

The common belief of modernity was the idea of the underlying ethical purpose of politics and their legal framework – social contract, liberty and equality of all men, constitutional rights, scientific progress and social justice. These were the new

Germany, that served as the first step toward creating the EU. Both institutions were the product of trauma of the Second World War and of the American will to be the guarantor of peace, if not worldwide than at least in Europe. It was the time when everybody in Europe, In the United States and in the Soviet Union, wanted to avoid World War Three – the memories of the last war were still too vivid and the marks of war – too unmistakable.

In parenthesis I would like to remark that united Europe remains perhaps a unique example of successful implementation of the modern ideal of supremacy of international, that is pan-European, law, but also an example of regionalization, already predicted by the father of geopolitics Friedrich Ratzel in the XIX century.

The period between 1945 and 1991 was the longest period of peace that Europe had known. Despite many uncertainties, this period was marked by symmetrical relations. Indeed what is more symmetrical than the MAD - Mutually Asserled Destruction doctrine, with its very elaborate strategy of nuclear dissuasion based on the principle of symmetrical annihilation. Some even argued that the USSR enjoyed the status of a superpower only because of the special arrangement with the US called the Cold War.¹

Despite their antagonism, both sides did everything to avoid any real

Symmetry, even the symmetry of threats, balances off the uncertainty of the possible outcomes when the threats are actualized. For a while, this symmetry of

between the United States, and its allies on one hand and the rest of the world on the other. The real problem is, until now we were unable to properly measure and adequately analyze these disturbances. Some call it the Clash of Civilizations, others – the rise of "Islamofascism", or the negative side-effect of the benevolent empire-building. Whatever it may be, it signifies a profound crisis of modernity in international relations.

The first clear signal of this crisis was the NATO-led attack against former

- Climate change, increasing pollution and environmental degradation.

If we look at the past fifteen years, we see that the trend toward fewer conflicts reported by peace researchers since the early 1990s, now seems to have been broken.⁴

Perhaps most unfortunate is our own disregard for the norms and principles of international law. One example of it is the unilateral declaration of the independence of Kosovo and its recognition by the leading European powers and the United States in February of this year. It is another blow to the system of international law and post-war legal arrangements. Recognition of Kosovo sets a dangerous precedent not only in terms of encouraging separatists movements world-wide, but most importantly in violating the spirit and the letter of important international treaties. It violates two international treaties - the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, as well as the UN Resolution 1244, and legal recommendation of the Arbitration Commission of the Peace Conference on the former Yugoslavia also known as the Badinter Commission.

Pacific NATO, involving US, Japan and Australia. All this points in the direction of growing regionalization and potential rivalry between different regions.

Some critics will say that these blocs are defensive, or even dysfunctional. Yet, I would like to remind you what Otto Von Bismarck once said about politics: "In

If you think that the generation that lived through the Second World War is slowly passing away, and less and less people remember the meaning of real war, it seems like we are no longer afraid of it, if only because we don't know what it is. Empowered by our ever-performing technology, we are no longer seem to be bound by our historic experience that found its expression in international public law since 1945. The danger is - if we are to forget what we lived through, we will be tempted of living through this experience again, and this is something we all need to avoid. In this context, one cannot over-emphasized the importance of true humanist education to think critically and act civically. Peace, just like culture, requires an effort, an act of will. Today, a deeper understanding of the global issues is needed, because it helps us to see how we got to where we are today. Only then can we begin to contemplate and effectively plan where we are heading and what that implies for the community of nations of today and tomorrow.