“In a world deeply split by ideological differences a close-knit Atlantic Community seems our only hope for eventually establishing world order based on justice and the consent of the governed” so wrote Christian Herter in 1963 exactly forty years ago. “… On major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus; They agree on little and understand one another less and less” writes today Robert Kagan in his celebrated essay “Paradise and Power”

Does the “West” still exist?

Between 1989 and 2003, have we moved from a world with two Europes and one West, to a world where there is one Europe but two West, an American West and a European West?

Yesterday the threat of the Soviet Union constituted the key to the existence of the West, the negative self-definition of western identity. The West was simply about resisting the Soviet Union. In retrospect and in view of the present quasi-divorce in transatlantic relations, any attempt now to define the Atlantic Community in positive historical and cultural terms sounds nearly artificial and pretentious: “The Atlantic People are heir to a magnificent civilization whose origins include the early achievements of the Near East, the classical beauty of Greece, the juridical sagacity of Rome, the spiritual power of our religious traditions, and the humanism of the Renaissance” These lines are coming from a so-called Declaration of Paris issued in January 1962 by the delegates to the Atlantic Convention of NATO nations meeting in Paris. Today as each side is engaged in the process of denigrating the other, no party would recognize the legitimacy of the other as heir to this glorious past.

In 2003 Americans and Europeans, may be objectively united by common threats and a same vulnerability to international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, but emotionally they are divided by the sense of a growing divorce in their respective essences.

In fact we are as much divided by the threat of terrorism, as united by it. The confrontation with the “absolute other” incarnated by “fundamentalist Islam” make Europeans wonder whether the Americans answers to these threats, are not more dangerous in their potential political and social repercussions, than the threat itself.
“We” may share common responsibilities, common values, common interests...but each side across the Atlantic tends to see the other as increasingly different, even if “relative other”. “We may be in the same boat, but you are not us” are we tempted to say to each other, with a growing sense of dissociation if not animosity. “You are not us, because you refuse to see how dangerous the world is”, Americans are saying to Europeans. “You are not us because you fail to see the complexity of the world” are replying the Europeans.

It is the deep conviction of the writer of these lines that the present transatlantic crisis is structurally different and much more serious than all previous crises. We may attempt to reassure ourselves with the evocation of the Suez crisis in 1956, the French departure from the integrated military body of NATO in 1966, the depth of the divisions created by the Vietnam War in the late sixties and early seventies, not to mention the Euro-missiles crisis less than a decade later. Yet these crises were self contained by the existence of the Soviet threat and the lingering memories of World War II. The image of America the saviour had not yet been corroded by the negative image of America as the dangerous, arrogant if not yet inefficient “Emperor”.

According to another school of thinking, especially strong in the Democratic camp in the United States, the present tension is serious but should not be overstated. The present clash is artificial, the product of a unique political moment, resulting from the encounter between a unique tragedy, “Nine Eleven” and an extremely conservative and ideological administration that was not even “truly” elected by the American people. “Let us just wait for a year ...” they tell their Europeans friends, and the “nightmare” will be over with the electoral defeat of the Bush team. Yet, I believe that even if the Bush style is clearly part of the problem, this reassuring interpretation represents a simplified vision of History. For the present tension is not simply the result of a bad alchemy between a too ideological American President and a too impulsive French President. This crisis is really different for three major reasons, interacting with each other: because the world, the United States... and Europe have all changed.

It does not follow from this pessimistic reading of the present state of transatlantic relations, that we should resign ourselves passively, even for some, happily, to the slow but inevitable death of the West. We may not be able to restore the old transatlantic link, that would suppose recreating the Soviet Union, which is neither possible nor desirable, but we may reinvent it on a new basis. Indeed we must attempt to do so for a combination of strategic, political, economical, cultural and even ethical reasons. For the world would be an even more dangerous place, if the United States and Europe were to fail to reinvent a “New West”.

What can and should be done to achieve such a result, beyond the attempt to put an end to the war of words between the two sides of the Atlantic? In reality, the only chance for the West to survive is to go beyond itself and its self-deprecatory narcissism. Americans and Europeans may be divided in their attitude to power, in their definition of what constitutes power, but they are deeply united --- contrary to what they may claim --- by a deep indifference to the fate of others. “Widespread poverty and concentrated wealth cannot endure side by side in a democracy” wrote John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1946.

What was true for the United States then, is even truer for the world today in our global interdependent age. The Americans may be driven by a legitimate revisionist instinct, to change the world, if only to protect themselves from it. But what I would describe as “Responsible revisionism” --- by contrast with “Imperial revisionism” --- will only come about if Americans, Europeans and other democratic nations work together, to rebuild multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. They must do so in a way that will help closing the divorce that exists today between what is legitimate and what is legal, not to mention the growing gap between the “haves” and “haves not”. The failure of the WTO negotiations in
Cancun can be seen as a warning. To a large extent for the rest of the world, the “West” exists above all as the “North”, i.e. the rich and selfish part of the world.

To balance the United States is one objective, to live in a less unbalanced world may be an even more urgent and more important challenge, if we assume it is our collective duty to leave a more stable and fair world to the generation of our children. To confront this challenge, to go beyond ourselves, will help us reinvent the West. In fact it may be the only way to do so.

**WHY IS THIS TRANSATLANTIC CRISIS DIFFERENT FROM ALL PREVIOUS ONES?**

The interaction between a different international system, a different America and a different Europe explains the unique nature of the present transatlantic crisis.

