

Toward a More Independent Europe

MICHAEL BRENNER

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* * *

Egmont - The Royal Institute for International Relations

Address Naamsestraat / Rue de Namur 69, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Phone 00-32-(0)2.223.41.14
Fax 00-32-(0)2.223.41.16
E-mail info@egmontinstitute.be
Website: www.egmontinstitute.be

© Academia Press
Eekhout 2
9000 Gent
Tel. 09/233 80 88 Fax 09/233 14 09
Info@academiapress.be www.academiapress.be

J. Story-Scientia bvba Wetenschappelijke Boekhandel
Sint-Kwintensberg 87
B-9000 Gent
Tel. 09/225 57 57 Fax 09/233 14 09
Info@story.be www.story.be

Lay-out: proccess.be

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1. Europe & Its Discontents

“What is to be done?” is the question Europeans are grappling with. A response requires us to clarify “about what” and “by whom.” The simple answer to the former is the European Union’s malaise – post-Constitution defeat, post budget bust-up. Malaise is undeniable. A mood of depression pervades the continent’s political elites. Its symptoms are flagging confidence and anxiety about the future. The state of mind is understandable in the light of the disunity on a daunting agenda of institutional change, reinvigorating continental economies, and solving the Turkish conundrum. All of this in an atmosphere made tense by chronic fractiousness among member governments, most of which are struggling with intractable domestic problems and a disaffected populace. Hence, the European project feels to be adrift. For those attached to the idea of an ever-closer union, the outlook is glum. For those who want the Union to get on with doing well its stipulated tasks, the picture is no brighter. For Euro-skeptics of every stripe, it is a field day.¹

A feature of this bleak season is an obsessive quest for the collective European identity. Rediscovered in the post-war years, it once again is elusive. The arduously acquired surety of who and what Europe is now is dimmed – a victim of enlargement, of the distancing in time of negative reference points, of success and of failure.² Success in fostering a pacific, self-absorbed citizenry devoted to enjoying the fruits of prosperity in a stable community, things that it takes as granted. Failure in the elites’ inability either to reassure that the good times will continue in the face of exposed vulnerabilities or to muster the spirit to deal with the forces that are making the future look hazardous. Diversity (of immigrant religion and culture), disparities (of wealth and economic security), demographics (of an inverted age pyramid), and dependency (of energy and security) on others are the sources of a free-floating neurosis.

1. Michael Brenner is Professor of International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh and Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations SAIS-Johns Hopkins in Washington, D.C. His writings on Euro-American relations and American foreign policy include: *The European Union, United States & “Liberal Imperialism”* (Washington, D.C.: American Consortium on European Union Studies, 2006), *Reconcilable Differences, French-American Relations In A New Era* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2003), and articles in major journals on both sides of the Atlantic. He has been a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the National Defense University and consultant to the U.S. Department of State. The author wishes to thank Frédéric Bozo, James Goodby, Pierre Hassner, Stanley Hoffmann, Furio Cerutti and Manfred Stinnes for their helpful comments.

2. The arduousness of the transformation that led to the Europe enjoyed today can be easily forgotten. The distress of the postwar years is brought back by Tony Judt in *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

Europe's external environment feeds these anxieties. From the world outside the community come the waves of globalization, in its several manifestations; the immigrants; the terrorist creeds and passions; the oil and gas; and – not least – the omnipresence of the United States. The last surely gets its share of critical attention among the thinking classes, business people, public officials and the public. Yet the nature and the extent of the ways in which America impinges on Europe is, I submit, still underestimated. This is true despite the acute awareness of American power and influence. I have in mind the effects the United States has in shaping how Europeans think, and not just about the international scene or the current strains in Euro-American relations – acute as they are. Beyond the evident, demonstrable ability to affect what goes on in the world is the more subtle propagation of social philosophies, cultural norms, and modes of doing things. Their permeation of European thought and sentiment has deleterious consequences for European self-esteem and will-power as well as for the capacity to devise means suited to Europe's own troubled circumstance.

I propose to illuminate the phenomenon by delineating the paths American influence takes and then by offering illustrations in the three domains of security, economics and politics.

1.1 A Model

First is the United States as *model*. European views of America as the embodiment of trends with which they themselves will have to contend goes back to the founding of the Republic. The United States was the great experiment in democracy that self-consciously sought to reconcile popular sovereignty with liberty. It presumed to do so without benefit of hallowed tradition or monarchical symbolism. The experiment was observed with awe, hope and dread – according to ideological vantage-point. Its success, dissected with unsurpassed brilliance by de Tocqueville, was historic. As with other monumental innovations, of a physical or a social nature, the demonstration that it could be done inspired emulation while lighting the route to be taken. Being Europe's cultural and biological offspring gave the experiment cogency and credibility. The force of American experience was all the stronger for the fact of the US being born “modern” against the grain of history – a virtue, at least to progressive thinking. Harvesting the vast wealth of a primeval continent to create a seeming cornucopia added further luster to the image of America as the golden new-found land. So it was with a string of innovations modeled by the United States over the course of the next two centuries. America would show the way to its European cousins in areas that included: universal public education, the system of mass production in manufacturing, “scientific management” *à la* Taylorism, processed food

packaging, as well as innumerable modes and artifacts of mass popular culture starting with Hollywood and reaching in our day to the internet.

That was followed by a myriad of breakthroughs that came with a rush coincidental to America's rise to world preeminence after WWII. The globe girdling multinational corporation impressed and challenged European business. The galaxy of multi-universities made American higher education the envy of most. Its alliance with government and corporate research institutes vaulted America into the highest realm of science and technology where it reigned supreme. Another educational departure, the business school and the MBA ethos it generates, has been copied across Europe. (The *Economist's* classified section would be considerably thinner without the advertising of eager European spin-offs).³ Management consultancy too has been a wildly successful export. Technical invention, matched with the structures and mindset to exploit them, established a record that burnished the American reputation as the pioneer, the trailblazer, the avant-garde. The atom was split first on American soil, computing science took root and flourished there, as have financial mechanisms like derivatives, hedge funds and their sustaining market. Not least, contemporary methods of electoral campaigning, combining technique and technology, have been perfected there.

The net effect is a pervasive, often implicit *expectation* that new products, new ideas (literary criticism, among other recondite fields in the humanities, apart), and new initiatives will come from America. It is so well established a pattern, that there is a tendency among some Europeans *to await* and *to anticipate* what springs forth across the Atlantic – whether it be a strategy on terrorism, an emergency plan for coping with a sudden regional monetary crisis, or the skills for setting up a political network that exploits the possibilities of electronic campaigning. That tendency is strengthened by the widespread belief (again, not always conscious or articulated) that American innovations work. They have value, as demonstrated by American success. The smug American conceit that the United States “knows best/does best” meets with the reaction that they may be right more often than most Europeans care to admit. The resulting readiness to emulate the United States varies, by country and by subject-area. The British are clearly the most receptive to Americanisms, the French the most instinctively skeptical. Technical matters and pop culture are disseminated and absorbed most avidly, political and social philosophies are most suspect. Style rapidly is adopted even where the borrowing of substance lags.

