengthening the transatlantic world.*

##### *Economics and security*

2.1 Viktor Elbling.....	36
2.2 Ian Lesser.....	39
2.3 Aurelio Regina.....	42
Q&A.....	45

*Closing remarks*

Antonio Tajani.....51

## *Welcoming remarks*

**Gianni De Gennaro**, President, Centro Studi Americani\*

Sono trascorsi otto anni da quando insieme ad Aspen abbiamo immaginato la prima edizione di questo Forum.

Era il mese di febbraio del 2015 e da pochi mesi la Russia aveva annesso la Crimea, aprendo così una frattura negli equilibri europei.

Il nostro obiettivo era quello di ospitare in un luogo neutro, quale può e deve essere un istituto culturale, un dibattito che, da un lato desse concreta rilevanza allo “spazio transatlantico” e, dall’altro, consentisse un confronto aperto e costruttivo con esperti provenienti dalla Russia.

Oggi, dopo otto anni, aprendo il nostro Forum, dobbiamo prendere atto che quella “frattura” si è trasformata in una drammatica “rottura” e ha dato vita a un cruento conflitto militare sul suolo europeo.

Esattamente 1910 anni fa, nel 113 dopo Cristo, più o meno in questo periodo dell’anno, a poche centinaia di metri dal luogo in cui ci troviamo, l’imperatore Traiano inaugurava la Colonna che porta il suo nome per celebrare la conquista della Dacia. La Dacia, secondo la nomenclatura geografica dell’epoca, corrispondeva grosso modo all’odierna Ucraina e Romania. Se aggiungiamo a quella della Dacia anche la conquista dell’Armenia, dell’Assiria e della Mesopotamia, vediamo l’Impero Romano raggiungere la sua massima estensione, quasi 5 milioni di km quadrati.

Traiano, l’Optimus Princeps, passò alla storia come uno dei migliori imperatori e la Colonna che porta il suo nome è ancora lì a

testimoniare, con i suoi fregi scolpiti nel marmo, alcuni dei momenti più salienti di quella espansione territoriale.

Il tema del nostro dibattito odierno recita “the future of the West”, ci interroghiamo dunque su quale sarà il futuro dell’Occidente. Vorrei allora provare a trovare una risposta, prendendo ispirazione dal passato e in particolare dal modello romano che, basandosi sulla tolleranza verso le altre tradizioni e religioni, ha fatto della diversità culturale il proprio asse portante.

Il 20 gennaio 2001, George W. Bush, nel suo discorso di insediamento disse:

“L’America non è mai stata unita per ragioni di sangue, di nascita o di territorio. Noi siamo legati da valori di fondo che ci muovono al di sopra della nostra quotidianità, ci sollevano al di sopra dei nostri interessi, ci insegnano cosa vuol dire essere cittadini. Ogni cittadino deve sostenerli. E ogni immigrato, attraverso la condivisione di questi ideali rende il nostro Paese più e non meno americano”.

In altri termini, un principio simile a quello che ha ispirato il più grande e duraturo impero della storia: “Civis Romanus sum”.

E allora, per guardare al futuro, mi chiedo se non sia giusto partire da queste nostre radici e dalla capacità che l’Occidente ha avuto di attrarre e assorbire popoli diversi, pur mantenendo sempre le loro peculiarità che, comunque, arricchiscono l’insieme.

Perché questo accada, però, dobbiamo guardare all’Occidente, non come spazio geografico ma come idea di civiltà e l’Europa può avere in questo caso un ruolo determinante, perché ormai si è in Occidente tanto a Tokyo, quanto a Seoul o a Gerusalemme o a Kiev.

Non dobbiamo al contempo trascurare un’altra grande eredità che il mondo romano ci ha lasciato: la libertà, sia essa libertà dalla



dominazione straniera ovvero libertà politica o infine libertà individuale, quella che ci consente di vivere come vogliamo, purché non si danneggi nessun altro.

La libertà è un valore fondamentale e su di essa si basa anche il nostro modello politico, economico e sociale dal momento che la libertà di fare impresa e di scambiare con il resto del mondo è un elemento essenziale per lo sviluppo delle nostre società.

Arriviamo così alla tragica invasione russa dell'Ucraina: una guerra con chiari risvolti strategici, con un'importanza culturale e una valenza storica sicuramente rilevante.

E chissà se non sarà proprio questa guerra a rappresentare una inaspettata, pur se deprecabile, occasione per riflettere su chi siamo, su chi vogliamo essere e soprattutto su come poterci ricompattare.

L'Ucraina ci sta impartendo una grande lezione: che la libertà, pur essendo un sacrosanto diritto, non è però scontata e che la libertà è una conquista che tutti abbiamo il dovere di difendere.

Perché ciò accada è necessario però poter contare su un forte sistema di sicurezza e di difesa. I Romani consentivano ai loro cittadini di vivere in pace e di prosperare grazie ai 360 mila legionari che l'Impero manteneva.

Oggi noi abbiamo uno strumento altrettanto costoso ma sicuramente più efficace: l'Organizzazione del Trattato Atlantico del Nord, la NATO, sempre più moderna ed efficace nelle sfide. Teniamocelo da conto e confidiamo sul suo prezioso aiuto per la difesa dei nostri valori.

Oggi, con questo nostro convegno, cerchiamo di capire come poter immaginare il futuro dell'Occidente.

Io mi permetto di osservare che per farlo non dobbiamo perdere di vista il passato, perché solo conoscendo la nostra storia, abbiamo forza sufficiente per costruire il nostro futuro.

Il dovere di tutti noi, e soprattutto di quanti di noi rivestono responsabilità nei vari settori politici, economici e sociali, è quello di consentire alle nuove generazioni che si affacciano al mondo di avere fiducia nel loro futuro, perché come è scritto nel libro del Qoelet: “Una generazione va, una generazione viene, ma la Terra resta sempre la stessa.”

\*(text not revised by the author)

## *Welcoming remarks*

**Giulio Tremonti**, President, Aspen Institute Italia\*

La guerra è venuta non solo improvvisa ma anche relativamente imprevista. E questo è in qualche modo curioso. Nei comunicués del G7 di Carbis Bay (a marzo 2021) o del G20 di Roma abbiamo letto il comune e convinto impegno per la costruzione di un mondo migliore mentre – evocato dai fantasmi di un mondo passato – arrivava un mondo peggiore. La guerra in Ucraina si manifesta su 3 dimensioni.

La prima è quella del tempo: conosciamo la data iniziale della guerra ma non riusciamo a prevedere una data finale, auspicando che questa possa essere anticipata da un armistizio.

Per quanto riguarda la seconda dimensione, possiamo dire che si tratta di una guerra estesa su un quadrante geopolitico sempre più vasto. Coinvolge infatti attori diversi e globali come gli Stati Uniti d’America, la Cina in prospettiva e scivola dal Mediterraneo, all’Atlantico, fino ad arrivare al Pacifico. Mi viene in mente la “Guerra del Peloponneso” di Tucidide, un volume esteso per 8 libri, che racconta una guerra durata 27 anni.

La terza dimensione è quella dell’ideologia, che si sta sviluppando nel dominio economico. L’economia contemporanea risale alla formula di Adamo Smith, espressa nel volume “La ricchezza delle nazioni”. Abbiamo visto un periodo – quello della globalizzazione – in cui la ricchezza contava più delle nazioni mentre adesso i termini sembrano invertiti: sono le nazioni ad influire su ampi strati dell’economia, modificando i meccanismi della concorrenza. Non credo sia corretto quanto è stato scritto sul Financial Times il 3 marzo 2023 a proposito della necessità di andare verso un *wartime economy model* ma

certamente dobbiamo mettere in conto una crescente influenza della mano pubblica. Aspen Kyiv nasce ufficialmente nel 2016 e rapidamente cresce per numero di iniziative, grazie anche al supporto di Aspen Italia. Con Aspen Italia, Aspen Kyiv ha organizzato un incontro sulla situazione in Ucraina poche settimane prima dell'attacco da parte della Russia. In quell'occasione abbiamo svolto un dibattito molto aperto, in una logica che per Aspen è insieme transatlantica ed europea. La speranza è che al più presto si possa parlare dell'ingresso dell'Ucraina nell'Unione Europea.