**A different international system**

The world has changed as the result of the encounter between two historical dates and the process of globalisation. These two dates are November Nine 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Nine Eleven 2001, the fall of the twin Towers of Manhattan. Nine Eleven is, not unlike November Nine, an historical turning point. It is more the manifestation of the tragic, dark side of globalisation, rendered possible by the end of the Cold War. The West was united up to 1989 by common values, common interests and largely common emotions. Since the end of the Soviet Union, we have fewer common interests and since Nine Eleven, more divided emotions between the two sides of the Atlantic. Nowhere probably are these emotions more contrasted than in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The last decade dominated by the hopes created by the Oslo process, led to a rapprochement, which allowed policies and emotions to come closer on both sides of the Atlantic. Europe’s saw her role as complementary to that of the United States. The failure of that process, the escalation of violence that followed has exacerbated an emotional divide whose consequences are far reaching. In short America’s pro-Israeli stand and Europe’s pro-Palestinian stand, with the possible exception of Germany, is acting like a powerful acid on transatlantic relations.

Beyond this emotional divide, Europe is no longer in objective terms, the first line of defence of America. As Europe keeps expanding geographically as a result of her own enlargement process, she is shrinking in the eyes of the last two United States administrations. The Balkans Wars artificially kept the flame of interests alive for nearly a decade. Today caught between the clear and present danger of an enlarged Middle-East that now covers a zone that goes from North-East Africa, to South-East Asia, and the future challenge of China looming large in the horizon, there is little room for Europe in the United States strategic agenda. In the second half of the Twentieth century the European continent has been turned from a subject to an object of History, as the Cold War’s favourite playground. Now, in the eyes of many Americans, Europe has become neither a subject, nor an object of History, but something akin to a “Theme Park”; Museums of art, beautiful landscapes and quality of life, good food in particular, and a complex, perhaps irrelevant field of experimentation where people try, to the confusion of Americans, to invent a new type of sovereignty. Above all, Europe has become a source of growing irritation.

Nine Eleven has not changed America as much as it has reinforced trends and tendencies that were already at work in the previous years. Yet emotionally it has created a larger gap between Europe and the United States. Since Nine Eleven, Americans have been at war, not Europeans. Some Europeans, the Germans in particular, may see the world in post-modern terms, others and they are probably more numerous, especially in the new enlarged Europe, see the world in pre-modern terms. They do accept the existence of a threat coming from the “South”, but they tend to believe that the American answer to it, is not only inefficient, but in itself a source of growing instability, and hatred. They think the more divided
the world will become in terms of wealth and affluence, the greater the risks that it will unite, against its uniquely powerful actor, the United States --- an actor whose actions as well as inaction, will be equally denounced. Even the “Western” citizens of the “Empire” tend to denounce the erratic, and excessive reactions of their “Emperor”, an Emperor who would feel very lonely demographically, culturally, politically, economically... without its distant, inefficient, querulous, untrustworthy and smaller older cousin.

A different America

“There is in the American style, a tension between the instinct of violence and the drive for harmony” according to the wise words of the American historian Michael Kammen. Europeans have always found it difficult to understand the “People of Paradox”. It is even more difficult today, as trends that were always present in the American character, such as intolerant suspicion of the other, and a religious breed of nationalism, that manifested themselves in particular during the MacCarthy episode in the mid-fifties, are once again resurfacing. And these forces are no longer counterbalanced by the existence of a deep understanding of Europe by liberals and conservatives alike.

Who could write today in the United States the equivalent of Laurence Wylie’s “Village in the Vaucluse” a patient, tolerant and so human account of life in a French village? We recognize the American wherever we meet him as a practical idealist” wrote Gunnar Myrdal in 1944.

Today’s Americans seem at the same time less practical and less idealist, than the Americans, Europeans used to interact with at the time of the Cold War. The generation of the Dean Acheson, and John Foster Dulles, who had a personal as well as an academic knowledge of Europe and its Greek and Latin sources is long gone. The founders of the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Alliance had a common set of references with their European counterparts. Their visionary generosity was part of an enlightened project, stemming directly from Europe’s eighteenth century philosophers. Their goal was to reconcile Europeans with themselves thanks to the help of American civilisation, America’s military might and America’s economic strength. A generosity that did not exclude self-interest of course, but that went beyond it.

Today for a combination of demographic, political and cultural reasons, Americans have progressively lost interest in Europe, and will not support a European Union, which will define herself largely in opposition to them. As Hispanics and Asian-Americans become more numerous for the first and more prominent for the second, as the centre of gravity of American politics moves towards Texas or the Mid-West, Europeans studies are less and less popular in the United States. There is a huge contrast between the importance of the transatlantic links in purely economic terms and their translation in geopolitical terms. Europe and the United States exchanges may amount to roughly one billion dollars per day: this fact no longer seems to matter for America’s geopolitical thinkers.

Americans view Europe differently, because their perception of their place in the world has also changed. The United States that view Europe with this combination of criticisms and malign neglect have brutally discovered their vulnerability at the peak of their superiority, a realisation that contrasts with their traditional unique combination of optimism and self-assurance. Americans used to see themselves as a model to the world, God’s gift to humanity. They are now forced to ask themselves why they have become an object of hatred. In this context, encouraged by the Manichean discourse of their President; “if you are not with me, you are against me”, many of them find it natural to practice a kind of anti-French patriotism, which in spite of the zapping instinct of the Americans may not disappear rapidly.

The very nature of American politics, dominated more than ever by the weight of the medias, the growing importance of money, not to mention the rise of parochialism and the domination of “short- termism”
does not play in favour of Europe, a continent that may constitute a long-term challenge and a key stake tomorrow but that is neither dramatic or problematic enough today.