3. The sense of threat created by aggressively successful American MNCs was expressed in Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's *The American Challenge* (New York: Avon, 1969).

Britain shows the greatest permeability – on occasions to the point of mimicry. Language surely has much to do with this. So does a history of intercourse in all domains. The vocabulary of entire spheres of British life has been altered by the assimilation of American words and phraseology along with their connotations.⁴ Business is one, politics another. The Blair government exemplifies this phenomenon in the latter sphere. From bringing an American style press cum spin operation into 10 Downing Street to the wholesale borrowing of the studied populist style (long the trademark of American politics) and the rhetoric on Iraq down to the exact phraseology, the British executive has come to mirror the American.⁵ Tory leaders have not been immune to this contagion. Their invitation to Senator John McCain, putative presidential hopeful, to address their annual convention in October 2006 is indicative of the same state of mind.⁶ Earlier, there was John Major's blind use of the American colloquialism "double-whammy" in his 1992 electoral campaign while his aides struggled to explain what they meant by it.

France is at the other end of the continuum. Prickly pride in a cherished national inheritance makes French elites especially feel their identities and sense of mastery threatened by American ideational imperialism. The Gallic compulsion is to originate ideas, to analyze ideas/people/circumstances in a practiced mode and method, and to act in accordance with their own judgments and preferences – wherever possible. American dominance, including over its European partners, progressively narrows the "possible" – to French irritation. To be querulous and ever parrying of American thrusts is the outcome. This pattern is the other side of the same coin to the British embrace of things American. They are different responses to the common reality of the United States' multifaceted influence over their circumstances and lives. The cross-pressures rending French society were encapsulated by the striking episode of President Jacques Chirac stalking out of an EU ministerial meeting on the Lisbon Agenda in protest over remarks in English by former MEDEF⁷ chief Antoine de Sellière, who pronounced it the

4. Confirmation of this phenomenon comes from the close Blair associate Derek Scott *Off Whitehall: A View From Downing Street By Tony Blair's Advisor* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2004). Former British ambassador to Washington Christopher Meyer provides a complementary account of the degree Washington became the lodestar of both political fashion and policy thinking in his candid memoir *DC Confidential* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2006).

5. Mimicry has reached the point of Tony Blair's body language copying that of President Bush when they are together; as it did that of President Clinton before him. A telling personal episode was Blair's sending his eldest son to intern at the Republican National Committee in the summer of 2005. It conjured images of Roman tributary states symbolically showing fealty by lodging the heir to the throne in the imperial capital. The selection of a purely partisan organization also was further indication that Bush's Republicans were seen as the cynosure of the admired American imperial creed.

6. In counterpoint, an address by Bill Clinton has become a staple of Labour Party conventions.

7. Mouvement des Entreprises de France.

“natural language of world business”.⁸ Interestingly, divergence in instinctive British and American reactions to American cultural inroads parallels the divergent strategic courses they chose in reaction to their shared humiliation at Suez in 1956.

There are, admittedly, some spheres where the United States has been laggard. The state’s assumption of the responsibility to provide for the basic welfare of the country’s workforce, and by extension the citizenry at large, was well ensconced in continental Europe (in some countries, for half a century) before the principle was accepted across the Atlantic. Indeed, the dedication of the current administration in Washington to roll back the New Deal is a vivid reminder of divergences in basic social philosophy. Their implications for current exercises in transplanting the American economic model are discussed below.

1.2 Dependency

Dependency has been the second great source of American influence on the European mindset. It is commonplace, of course, to refer to the singular role that America played in the post-war era: setting Europe on the road to prosperity via the Marshall Plan, serving as godfather to the community building project, and then sheltering its allies under the protective nuclear umbrella during the long years of the Cold War. The United States provided physical security and the existential security that allowed the Europeans to hold at bay the ghosts of the past while creating a peaceable new order. Moreover, Europe could afford to be strategically parochial so long as America tended to matters elsewhere around the globe, even if its manner of doing so did not always elicit praise. The effects of American domination on the structure of the Euro-American alliance

8. Faddism has its own dynamic. One *apropos* contribution to the rich literature on the subject is Martin Gardner *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science* (New York: Dover, 1957). Status aspirations, network communication, image mongering – all come into play to influence how and why certain ideas/practices acquire special cachet. What emanates from America intrinsically has great trend-setting potential for two reasons. One is America’s reality based image as the home of the new and better. Another is the country’s exceptional assets for disseminating what it originates: CNN, Hollywood, the English language. This is a theme of thoughtful continental commentary on the braided strands of American influence on European thinking. See, for example, Hubert Védrine *France In An Age Of Globalization* (Brookings, 2001); (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2003). This phenomenon is much discussed in terms of American “soft power” popularized by Joseph S. Nye, whose formulation is presented fully in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Public Affairs Press, 2005). Moreover, in the realms of economics and management, American institutions, especially its universities, are uniquely able to confer status. It works two ways: American thinking and its expounders are most likely to get an attentive, sympathetic hearing; and the status attached to American institutions can be transferred to foreigners – as individuals or as an institution – who associate with it. To be a dispenser of a scarce good (and status is indeed a scarce good) is to be in a position of power.

have been minutely and repeatedly examined. Its psychological dimension has gotten less attention. Yet that dominant-subordinate relationship continues to inflect their interaction and impinges as well on the Europeans' sense of self along with their aptitude for autonomous behavior. Such a long hiatus in exercising normal powers of sovereignty, set in the broader context of overweening American cultural and intellectual influence, inescapably has created a culture of inequality. It affects all parties.

One observable trait is that America acts and Europe reacts. That pattern is due not only to differentiation of roles and capabilities, but also to the levels of confidence and optimism that complement them. Experience mixes with national personality to determine what that level is. Americans are "pro-active" and optimistic by philosophy and temperament. Position accommodates the propensity; habit institutionalizes it. It is instructive to recall how the post-Korean War vow never again to get entangled in an open-ended land war in Asia was forgotten as the Kennedy administration plunged into Vietnam.⁹ The latter agonizing experience etched onto the American consciousness more powerful lessons, ones that were codified in official doctrines.¹⁰ A generation later the United States rushed headlong into Iraq. Action begets action for alpha-types, no matter what.

