Painful lessons of history thwart Europe’s ambitions

By Denis Collins

A political revolution is under way in Europe, one that is shockingly utopian, yet practical. At this point, it is unclear how many of the European nations invited to be part of this great democratic experiment to form a unified economic, political and military system actually will join. All of them ought to join, and many, if not all, will.

Yet caution struck the millennial tide when, despite a unified effort among the political elites to convince people of the obvious logic of this proposal, the citizens of Denmark thumbed their noses at the European Community bureaucrats.

Many of the recent political writings have wrongly applied economic analysis in trying to understand why the Danes said no, the Irish said yes, and all other invited nations may say no, yes or maybe.

Predictions of national decisions ought to be based upon historical analysis in addition to economic analysis. Many Danes like the idea of a common market. What they, in particular the older Danes, don’t like is the idea of forgiving Germany its transgressions. For Europeans born before 1950, World War II was yesterday, World War I was two days ago, Napoleon was three days ago and the German barbarians sacked Rome just last week. According to these people, Germany should not be trusted.

To fully understand the power of these common sentiments, and the obstacles they create, one need only talk to people walking on the streets of Brussels and other Euro-

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traveled international consultant of Moscow on European politics is all of this is exemplified by the also a contemporary non-issue.