Also, nothing fails more than success. Americans are discovering nearly at the same time the triumph of their military strategy, and the political limitations of their unique hard power superiority. The President of the United States may have a vision for the future of the Middle East but does he have an alternative strategy, as Iraq lapses into disorder and the Road Map into oblivion? Contrary to what too many Europeans believe, Americans have no appetite for ruling the world. Proud of their imperial status, Americans have not become Imperialists, the way the French and British were, a century ago. They have neither the interests nor the ability to do so. They lack the tools and the will for an understanding of the culture of others. They may want democracy as a universal model for the world, but they do so as much out of fear as out of hope. Yet even if America’s new brand of revisionism may be selective and concerns only some regions of the world, such as the Middle East, it nevertheless contrasts with the status quo preference of the majority of European countries. Yesterday it was the West --- America and Europe alike --- that favoured the status quo, confronting a revisionist Soviet Union. Today the American West has become revisionist while the European West still favours the status quo.

**A different Europe**

Today’s Europe is so busy defining her own identity, that her priorities are more than ever inward looking. As Europe becomes more real every day with the Euro, Europe is less of a project in the eyes of her citizens. One watches with dismay the rise of divisive nationalists outbursts or selfish behaviour, between those who no longer respect the rules of the Union and those who launch populist attacks on fellow Europeans. Italians and Germans quarrel with each other, France quarrels with Brussels… From that standpoint, the international calendar has been most unkind to Europeans. The world accelerated its pace at a time when Europe was busily deciding on her geography, her borders -- where does she end? --- and on her institutional future, and the kind of Europe which will emerge of the work of the Convention between the Federal and Inter-governmental scenarii. In this context of identity search it is so easy and tempting to use the United States as a kind of natural scapegoat.

The first interrogation about the limits of Europe contributes to the confusion of her “Western identity”. Could Turkey be more western than European, Russia more European than western, and what do we imply by these definitions? Could France be tempted to court Russia, a country that is not --- unlike Turkey --- a candidate to the European Union, at a time the country slides away in political terms from her western European model, by behaving in a more troubling i.e. autocratic way towards any notion of democracy? In the case of Turkey, her “no” to the United States on the immediate eve of the war with Iraq did not reinforce her European image, but rather comforted the anti Moslem prejudices against her. For many Europeans, it was her Moslem identity, not her European one that made her say “no” to the United States!

This Europe already confronted by the dual challenges of enlargement and deepening, is forced on top of it to decide where she stands in her relations with Washington. It is simply too much for a continent that is more known, at least lately, for its procrastination methods, than the daring political courage of its leaders. With few exceptions one would be tempted to speak of a game of competitive decadence between the respective political leaderships on both sides of the Atlantic. Could we be living an exceptional period, without any exceptional leaders?

In this context of identity search, it is only too natural, that a new brand of anti-Americanism would emerge in Europe. As if divided about their institutional and geographic future, Europeans could only exist in their own eyes as an alternative to the United States, by claiming to be a different and a “better” West, as prosperous and democratic as America, but so much more human socially and economically.
This is a largely idealised self-portrait, and does not integrate the joint failure of society, family and the State, as best exemplified by the consequences of the heat wave in France for example, when nearly fifteen thousand old people were condemned to “premature deaths”. Yet Europeans continue to perceive themselves as the West beyond the death penalty, the West whose art of living could be symbolized by the “soft power” of an excellent “camembert cheese” accompanied by a glass of Bordeaux red wine. A “You may weigh more, do more, but we are more” kind of discourse. A traditional approach which goes down less well, with today’s American elites, who have gradually lost their “cultural” inferiority complex with regard to Europe. These elites know very well that their elite universities are the best in the world. Where are the best students of China going to study when they can, if not to Harvard, Yale, Princeton … and is not Californian wine becoming a match for the French Médoc?

In the early 1970’s, European anti-Americanism was a reaction to what the United States did, such as bombing Vietnam or Cambodia. Today’s anti-Americanism is as much a reaction to what the United States are, rather than to what America does, i.e. invading-liberating Iraq. With the process of time, the difference between the French perception of America, and the way the rest of Europe looks at the United States is more a matter of style and nuances, than of content. A majority of Europeans, and not only the French, were ready to condemn America before the start of the last Gulf War. The French President Jacques Chirac was clearly not speaking in the name of the majority of European governments when he opposed himself so spectacularly to the American strategy of war, but he was in tune with the majority of European public opinion --- “new” Europe as well as “old” Europe, even possibly in Great-Britain. The only possible exception might have been Romania, which could compare Saddam Hussein to Ceaucescu. In fact some leading Europeans intellectuals such as Juergen Habermas and Jacques Derrida saw in the anti-war demonstrations in Europe, the proof of the emergence of a true European civil society, one unfortunately that finds it easier to define herself negatively, against the United States, than positively, in the name of a clear project for Europe.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REINVENT THE WEST?**

Why reinvent, what may have simply represented an artificial moment of around fifty years, the consequence of Europe’s suicide and one of its by-products the rise of the Soviet Union? One cannot dream of recreating conditions, which no longer exist. Like NATO, its most spectacular institutional incarnation, transatlantic relations will continue to have some existence, but as in a famous publicity ad, “it will have the colour of the West, the taste of the West, but it will not be the West.” Commemoration of the past will continue, but it will be the tribute one pays to a very respectable, even admirable long gone reality. Graves of fallen American soldiers will be flowered, speeches will be read, we will pay lip services to each other from La Fayette to General Marshall… but the notion that transatlantic relations still have specific significance, or that a western identity will constitute a positive tool to answer the challenges of the present and the future will have disappeared.