Europe is composed of alphas resigned to being second-in-command (Britain), frustrated alphas (France), and a slew of betas. Some of the latter are so by nature, some by virtue of the shock therapy dispensed in big doses by the twentieth century. The orientation of all is perpetuated to some degree by the overshadowing United States. These states of mind produce a number of readily recognizable behaviors. One is characterized as "followership", a term which, when translated into French as "suivisme", carries a heavy negative meaning. It entails (1) deference to the American way of interpreting a situation or defining a problem, whether it be a financial meltdown in East Asia or the campaign against al-Qaeda focused on unseating the Taliban as the first step in a global "war on terror"; and (2) deference to American leadership in dealing with it.

9. Among the numerous works drawing lessons from the Vietnam experience, the following stand out: Brian VanDerMark and Robert S. McNamara *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Vintage, 1996); Ole Holsti and James Rosenau *American Leadership: Vietnam and the Breakdown of Consensus* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984); Stanley Karnow *Vietnam: A History* (Washington, D.C.: Naval Institute Press, 1983); Max Boot *The Savage Wars Of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

10. The so-called "Powell Doctrine" is a set of maxims for the prudent deployment of American soldiers for armed conflict. Promulgated by Colin Powell, it became the orthodox view among the armed services. Powell's views were succinctly stated in "US Forces Challenges Ahead" *Foreign Affairs* XXI winter 1992/93. Powell's *My American Journey* with Joseph Persico (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995) provides a fuller picture of the post-Vietnam context of the thinking behind the doctrine.

Another behavioral norm is abstention. Abstention, or silence – its functional equivalent, occurs in either of two circumstances. The first is where the perceived wisdom is to stay out of America's willful way, as was the case with the 1998 missile strikes in Sudan and Afghanistan and the aggressive enforcement of the "no-fly" zone in Iraq between 1995 and 2003. An antecedent was the 1987-88 reflagging of Kuwait oil vessels in the Persian Gulf. There, the European allies refused repeated American entreaties to participate despite the risk of serious supply disruption, so low was their confidence that Washington could manage so delicate an operation. Only well into the mission, when the Reagan administration had shown itself competent, did the Europeans dispatch naval contingents. Current reluctance to deploy expanded troop contingents to the most volatile regions of Afghanistan fits the pattern. This mode of saying a passive "no" to the United States has been aptly termed "balking" by Stephen Walt.¹¹ The second is where America itself takes a hands-off attitude, leaving the field of play open to the Europeans were it inclined not to act. Darfur is a recent example; Bosnia until 1995 another, egregious example closer to home. Passivity and diffidence are the common elements. The latter attribute assures that the former only rarely turns into passive aggression.

The need for the Europeans to act collectively so as to be effective, even on relatively minor issues, contributes to this type of behavior. A leaderless group of governments, facing problems that do not endanger vital national interests, is fated to experience all the liabilities and pitfalls of consensual policy-making and execution. Thorny situations evoke avoidance behavior as no one has the incentive to boldly identify it, since to do so is to volunteer to take up a potentially onerous responsibility. By contrast, the United States is nearly always "on-duty" with its antennae extended to pick up signs of threat, even if it is selective in deciding when action is dictated in accordance with its titular position as global hegemon. Moreover, agreement among the instinctively cautious is likely to be on a lowest common denominator basis; thus, coping is the norm and risk-aversion is strong. Witness Bosnia. This behavioral pattern is not ineluctable. Necessity can be the mother of invention. Past habit of dependency on the United States, however, reinforced by continued American dominance, militates against it.

For most European leaders and publics, fears of over-commitment outweigh concerns about under-engagement. There are certainly reasons indigenous to Europe that explain that; *inter alia*, the continent's long-peace, the attributes of their "civilian societies", a philosophy of politics that transposes in diluted form

11. Stephen Walt in *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

the ethic of cooperation and compromise cultivated internally onto the more tumultuous affairs of other regions. Indeed, one hears from thoughtful Europeans the view that Europe is destined to moderation and “Zurückhaltung” if it wants to ensure the community enterprise does not founder on the shoals of intractable, contentious external ventures. Still, we should recognize the conditioning effects of close association with a cosseting, protective, hyperactive, supremely self-confident America.

1.3 Misplaced familiarity

There is a third dimension to the complex of elements that together weaken European identity and resolve vis-à-vis the United States. It is *the fallacy of misplaced familiarity*. I offer this concept as the counter to the oft-quoted notion of the “magnification of small differences” among similars.¹² Both can be apt, depending on circumstances. The cardinal Euro-American success in developing a community unprecedented in its depth, scope and rootedness in shared principles cannot be gainsaid. It is, after all, the outstanding fact of international life. Yet, it has become evident that Europeans and Americans do not understand each other as well as they thought they did. It follows that they do not understand the taproots of their own behavior as well as they think. Much of the image of who we all are as members of the democratic “West” was fashioned by the Cold War, as was the way we related to one another. What is distinctive and different now has come to the fore as security imperatives recede, to be replaced by novel worries. Those concerns, and how they are approached, reveal traits of national personality obscured or elided by the half century of international emergency. The heralded truth is that the Western democracies, like de Tocqueville’s nineteenth century Americans, “consider a great number of things in the same point of view; and ... hold the same opinions on many subjects.”¹³ The disquieting discovery is that family resemblances are sometimes misleading.

The most pronounced differences are evident on the neuralgic issues of social violence (criminality, the death penalty, the alleged “trigger happy” American attitude toward the use of military force); treatment of the poor and destitute; and the intrusion of religion into public life. All have sharpened in the Bush era. Each has a specific negative reference point: the Iraq war/occupation, the callous mishandling of Katrina, and the incessant sanctimony of Washington rhetoric juxtaposed to the first two. In regard to these matters, Europe does not see

12. Freud’s exact phrase was; “the narcissism of minor differences.” See *Civilization and Its Discontents* James Stacey, translator and editor (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1961) pg. 77.

13. Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy In America* (New York: Holt, 1838) pg. 176.



America as a model, nor does it find itself dependent on the United States – except for Iraq and associated behavior in the “war on terror” where Europe is hostage to American conduct. We shall return to this issue.