\*(text not revised by the author)

## ***Welcoming remarks***

**Shawn Crowley**, *Chargé d’Affaires* at the U.S. Embassy to Italy\*

I want to thank our friends at the Centro Studi Americani, the Aspen Institute, and the European Council on Foreign Relations for organizing this afternoon’s discussion.

It is an honour to be here with Presidents Gianni De Gennaro and Giulio Tremonti, and to welcome so many distinguished experts.

Just over one year ago, my predecessor spoke at this same podium for the 2022 Transatlantic Forum as Russia was preparing its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. He said:

*What this crisis is about, at its core, is Russia’s rejection of a post-Cold War Europe that is whole and free. It is about Russia turning away from agreements that have kept the peace across the continent for decades, taking aim at NATO and at the governing principles of international peace, security, and democracy that we all have a stake in defending. To allow Russia to violate those principles with impunity would drag us all back to a much more dangerous and unstable time and send a message to others around the world that these principles are expendable.*

Those words are as true today as they were a year ago. Russia’s brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine is one of the most significant events in this century. The war has global implications requiring a strong, united, and decisive transatlantic response.

Putin thought he could roll over Kyiv and that the transatlantic community was too divided to respond. To Putin’s surprise, the Ukrainian people have defended themselves effectively with courage

and ingenuity. To Putin's consternation, the transatlantic community has rallied to assist the people of Ukraine. To Putin's dismay, his attempt to annex another country's territory has failed.

The one-year mark of the conflict did not see a victory parade by Putin in Kyiv or Moscow. Instead, it brought valiant resistance by the people of Ukraine against a foreign power seeking to take away their freedom and right to choose their own government. It brought a barrage of Russian and Iranian-made missiles and drones deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure to deprive the population of electricity and water. It brought further evidence of Russian atrocities and war crimes that are, in the words of Vice President Harris, an assault on our common values and common humanity. It brought President Zelensky to Washington, Brussels, and European capitals. It also brought visits to Kyiv by President Biden, Prime Minister Meloni, and many others.

The broad coalition supporting Ukraine speaks volumes about the kind of world in which both Americans and Europeans want to live. Russia's attack elicited a commitment by Europeans to invest the resources required to defend themselves and their allies from aggression. Historically neutral States, such as Sweden and Finland, asked to become members of NATO. All of us now focus on the importance of security for energy resources and supply chains, topics that are important to every person and business facing high energy prices and inflation.

Transatlantic teamwork is needed now more than ever, even in areas where we sometimes have different paths toward the same goal. For example, some European States have raised questions about the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, which will address global climate change. We believe there are opportunities for European firms in the IRA, as well as benefits to EU energy security. We are discussing our

respective positions in a joint task force with the European Union and have already made progress on certain issues.

Since we are meeting in Rome, I note that Italy has been a key component of the transatlantic response to the war in Ukraine. The Italian people welcomed over 170,000 Ukrainian refugees. Italy has donated millions in humanitarian assistance. Italy has provided vital equipment to allow the Ukrainians to defend their families, their cities, and their independence. Italy has also led the way in encouraging other EU States to offer Ukraine a real European perspective. This willingness to stand up for the values it holds dear has reinforced Italy's position as a leader in NATO, the EU, and the G7.

During his visit to Kyiv, President Biden told the Ukrainian people, quote: *“You remind us that freedom is priceless; it’s worth fighting for, for as long as it takes. And that’s how long we’re going to be with you: for as long as it takes”*. By “we” the President did not just mean the United States. He also meant Italy. He meant the EU. He meant NATO and he meant the broader transatlantic community.

Let me close by stating that the United States is committed to strengthening NATO, raising the level of ambition in the US-EU relationship, and standing with our European partners in defence of the rules-based system that underpins our security, prosperity and values.

## *First Session*

### *The long war and its global implications*

Chair: **Vessela Tcherneva**, Deputy Director and Head of Sofia's office, ECFR\*

**1.1 Oksana Antonenko**, Global Fellow at Kennan Institute and former Director for Global Risk Analysis at Control Risks\*

**Vessela Tcherneva:** *The consolidation of the West is one of the best outcomes of this war. Vladimir Putin has really succeeded in consolidating Europe and – in a broader sense – the West. At the European Council on Foreign Relations we've just published a global survey that we did in 9 European countries, in the United Kingdom and other countries such as the US, India, China, Turkey and Russia. The result of those polls – for the first time since the beginning of the war – is that there is almost no difference between the public opinion and governments. Moreover, both sides of the Atlantic Ocean are extremely unified. Many people probably thought that Ukraine would not be able to sustain this war. Fortunately, things turned out differently. We are supporting Ukraine and defending our own security. Now I will give the floor to Oksana Antonenko. Do you think this positive trend could be at risk? How do you feel the West is perceived?*

**Oksana Antonenko:** Thank you very much for inviting me to this conference. It's been a year since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine ordered by Putin and nine years since Crimea was annexed by Russia through an illegal referendum. All of this has been



lasting for almost a decade. We are still in the midst of it and there's still great uncertainty on the possible evolution of the conflict. So far we know that Ukraine has been stronger than anybody ever expected and it is defending not only itself but also Europe as a whole. And as such, it has really become a central part of European security and European family, on the path towards the European Union and NATO membership. The second thing that we know is that Russia is actually weaker than we expected before the invasion, both on the battlefield – where it has not been able to achieve any of its strategic objectives – and on the geopolitical field because so far there is no political ally which is ready to fully align with Russia's positions. Of course, Russia has received some support from Iran, North Korea but this is all about rhetoric, especially related to NATO's enlargement. I think it is really important to emphasize how isolated Russia is from a geopolitical point of view. This isolation is rapidly transforming not only the Western part of the post-Soviet area but also Caucasus and Central Asia. The visit of the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in Central Asia's States has clearly demonstrated that – although they're still part of institutions such as the Eurasian Economic Union together with Russia – they are actively looking for ways to distance themselves from Russia and to develop closer relations with the United States and Europe. We should not miss this opportunity to transform our relationship with other parts of the former Soviet Union. The third thing that we know is that the West has been consolidated. NATO has become stronger and there are polls from ECFR showing no difference between northern Europeans and central Europeans as regard to their perception towards Russia. The European Security system has not been effective in preventing the war from breaking out. We don't have institutions or agreements to manage this long-term confrontation and – as evidence of this – I want to remember that Russia just withdrew from the Strategic Arms Control Treaty. There

are now a lot of countries – such as China, India, Turkey – that are really pushing for a quick ending of this conflict because the spillover effects are economically substantial.

Clearly we want Ukraine to win this war but, in order to make that happen, we should give much greater military support to Kyiv so that it can take back territories which have been occupied by Russia since the beginning of the conflict nine years ago. During the last few months the frontline of the war has not moved very much and it would be very important to see again this summer those results that Ukraine achieved last summer. We don't know whether this war will remain confined to Ukraine or whether there will be significant repercussions in the region. Until now we have witnessed spillover effects in the form of refugee flows, increases in the price of energy but not in the form of military struggles. In the absence of any infrastructure in the confrontation with Russia, the risk of a spillover effect is real. It is particularly important to find out how the relationship between Russia and China will develop. Even if China has so far supported Russia from a rhetoric and economic point of view, it has not provided military support to Moscow. But the situation could soon change, as some statements coming from Washington are warning that China is now more engaged in the conversation with Russia about a potential military assistance. If this happens, we are going to see a global and much more dangerous conflict. Preventing China's entry into this conflict is absolutely crucial. I believe that an involvement of China is not imminent but there are some drivers that could change the geopolitical scenario. For instance, if a political change within Russia becomes more realistic after a potential defeat, then China will be more likely to step in and support the current regime, which seems to be very aligned with Beijing.