Yet, I do believe that a close and relatively harmonious relationship between Europe and the United States is not only important for the two sides of the Atlantic but for the world as well.

**For the United States**

Seen from Washington it is so easy to look at Europe with a mixture of indifference, commiseration, and derogatory paternalism. By their speeches as much as by their deeds—or more precisely, by their lack of deeds especially in the field of security, most Europeans, with few notable exceptions, seem keen to justify America’s negative vision of them.
In fact, despite the present spectacle Europeans are giving of themselves, America badly needs Europe, but not necessarily for the reasons she claims. Washington tends today to emphasize the role of Europeans, as --- depending upon the extent of their diplomatic taste --- its Deputy Sheriff or cleaning lady! “America fights, Europe funds, the UN feeds”: a perfect division of labour, in tune with the comparative advantages of each party. We will do the “hard” work, since we have the hard power, you will help us do the post-operation job, since you do not have the means to do otherwise, seems to be the present American motto. The problem with such a clear-cut vision is that it fits neither the realities of the world, the Middle-East in particular, nor the core essence of what America is, i.e. a country that has much less appetite for military adventures than Robert Kagan seems to assume. In our complex, global and interdependent world, hard and soft powers are increasingly intertwined, as clear-cut divisions between what is “military” and what is not tends to disappear. What is the meaning of absolute military superiority, when classical notions such as territories, boundaries, regular armies, are less and less valid, and when technology fails to master emotions, as demonstrated in Iraq nearly every day.

In such a context the United States needs its Europeans friends, and not only for the quality of their intelligence networks, the seriousness of their police, the professionalism of their anti-terrorists judges, or their willingness to engage in humanitarian if not military activities.

To a large extent Europe is the best protection of the United States against their own inner evils, neo-isolationist narcissism and arrogant ignorance of the way “Others” may feel and think. To remain truly internationalist in a positive, constructive “Republican way”, America needs Europe. Europe incarnates America’s links with the best aspect of her past. America from a negative as much as from a positive standpoint needs to maintain a special relationship with her European roots to keep alive in her the sources of her unique internationalism, and not to fall prey to the seduction of a cheap “Imperial Model”. How will Americans achieve idealism without illusion, and realism without cynicism if they forget their links with Europe?

Americans were at their best when in their founding time, they wanted to be an anti-Europe, when they saw themselves as a future, a departure from a Europe dominated by religious prejudices and continuous wars. Americans were at their best too when, in the last century, they came to Europe twice to save her in the best spirit of enlightened internationalism. To lose track of this past would endanger the United States’ approach to the outside world. Americans also need the past of Europe in another sense. The former colonial, imperial experience of Europe is vital for America if she does not want to repeat all the mistakes Europe made and in particular this one: “You do not define what is good for others without involving them”. Americans may give some lessons of determination to Europeans. But Europeans can surely give some lessons in “complexity” to Americans.

By the end of the day, the world as it evolves demographically and strategically would be a very lonely place for Americans without Europeans to support … and to criticize them.

For Europe

A multipolar world less dominated by the unique superiority of the United States would probably constitute a better scenario for the international system. But contrary to what many Europeans assume, a world without a powerful and internationalist America, would be an even more untidy and dangerous place. Yesterday the United States represented the ultimate life insurance for the countries of Western Europe and the best card of “kidnapped Europeans” in their dream to “return” one day to Europe, in a process that should have been described as one of reunification and not enlargement. The process of European reconciliation was made possible by the United States. It is not, as Robert Kagan writes that “American power made it possible for Europeans to believe that power was no longer important”. Such an abrupt summary does not apply to Great Britain and France, and does not translate the respect, most
Europeans have for America’s power, a power they cannot dream of achieving. But yesterday without the United States’ presence in Europe, the European continent could have well been reunified by fear and not by hope, by constraint not by choice.

Today in a world that is at least as dangerous, but where the threats are much more diverse, the existence of a strong, internationalist America remains vital for Europe. Europe could not promote her post-modern vision of History in a largely pre-modern world, if America did not exist. The argument often made by Europeans that they are balancing America’s hard power superiority with their soft power supremacy is the wrong one, and is sure to provoke the ironic irritation of Americans. Europeans for their own good cannot only rely on the military might of the United States, if they want to be taken seriously politically by Washington. But they cannot dream either of building a European project as an alternative to the United States. The not-so-secret dream of the French represents a nightmare for a majority of the governments of the “New” Europe of the Twenty Five. It deeply divides countries such as France and Poland for example. And this for a combination of reasons ---which include the sense of physical insecurity due to the historical and geographical closeness to Russia --- and the conviction of all new members of the European Union, that Europe will not exist in security terms in a foreseeable future.

Also Europe as a “power” by opposition to Europe as a “free-trade area space” cannot be conceived without the participation of Great Britain. Such a Europe cannot be build against America. In fact Great Britain could one day appear as the ideal bridge between the American and the European West. Fundamentally, beyond security considerations, America still incarnates for European citizens, what it does for citizens of the world: a land of opportunity, a land of excellence, by which to judge your own performance, a land of successful individualism, a land of mostly well integrated migrants, a land of flexibility. Europeans cannot cut themselves from the United States without divorcing from a part of themselves, for America is still as much the incarnation of their worst nightmares as the land of their foremost dreams.

America remains above all for Europeans an incitation to surpass themselves, in the best sense of what sports competition is about.