The evidence adduced here runs counter to my main argument. A generalized disposition to yield to American ways of thinking and doing does not prevent clashing attitudes from forming and expressing themselves. Yet, equally notable is the evidence that the vivid displays of American traits that bruise European sensibilities have little effect on the latter’s openness to multifarious influences in so many other spheres.¹⁴ Part of the explanation for this incongruity lies in the long-standing dissociation in European minds of the primary, overwhelmingly positive image of America from individual negative features. The most dramatic latter example, of course, has been the abuse of its Negro population. That scar on the American character did not prevent generations of Europeans from seeing the United States as the cradle of liberty, the herald of democracy or – most certainly – their savior in the great trials of the twentieth century. The American armies that helped liberate Western Europe from the Nazis were riddled with a hundred prejudices. Their heroic mission was deemed no less virtuous for that. In the same way, the Manifest Destiny propelling Americans across a continent trod the natives brutally underfoot, tore a huge chunk of real estate from the Mexicans, grabbed the remnants of Spain’s enfeebled empire, and intervened by force more than a hundred times in the Caribbean basin between 1890 and 1930.¹⁵ But these depredations did scant harm to America’s reputation embodied by Woodrow Wilson’s portrayal as white knight and moral prophet. Nor did the truth that he was a bigot who deemed the war against slavery to be wrong while seeing virtue in some Klu Klux Klan activities.¹⁶ The same can be said for the recurrent bouts of hysteria that seize its people with exaggerated fears while firing them to violate the very rights and liberties that are the keystone of their civic religion. Swift sublimation of repellant facets of American public life exposed by the Katrina calamity, now nearly disappeared from the discourse on the American socio-economic model, shows this psychology’s durability. A Europe that needs and wants an exemplary, well scrubbed

14. The diverse, and in some respects contradictory images Europeans have of America, are pondered in François Heisbourg’s classic article “American Hegemony? Perceptions of the US Abroad” *Survival* 41-4 Winter 1999-2000.

15. The record of the United States’ serial interventions has been reappraised recently by Alan Kinzer *Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Times Books, 2006).

16. Wilson’s racial views were critically scrutinized by Rayford Wittingham Logan in *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Collier, 1965) which first opened a window on the influence of his upbringing in a slaveholding family. The former President’s attitude toward the Klu Klux Klan is evident in his own *History of the American People* (New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1902).

America is ever ready to forget, to forgive and/or to compartmentalize, especially these days. The perplexing thing is that today's Europe remains so needy.

There is, too, the practical conviction that the United States is indispensable to an orderly world. Its contributions as underwriter and producer of collective goods are taken to be crucial to European interests even as its contribution as honest broker has been severely compromised by its diminished moral authority and by now selfish, rather than selfless conduct.

The contrast with Japan-American relations is instructive. Throughout the post-war era, Japan's dependency on the United States and openness to American political influences has been greater than Western Europe's. It was occupied by a conquering American army for six years, its constitution dictated by Washington, its security totally reliant on American military might, its economic boom fueled by exports across the Pacific, and its diplomatic isolation in Asia for decades meant leaning on the United States in order to certify its credentials. Yet, Japanese elites have always resisted the sort of voluntary subordination to American ideas and the American mindset more naturally, more consistently than have their European counterparts. This was so even as Tokyo took the low posture on matters of security and broad issues of global management. With the country's self-confidence bolstered by demonstrated superiority in manufacturing, along with concomitant financial strength, during the 1980s, Japan quietly but boldly stood up to the United States. The stunning case in point was the 1987 decision to use their horde of official American financial assets to preempt Washington's threatened imposition of import quotas on Japanese semi-conductors. It was the latest in a decade-long series of duels over the encroachment on the American market of Japanese products that the Reagan administration claimed were beneficiaries of unfair trade practices. Tokyo had acquiesced, with growing reluctance, to a string of Voluntary Export Restraints (VCRs) under intense pressure from Washington. In this instance, the Japan that was learning "to say no" decided enough was enough. The deterrent it possessed was the ability to trigger a crash in American financial markets. The will to use it had to be demonstrated for it to affect American behavior. A calculated sale of a relatively modest amount of the US Treasury's financial paper was sufficient to cause an immediate, marked drop in bond prices. The bond crisis of April 1987 has been eclipsed by the stock market crash six months later. As a Japanese shot across the bow of the White House, it was of greater economic-strategic importance.

No European government has seriously even contemplated so bold an action since de Gaulle traded in his dollars at the U.S. Treasury's gold window, and then withdrew France from NATO. The imposition of tariffs or quotas on a few

millions of dollars on selected imports in retaliation for Washington's non-compliance with a WTO decision is as far as the EU has gone. In those few instances, moreover, it was preceded by much hand-wringing. To sharpen the comparison, let us imagine a Japan in strategic circumstances analogous to those in which Europe is today. That is to say: warm relations among all states in the vicinity; freed of its inhibiting burden of wartime guilt; a non-existent military threat; but concerns about turbulence in another region, across a sea, where it has major interests. Can we imagine a Tokyo as beholden to the United States, self-deprecatory, and fretfully indecisive as Western European capitals are today?¹⁷

17. For an insightful current appraisal of how independent a line Japan is likely to take see Yutaka Kawashima *Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Challenges and Options for the Twenty-first Century* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2005).

2. Security

The transatlantic dependency relationship never was a garden of roses. European reliance on the United States for its post-war security was interspersed with bouts of criticism: from Suez to Vietnam to the American avocation of toppling inconvenient governments to the nasty Soviet natural gas pipeline dispute. Several European leaders (a greater fraction of political elites generally) took potshots at Uncle Sam. In the last mentioned case, they even managed to best Ronald Reagan in a unique show of unity and will. These notable exceptions to the leader-follower model had multiple identifiable sources: European parochialism (who really worried about a Red tide sweeping over Guatemala or the Congo)¹⁸; preoccupation with forced decolonization and then instinctive aversion to its homologues; doubts about the probity of American judgment – personified in the run of Presidents from Johnson through Reagan; and fearful reaction to ill-starred displays of utter incompetence (most of Vietnam; Jimmy Carter’s jousts with windmills; Beirut; Iran-Contra ...). Yet, criticism was bounded in target and effect because on the really big things, American policy turned out to be sound – reflex, rhetoric and hyper-activism aside. That was true with regard to German reunification and the opening of western institutions to the former Communist countries. Washington’s judgment was demonstrably sounder than that of the anxious, ambivalent Western Europeans.

The Cold War denouement held out hope that mature partnership now would mark the Euro-American relationship. Gulf War I looked to be the harbinger of good things to come. The indifference and occasional petulance (re. the Yugoslavia imbroglios) of the Clinton decade conjured images of America adrift and drifting apart from an integrating Europe. Nothing dire though. The imagined risks of rupture became real with Bush the Younger entering the White House, dedicated as he and his associates were to re-exerting American national power and tossing overboard everything his predecessor had done and said. Bush was the embodiment of the dark side of the collective American persona in many European eyes: cocky pugnacity laced with self-righteousness. The Bushies, for their part, disparaged and belittled a squabbling, indecisive and, above all, “soft” Europe (the Brits, as ever, the noble exception). This was the hour of “Mars and Venus” – then seen as the odd couple fated to grate on each other’s nerves.¹⁹

18. We may recall the wry comment of Winston Churchill that he had lived to the ripe age of 80 without learning where Guatemala was on a map. Of course, Churchill was vexed by distractions from the serious business of how to approach a post-Stalin Soviet Union.