\*(text not revised by the author)

**1.2 Paula J. Dobriansky**, former Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs; Vice Chair of the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security; Senior Fellow at Harvard University Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Future of Diplomacy Project\*

**Vessela Tcherneva:** *Paula J. Dobriansky, how isolated is Russia? Is it the West versus the rest or is it a different scenario? In our ECFR's poll, we found out that the Western public opinion was imagining the world of tomorrow in two block terms, while the rest of the world sees the global context as a multipolar reality.*

**Paula J. Dobriansky:** I would like to thank President De Gennaro and President Tremonti. Oxana is right to point out that the war began nine years ago with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Donbass. There needs to be a strategic approach. We've had many different policies – in the economic, humanitarian and military track – but as we come together we need to step back and look at this issue from a strategic perspective. I think one of the most important and significant impacts has been that the Post World War II order has been called into question. Here, a country's sovereignty and territorial integrity has been challenged. By what has happened here, a type of precedent has been set, one which all those around the globe are watching. In particular, other autocrats in the rest of the world are looking at what kind of successes Russia will achieve because that will probably have an effect on them and on their own desires. Xi Jinping certainly is looking at how all this unfolds, by thinking about how to implement the reunification with Taiwan. The world is witnessing a brutal, unprecedented and violent attempt to change borders by force and coercion. This is unacceptable because the rules and the standards

of the post-war order have been definitely called into question and they have to be defended. In this process it is also imperative to state that Putin himself cannot be allowed to violate these principles. There are some very significant economic long-term implications that have had a dramatic impact. One of the most significant shifts is the transformation of the energy's space. Moscow has developed a weaponization of gas and oil. As a result, countries have diversified their energy policies by taking a more independent stance (e.g. Germany). There are other clear geopolitical implications such as the fact that NATO has been expanding through the inclusion of Sweden and Finland. Moreover, we should mention the issues related to non-proliferation and nuclear weapons, which have a longer-term ramification. Countries like Iran and North Korea saw that Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons in the context of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum in return for the protection of its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Other countries that have very aggressive agendas are looking at the nuclear path and they do not want to undermine their nuclear ambitions. Then there is the challenge linked to countries like India – the largest democracy in the world – which depends on Russia for the supply of weapons and oil. The scenario is very complex as the United States has a strategic partnership with New Delhi. Russia and China are developing a growing and closer relationship, both from a military as well as an economic point of view. Even if China speaks about the principles of sovereignty, it has decided to virtually back Russia in this case. A few years ago – together with Steve Hadley – I wrote a piece in which I was examining the course and the trend of that relationship and, even prior to the invasion of last year, Beijing and Moscow were becoming close allies. I would say that there are significant reverberations around the globe, also because of the global food insecurity triggered by this invasion. Suffice it to say that Egypt and China rely heavily on Ukrainian grain. More in general, many

countries from the south of the world are undergoing serious economic repercussions. There has been a fundamental disruption of broader global supply chains and many Asian countries have also taken their manufacturing out of China due to the lack of reliance and to the position of Beijing relative to the war. I think that the humanitarian component must be mentioned. A massive flow of refugees is having an impact on many European countries – including Italy itself – without forgetting that Russia has taken many Ukrainian children and has brought them into Russian territory. The Transatlantic front must be united in providing Ukraine with the kind of military assistance which is necessary to be successful. The process of reconstruction in Ukraine has already begun and it will be crucial for the modernization of the country, the elimination of corruption and the stability in the heart of Europe.

\*(text not revised by the author)

**1.3 Kurt Volker**, Distinguished Fellow, Center for European Policy Analysis; Founding Partner, American University of Kyiv; Senior International Advisor, BGR Group\*

**Vessela Tcherneva:** *I will now give the floor to Kurt Volker. What is a successful end to the war? The answers can vary depending on the country: Poland will give an answer while the United States or France will give another answer. India and Brazil think that this is a regional war, they don't care how it will end but they want it to end.*

**Kurt Volker:** It is wonderful to be here, let me thank the Center for American Studies and Aspen Italia. We have to understand that Putin's war against Ukraine is a war against Europe. It is a war against freedom, European values, the idea of Ukrainian people having an identity and the European security architecture, which rests upon the principle of international borders that must be secure and respected, as established by the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. It was mentioned that this is a long war because it started in 2014 and not in 2022. We could look at Yanukovich's regime as a form of Putin's war against Ukraine. And then we could go back to the Munich Security Conference in 2007, when Putin literally tore up the European Security architecture and then invaded Georgia in 2008, or to the speech in 2005, when he said that the greatest tragedy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the collapse of the Soviet Union. Everything he has done since then is trying to rebuild a Russian empire on the territory of the former Soviet Union. It represents a danger to all of Europe because this is an imperialist ideology which denies the rights of others. As long as this exists in Europe, then Europe is not secure. The future of the Transatlantic community really depends on the future of Russia's

war against Ukraine: if Putin wins then he will act like this again; if Ukraine wins then Europe could be secure and that's what we need to be aiming to. Now, what does Ukraine's victory look like? The first element is obviously the defeat of the Russian military. As long as Russian troops are able to continue fighting, they will do it because Putin has given the order, making his logic and determination very clear: he wants to take Ukraine and replace the government. He has staked his personal prestige and legacy as President of Russia on this point. When the Russian army will be defeated, it is critical that Moscow goes through a reconciliation with its actions, just like Germany, Italy and Japan did after the Second World War. Putin and his inner circle must recognise that the Russian army has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the name of the Russian people. There needs to be a period of accountability and therefore a war crimes tribunal. This means reparations and support for Ukraine in order to rebuild what Moscow has destroyed. Then, following from that, is Russia agreeing to live within its own borders? One of the things we've been wrong about for almost 30 years is the tacit acceptance that Russia can occupy the territory of other countries and get away with it. We don't have special rules like that for anybody else in Europe and, by accepting that principle over time, we have only encouraged Putin to act like that again and take more. Russia must agree to live within its own borders. With respect to the security of the rest of Europe, it has already been decided by the European Union that Ukraine is a candidate for EU membership. I also believe that Ukraine must become a member of NATO. There is no other security arrangement in Europe that works. From a purely political point of view, I don't think that there's security for Ukraine without an American security guarantee, just like I don't think that any American politician will give Ukraine a security guarantee alone. We will insist that our allies will do the same. We are facing this war in Ukraine

because we left grey zones and we left Ukraine in a limbo, together with the states of the Balkans and that is why these are still areas of instability. Sweden and Finland have made the decision that it is not safe to stay in a limbo. Of course, States that are in a limbo must meet the standards but they need to know they could be part of a transatlantic institution like NATO. In my view, that clarity about what the West represents is the strongest statement we can give in the face of competition with China.

**Vessela Tcherneva:** *When you talked about defining and defending the West, this year at the Munich Security Conference there was a very robust US delegation. This was not the case of 10 years ago, when there was much more scepticism towards Europe. The other different picture was also the presence of the global South. There were a lot of African, Asian, Latin American countries. When you look at this picture, what kind of world order do you think will emerge after this war?*

**Kurt Volker:** If we are divided, doubting ourselves and our victory, why would the global South believe in us? We have to think of ourselves in a constant competition between two ideas of governance: one is about people – as active citizens – who are able to choose and change their governance; the other - which includes Russia, China, Iran - is about few people who are in charge of authoritarian systems and rule over the masses, which are not citizens but subjects. The good news about the Western model is that it represents what people all over the world want and we need a clear expression of certain principles in order to be persuasive in the global South. Some might say that this is just another form of colonialism and this is not our problem but at the



end of the day it's everybody's problem because it rests on this fundamental division of values.