For the World

The existence of one West or two West working in harmony is also a plus for the rest of the world. One should not of course play with the idea of resuscitating the “mission to civilize” of the European West. It would be as anachronistic as the attempt by some American strategists to replay nineteenth century classical balance of power games. In today’s world, the West is at the same time much less and much more than what it was yesterday. Demographically, the West has shrunk of course with half of humanity coming from Asia, and one may add, from a non-monotheist world. The only monotheistic religion that progresses in the world is Islam. Economically, the giants in the making are coming from Asia too.

But politically, culturally, not to mention strategically or militarily, Western influence remains immense. Americans and Europeans may no longer know what the concept of the “West” means for them. The rest of the world does, and does not necessarily distinguish between an American and a European West, even if America attracts more expectations and more rejection, if not hatred.

Seen from outside the West may mean the riches, if not only the Whites, the old (European) and new (American) Empires. It may be synonymous with selfishness, a sense of superiority, arrogant self-righteousness, and democratic imperialism…Yet, if one considers that the international system has to be transformed, and that international institutions have to be amended, if one believes there exists a need to transcend the stumbling blocks of sovereignty, equated with a frustrated sense of identity, this programme cannot be achieved without the unity of the West. For by the end of the day, only “the West” has a real sense of responsibility for the rest of the world. For it still carries a universal message, combining the
respect for the rule of law, the promotion of democracy and a sense of moral duty linked to the heritage of
the past as well as a sense of responsibility for the future. It is not China that will feel responsible for the
African continent.

Only the West, out of necessity, because it is so close geographically and emotionally, has still the desire,
the means and the tools to invest itself in the Middle East: to protect its economic interests of course, but
at a deeper level out of the conclusion, that western lives would not ever be safe and “normal”, if the
present combination of despotism, injustice and hatred were to continue in the Middle East. Some
regimes in the Middle East may derive short term benefits from the divisions of the West, but definitely
not the people from those continents, who deserve better and can only benefit from the involvement of a
West as “united” as possible. The rest of the world would have nothing to gain from the exportation of
our quarrels. Some in Europe, in France in particular, may dream of uniting the rest of the world against
the United States, but it is a dangerous illusion, one that can find echoes and popularity in Beirut,
Damascus or Tripoli, but which will not seriously affect the life conditions of the citizens of these
countries. A divided West may comfort the wrong regimes but will not bring about the right and
necessary changes.

The enlargement of the zone of peace, democracy and prosperity --- that is synonymous with the West ---
to other continents, can only come by a process of proxy, each part of the West having a primary
responsibility for the zone historically and geographically closer to it.

**What can and should be done to reinvent the West?**

In order to reinvent a relationship that is mutually beneficial and a plus for the world at large, Americans
and Europeans have to concentrate on three categories of measures:

- What they should *refrain* from doing to each other;
- What they should *learn* from each other;
- What they should *do* together.

**What Americans and Europeans should refrain from doing to each other**

The war of words has greatly abated between the two sides of the Atlantic, even between the United
States and France, as if political elites in both countries had realized they had gone too far. Yet even if the
public expression is more controlled, thoughts and feelings have not really changed. False perceptions of
the other, if not voluntary and manipulative distortion of facts and emotions continue to exist.

On the American side, let us go beyond the neo-conservative obsession with power and the
misunderstanding of what a Kantian world is really about, and therefore the often legitimate denunciation
of Europe’s weaknesses. What is much more serious and really destructive, is the United States
temptation to use Europe’s past against Europe’s present and future, as if “Munich or, even worst, Vichy
were around the corner”. As if Europe was forever doomed to be the continent of betrayal and
antisemitism. The publication in popular magazines, such as Vanity Fair, of deeply biased and excessive
analyses are profoundly dangerous. Anti-Semitic acts in a country like France are not the fact of the
French State as in Vichy’s times, nor even the product of Christian Europe as in the past. These criminal
acts are the direct consequences of the impact of images coming from the Middle East on an Arab-
Moslem population, largely coming from the Maghreb, a community which France has failed to integrate
successfully. It has nothing to do with Europe’s past. In the same vein, the rise of populists, extreme-
right, or even more so maybe extreme-lefts leaders, like José Bové in countries such as France, Belgium
today or Austria yesterday should not make Americans believe the 1930’s are back. There is a parallel and equally dangerous tendency on both sides of the Atlantic which has to be resisted, and it consists in believing that Jews are the victims in Europe and the dominant source of influence in America. Neither assertion is true. Moslems are on the first line of prejudice and discrimination in Europe, and the Jewish power in America has to be greatly relativized.

To de-legitimise the European continent, to play a role in the Middle-East in particular, for a combination of false assumptions and or cynical calculus is one thing, to introduce artificial concepts to divide Europe is another, and as negative a temptation for the future of transatlantic relations. The division made by Donald Rumsfeld between “New” and “Old” Europe is not only intellectually schematic and false, it is politically offensive. In historical terms “New Europe”, especially if one follows the American post-World War II logic of reconciliation is the “Franco-German” Europe. All of Europe is trying to follow that path, and has not yet reached that level of maturity. From that point of view by contrast, “Old Europe” is still today in the Balkans or in the “Eastern” dimension of Europe, such as Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia --- a part of Europe which is not yet reconciled with herself, that continue to strive for more democratic institutions, and for a clear perception of where she ends or what she contains in boundaries terms. To assume that the only criteria of modernity, that define what is “New” Europe, is where you stand in relations with Washington, can only be a misguided form of American narcissism.

In their relations with the European continent, Americans must come to the conclusion that a strong, united, and confident Europe is in their interests. To play Poland versus France may work in the short term, but will have negative consequences in the long run. The less sure Europe is of herself, the more as a whole she will distrust and resent the United States. The more divided and impotent Europe will be, the less useful she will be for Washington.

