

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW MORAVCSIK

“THE WORLD THIS WEEKEND”

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James Cox of the BBC: American heavy-handedness, as displayed by its lobbying over membership for Turkey, does rancor with some European leaders. But does it stem from deep misconceptions on both sides of the Atlantic about the nature of each other’s political systems? Well, yes—according to Professor Andrew Moravcsik, an American, though of Hungarian stock, who is now Professor of Government at the Center for European Studies at Harvard University.

Andrew Moravcsik: Most American policy-makers misunderstand modern Europe. Enlargement is important because it demonstrates the attractiveness of a very distinctive European model of civilian power based on trade, aid, and commitment to multilateral institutions. It’s fashionable in the US to stress that only the Americans have real power, but I think we should stress also that only the Europeans can deploy accession, trade, development assistance, and peace-keeping effectively to promote peace and stability. I think that when historians look back on it 25 years from now they may well conclude that these quiet European instruments have been more effective than American guns and bombs.

BBC: This is a real clash between the advocates of power and the advocates of influence.

AM: Well, it's a clash between two conceptions of power: one conception of power that's essentially coercive and another conception of power that seeks to persuade or entice countries to accept a form of international order. And I think the European conception of power is every bit as effective as the American one.

BBC: Why is there such misapprehension about what kind of a beast the European Union is?

AMM: Americans misapprehend the European Union because they have no experience whatsoever with an international institution like it. American foreign policy is dominated by political-military thinking. The people at the top of the government think in political-military terms, the legacy of the Cold War—and it's an enduring one. Americans simply have no experience of how difficult it is to expand an institution like the European Union. I often say to American policy-makers: Imagine that Vicente Fox, the President of Mexico, comes across the border one day and says "Let's expand the range of the United States Trade Representative, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Supreme Court, the American Federal Reserve, and a dozen other federal agencies, to Mexico." And I ask them, how long do you think it would take to negotiate the agreement? The most interesting thing is the answer. American policy-makers often look at me, puzzled, and say, "the European Union does all that?"

BBC: Your piece in *Newsweek* was headlined “The Quiet Superpower.” Is there any way in which you feel the United States actually feels threatened by Europe?

ANM: No. Perhaps the United States might do well to feel a little more threatened by Europe! But I don’t feel there are fundamental conflicts of interest at the geopolitical level between the United States and Europe today. What there are are misunderstandings about the instruments of power. And those misunderstandings go both ways. The Europeans, I think, systematically undervalue the importance of military force in international affairs. Americans certainly underestimate the importance of civilian power in modern world politics. The United States simply doesn’t understand what Europe is trying to do. It’s a fair statement that no policy pursued by any country in the world over the past decade has contributed as much to the spread of peace and democracy as the enlargement of the European Union—and that’s a basic fact that Americans simply don’t understand.

BBC: How can we bring these misapprehensions together?

AMM: It’s extremely difficult to do because the misapprehension between the Europeans and Americans are embedded in the political and bureaucratic institutions that they’ve constructed. The political-military people here never really quite understand the imperatives underlying something like European integration. And I think it’s fair to say that the civilian officials in Brussels don’t very often understand the imperatives

underlying the American security strategy in the Persian Gulf. Until we can get beyond the bureaucratic misfit between the U.S. and European it's going to be very difficult to talk substance.

BBC: Professor Andrew Moravcsik of Harvard University.