\*(text not revised by the author)

**Oksana Antonenko:** So far we have seen that Russia is able to procure spare parts for the planes on a parallel import market. Then of course we have the “Iran model”, which has been operating western planes for a very long time under sanctions and it is now able to produce some of the spare parts on its own. So, although it is very worrying that Russia is not subjecting its planes - more than a thousand - to proper technical expertise manufacturing (Boeing or Airbus), Moscow is able to procure spare parts bypassing sanctions. I don't think this is going to be the key trigger point to generate a change within Russia, also because the Kremlin has provided very large subsidies to allow those planes to fly within Russia, where they never flew before. The public support has been only increasing about this connectivity in the Far East.

Although Russia has clearly demonstrated to be militarily much weaker than we expected, its economy held up relatively well, given the scale of sanctions that have been imposed so far. Last year the Russian economy only shrank by 3% of GDP, which is substantially lower than what Russia experienced in the global financial crisis or in the 1990s. I think much will depend on whether sanctions on Russian energy resources - in particular refined oil products - are going to be enforced. Until now we have not seen the collapse of the Russian economy. Many economists think that the economy is going to hold up for a couple of years. Even this year the Russian economy is unlikely to decline by more than 3% or 4% and therefore we have to be patient. Moscow is able to redistribute the revenues coming from the export of oil and direct those flows of money towards the constituencies that are supporting the regime. As a result, we have not seen high unemployment or any substantial economic impact among the lower or middle class. The middle class and the more internationally integrated people have suffered but they probably represent 15% of national economy. The economic situation is not

going to be the main one which is going to drive a drastic change in the regime. I believe the losses on the battlefield can potentially be much more harmful, as they can weaken the regime from within. Even if propaganda is extremely strong and the majority of people do not have an objective picture of what is actually happening on the battlefield, a lot of families are being impacted by mobilization and are receiving information from those who went to the front. Unlike the war in Chechnya in the 1990s - when we saw the civil society and the soldiers' mothers taking a stand - now the regime has become really dictatorial and it is much more difficult to see any form of opposition to the war. The opinion polls, even the most independent ones, are still showing a strong support for the war, with more than 70% of people. I doubt that we will see any regime change.

**Paula J. Dobriansky:** I think that sanctions do have an impact when they are targeted and sustained. Here, especially in the energy space, there are circumstances that are providing income, fueling the Russian war machine. It is striking to me that Russians concluded a pipeline deal with the Chinese - a great disadvantage to themselves - and they did so because they knew the European market was shifting on them and there was a strong desire to sustain that kind of income flow. I do believe that sanctions are having an impact on Russian moves. We also know that Russia has been able to get resources from India, which has really significantly upped the percentage of oil coming in from Russia. One of the most significant sanctions is against the Russian Central Bank. Sanctions have a deteriorating impact. I believe that public opinion has been more affected by the term “special military operation”. No one knows what that is. There have been defections on the Ukrainian battlefield by Russian soldiers, many of whom sold tanks to the Ukrainians, while a high percentage of Russians (200.000)

have died on the battlefield. The terms of what is happening there is certainly affecting public opinion because the reason and the rationale behind this war has not been embraced by younger generations. As Zelensky has said several times, success in Ukraine is crucial and it matters not just for Ukraine but also for Europe, NATO and the global community at large, not only militarily but also economically and politically. There are fundamental values which have been discarded by Russia and China. In fact, we are living in an era of great power competition, in which both Moscow and Beijing are united by the desire to undermine the influence of the United States, the West at large and to fragment our Transatlantic unity and our partnership with other countries. We must be united to face this challenge.

**Oksana Antonenko:** I do not believe that we will be going into the lasting peace that Kurt spoke about, as I simply cannot imagine the circumstances in which Russia could come to terms with its crimes and pay reparations. If tomorrow something happens to Putin, it is likely that a more radical “Weimar-style” Russian leader is going to emerge, partly because propaganda has really succeeded in brainwashing the population. Now a huge part of the population thinks that Russia is fighting an existential war with the West and that Ukraine is only being used by the West as a proxy to attack Russia. All the opinion polls are showing that the absolute majority of people are fully believing these lies. The bigger the lie the more likely there’s people who buy it. Whoever comes to power after Putin will have to take into account that the population will be operating on the basis of this lie. It will be complicated to admit this was a lie, not only for a Nation but also for individuals. Putin is trying to outlast the West and wait until 2024, when the American elections or next European electoral cycle will take place. But I think that unity will be preserved.

In this context Putin cannot achieve particular strategic objectives such as taking control of the entire Ukraine, removing the government and pushing Ukrainian people to accept Russian domination. This is now completely out of the question. The only alternative scenario to a full victory of Ukraine is a scenario in which there is a frozen conflict, on the model of North Korea-South Korea. Nevertheless, unlike that case, the borderline is very long as it will stretch along the territories of Ukraine and NATO-Russia border, from Finland to the Black Sea. I want to underscore that we have now completely demolished the entire infrastructure of confrontation – arms control, rules of engagement, hot lines – with Russia, something that existed with the Soviet Union. The West must be prepared for a very prolonged period of confrontation with a humiliated, revisionist and “Weimar-style” Russia, which will be preparing for the next hot war. We really need to reflect on what this confrontation looks like and how long it will last.

**Kurt Volker:** In a way we already are in a “Cold War mode” and we have to get out of it by winning. China sees itself as the “Big brother” in this partnership with Russia and it doesn’t want to be dependent on anything that Russia does. China has its own interests and it’s going to pursue them in its own way. Every time we talk about China and Russia working together, the Chinese don’t see it that way and if they need anything from Russia, they can buy it. That is exactly the point of the pipeline and the oil. Beijing likes to play a sort of “in-between role”.

We are not doing enough to counter the info war started by Russia. Unlike the West, Moscow is devoting billions of dollars to create and push narratives in order to shape its view of the world. We should not

promote propaganda, but we should push out information into a Russian language space or into our own societies.

At this point of the war, we have two timelines and we don't know what comes first. Does the war end first or does something in Russia happen first? As long as Putin is in power, there is no ceasefire or end to the war because he has linked his personal claim on leadership of Russia to the success in recreating the empire. He will not stop or back down. If there is any pause it is literally only a pause while he tries to amass the forces to attack again. That is what we saw already in Ukraine from 2014. We have to figure out how to help Ukraine end this war quickly by giving weapons.

I'm reminded of my first job as an intelligence analyst. We had to write a summary of what was happening and then write our best judgement of what was the most likely thing in the future. And I find myself writing every day that the most likely thing is exactly what is happening today. The trick is not to predict the most likely thing, it is trying to figure out when it is going to change and what is going to cause that change. We may mention one cause, that is aviation. The fact that a million people flee the country after Russia orders mobilization tells us that people know that something is up. Furthermore, Putin doesn't use the public entrance to the Kremlin anymore and, during his meetings, he is very careful about how close he is to anybody who is there. There are all these indicators that everybody knows something is wrong. We don't know what the trigger is. Is it the airplane crash? A defeat of Russian forces somewhere on the ground? There is enough pressure in the system now that I think we can be pretty confident about a possible change. We just don't know how and when. In the meantime, we should accelerate our assistance to Ukraine. I am worried that the West now has a sense of complacency by thinking: "here we are, over a year after

the Russian invasion, and Ukraine is still standing”. We could look at this with satisfaction. That would be a very wrong way of thinking. First and foremost, Ukraine is standing because of the determination of the Ukrainian people and secondly because of the arms that we gave them. We gave them arms slowly and gradually and Ukraine has managed to survive despite that, not because of that. I think we need to compress the timelines, correct the mistakes we made last year and give Ukrainians everything we can as quickly as we can to push this war to conclusion. That is the thing that will eventually re-establish peace and equilibrium.