On the side of Europe, the way Europeans stand vis-à-vis Washington has become an obstacle on their already difficult integration process, one that encourages reciprocal suspicions within Europe herself. It is a self-fulfilling process of paralysis. Europe cannot be described constantly as the best way to oppose and resist the Unites States. It is neither a feasible nor a desirable goal, given the nature of today’s Europe, and the importance of transatlantic relations, for the majority of European governments. It is an unfortunate reality that spontaneous popular anti-Americanism present in most European countries is still encouraged at the government level, at least in some parts of the continent. A process that is far from innocent, and that is of course greatly helped by the style and discourse if not the deeds of the present Bush administration. Some in Europe where even hoping the victory of Bush three years ago, with the argument that the “worst” candidate should win, so that things would be clear for Europeans! “True America would emerge” as she is, and not as Atlanticists wanted her to be!

This negative reductionist vision tends to mirror the American distorted view of Europe. Except that for many Europeans it is America’s present incarnation that taints America’s past and future, as if there were “no life after Bush”, or as if the most conservative, ideological, religious, nationalist elements of the Bush administration were the only ones to exist or to matter. The tendency on both sides to use the most extreme discourse of the other has been one of the most detrimental characteristics of the past few months, and has to be abandoned.

Of course to transcend the war of words will not suffice to recreate a healthy transatlantic relation. We will also have to concentrate on what we can and should learn from each other, and on what we can do together, and see whether new institutional mechanisms do not have to be invented to reduce the growing divorce between our respective analyses of the world challenges and the best ways to confront them.

**What Americans and Europeans should learn from each other**
In the long run, the key challenges facing Europe and the United States are of a different nature, but both involve the relationships with “Others”, and neither of these challenges can be solved without the experience of each other. One of the key challenges facing Europe is immigration. Given her demography, Europe cannot fulfill her growth ambition without the influx of new blood. There is in Europe today an absolute contradiction between the economic, rational need to receive more migrants and the negative emotional rejection of them. Of course the nature of migrants has changed. Yesterday their ambition was to join the dream of the country they were coming to work in. Today they want to remain themselves if not cultivate their differences in a somewhat diffident way towards the countries that greet them. If the American dream still functions somewhere, it is in the eyes of the migrants who even after Nine Eleven and the hardening of American legislation, keep trying to come to the United States. The success of the integration of Hispanics in the United States is the last example of America’s successful experience. Somewhere there should exist a “European” dream for migrants as there is an “American dream”. Europe should learn from the American model of integration, and not stick to models which are no longer working.

The American challenge is of a different nature but is also centred on the relations with the “other”, not the other that wants to join you, but the other you want to transform in its own country. Because of their unique combination of superiority and vulnerability, the United States have become more involved in the task of changing the world, an imperial task for which they too must learn from the European colonial experience, its failures as much as its successes. In fact each side needs to learn as much from the past than from the present of the other. This requires the willingness to get knowledge through study and an absence of prejudices, just the opposite of what seems to prevail today i.e. ignorance and negative stereotypes.

In a nutshell, Europe should learn from America’s ambition and Americans should benefit from European modesty. America still dreams and makes people dream, even if American dreams may be someone else’s nightmares. Yet, America is animated by the right “revisionist instinct” which needs to be tempered by Europe’s legitimate caution. Europe’s post modern instinct vis-à-vis the limits of power, and Europe’s post mortem reflection on her colonial experience are badly needed by Americans if they want to avoid a “new Iraqi quagmire” wherever they intervene in the world. “Responsible revisionism” --- which can sometimes imply “muscular” reformism --- can only be achieved by Americans and Europeans thinking and planning together. The debate between unilateralism and multilateralism will largely remain an artificial one if it simply acts as a cover to hide Europe’s refusal to act, or America’s refusal to consult with her allies. Americans are rediscovering the limits of military power alone, while Europeans realise that without a minimal hard power, it is difficult to turn soft power into real influence.

What Americans and Europeans should do together

As a matter of principle, we should in the months and years to come, concentrate on the ways we can promote complimentarily our respective analyses of the main issues of the world. To act together, we do not need to think alike, but we must at least understand where the other stands.

The last Iraqi crisis appears in retrospect like a “tragedy of errors”, each side being at one key moment, wrong on its expectation of what the other was about to say or do. Americans were sure France would not dare to use her veto right, while French decision makers came late to the conclusion that war was inevitable. Of course, the lack of a true European Planning Staff prevented even the emergence within Europe of a common understanding. How could Americans have perceived what Europeans themselves failed to grasp about themselves. The future European Foreign Affairs Minister should have at his disposal a real centre for analysis and prediction, whose links with his American counterpart should be institutionally established. In the same vein, “Contact Groups” should be formed on the big new challenges facing Europe and the United States. Transatlantic contact groups on issues such as on Iran,
Weapons of Mass Destruction … would be useful. With another name, such cooperation exists on international terrorism and seems to be working well. Why not emulate such efforts on more traditional, but just as vital issues?

Beyond the institutional mechanisms that are necessary if “we” want to work better with each other, there is the choice of the issues on which we should concentrate. In an excellent essay, full of insight and positive thinking, “Transatlantic Rift: How to bring the two sides together” Charles Grant, the Director of the British-based Centre for European Reform, gives a series of recommendations to Europeans, to Americans and some which are valid for both Europeans and Americans; for Grant they should jointly insulate the management of the global economy from arguments on security issues; work out a common approach on Iran; reach an understanding on weapons of mass destruction, discuss the principles of intervention.