19. Robert Kagan *Of Paradise and Power: Europe and America In The New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003). Europeans saw American foreign policy being taken over by a coterie of passionate, ideologically driven true believers in the idea of the United States as destined to reshape the world in its interests and in its image. That spirit was depicted in Jim Mann’s account of *The Vulcans: The History Of Bush’s War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

September 11 for a time overrode that growing estrangement in a gush of sentiment that drew on the deep well of goodwill toward Americans and the strong affinities of the Atlantic peoples. Iraq ensured that it would be a fleeting moment remembered as a feast of empathy. The millions who poured into streets and squares across the continent in silent homage to a stricken America would be replaced, within only sixteenth months, by crowds shouting their objection to a warrior America seemingly bent on blind vengeance. That contrast in itself exposed how powerful the crosscurrents in Euro-American relations are.

Today, four years later, supposedly sobered American officials meet with their supposedly forward-looking counterparts to acclaim their renewed brotherhood. Assistant Secretary of State for European affairs Daniel Fried waves off mention of clashes on Iraq with the cute phrase: “so 2003”.²⁰ Discourse rather than dispute, reflection rather than passion, cooperation rather than crossing of swords. Commentators nod approvingly.²¹ A page has been turned, dedication to common good works is proclaimed, and nary a scowl or petulant lip in sight. Too good to be true? Alas, yes.

Virtual reality was eclipsing actual reality. Form was counting more heavily than substance; the hallmarks of American public life skipping across the Atlantic. For sure, there is a convergence of thinking on identifying core problems and on objectives. They are concentrated in the hazard zone that is the greater Middle East. Iran, that nuclear wannabe whose fading revolutionary passion has been lathered by president Ahmedinejad, demands a concerted response. Iraq’s ersatz democracy is in urgent need of Western help and encouragement to ward off the country’s implosion. Palestine under Hamas figures less as a viable negotiating partner for Israel than as a conduit for the anger stoked by the Israelis’ clear intention to reify their own map of the Holy Land. The West wants to avoid that. Terrorism is the biggest imminent threat to domestic tranquility. The West should redouble its campaign to root out terrorist groups of the jihadist variety. Energy dependency makes economic well-being hostage to political vagaries in unruly parts of the world, especially the Persian Gulf. Russia’s new gambit of playing geo-energy games is worrying; Putin must be persuaded to behave responsibly. All ascribe to the above.

But what does it amount to? Some things are obvious. One, the United States has no grand strategy tying these issues together. Indeed, the linkages are barely recognized. In regard to each, improvisation is more and more the name of the

20. Remarks made at The Brussels Forum April 29, 2006.

21. Responsible. mainstream transatlantic opinion is well represented by the contributors to *Friends Again? EU-US relations after the crisis* ed. Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: Institute for Security Studies 2006).

game. Two, if Washington lacks a strategy, *ipso facto* Europe lacks a strategy. That is so not only because of Europe's divisions and weak coordinating mechanisms. But also because, without an American lead either to follow or to play off, European leaders and political elites lack the confidence and conviction to design a strategy. The absence of one is convenient insofar as it avoids wrestling with the question of how it could ever be executed by a committee. Three, a look behind the façade of active partnership exposes the disturbing fact that the Bush administration still insists, albeit *sotto voce*, that it jealously holds onto the right to judge, decide and act according to its own lights. Public remarks by Secretaries Rice and Rumsfeld in mid-2006 made it clear that while the United States is committed to *discussing* serious matters with its allies, it in no way is bound to reaching a consensus. The latter took pains to explain that NATO as an organization is no more the preferred instrument for collective action than it was in 2003. Repeated comments as to the value of working closely with Pakistan, placing it on a par with the Old Europeans, punctuates the thinly veiled view that the "the United States should put more emphasis on building flexible alliances ... and rethinking the role of longstanding alliances like NATO."²² The dictum that "the problem determines the coalition" is very much alive. NATO is advertised as useful in spurring the Europeans to spend more on defense, and in taking on missions like ISAF-plus in Afghanistan, but not right for overseeing a common, comprehensive program there. Certainly, it is not the instrument of first resort.

Washington's invigorated campaign promoting Ukraine's admission to NATO fits this logic. Although the project is now on hold due to an unfavorable turn in the country's domestic politics, the aim remains to bring Ukraine into the Western orbit with finality; to extend NATO's role as "exporter of stability" deeper into the former Communist lands; and to gather as many potentially pro-American states into the alliance as possible. All of the above-mentioned ends are served by keeping NATO reasonably intact (even if not fit for a full, robust and autonomous life), and by keeping Euro-American relations calm. The point was made again a few days after Rumsfeld's remarks by vice president Richard Cheney who, with typical finesse, vaunted the merits of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia as members of the EU and NATO who would "rejuvenate" those stale institutions.²³ European leaders were studiously silent about the three newly discovered founts of democratic inspiration from the deepest Balkans.

NATO is seen by Washington in strictly instrumental terms. Its value as the formal expression of Euro-American comity is implicitly disparaged. NATO is

22. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld Remarks to Press July 1, 2006.

23. Vice President Richard Cheney Speech Zagreb, Croatia June 26, 2006.

a toolkit to be used as and when the United States chooses. The metaphor is that of a Swiss army knife – multi-functional, passive, ever ready and, in the improved model, constantly honing its implements for possible activation. Many Europeans seem quite content with this arrangement even while making polite requests for more communication. What they mean by better communication is modest. Secretary Condoleezza Rice is lauded for being a “good listener” – however slight the evidence that the views gently expressed have a marked impact on American policy or the manifest evidence of continued lack of inhibition by her or her subordinates to scold European governments publicly. NATO’s assumption of command for a large European force in Afghanistan does mark the passing of a milestone, for both the alliance and participating countries. We should see the move in perspective, though. Operation Enduring Freedom was wholly American in conception and overwhelmingly American in execution. So too was the flawed tutoring and patronage of the Kharzai-centered reconstruction plan. Its failings have contributed much to the arduousness of the current undertaking.

3. The Middle East

On the greater Middle East, on closer examination of the much trumpeted transatlantic concord it is seen to conceal as much as it reveals. For there are serious, not easily reconciled differences about how to approach every one of the high agenda items. The inhibition of governments in Europe to broach them, even to hint at them, testifies to two distressing realities: many European leaders do not believe, deep down, that Washington has mended its maverick ways and, therefore, it is hazardous to do or say anything that could provoke the beast; and, America thereby continues to denature Europe by its intimidating, looming presence. The Lebanon crisis should have confirmed the grounds for skepticism while highlighting the latter reality. There is no gainsaying three discomfiting facts. One, the Bush administration decided to back Israel unqualifiedly without prior consultation (indeed, there is persuasive evidence that it elaborated plans in advance for the combined military/diplomatic strategy that was followed). The kind of consultation Europeans want did take place – between Washington and Jerusalem. Two, it closely linked the campaign to destroy Hezbollah to a unitary plan aimed at confronting Iran and Syria. All of these elements were folded into a general war against “Islamofascism”.²⁴ And, three, it presented the package to its European allies without asking for input or critical review. Neither the subsequent diplomatic *pas de deux* with Paris in the Security Council nor the EU lead in deploying a newly mandated United Nations International Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL) could obviate the fundamental truth that once again Washington had acted unilaterally on a set of issues of cardinal concern for Europe, thereby creating a constraining, unyielding reality for the Europeans to operate in.

