

Era of Western Dominance Ended But Remains Blind to “US Elephant in the Room”: Joseph Borrell, Vice President of the European Commission

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Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission, and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has recently acknowledged the fact that the “era of Western dominance has indeed definitively ended”, adding that while “this has been theoretically understood, we have not always drawn all practical conclusions from this new reality.”

By his own [accounting](#), this was one of the four main tasks on European Union's (EU) geopolitical agenda he proposed at the Munich Security Conference (MSC), the other three being ending the humanitarian catastrophe in Palestine by implementing the two-state solution, improving European relations with the Global South, and “supporting Ukraine more and quicker.”

In July 2023 the European diplomat's statement about Europe being “[a garden](#)” (while the rest of the word was “a jungle”) became a matter of much controversy globally. Well, it seems something is rotten in the garden. Moreover, the “garden” does need the “jungle”, that is, the Global South, and thus the former is being urged by Borrell to court the latter, even though his words do not help much.

Deeds do speak even louder than words, and I've written before on how time and again the West, including Europe, [antagonizes African energy projects](#) (while Moscow and Beijing offer cooperation). For instance, in 2022 the EU Parliament passed a resolution stating that the Uganda-Tanzania EACOP project, might pose “social and environmental risks.” On the other hand, since early 2022, Europe has been [working with its American ally to find non-Russian gas suppliers](#) in North Africa and other places.

In that context, some hoped Algeria could be the big next thing in terms of hydrocarbon supplies. But this is far from being the case, for a number of reasons, as I [wrote](#) elsewhere, its [ongoing](#) tensions with Morocco, largely [made worse by Washington](#), being one of them. The fact is that the US-led West's so-called "Green Agenda" hampers energy security in Africa and elsewhere in the Global South. Ironically, it does so in Europe itself too, and, moreover, European interests pertaining to its own energy security have been [used by Washington](#). In 2019, Washington was already threatening Europe with a "gas war", as Peter Iskenderov, a RAS Slavic Studies Institute researcher, describes it.

And already [in 2021, Europe's energy crisis](#) and energy prices rise could have been at least partly avoided [if Nord Stream 2 had not been delayed](#). The latter was a complex of natural gas pipelines running from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea that was the target of a ferocious [American boycott campaign](#). One may recall that in May 2021 German members of parliament even suggested [Berlin should retaliate](#) by sanctioning the United States. All of that is water under the bridge now – and so is Nord Stream, by the way, the explosion of its pipelines being [denounced](#) by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh as a US act of sabotage. Meanwhile, Ukraine today basically [blackmails Europe](#) by refusing to renew gas shipments,

Back to Borrell, it is worth quoting his points at some length. With regards to the crisis in Gaza (which puts "the security of the EU at risk"), there is not a word on the US role in it. In fact, the whole [Red Sea crisis involving the Houthis](#), which threatens international trade, is arguably a direct spillover effect of the US-backed disastrous Israeli military campaign in Palestine.

Borrell acknowledges that "if the current global geopolitical tensions continue to evolve in the direction of 'the West against the Rest', Europe's future risks to be bleak", and adds that many in the "Global South" (that is the "jungle", as he described it before) accuse Westerns of double standards, and Russia "has managed to take advantage of the situation."

Borrell does not delve any deeper into that: for one thing, it is no wonder at all that the global rise in commodity prices has largely been perceived, in that part of world, as a product of US-led Western [sanctions policies](#) (that did not just "backfired" against Europe but also against developing nations). In the same way [fuel wars](#) have been made worse by American sanctions such as the US Caesar Act. This is the overall context of Global South nations looking for parallel mechanisms and alternatives. It is in this spirit that a new non-aligned tendency has emerged, and the BRICS+ expansion is certainly part of that. On that, Josep Borrell, in his account, merely states that "we must make a massive effort to win back the trust of our partners."

In the same accounting, Borrell also reiterated the need to reinforce European "defense capacities" and "defense industry". Something that has been made impossible by Europe's own Atlantic ally, namely the US itself, as I detailed [elsewhere](#). European [deindustrialization](#) is of course only being made worse by the American [subsidy war](#), as Jakob Hanke and Barbara Moens, writing for Politico, [described](#) the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) enacted by US Congress. The European response to it has been "heated", as detailed in a February 2024 European Parliament [study](#).

So, Europe basically wants to further arm itself (which would require re-industrializing itself, something Washington won't allow) so that it can fight a US proxy war in Ukraine, to the

detriment of its own energy interests. It remains divided though on [budgetary issues](#) with regards to further aiding Ukraine, amid farmers protests.

To sum it up, the European bloc's top diplomat accurately sees that the West, and Europe particularly is in decline and is "losing" the Global South which seems to be the new trendy word for what used to be the "Third World". EU does not seem to see or to be ready to admit, though, that a lot of it has to do with the costs of a transatlantic alliance that has not been marked by symmetry.

In other words, the price of having thrived, for a while, under an American nuclear umbrella, in the post-Marshall Plan world, can be quite high. This is the post-Nord Stream world and the future does not look good. So much has been talked about "[strategic autonomy](#)", but Western Europe simply cannot assert its [sovereignty](#). It is too entangled in NATO's structures to see the American elephant in the room.

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Featured image: EU High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell's comments have threatened an upcoming EU electoral mission to Venezuela. (Reference)

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