As regards the US internal policy, right now we have a substantial majority of Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate, who fully support Ukraine and are very happy to put sanctions and pressure on Russia. I think this is a sustainable situation for about one year. We will get into the situation in the next year where the presidential election’s dynamics will start to take over. In this context Donald Trump - who is already a declared candidate - will declare that we shouldn’t spend so much money on Ukraine because it is a European problem. This is the kind of argument he is going to use and it could put pressure on Republicans and become dangerous among the public. All of the other presidential candidates will be in favour of supporting Ukraine. Even the most likely alternative to Trump on the Republican side - Ron De Santis - is careful not to oppose Ukraine. We don’t know how the electoral dynamic will go. One scenario is that Republican voters could reject the figure of Trump and choose other personalities; the other scenario is that Trump captures the majority of the Republican electorate. In the latter case we run a risk of a repeat and it’s hard to predict how things will go this time.

## *Closing remarks*

**Hanna Halchenko**, Counsellor, Embassy of Ukraine to Italy\*

Dear speakers, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this distinguished audience, it's an honour to be here. Today's gathering is more than a meeting between officials and experts, it is a meeting of true friends and partners. I'm glad to acknowledge you all here, in this conference room, are true supporters of Ukraine in our existential fight. My country has been ravaged, our houses have been bombed, our citizens have been executed, our children have been traumatized and terrorized by bombing and drone attacks, but Ukraine has done a magnificent job withstanding its adversaries against Russian unprovoked invasion. We have preserved Ukrainian freedom. Thanks to everyone who is fighting, thanks to everyone who helps us fight. First and foremost, I would like to thank all the distinguished speakers for the excellent thought-provoking talks. It will probably be a day or two before we can consolidate our own personal perspectives on this issue. I would like to review some of its main points during our deliberation. The one overriding message is that the 21st century war in Europe led by nuclear power is pushing the global security architecture to be rethought. President Putin hoped the invasion of my country would split the West, instead the scale of the Transatlantic response to the war - from energy, to participation, to sanctions, to migration management - has demonstrated that the international community has remained united with Ukraine. Our partners and friends have presented a united front standing firmly with Kyiv. In a way Ukraine has brought the European Union together like never before. As said by the distinguished speaker Kurt Volker, Putin's war against Ukraine is a war against Europe.



The economic sanctions imposed by the EU, NATO allies and other countries have been unprecedented in terms of scope, scale, and severity. The anti-Kremlin coalition has gradually become strong, effective and larger. The recent decisions of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group have boosted our military capabilities at a decisive stage of the war. Thanks to the Coalition.

Moreover, those new forms of cooperation and decision making are shaping a new reality and a new approach to security and challenges. Russia's decision to invade Ukraine has also appeared to strengthen the West. Today, it was mentioned that the European Union and NATO now have a renewed sense of purpose. For example, after a decade of non-alignment, Finland and Sweden have asked to join NATO as a form of protection against Russia. Ukraine submitted its application to join the European Union one year ago on the fifth day of Russia's full-scale war and, since then, it has become a candidate to join the EU. Then, Ukraine has applied for the “fast-track NATO membership”.

As President Zelensky emphasized, Ukraine has always been and will always be a part of Europe. For many years to come we have security. As underlined by all the distinguished speakers and especially Paula J. Dobriansky, Russia's invasion of Ukraine also triggered the global concerns over the issue of energy security. For decades Europe has relied on Moscow for its supply of oil and gas; however, as President Zelensky said, the old European hope that economic ties would hold off Russians did not work.

The invasion proved that Moscow could no longer be a reliable partner and supplier and pushed the continent to seek alternative sources of energy. The loss of Russian imports has increased awareness of the danger behind relying on certain geopolitical actors for fundamental resources. Security and affordability play a key role in national politics

on energy in years to come. Moreover, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has the potential to accelerate the global shift to green energy in the long run. The war against Ukraine has also brought attention to the issue of its implication for the rule of law and it remains the most feared and unprecedented challenge to the international community since WWII. Russian troops systematically violated international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine. The strategic need to halt Russia is to prevent future wars.

The crime of aggression committed by Russian political and military leadership against Ukraine poses a threat to the entire world community. Leaving these actions without punishment can be a dangerous sign that the world is dominated by force and not by law.

There is one more important issue that I would like to touch upon: environmental damage. The environmental damage in Ukraine caused by the Russian War is estimated at more than 46 billion US dollars. Just one example, Ukraine has become one of the most mined countries in the world. One third of Ukraine's territory requires demining, a process that will require at least 5 years. And, on top of that, there are other dangerous actions put in place by the Russian Federation around Ukrainian nuclear power plants that continue to increase the risk of environmental disasters.

By concluding, I would like to draw attention one more time to the fact that Russia has not changed its plans to destroy Ukraine. Every time Russia cynically calls for negotiation, its occupational forces do the exact opposite and go on fighting. Ukraine continues to fight for freedom. We will fight for as long as it takes to win because we have no choice but to win. The spring and early summer of this year will be decisive for the course of the war.

The speed of ending the war, as mentioned by Kurt Volker and Oxana Antonenko, depends on timely military and technical assistance from our partners. We are deeply grateful to all of our allies and States that are supporting us. More support now means faster victory.

I would also like you all to join and to contribute to peace and the rule of law by facilitating and promoting the implementation of the peace formula plan proposed by President Zelensky. All 10 points of the plan are based on the principles of the UN charter and guarantees of security and justice for the entire international community. It is in our common interest to bring peace back as soon as possible. Thank you.

\*(text not revised by the author)

## *Second Session*

### *NATO and the EU: Strengthening the Transatlantic world. Economics and security*

Chair: **Marta Dassù**, Senior Advisor European Affairs, Aspen Institute Italia; Editor-in-Chief, Aspenia; Vice President CAS\*

#### **2.1 Viktor Elbling**, Ambassador of Germany to Italy\*

**Marta Dassù:** *Il titolo del panel è “NATO ed Unione Europea”. La Guerra in Ucraina segna un grande rilancio della NATO ma non è ancora chiaro come il tema della sicurezza e della difesa verrà affrontato in Europa. Un fattore chiave è naturalmente la Germania, che ha recentemente deciso di investire 100 miliardi nel settore della difesa per raggiungere il celebre 2% del PIL. C’è una polemica: una scuola di pensiero ritiene infatti che questo sforzo tedesco sia rivolto a creare una capacità militare nazionale e transatlantica – anche attraverso l’acquisto di F35 – piuttosto che europea. Viktor Elbling, cosa ne pensi dell’approccio tedesco? La Germania è davvero diventata un paese “NATO first” e ha smesso di pensare alla costruzione di una difesa europea?*

*La priorità degli Stati Uniti, come sappiamo, è la competizione con la Cina nel teatro dell’Indo-Pacifico. Fino a quando l’America rimarrà impegnata sul fronte europeo e quando chiederà a noi europei di impegnarci in prima linea?*