The disconnect between proclaimed concert and a dysfunctional American dominance is evident in both what was the original American grand strategy (*circa* 2003) and each of its critical component parts.²⁵ Most European policymakers believe it practical to break down the American package into separate agenda items. Moreover, the connections that they do make are different from those made in Washington. Fighting the war against terrorists is one problem,

24. The term “Islamofascism,” popularized by Thomas Friedman, had become the preferred reference for violent fundamentalist Muslim groups among hardliners before being appropriated by the President in a speech to the American Legion national Convention on August 31, 2006.

25. I examine the evolving Bush administration strategy that made Iraq the keystone for an all-embracing edifice intended to resolve the Middle East’s multiple problems in “Values & Interests: The Middle East” in *Changing Identities – Evolving Values: Is There Still a Transatlantic Community* ed. Esther Brimmer (Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins, Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2006). A more troubled assessment, which concentrates on economic as well as security matters, comes from Bruce Stokes “The stresses Of Deep Integration: The Transatlantic Relationship’s New Economic And Political Challenges” AICGS Policy Report 23 2006.

Iran's nuclear ambitions is another, the fate of Iraq a third, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict yet another. Collaboration with Washington on each is necessary, wherever possible. But the terms of that collaboration are colored by those underlying divergences of interpretation. Strikingly, the Bush administration has chosen to see developments re. Palestine as a dependent variable of what happens elsewhere in the region. Europeans tend to see the causal connection as operating in the reverse direction. American officials were fond of saying a few years ago that the road to Jerusalem went through Baghdad. That notion struck their counterparts as odd. The latter were less comprehending of why the causal arrows ran from success in Iraq to the stifling of terrorism to peace in the Holy Land. For them, the level of Islamic terrorism was dependent in good part on what was going on in the other two places.

On *Iran*, evidence grows that senior American policy-makers are seriously considering air strikes – to destroy its nuclear infrastructure and to trigger a popular uprising against the clerical regime. A new, bellicose stance was announced by President Bush in his January 11, 2007 address on Iraq.²⁶ Harsh words were followed by acts as the United States dispatched a second carrier taskforce to the Persian Gulf and arrested Iranian officials in Iraq who were there at the behest of the Baghdad government. Shortly thereafter, Washington acknowledged that six months earlier it had launched a campaign targeting Iranian interests by (a) attacking its clients/supporters among Hezbollah, Hamas, Shiite militias in Iraq and factions in the Gulf principalities; and (b) pressuring financial and business institutions in Europe and elsewhere to shun any dealings with Tehran.²⁷ To the same end of undermining the regime, it set aside \$90 million to fund various hapless exile groups to incite opposition to the mullahs in the name of democracy. No European policy-makers view military action as anything but madness, with the predictable exception of Tony Blair who dismissed Foreign Secretary Jack Straw for, among other sins, publicly taking the military option off the table. The widely held opinion everywhere else is that only direct dealings with Tehran on the broad security agenda in the Gulf holds out hope of reaching a *modus vivendi*. For, at very least, it serves to cut the ground from under those who demonize America as the Islamic Revolution's implacable foe, the "Great Satan" image, while encouraging voices of pragmatism in Tehran. That is adamantly resisted by the Bush administration despite its on-again off-again desire to talk with the Iranians at low levels about what they could do to help America salvage something in Iraq. As for the idea of sponsoring a destabilization campaign, the response across Europe is raised eyebrows over a likely repeat of the Ahmed Chalabi fiasco.

26. President George W. Bush Address Freedom Hall, Fort Benning, Georgia January 11, 2007.

27. See the detailed account of this program in Dafna Linzer "Troops Authorized to Kill Iranian Operatives in Iraq" *The Washington Post* January 26, 2007.

Yet, the mounting American campaign against Iran on all fronts prompted no sustained or concerted effort on the part of European governments to oppose it. Each new step in the escalation ladder meets with little more than discreet, off-the-record expressions of skepticism. Even as overt American threats against major European banks to cease all activity on behalf of Iran coerced them into doing so, contrary to their best economic and political judgment, political leadership in the countries involved (Germany and the United Kingdom outstanding among them) bit their tongues.

On *Palestine*, too, Washington has a plan of its own. It is to maximize pressure on Hamas – economic, military (via Israel), and political so as to break its will and open the way to a more compliant Palestinian government. Support for Israeli’s arrest of the elected Palestinian leadership, its throttling of the economy in the occupied territories, and aggressive policing of Gaza are in line with the no-holds-barred approach taken in Lebanon. The Bush administration went so far as to connive with Israel to stoke civil strife between Fatah and Hamas via a scheme to smuggle arms from Egypt to the former. No word of this provocation was passed to European capitals. The predominant viewpoint in Europe, by contrast, is that such a tack will lead to deeper embitterment, strengthened extremism, and more terrorism. To their credit, some Europeans have demurred in guarded statements that question the wisdom of the joint American-Israeli strategy. The Finnish Presidency in Brussels joined in. Overall, however, Europe has failed to enunciate an alternative or marshal the will to press forward despite much talk of seizing the moment of its lead in Lebanon to leverage its position on the Palestinian issue. Europe continued to flounder about: refusing to deal with Hamas, seeking ingenious ways to circumvent it while providing humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, fretting about the rising presence of Iran and other dubious benefactors, gently remonstrating Israel for its Fence, and alluding wistfully to the long defunct “road map”. In the meantime, its standing in the Middle East plummeted as international agencies reported humanitarian conditions in the occupied territories as being as on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. They can be saved from ignominy only by a *deus ex machina* in the form of an elusive Fatah-Hamas national unity accord that offers legal and political cover for the resumption of minimal assistance to the Palestinians.²⁸ This is not quite virtual diplomacy, simply vapid diplomacy that glides over the surface of a grave issue.²⁹ Meanwhile, Secretary Rice makes her periodic whirlwind swings around the region (starting in Jerusalem) that win her, and the

28. Reported in the *Financial Times* September 12, 2006.

29. There is an illuminating discussion of how a situational logic shapes policy behavior that can be detrimental to achieving objectives by Robert Banks in *Perspectives On Politics* American Political science Association June 2006.

United States, generous words of praise from European leaders for recommitment to an obviously fictive peace process.