I would give here my own set of priorities as follows:

- Concentrate on the Middle East;
- Reinvent the United Nations;
- Find a logical and partly geographical division of influence between Europe and the United States;
- Do not forget the African continent.

The Middle East

There is an absolute urgency to concentrate even more than we do on the Greater Middle East. It has been the source of our past and present transatlantic tensions. It should constitute one of the bases for our rapprochement, for no long-term solutions can be achieved in the region if America and Europe do not work together. The war in Iraq has led to a near divorce between Europe’s society and the United States and has created many divisions within Europe itself. It is our collective duty to use the present quagmire in Iraq and in the Middle East conflict as an opportunity to recreate better transatlantic relations. The time is ripe, because the sense of urgency is growing. America did not need Europe to win the war against Saddam Hussein. America needs the international community and therefore Europe not to lose the peace. By their own admission Americans may have a vision of what to do in the Middle East but do not have any longer a clear strategy as how to implement that vision.

The deepening deterioration of the situation on the ground with the escalation of suicidal violence in the Israel-Palestine conflict and the rise of chaos in Iraq constitute both a challenge and an opportunity for transatlantic relations. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is becoming the matrix of international relations. Under the dual guidance of Prime Minister Sharon and Chairman Arafat, an infernal couple of sort, the Israeli and Palestinian people are committing suicide in front of our eyes. Their conflict has turned into a vendetta-type of warfare whose ultimate purpose is to spill the blood of the other in an infernal cycle of murder and retaliation. As a result, a growing number of mostly young people, on both sides tend to live in the hope of finding a more normal life elsewhere. Like two irresponsible children playing with matches next to an oil field, Israelis and Palestinians have to be stopped by external forces that would impose upon them a solution which they are incapable of finding and implementing by themselves. Both peoples are psychologically and physically exhausted. Both would have to accept a difficult exchange between security and sovereignty. Israel was created to give security to the Jews with the assumption that only Jews could properly do the job. Could the reverse be true today? Could a Western-NATO presence separating them from Palestinians, to accompany the implementation of a peace agreement, be perceived by Israelis as a guarantee of security that their government can no longer provide? Could such a presence be perceived by a majority of Palestinians as a promise of legitimacy and prosperity? In the Middle East there is no alternative, at least in the short term,
to a two-States solution and only a Western and not a UN presence would be acceptable to Israelis. Such a suggestion may sound premature and unrealistic today but may constitute the only alternative tomorrow if a new cycle of violence reaches unpredictable new heights. To surmount its own and deep divisions the West as such should be more discreet in Baghdad and more present in Jerusalem.

Reinvent the UN

Beyond the geographic concentration on the Middle East, Americans and Europeans alike will have to both realise that they badly need a working UN system.

From Iraq to North Korea, no long-term solution can be arrived at, that would not involve the United Nations. Americans do not have the luxury to ignore the UN and Europeans should not simply think of the UN as a tool to stop, refrain or block the United States. Americans, especially after their intervention in Iraq, will realize how much they need the legitimacy of the UN. In fact, instead of using the limitations of the UN as an alibi for unilateral action, or as a way to veto the United States, Americans and Europeans together should start thinking seriously of the best possible ways of reforming an institution, which is confronted by the growing divorce between what is legal and what is legitimate, and the growing gulf between UN missions and UN means, especially at the level of the Secretary General. At the outset of the Cold War, in the aftermath of the beginning of the Korean War, Americans decided to give teeth to the institution they had just created, i.e. NATO.

In the same way, the time has come to give teeth to the UN. We live in a world, where military intervention called for by the misbehaviour of failed or rogue States will appear increasingly necessary and legitimate, in a global, transparent, interdependent world where we have lost the privilege of ignorance. Whether the rearming of the UN comes through the privatisation of military means --- a tempting but too risky solution for me, what if the mercenaries of peace seriously misbehave? --- or through more classical inter-governmental ways, is an issue for debate. What is clear is that Americans and Europeans together should revisit international law, to emphasize the duty of humanitarian intervention.

If Americans take seriously their revisionist instinct, they will soon realise that they possess, neither the appetite, nor the legitimacy to do the job by themselves. Europeans, if they want to find an answer to their concerns with America’s unilateral instinct and yet accept the need to go beyond the comfort of passivity, will have to rally too to that principle.

In the last war in Iraq, the weakness of the U.S. position was the nature of their argumentation, emphasizing, what Saddam Hussein’s regime could do to the world and not what he did to his own people. The weakness of the Europeans opposing the war was that they had to explain in the name of what logic they were, by their multiple reservations, keeping the regime of Saddam Hussein in power. To reconcile the two positions one needs two things: a different sets of principles, by which what is considered legitimate becomes legal, and the means to implement such a revolution. It will come through only if Americans and Europeans work together on such a fundamental issue. This is what I would describe as “responsible revisionism” at its best. It means giving supra-national responsibilities and power to the Secretary General of the UN: Kofi Annan was one of the political casualties of the war in Iraq. He should re-emerge out of the present crisis with greater clout and means, in the interest of the international community at large and transatlantic relations in particular.