**Viktor Elbling:** Grazie a tutti, è un piacere essere qui. Per quanto riguarda le politiche di sicurezza e di difesa, sia l'Italia che la Germania – e probabilmente l'Unione Europea in generale – vengono da una tradizione basata sul Soft Power. Nel corso dei decenni abbiamo pensato che il Soft Power, nella forma del dialogo o dello scambio commerciale, fosse lo strumento per costruire una cooperazione pacifica che portasse benefici per tutti. Per un paese come la Germania, il nuovo approccio rappresenta una svolta epocale. Uno degli elementi che rende ancora più visibile questo cambio di mentalità è la posizione dei Verdi, un partito cresciuto con alcuni principi cardine come il disarmo e la demilitarizzazione. Attualmente, nel governo, il partito dei Verdi è infatti quello più favorevole ad un *engagement* sempre maggiore da un punto di vista militare. Siamo di fronte ad una svolta enorme, che deve ancora vedere una sua implementazione completa. Ritengo che i 100 miliardi siano una somma relativamente piccola se pensiamo alle spese necessarie per rimettere in sesto l'esercito tedesco – che non è in uno stato ottimale – dopo 40 anni in cui si credeva che la difesa tradizionale non fosse più necessaria. L'idea è quella di avere a disposizione un budget per poter iniziare un percorso di ammodernamento delle forze armate. C'è un tema relativo alle tempistiche. Quello che sta succedendo in Ucraina ci impone di investire sulla difesa e sulla sicurezza ora, non solo in ambito nazionale ma anche in ambito europeo attraverso l'integrazione delle nostre industrie. La decisione di puntare su armamenti americani o israeliani piuttosto che europei si spiega con la necessità di avere determinati strumenti nel più breve tempo possibile, poiché abbiamo una guerra di fronte alle nostre porte. La Germania è il terzo paese per aiuti forniti all'Ucraina (secondo se teniamo in considerazione le risorse che passano attraverso l'Unione Europea) e sta svolgendo un ruolo fondamentale sul tema dei carri armati. Siamo, de facto, i leader della squadra che sta tentando di mettere insieme i

due battaglioni di Leopard. È la dimostrazione del fatto che stiamo facendo grandi passi avanti in questo campo.

**Marta Dassù:** *Uno degli esiti possibili della guerra potrebbe essere un cessate il fuoco sul modello della Corea. Come pensi potrà evolvere la guerra? C'è un accordo tra Stati Uniti ed Europa?*

**Viktor Elbling:** Ritengo che sarebbe sbagliato cercare di prevedere quale sarà l'esito della guerra perché, come sosteneva Churchill, "siamo alla fine dell'inizio ma non ancora all'inizio della fine". In quest'ultimo anno le previsioni sono state ribaltate diverse volte. Tutti gli esperti si aspettavano una rapida vittoria della Russia e nessuno si aspettava una controffensiva degli Ucraini. Per questo motivo, indicare un punto di arrivo in questo contesto è praticamente impossibile.

Tutti noi vogliamo la pace ma è importante che questa sia giusta, duratura nel futuro e conforme a quanto dicono gli Ucraini. Questa guerra ha dimostrato che chi rinuncia alle armi nucleari – come ha fatto l'Ucraina nel 1994 – si trova davanti a problemi molto seri. È un messaggio recepito da paesi come Iran e Corea del Nord. L'architettura mondiale della sicurezza è messa in discussione da questa guerra ed arrivare ad una pace "giusta" è forse più importante di ottenere una pace nel minor tempo possibile.

\*(text not revised by the author)

## 2.2 Ian Lesser, Vice President, German Marshall Fund of the United States\*

**Marta Dassù:** *Ian Lesser, we are discussing the NATO-EU relationship and are examining the approach of different countries. I would ask you about Turkey, a key NATO member that is playing a crucial role both in security and energy terms. What do you think about the role of Turkey in light of the war in Ukraine?*

**Ian Lesser:** This is a multifaceted question. Turkey is a stakeholder in what has been happening over the last year. It has a strong relationship with Russia and – at the same time – it is a key member of the Atlantic Alliance. Turkey is exposed: as long as this conflict goes on, the chance of an incident could take shape. Many of these risks are not only on the Polish border with Ukraine or in the Baltic but also in the Black Sea or in the Eastern Mediterranean. There are many places where NATO allies and Russia have come into contact. There is evidence in the past between Turkey and Russia. I remember the shooting down of a Russian aircraft in 2015. If it happened today, it would be very different. Turkey is playing a very delicate game: on the one hand, it would like to see itself as a facilitator of negotiations between Ukraine and Russia (in a limited sense it has done that with the “grain deal”); on the other hand, it is very well aware of being dependent on the NATO security guarantee. There is one area where Turkey is not on the same page and that is when it comes to sanctions. This country is in fact allergic to economic sanctions. There is a long story going back to the relationship with Iraq and Iran. Turkey is clearly allowing a sort of economic escape valve for Russia, adopting an approach which is not popular in Washington or Brussels. It’s a very difficult kind of game for the Turks to play in this functional non-

alignment that they aspire to, which is maybe the instinct of President Erdogan himself and some of the people around him. But it's getting harder and harder to act like this.

**Marta Dassù:** *Now, I would like to focus on the solidity of the American domestic front, a key-point in view of the 2024 elections. How do you read it? Because the “radical” wings of both parties seem to be more sceptical about the amount of aid to give to Ukraine for many different reasons, such as the idea that the real competition is with China and this war is distracting resources to the European front. Which is your assessment on this?*

**Ian Lesser:** I would make a distinction between what the United States is doing in spending with regard to defence support for Ukraine and what the United States is doing in terms of its own defence budget, and that's likely to include all kinds of new spending on nuclear modernization. I would imagine this support will stay fairly strong on a bipartisan basis. It will be much more difficult to converge on the economic support for Ukraine. If we think about the long-term demand for reconstruction in Ukraine, I do believe that this is going to shape a new form of burden-sharing across the Atlantic. It will be very complicated for any American administration to justify large-scale economic support for Ukraine over the longer term, unless Europe seems to give its contribution on that front. So, I would distinguish between the defence issue – which is driven by Russia and national defence concerns – and the longer-term economic support for reconstruction in Ukraine, where China plays a role as well in terms of the perception about security and defence spending. On the



economic side, policies are going to get very complicated and they will be related to what is going to happen in the 2024 elections.

\*(text not revised by the author)

### 2.3 Aurelio Regina, Delegate for Energy, Confindustria\*

**Marta Dassù:** *Lascio la parola ad Aurelio Regina per parlare di ricostruzione economica e di energia, due temi su cui l'Italia sta lavorando. In entrambi i casi c'è l'idea che la crisi generi opportunità. Da mesi stiamo implementando una politica di diversificazione energetica ed ora, con le nostre imprese, ci stiamo interessando alla ricostruzione dell'Ucraina, un Paese che è stato in buona parte distrutto. Quello che mi colpisce è che, laddove la Russia non riesce a vincere, distrugge tutto. Ci sono fotografie che certificano la distruzione di alcune città del Donetsk.*

**Aurelio Regina:** Ringrazio il Centro Studi Americani ed Aspen Italia per la grande opportunità. Tutti noi dobbiamo renderci conto del fatto che Putin ha dichiarato guerra all'Europa intera e non solo all'Ucraina. E questo è particolarmente vero se guardiamo agli aspetti inerenti al fronte energetico. I prezzi dell'energia hanno cominciato a lievitare ben prima del 24 febbraio 2022, con fattori congiunturali che hanno determinato un tale incremento. Tra questi il periodo di siccità in alcuni bacini idroelettrici, la mancata ventosità nel nord d'Europa ed il livello degli stoccaggi. Si parla poco di uno degli effetti più importanti: Putin, attraverso Gazprom, ha fatto gradualmente mancare i volumi in eccesso di gas – quelli al di fuori dei contratti di lungo termine che normalmente venivano destinati a bilanciare i mercati – dalle piattaforme elettroniche. Questo ha reso il TTF illiquido, spingendo gradualmente i prezzi verso l'alto fino ad arrivare a picchi insostenibili con l'invasione dell'Ucraina. Attraverso questa strategia il Cremlino ha cercato di condizionare e sterilizzare la reazione europea dopo l'inizio della guerra. Per alcuni aspetti ha avuto successo, per altri no. Uno degli effetti della guerra è stato quello di

far emergere le differenze in termini di politiche energetiche tra gli Stati membri, che rendono difficile l'integrazione dei mercati. Il vero obiettivo a cui dobbiamo tendere è la creazione di un mercato unico ed integrato del gas. I tedeschi erano ancor più impauriti di noi Italiani di fronte ai possibili effetti della carenza di gas sul sistema industriale, come dimostrato dall'ostilità della Germania alla proposta italiana del "Price Cap". Alla fine c'è stato un compromesso modesto che ha avuto i suoi effetti sulla riduzione del gas. Oggi abbiamo dei livelli di prezzo più sostenibili, anche se equivalgono al doppio dei prezzi del periodo precedente al Covid.

