

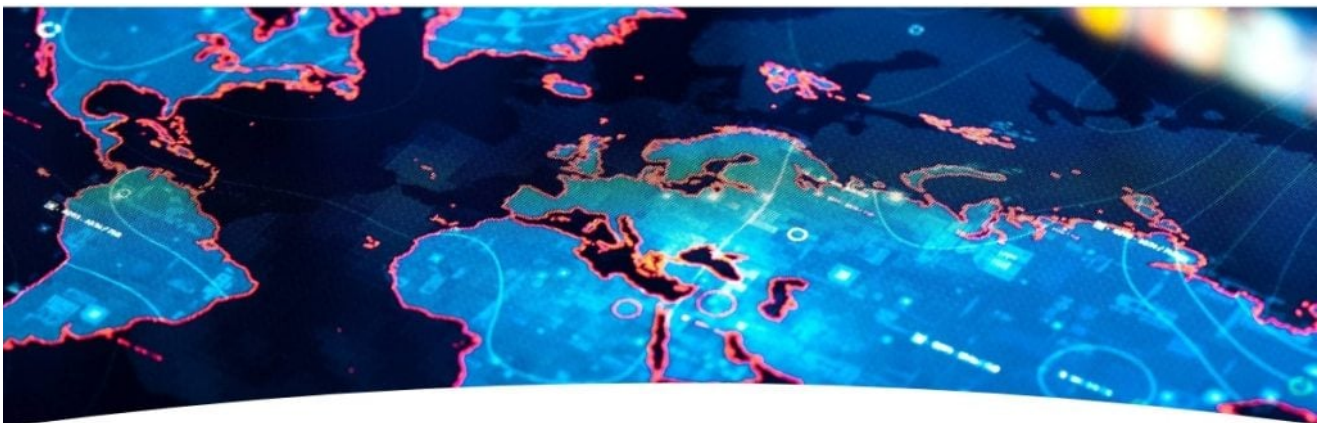
America and Europe Can Hang Together—Or Hang Separately

By Victor Davis Hanson

Consider these European and American binaries.

On December 20, 2024, a terrorist, Taleb Al-Abdul Mohsen, rammed his SUV into a Christmas crowd in Magdeburg, Germany. He killed 6 pedestrians and injured 299 others.

Eleven days later, on New Year's Eve in New Orleans, Louisiana, Shamsud-Din Bahar Jabbar smashed his pickup into a festive crowd. He murdered fifteen and hurt over 35.



Germany's fertility rate is scarcely above 1.4—about average for a shrinking European Union. About 20 percent of the country is now foreign-born, a record high.

American fertility has precipitously dived to 1.6. The foreign-born now represent 15 percent of the American resident population, the highest in both actual numbers (50 million) and percentages in history.

The German military is a shell of its former self, with fewer than 200,000 soldiers and a shortage of almost all types of weapons.

The U.S. military, after being humiliated in Afghanistan, is

currently down some 40,000-plus recruits. It faces shortages of anti-tank weapons, artillery shells, ships, and logistical support.

Germany may finally manage to spend 2% of its GDP on defense; the United States is heading downward below 3%—the lowest in over 80 years since the Great Depression.

Last year, the German economy shrank; this year, it will scarcely grow, in part because of shortages of affordable fossil fuels.

Germans pay four times what Americans on average do for electricity. Yet the Trump administration has promised an oil and natural gas renaissance, hoping to expand both production and exports with envisioned new pipelines and liquefied natural gas terminals.

In sum, the U.S. is beginning to mimic the pathologies of Europe—and yet in the next four years, renewal could help slow the decline of both.

Both face shrinking and aging populations. Both either cannot or will not control their borders, despite popular protests. Both suffer from woke political correctness and are pushing back.

The proverbial people of both nations want smaller government—and more freedom of expression and less woke. They insist on less and legal-only immigration and secure borders.

They vote for cheaper energy and fewer regulations.

Europeans and Americans alike want more meritocracy and fewer fixations on race and gender.

In the chaos of the postmodern 21st century, Europe and the U.S. nevertheless are still likely to share the same enemies and friends.

Both resent the asymmetrical Chinese approach to global commerce, based on a mercantilism that would never allow

Europe and the United States to treat China as it does both.

The Europeans and the Americans are both worried about a vastly expanding conventional and nuclear Chinese military. Neither wants Iran to develop nuclear-tipped missiles with ranges to hit the capitals of both. They do not want Vladimir Putin to recreate the former Soviet Union's borders.

Europe, as a rule, loves Democrats as kindred quasi-socialists. But privately many Europeans assume their own security and prosperity do better when America is governed by conservatives.

In the past, Europe has not been a fan of Donald Trump, both as president and as a pre- and post-presidency candidate.

They fear that he is an isolationist, insufficiently diplomatic, not fully supportive of NATO, or too tariff-happy for their tastes—and are scared of his art-of-the-deal trolling to prompt wake-up calls.

But 2025 is certainly not 2017 or even 2020. And a “reset” in thinking on both sides is urgently now needed more than ever.

The Biden administration was no model partner for Europe. It quite outrageously forced cancellations of a joint Cypriot, Greek, and Israeli EastMed pipeline to bring much-needed natural gas to Europe.

It talked a great game about strengthening NATO. But the alliance's bulwark, the U.S. military, saw its real budget cut, its Pentagon politicized, and recruitment short more than 40,000 enlistees.

The humiliating 2021 skedaddle from Afghanistan not only eroded American credibility but undermined all Western deterrence as well.

Biden opposed building new liquefied natural gas export terminals in the U.S. designed to help energy-starved Europe find a reliable and honest supplier and decouple from Russia.

Trump, in contrast, promises to “drill, drill, drill,” in part to ensure needed income by exporting huge amounts of LNG to fuel-starved Europe.

Europe was angry that a bantering Trump once bullied them to meet their promises to increase their defense spending.

But after the invasion of Ukraine, they are happy that some countries did just that.

Europeans likely want—and need—Trump to restore a more deterrent U.S. military, not a woke one.

Europe and America are both in crisis and need radical new thinking.

So, who knows—Europe may soon quietly rejoice that Biden is gone, Trump is back, and they have a strong, loyal, and rowdy friend rather than a simpering enabler.

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