On *Iraq*, European leaders remain sidelined. They have been rendered impotent by the American invasion and feckless occupation. The talk, for almost four years, has been about assisting in building a viable democratic Iraq. NATO has committed itself as a body to help train Iraqi military, paramilitary and police officers. Member governments choose *à la carte* which to train, where to train them (inside Iraq or outside Iraq), and what ancillary assistance to provide. The program is auxiliary to the main American effort to beef up the country's capacity to maintain a modicum of public order. Given the daily confirmation that "Iraq" is a pronoun with multiple antecedent nouns, European efforts in this sphere are at best jejune, and at worst accessory to the mounting civil violence. Economically, pledges were made early on of reasonably generous financial aid. Relatively little has materialized, though, beyond the wide agreement to write off most of Iraq's existing debt. This last entails no great sacrifice since the chances of Iraq paying down the mountain of debt bequeathed by Saddam Hussein are on a par with that of realizing the value of Czarist railway bonds. Whatever the eventual amount, it cannot be crucial to the country's economic future. The United States already has spent close to \$60 billion (roughly 20 of its own and 40 from a combination of the inherited "oil-for-food" fund and revenue from oil sales) with little to show for it. Infrastructure and services remain in markedly worse shape than they were before the invasion; investment is negligible; and economic activity of all kinds stutters. Now President Bush has upped his bet on reaching "success" by military means, rejecting the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group and flying in the face of American public opinion. The decision to do so predictably was made without input from European allies. In short, Europe's contribution to the outcome of what all now declare to be a matter of historic consequence is, literally, unimportant. America acts. Europe prays.

In reviewing the whole Iraq affair dispassionately, from a Euro-American perspective, a couple of things have acquired sharper definition. One is that the Europeans were destined to play a minor role even had their diplomatic backing and military role been larger. The Bush people were fixed on making it an American show. It was the key to their grand strategy for the Middle East, fuelled by post-9/11 passions, and directed by remarkably willful people. It also meant to send loud and clear the message that America was ready to use its power to put its indelible mark on the world. The matter of influence cannot be reduced to physical capabilities. The British had a significant presence; their impact on what has been done is inconsequential. British highest ranking diplomatic and military leaders in Baghdad were granted grand titles even as they were relegated

to the role of spear-carriers in a Washington production. Sir Jeremy Greenstock, who was deputized to Paul Bremer III after leaving his post as Ambassador to the United Nations where he battled alongside the Americans during the run-up to the war, privately made known his vexation at the string of crucial American mistakes. Yet so slight was London's influence, so low its profile, that its views got scant attention in official circles or out. As Chris Patten reports after long discussions with the Brits in Baghdad, "No one holds Britain to account because no one thinks for a nanosecond that Britain is implicated in the decisions. Britain is there as part of the feudal host, not as a serious decision-making partner."³⁰

What if other West European allies had been militarily present? Let us conjecture a situation wherein France and Germany each had sent 10,000 troops, with cruise missiles in the quiver of each force, and further assume that ESDP A-400 cargo planes provided the transport. All are things long demanded by Washington. In all probability, Patten's appraisal would stand for the collective European presence. Don Rumsfeld's Pentagon and Paul Bremer III would have failed utterly exactly as in actuality they did.

Their may be sound reasons for the Europeans to beef up their militaries, and finally to put some meat on the bare bones of their European Security and Defense Policy. Their dilatoriness in missing deadline after deadline, operating with a seemingly Hindu sense of time, is inexcusable. But we would delude ourselves to think that a heftier military establishment is the key to a better equilibrated Euro-American partnership.

30. Chris Patten *Cousins And Strangers* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2006) pg. 127. In Bob Woodward's latest account of Bush administration actions in and about Iraq, Sir Jeremy Greenstock gets one fleeting reference. Tony Blair himself figures only as a very occasional off-stage voice. *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

4. The “War on Terror”

The current state of the so-called “war on terror” is most instructive as to how distorted the Euro-American partnership is. There are several bases for this claim. First is problem definition. From 9/11 through the intervention against the Taliban, a strong consensus existed that al-Qaeda’s use of Afghanistan as a multi-purpose base posed an intolerable, immediate threat of great gravity. That consensus began to dissolve with the group’s fragmentation. The change was hidden by a common vocabulary, sloganeering, and the European governments’ desire to stay on the same wavelength as the Bush administration. As case in point, the Salonika Declaration issued by the European Union heads of government at their June 2003 summit, provided a formal statement that borrowed heavily from official American documents in the formulation of priorities, emphases, and needs. For most European governments, however, anti-terrorism policy was essentially a police operation on an international as well as national scale. The intertwining of Islamic terrorist groups, WMD proliferation, and rogue regimes was an American concoction – at least in official circles and as regards policy actions. Even those European leaders who supported the American invasion of Iraq were skeptical of the package’s coherence. Tony Blair, as always, was the odd man out. Thus, the public evidence of convergent perspectives was belied by a more complicated reality behind the scenes. That discrepancy has been a factor in the widening gap between European public opinion and official European behavior on the vexing questions of torture and rendition; itself another price paid for the less than honest relationship between Europe and America.

Combating terrorist violence has been seen as the signal success of Euro-American cooperation. Rightly so. Intelligence sharing and joint operations have been conducted at unprecedented levels. The one issue that has riled European public opinion, aggravating an otherwise fruitful and smooth collaboration, has been the American treatment of internees at Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram. Revelations of gross human rights abuses and the Bush administration’s cavalier dismissal of the Geneva Convention’s provisions had the pernicious effect of eroding America’s moral standing, besmirching its image in the Muslim world, and compromising the principles that were the foundation of the West’s claim to international legitimacy. The sorry record of Guantanamo *et al.*, and renditions to a network of torture sites, is at once an affront to the West’s moral principles and a liability in the campaign to close the breach with the Islamic world. That liability grew in the face of a damning report on Guantanamo issued by the United Nation’s Commission on Human Rights in February 2006.³¹ The com-

31. “Situation of detainees at Guantanamo Bay,” United Nations Economic and Social Commission on Human Rights, 62nd Commission, 15 February, 2006.

promising of the democratization strategy it so energetically pursues harms Europe as well as the United States. For Europe is both tainted by association and the inescapable victim of the unfortunate results in radicalizing Islamic opinion and encouraging acts of terrorism.