Mi sbilancio affermando che tendenzialmente negli anni a venire ci sarà un afflusso sostanzioso di gas in Europa ed è dunque legittimo aspettarsi che i prezzi rimangano stabili o addirittura si riducano. Questo è importante perché naturalmente toglie dal campo una delle armi su cui Putin contava di più nel confronto con la comunità transatlantica. Tanto è vero che già oggi la Russia non fa più dichiarazioni o minacce sul gas, perché risulterebbero ininfluenti sulla determinazione dei prezzi. La crisi energetica arriva in un momento in cui l'Europa – ed in parte gli Stati Uniti – sta trasformando il proprio modello energetico a causa del cambiamento climatico. Si tratta di una novità che riguarda il consumo, la produzione e la trasformazione dell'energia, con un impatto rivoluzionario sui sistemi industriali. Il processo sarà profondo e delinea una rivoluzione equiparabile a quella industriale. La rivoluzione dei prezzi avviene contemporaneamente, mentre ci diamo degli obiettivi molto sfidanti, come quelli relativi al "Fit for 55". La transizione ecologica ha tuttavia evidenziato una serie di incongruenze: se da una parte chiediamo alle industrie di pagare i certificati della CO<sub>2</sub>, dall'altra autorizziamo le centrali a carbone a produrre più energia. Ritengo che in una fase emergenziale abbiamo adottato dei comportamenti sclerotici, che ci portano a dire che oggi l'Europa ha la grande responsabilità di definire

la sua politica energetica ed uscire dall'era degli egoismi. Per una politica energetica che si rispetti occorrono tre fattori: la sostenibilità ambientale, in linea con la visione europea; la sicurezza degli approvvigionamenti; l'ottimizzazione dei costi. Sul secondo e sul terzo fattore noi ci siamo illusi di poter avere per decine di anni un gas a prezzo modico e in quantità enormi, affidandoci ad un provider non particolarmente affidabile. L'Europa si è invece focalizzata sul primo fattore. Oggi ci rendiamo conto che agire su un solo fattore e non anche sugli altri due significa trovarsi in grande difficoltà. Ecco perché ci stiamo orientando verso una politica di diversificazione, che cambia l'assetto geopolitico europeo spostando l'asse di approvvigionamenti dal nord-est al sud o sud-est – con la Tap che dà un rifornimento – e porta con sé una nuova visione grazie al nuovo Piano Mattei, attraverso cui l'Italia potrebbe fungere da hub per tutto il resto dell'Europa. E dunque, anche rispetto ad un sistema di difesa e di sicurezza nazionale, vanno fatte le adeguate riflessioni.

\*(text not revised by the author)

**Marta Dassù:** *Parliamo ora della gamba economica ed energetica perché, secondo me, è difficile che un'alleanza così stretta come quella tra Stati Uniti ed Europa possa reggersi solo sulla gamba della NATO. Serve anche un solido accordo economico tra le due sponde dell'Atlantico. Non è semplice perché, con l'IRA (Inflation Reduction Act), l'America ha ribadito il sostegno ai propri prodotti e alla propria industria. Recentemente, a tal proposito, si sono recati negli Stati Uniti Ursula Von der Leyen e i ministri dell'economia di Francia e Germania. Si può trovare un accordo? Che tipo di risultato ideale potremmo ottenere?*

**Viktor Elbling:** Abbiamo sicuramente bisogno di un accordo commerciale costruito sui nuovi obiettivi che abbiamo definito. I temi sono quelli del cambiamento climatico e dell'energia pulita. In America sono quasi tutti d'accordo sul fatto che bisogna investire su questo fronte. Da un punto di vista europeo, ritengo che si critichi un po' troppo l'IRA. È un bene, infatti, che gli americani vogliano investire pesantemente nell'energia pulita. Ciò che apprezziamo di meno è la volontà di trovare una base industriale esclusiva negli Stati Uniti. Anche lì, coloro che fanno parte delle filiere e vengono dall'Europa ne possono approfittare, portando i loro prodotti verso gli Stati Uniti. Ci piacerebbe operare in un contesto dove sia chiaro che insieme dobbiamo produrre un determinato tipo di prodotti. Io credo che sia possibile arrivare ad un accordo con gli Stati Uniti perché il primo obiettivo degli americani non è quello di nuocere all'Europa. Esistono tre obiettivi: il primo è quello della sicurezza, anche in relazione alla Cina; il secondo è quello dell'energia pulita; il terzo è quello del finanziamento. Veniamo da una tradizione in Europa per cui il mix energetico si fa attraverso politiche nazionali ma con il tempo stiamo realizzando come non sia possibile attuare 27 politiche

diverse. Lo stesso discorso è valso per la pandemia ed il fronte sanitario. La discussione sul “Price Cap” ha a che fare con tutto questo perché ognuno di noi ha esigenze diverse e, ad esempio, l’industria tedesca è pesantemente basata sul gas naturale. Le naturali differenze di vedute si possono risolvere sostenendo una politica energetica comune, incentrata sulle connessioni per elettrico, gas e possibilmente idrogeno. Credo che sia necessario trovare una soluzione congiunta perché siamo in una nuova fase. La comunità dei valori dell’Occidente – estesa a Corea del Sud, Giappone, Australia, Nuova Zelanda – ci obbliga a unirci in modo diverso rispetto a quanto fatto fino ad ora. Lo sguardo degli Stati Uniti verso la Cina ci aiuta in questo senso ma quello di cui abbiamo bisogno è un’unità transatlantica molto forte, da un punto di vista politico ed economico.

**Marta Dassù:** *Ian Lesser, two questions for you. The first is on the economic track of the Transatlantic bargain: do you think that something like the TTIP would be possible? And then, which kind of Soft Power can be effective enough to extend the notion of the West? How can we regain influence in the global South?*

**Ian Lesser:** We talked about the return of war. But there are other things that have come back. The State is back, and this is not just a result of what happened over the last year. We can go back to the 2008 economic crisis, the Covid crisis or the energy crisis. Industrial policies are back, also on the American side. And so we have to grapple with this. It produces a lot of ironies: there is the irony of having this extraordinarily close cooperation on security issues across the Atlantic in the last period, accompanied by all sorts of unresolved tensions on trade and regulatory matters. Just think about the IRA or

the differences over digital policies. I think it shows us how unfortunate it is that we don't have something like TTIP. I think that probably we wouldn't have gotten into the same difficulty over the IRA if we did have something like it. I'm confident that this will be resolved. Another irony: the Europeans would like to see the United States to follow – in a public policy way – a long line for energy transition and climate policy. But it requires some political compromises to sell this internally at that scale. I think we are never going to get away from these tensions entirely but I believe we face some really new challenges because it's not just a matter of private sector policy. The State is back, together with industrial policies. My sense is that in Washington, with this administration, there is a recognition that you cannot completely expect consensus globally, even around something which is clear cut as the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Most countries in the global South are on the same page with the West, in terms of the war's effects and legality.