To reconcile the symbol of what is the law --- the UN --- with the realities of power --- the U.S. --- can only come with the help of a Europe that will be convinced that the revisionist instinct of the United States is a legitimate but dangerous one, and that the world cannot simply be taken for granted.
A division of influence

Coming together on the need to reform the UN is one thing. However, Americans and Europeans should also establish an implicit division of power rules, which takes into account the respective geography, history, not to forget the means of the “Two West”. From that point of view, one has to distinguish, the themes and areas where each party has a kind of inner legitimacy, one that would amount to the existence of “two Monroe Doctrines”, a proposal already made by the Aspen Institute in Italy. Europeans will thereby concentrate on Europe, with a special emphasis on the Balkans Arc of Crisis and the Euro-Mediterranean space. In the same way, the United States will have a legitimate priority in the Americas but also in Asia, given their global reach and power. The Middle East would remain an area of privileged collaboration, with the two parties attempting to close the emotional gap that exists between them, with the Europeans being more critical of the Palestinians and of the Arab regimes, and the Americans more critical of Israel. Both parties would support the Moderates wherever they are, and press for the establishment of the Rule of Law everywhere, with the conviction that reforms made in time weaken the strength of the revolutionary destructive spirit.

Dealing with Africa

There exists a forgotten continent which exemplifies probably everything that can go wrong in our international system, from failed States, to the spread of terrible diseases like Aids. The African continent would constitute a perfect place of close collaboration for Europe and the United States. Transatlantic emotions on Africa are less divisive than in the Middle East, and the relation is also probably more balanced there, between Americans and Europeans. Europe was formerly greatly involved in a continent where she retains a combination of knowledge, networks and experience. Americans are relatively newcomers in most of the continent, but bring about their unique international clout. Africa is a continent where the new principles of intervention can be tried out, because this is the continent where failed states are the more numerous. My suggestion is not of course to re-colonise the African continent, nor to start a new sphere of influence scheme there. It is just the opposite. Can the West reinvent itself by proving that its recreated unity has a purpose for others, that a new enlightened interventionist generosity has a sense? The role of the New West is not to play Mother Theresa in a world which remains dominated by the confrontation of power ambitions. But it is equally naïve to be too cynical. The West cannot remain indifferent to the immense sufferings of the African continent without long-term consequence for itself. It is the assumption of this report that it is in the African continent that one meets this unique combination of absolute need and greater feasibility, an example of the attempt to do more than paying lip service to the cause of development aid. For it is in Africa more than anywhere else than the West meets the South and is confronted with its most symbolic task, that of reducing inequalities that can lead so easily to despair and anger.

Conclusion

The rest of the world’s negative evolution is our key reason to unite. Dealing with the rest of the world will constitute our way to do so. Yesterday we were united for negative reasons, in our joint refusal of Soviet expansionism. Today, even more so after Nine Eleven, the temptation is still great to find a common enemy, common threats to unite us. What will happen tomorrow if we are confronted with other acts of mega-terrorism? But the attempts to define the West once more in purely negative terms, or in vague references to democracy or human rights have been largely divisive. Islamic fundamentalism, international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, despotism… do not have the same unifying clarity, as yesterday’s Soviet threat, because we see differently the ways to confront them and because we too have deeply changed, and our own confidence, in the value of our democratic system has been eroded.
Our present challenge consists in recognizing that we are indeed different, that we may have different interests, different emotions and of course different means. But we must also be convinced that we must have common goals which can only be achieved if we come together, for ultimately we have common values.

Is it totally impossible to find positive reasons to work together, to define the challenge not in terms of threat, but in terms of achievement? Are our respective political leaders too cynical, too narrow in their purely self-interested political visions to conceive such ambitions, or has the world become too complex to realize that it is realistic to be moral and naïve to be too cynical?

From that point of view the conjunction of America’s Wilsonian internationalists principles, with the prudent post colonial experience of Europe may be what the world needs today. It is in fact just the reverse of what we seem to be seeing now, i.e. an exchange of role between the United States and Europe. In this scheme, America in these early years of the Twenty First century has endorsed the Bismarckian philosophy of history which dominated late Nineteenth century Europe, while Europeans sound like Nineteenth century American internationalists. But this switching of roles is bad for both. America in her discovery of “Bismarck” is not tempered by the long experience of dealing with a balance of power world, whereas Europeans live in a post-modern world on the cheap so to speak, without the strong idealism of the Americans or their strong ambition to change the world. The worst case scenario would be for America to transform herself into a “big Prussia”, with no Bismarck at her head to guide her and for Europe to turn herself into a “big Switzerland”, a selfish, prosperous, provincial and largely irrelevant entity, whose neutrality is essentially passive and self-protective.

In the 1950’s in the midst of the Cold War, Great Britain under the Premiership of MacMillan dreamed of herself as a kind of Athens for the new Rome, the United States. As a result Great Britain missed the departure of the European boat, and had very little influence on America. Today, by contrast, the role of a united Europe is to help the United States against its own inner evils, and from the danger that the strong confident American Republic would turn into a diffident and arrogant Empire. To prevent such a scenario from becoming a reality we have to define jointly common positive goals. It means leadership and political will on both sides of the Atlantic and the absolute determination to transcend natural prejudices and the negative dialectic between inferiority and superiority complexes.

Because they are “less” today, Europeans will have to do more. Unless they do much more in security matters, Europeans will not be taken seriously by the United States, and can only have themselves to blame if their irrelevance turns into anger against the United States, which can only become a mirror of their own impotence. Because they are “more”, Americans will have to rediscover the virtues of modesty and self-restraint: A difficult task for both. This is what I mean when I speak of “Reinventing the West”, a West that would not survive for long if it is not reinvented.

To achieve such a goal, the creation of an “action-oriented” Wise Men Committee between the United States and the European Union might prove to be a useful initiative of the Trilateral Commission. The role of this Committee would be in particular to select the areas and topics of possible joint initiatives for the West.

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