

Reality confronts the Euro ruling-strata – 'Through the tear in the fantasy bubble, they see their own demise'

By Alastair Crooke – Strategic Culture Foundation

Ostensibly, it is not in Europe's interest to mount a concerted resistance against the U.S. President over a failed war.

They (the Euro-élites) don't have a chance: *"If Trump imposes this tariff [25%], the U.S. will be in a serious trade conflict with the EU"*, the Norwegian Prime Minister threatens. And what if Brussels does retaliate?

"They can try, but they can't", Trump responded. Von der Leyen has, however, already promised that she will retaliate. Nonetheless, the combined suite of the Anglo administrative forces is still unlikely to compel Trump to put U.S. military troops on the ground in Ukraine to protect European interests (and investments!).

The reality is that every European NATO member – to varying degrees of self-embarrassment – admits publicly now that none of them want to participate in securing Ukraine *without* having U.S. military troops provide 'backstop' to those European forces. This is a palpably obvious scheme to inveigle Trump into continuing the Ukraine war – as is Macron and Starmer's dangling of the mineral deal to try to trick Trump to recommit to the Ukraine war. Trump plainly sees through these ploys.

The fly in the ointment, however, is that Zelensky seemingly fears a ceasefire, more than he fears losing further ground on the battlefield. He too, seems to need the war to continue (to preserve continuing in power, possibly).

Trump calling time on the Ukraine war that has been lost has seemingly caused European elites to enter some form of cognitive dissonance. Of course, it has been clear for some time that Ukraine would not retake its 1991 borders, nor force Russia into a negotiating position weak enough for the West to be able to dictate its own cessation terms.

As Adam Collingwood writes:

"Trump has torn a huge rip in the interface layer of the fantasy bubble ... the governing élite [in the wake of Trump's pivot] can see not just an electoral setback, but rather a literal catastrophe. A defeat in war, with [Europe] left largely defenceless; a de-industrialising economy; crumbling public services and infrastructure; large fiscal deficits; stagnating living standards; social and ethnic disharmony – and a powerful populist insurgency led by enemies just as grave as Trump and Putin in the Manichean struggle against vestiges of liberal times – and strategically sandwiched between two leaders that both despise and disdain them ...".

“In other words, through the tear in the fantasy bubble, Europe’s elites see their own demise”.

“Anybody who could see reality knew that things would only get worse on the war front from autumn 2023, but from their fantasy bubble, our élites couldn’t see it. Vladimir Putin, like the ‘Deplorables’ and ‘Gammons’ at home, was an atavistic daemon who would inevitably be slain on the inexorable march to liberal progressive utopia”.

Many in the Euro ruling-strata clearly are furious. Yet what can Britain or Germany actually do? It has quickly become clear that European states do not have the military capacity to intervene in Ukraine in any concerted manner. But more than anything, as Conor Gallagher points out, it is the European economy, circling the drain – largely as a result of the war against Russia – that is dragging reality to the forefront.

The new German Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, has shown himself to be the most implacable European leader advocating both military expansion and youth conscription – in what amounts to an European resistance model mounted to confront Trump’s pivot to Russia.

Yet Merz’s winning CDU/CSU achieved only 28% of votes cast, whilst losing significant voter share. Hardly an outstanding mandate for confronting both Russia – and America – together!

“I am communicating closely with a lot of prime ministers, and heads of EU states and for me it is an absolute priority to strengthen Europe as quickly as possible, so that we achieve independence from the U.S., step by step”, Friedrich Merz said.

Second place in the German election was taken by the *Alternative for Germany* (AfD) with 20% of the national vote. The party was the top vote getter in the 25-45 year-old demographic. It supports good relations with Russia, an end to the Ukraine war, and it wants to work with Team Trump, too.

Yet AfD absurdly is outcast under the ‘firewall rules’. As a ‘populist’ party with a strong youth vote, it becomes automatically relegated to the ‘wrong side’ of the EU firewall. Merz has already refused to share power with them, leaving the CDU as pig-in-the-middle, squeezed between the failing SPD, which lost the most voter share, and the AfD and *Der Linke*, another firewall outcast, which, like AfD, gained voter share, especially among the under-45s.

The rub here – and it is a big one – is that the AfD and the Left Party, *Der Linke* (8.8%), which was the top vote getter in the 18-24 demographic, are both anti-war. Together these two have more than one third of the votes in parliament – a blocking minority for many important votes, especially for constitutional changes.