But beyond that, there is a breaking point with the West as regards Russia's policy and sanctions regime. In this context we could see this "functional non-alignment": a moral and legal agreement with the West but a disagreement on strategy and sanctions. I'm sure we are going to face these challenges in the future, as China is demonstrating.

**Marta Dassù:** *Aurelio Regina, qual è l'agenda vera di un dialogo che ci vada bene nell'economia tra Stati Uniti ed Europa? Viktor sosteneva che di fronte all'IRA abbiamo avuto una reazione esagerata perché in fondo nulla impedisce ad una azienda europea di andare a produrre in America e di prendere crediti fiscali. È un problema se produciamo energia pulita in America? Ci dobbiamo difendere o dobbiamo cooperare?*

**Aurelio Regina:** Io credo che la reazione europea all'IRA sia arrivata in un momento in cui lo sbilanciamento dei prezzi dell'energia tra Stati Uniti ed Europa era altissimo e si aggiungeva ad uno svantaggio competitivo importante. Lo sbilanciamento era tale per cui il prezzo dell'energia era di gran lunga superiore a quello del 2019. In particolare, quello con gli Stati Uniti raggiungeva vette ancora più elevate. Condivido l'idea secondo cui c'è stata una reazione eccessiva. Il piano americano per la riduzione dell'inflazione va attuato con cautela perché - come molti economisti sanno - rischia di aumentare il debito e di rivelarsi poco produttivo. Si tratta di un grande piano di sostegno alla trasformazione energetica, che va preso come un avviso ed un'opportunità per l'Europa. Io mi auguro che l'Unione Europea guardi a questo contesto in un'ottica di dimensione industriale. Il prossimo futuro dei nostri paesi dipenderà da come sapremo costruire la nuova dimensione europea e come sapremo coniugare la transizione energetica. Confrontarsi con sistemi di paesi amici come gli Stati Uniti è solo un'opportunità. Naturalmente dobbiamo ideare dei percorsi, abbattere delle barriere e dare una dimensione globale agli aiuti di stato, concentrandoli nelle poche attività che risultano strategiche per l'Europa. Dobbiamo soprattutto guardare al futuro dell'Europa e della politica ambientale in un'ottica di neutralità tecnologica.

**Viktor Elbling:** Sia il Fondo Monetario Internazionale che la Commissione Europea sostengono da decenni che la Germania investe troppo poco, come è ravvisabile osservando strade, ferrovie e ponti. Abbiamo risparmiato troppo per anni, ora spendiamo di più e veniamo criticati. Secondo la teoria economica, coloro che sono nelle condizioni di farlo dovrebbero spendere di più poiché questo produrrebbe benefici per tutti gli altri. È vero che gli Stati Uniti stanno agendo attraverso l'IRA ma in Europa non siamo rimasti fermi. Grazie



al Next Generation EU abbiamo investito 750 miliardi di euro. Se prendiamo in considerazione tutti i sussidi messi in campo da noi – sia quelli pubblici che quelli privati – raggiungiamo una somma superiore a quella messa in campo dagli Stati Uniti.

**Aurelio Regina:** Come Confindustria stiamo per presentare al governo uno studio sull’impatto economico del “Fit for 55” in Italia. Vi anticipo che noi dovremo spendere da qui al 2030 circa 1100 miliardi di euro, che equivalgono a circa 150 miliardi di euro l’anno. Stiamo parlando di una quantità enorme di denaro, che sarà vitale se riusciremo ad investire attraverso una politica industriale che valorizzi i punti di forza e non punti su un’unica tecnologia, favorevole per altri ma non per l’Europa.

**Marta Dassù:** *Ian Lesser, you rightly said that industrial policy is back. The point is that in Europe we tend to invest money according to national priorities. The idea - especially in Italy - is that we have to move to a more European approach to industrial policies. In stronger countries, such as Germany, national recipes are always important. In the US there are very strange phenomena because for instance Texas - a State which is ideologically against climate change and clean energy - is producing much more clean energy than California.*

**Ian Lesser:** Yes, my country always produces lots of strange phenomena. I would focus on the tensions between national and European policies. It is also a question about how the United States relate to these things. There is a window of opportunity with this administration because, unlike many predecessors of either party, it

actually takes the European Union seriously as an institution. The issues of friend-shoring and decoupling are crucial nowadays and allies such as Canada or the European Union are extremely important for the United States.

## *Closing remarks*

**Antonio Tajani**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International  
Cooperation

La guerra in Ucraina ci pone davanti a molte sfide di respiro globale. Il nostro sentiero è però chiaramente tracciato. La posizione del Governo italiano è inequivocabile: la nostra sicurezza, stabilità e prosperità non possono essere assicurate che dal rispetto della legalità internazionale. In questo, il partenariato transatlantico, forte della sua granitica identità di valori, si è dimostrato e continua a dimostrarsi solido e compatto, dando prova di lucidità, pragmatismo ed equilibrio. Chi aveva scommesso sulle nostre fragilità e divisioni ha commesso un errore strategico.

L'unità che continuiamo a mantenere anche sulle sanzioni nei confronti della Federazione Russa fa parlare ora di una vera e propria "coalizione delle sanzioni": una coalizione che non scende a compromessi per difendere valori che non sono negoziabili; e che non fa sconti a chi viola tali valori.

Non siamo soli: il 24 febbraio a New York, l'Assemblea Generale dell'ONU ha adottato ad ampia maggioranza una Risoluzione per la pace in Ucraina che richiama chiaramente il rispetto del diritto internazionale e della Carta delle Nazioni Unite. 141 Paesi, inclusa l'Italia, si sono uniti per sostenere i principi condivisi di legalità internazionale e convivenza pacifica tra gli Stati.

Le sfide che abbiamo davanti non si esauriscono sul territorio dell'Ucraina, né tanto meno in Europa: instabilità, insicurezza alimentare, vulnerabilità degli approvvigionamenti energetici, migrazioni, cambiamento climatico riguardano tutti. Per questo è

fondamentale portare avanti un'azione unita, coesa e strategica verso il “Sud del Mondo”. Perché gli spazi che noi lasciamo vuoti verranno riempiti da altri, Russia e Cina in primis: i nuovi equilibri geopolitici globali dipenderanno dalla nostra capacità di risposta insieme ad Alleati e partner.

La NATO e l'Unione Europea si stanno muovendo con visione e decisione, reagendo alle minacce anche in ambiti nuovi quali la sicurezza alimentare ed energetica, la sicurezza cibernetica, la disinformazione, l'affidabilità delle infrastrutture critiche e delle catene del valore, la sfida tecnologica e per la sicurezza dello spazio extra-atmosferico.

L'Italia vuole essere protagonista su tutti questi fronti: rafforzando il proprio ruolo di snodo energetico in Europa, promuovendo soluzioni di lungo termine per sistemi alimentari sostenibili, impegnandosi per consolidare e sviluppare i partenariati economici e commerciali, investendo su un'immagine innovativa di Paese all'avanguardia sul piano scientifico e tecnologico. È uno sforzo corale di tutto il Governo, al quale contribuiscono tutte le componenti del sistema Paese, incluse le Forze Armate, le imprese, le università, la società civile.

Dobbiamo anche continuare a lavorare insieme ad Alleati e partner per rilanciare sul piano internazionale il dialogo su un multilateralismo realmente efficace, responsabile, trasparente attento alle diverse istanze e sensibilità e alla ricerca di soluzioni concrete. Credo che la nostra Presidenza G7 nel 2024 sarà l'occasione per tornare a focalizzare l'attenzione sulla costruzione di strategie condivise per affrontare le grandi sfide attuali, in un dialogo costante con i paesi che appartengono al “Sud Globale”.

Il Governo italiano continuerà a dare il suo importante contributo, investendo nel rapporto transatlantico, che da oltre settant'anni è la stella polare dell'azione esterna del nostro Paese.