This will be a big headache for Merz, as Wolfgang Münchau explains:

“For one thing, the new Chancellor had wanted to travel to the NATO summit this June, with a strong commitment to higher defence spending. And even though the Left Party and the AfD hate each other in every other respect, they agree that they won’t give Merz the money to strengthen the Bundeswehr. More important, though, is the fact that they won’t support a reform to the constitutional fiscal rules (the debt brake) that Merz and the SPD are desperate for”.

The Rules are complicated, but in gist dictate that if Germany wants to spend more money on defence and aid to Ukraine, it had to be saved from elsewhere in the budget (most likely from social spending). But politically, saving on social spending to pay for Ukraine hasn’t played well with the German electorate. The last coalition failed on precisely this issue.

Even with the Greens, Merz still will be short of the two-thirds majority necessary to make constitutional changes, and the ‘Centre’ just doesn’t have the fiscal space for challenging Russia without U.S. funding. Von der Leyen will try to ‘magic’ money for defence from somewhere, *“but German youth are voting against the Establishment parties who are hated. They can build a few Leopards if they want. They won’t get recruits”.*

Whilst the EU and Britain are proposing to raise billions to arm themselves against some imaginary Russian invasion, it will be done against the backdrop of Trump saying explicitly – on the threat of a Russian invasion of NATO – *“I don’t believe that; I don’t believe it, not one little bit”.*

Another Euro-shibboleth ripped by Trump.

Thus, how will the European public, which has largely soured on the Ukraine war, react to higher energy costs and more tax and social service cuts, in order to pursue an unwinnable war in Ukraine? Starmer already has been warned that the (government debt) ‘bond vigilantes’ will react badly to yet more UK government debt as the fiscal situation wobbles precariously.

There are no obvious solutions to Europe’s current predicament: It is, on one hand, an existential conundrum for Merz. And on the other, it is the same one that dogs the EU as a whole: To get anything done, a parliamentary majority is a basic necessity.

The ‘firewall’, though primordially intended to protect the ‘Centrists’ in Brussels from Rightist ‘populists’, was subsequently turbo-charged in Brussels by Biden’s issuing of a foreign policy determination to all U.S. foreign policy ‘actors’ to the effect that populism was a ‘threat to democracy’ and must be contested.

The practical outcome however, has been that across the EU, blocking coalitions were formed of odd (minority party) bed-fellows agreeing to keep the Centrists in power, but which rather has led to endless stasis and an ever increasing detachment from ‘we, the people’.

Angela Merkel governed in this way, kicking the can of reform down the road for years – until the situation ultimately became (and still is) insoluble.

“Can another coalition of short-sighted centrists arrest the decline of the economy, fix the failure of leadership, and free the nation from its pernicious political trap? I think we know the answer”, writes Wolfgang Münchau.

There lies a bigger problem however: As Vance very explicitly warned at the recent Munich Security Forum, Europe’s enemy lies not with Russia; It lies within. It derives, Vance implied, from the fact of having a permanent bureaucracy, assuming to itself the exclusive prerogative of autonomous governing power, yet incrementally becoming ever-more remote from its own base.

Tear down the firewalls, Vance advocated, in order to return to the (abandoned) principles of that earlier democracy originally shared between the U.S. and Europe. Implicitly, Vance is targeting the Brussels Administrative (Deep) State.

The Eurocrats see in this new front an alternate American-supported attack on their Administrative State – and perceive therein their own demise.

In the U.S., there is acknowledgement that there is an “*institutional resistance to Trump*” in the DOD, DOJ and the FBI. It proves, Margot Cleveland argues, that those touting the need for “institutional resistance” and the supposed independence from the executive branch, are the opponents to democracy – and to Trump.

Given the close nexus between the U.S., the British and European Deep States, the question arises as to why there is such strong parallel resistance to Trump amongst European leaders also.

Ostensibly, it is not in Europe’s interest to mount a concerted resistance against the U.S. President over a failed war. Is the European frenzy then fuelled by a wider (U.S.) Deep State desire to neuter the ‘Trump Revolution’ by demonstrating, in addition to the U.S. domestic opposition at home, that Trump is causing havoc amongst the U.S.’ European allies? Is Europe being pushed further down this path than they would otherwise have chosen to venture?

For Germany to change course – albeit unthinkable for Merz – it would require only a minimal amount of imagination to envision Germany again linked to Eurasia. The AfD gained 20% of the vote on just such a platform. Really, there probably is little other option.