Logically, it should follow that the United States' conduct be condemned for both practical and ethical reasons. Ensuing official European chastisements, though, were remarkable more for their tepidness and rarity than for their candor or conviction. Unofficial judgments were sterner. In Britain, Tony Blair referred to Guantanamo as an "anomaly." Eventually, he was prodded by the press and opposition into seeking custody of a number of British subjects held there. But even repeated appeals to his friend George Bush fell on deaf ears until the White House relented with obvious reluctance to give up some of their captives. Moreover, his government was accessory to the rendition of one citizen and two residents. In Germany, as we have learned, the Chancellery and the Interior Ministry were complicit in the rendition of German citizens/nationals, and resisted accepting their release when innocence was established. In Italy, the Berlusconi government connived in the rendition from Milan of an Italian resident. And so on. Thirteen countries have been implicated, one way or another, in America's rendition program. Indeed, the EU as a body, under the Austrian Presidency, held secret talks with American officials in May 2006 on setting up a joint "framework" for collaborating on extraordinary renditions. The proposed statement would "note that rendition could be a useful tool in the fight against terrorism." The idea foundered on American rejection of any form of reasonable safeguards.³²

One explanation for this shameful conduct is that European leaders shy away from doing anything that could provoke the ire of a prickly Bush administration. Another is that many if not most European governments have been accessories to the rendition policy. That has been established in the case of both supporters, Britain, of the American policy in Iraq, and critics, Germany.³³ The charged atmosphere surrounding Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's trip to European capitals in January 2006 had as much to do with her thinly veiled threats to expose her hosts' complicity as with her tergiversations in trying to defend and to deny torture simultaneously.³⁴ The initial thinking that led Euro-

32. See Mark Beunderman "EU considered joint renditions 'framework' with US" *EU Observer* 29/11/06. Neither the EU Council nor member governments have denied the report's general accuracy.

33. The British government's readiness to allow American planes to transit using airfields in the U.K., widely suspected, was confirmed by a leaked memo from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Downing Street making suggestions as to how to spin the story without formally admitting complicity. It was printed first in the *Sun* and reprinted by *The Guardian*; see Ian Cobain, "FO Paper Reveals British Knowledge of Torture Flights" January 19, 2006.

34. Daniel Dombey "Rice strives to defuse furore over CIA jails" *Financial Times* January 8, 2006.

pean governments to turn a blind eye to rendition and torture on their continent is not clear. In the Eastern European countries that provided detention facilities, the desire to keep on the right side of the Bush administration surely played a role. Elsewhere, it is a reasonable surmise that there was a hope that those draconian steps would yield high value intelligence which could be used to prevent terrorist acts. That has proven to be a dubious assumption, as far as we know. The Europeans' own efforts, whose severity varies by country, seem to have been more productive. A number of terrorist plots in Britain and on the continent have been averted through preemptive police action, ones far more consequential and advanced than anything unearthed in the United States.

The moral dilemma all face in reconciling acute security concerns with civil liberties is compounded when governments resort to outsourcing torture. European leaders gave tacit support to tough American actions in the belief that the United States would be both effective and reasonable. In fact, it has been neither. The extent and brutality of interrogations surpasses what anyone envisaged. So too has been the indiscriminate collecting of suspects. Consequently, the Europeans' own human rights credentials have become hostage to the moral vagaries of American behavior. As to benefits, there is no public evidence of any direct connection between intelligence gathering at notorious detention centers and successes against terrorist groups, except possibly for the capture of Al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan. Even more troubling is that in drawing up a balance sheet of benefits/costs from going the torture route there is no foreseeable end date. The West will be paying the price indefinitely – even were future policies less drastic. For the United States has in detention a few thousands of persons, many innocent of any wrong-doing, whose release will be an embarrassment. Like those already set free, they will recount stories of gross mistreatment – firing anti-American passions. That may be the reason why the German government of Gerhard Schroeder, in particular head of Chancellery and now Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, was less than avid in their efforts to secure the release of Bremen native, Turkish national Murat Kurnaz (swept up by the CIA while visiting Pakistan) who would testify before a Bundestag committee as to the role of German officials in his kidnapping and brutal interrogations. That counter-productive result, in terrorist terms, is already visible in Iraq where resentment rather than appreciation is the response to prisoner releases. For regimes that have zero scruples, no accountability, and do not presume to be the world's fount of virtue, the answer is to liquidate the victims and to terrorize into silence those few who are set free. The other alternative is to warehouse them indefinitely. It behooves European governments to ponder the question of what exactly the Bush administration plans to do with its detainees.

The torture issue has been little more than another minor irritating fact of transatlantic life. That is surprising – and unfortunate. By alienating opinion in Europe from America it perpetuated strongly negative attitudes toward the Bush administration which themselves became impediments to a full restoration of comity and trust. Governments, political elites generally and publics seemingly shared a distaste for unbecoming American behavior. That has proven to be incorrect. The revelations about rendition carried disturbing details about the kidnapping of suspected terrorists or their associates and then clandestinely shipping them to either American run torture facilities (“black sites”) or foreign governments ready to employ their own practiced techniques for extracting information. Some of the former were in Poland or Romania; others in Afghanistan and Diego Garcia. Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Pakistan figured among the locations for outsourcing. As noted, almost every country (France is an outstanding exception) had allowed CIA or American military aircraft engaged in prisoner commerce to use their airfields for stopovers.³⁵

The official reactions to these reports by Amnesty International, *The Washington Post*, Seymour Hersh in *The New Yorker*, and then others, were as remarkable as the actions cited. Firm statements emanated from one European official after another that they knew nothing of the matter. The reports were uniformly dismissed as based on unverifiable “rumors, allegations and accusations.”³⁶ Javier Solana, the European Union’s High Representative for the Council’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, was vocal in rejecting the indictment as without solid foundation. He added, vehemently, that “I don’t have the competence ... to ask the countries how they have handled these questions and they don’t have the obligation to answer me.”³⁷ He was echoed by NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. Neither they nor member governments called for investigation.

Two institutions did act. The Council of Europe appointed the Swiss Senator Dick Marty as rapporteur of a special panel under the Human Rights and International Law Committee to check into the allegations. With scant resources, he was only able to confirm *prima facie* evidence of the alleged illicit activities. His

35. *The Washington Post* November 12, 2005; Seymour Hersh *The New Yorker*, January 21 2005; Amnesty International “Below the Radar: Secret Flights to Torture and Disappearance” April 5, 2006.

36. Javier Solana “Testimony to the European Parliament Special Committee” May 3, 2006.

37. *Ibid.* Solana, a conscientious public official and a man of rectitude, was forced into this fatuous performance by circumstances beyond his control, unless he dared take the brave action of resigning. After years of frustration trying to give body to CFSP and ESDP, an exercise tantamount to trying to make bricks without straw, Solana understandably was not about to butt his head against the unusual consensus albeit one arrayed in favor of a collective policy of denial. This behavior earned him scathing criticism from the Fava committee.

inquiry concluded that fourteen European governments, including a large majority of western European ones, had colluded with U.S. intelligence in a “spider’s web” of secret flights and detention centers that violated international human rights law.³⁸ The European Parliament, where attitudes were decidedly mixed along party and national lines, also took the bit between its teeth in appointing a special committee led by Italian MEP Claudio Fava. Both bodies protested the “obstruction and uncooperativeness of all governments implicated”, as well as Dr. Solana.³⁹

The tacit accord among European officials in Brussels and national capitals to sweep the scandal under the rug blocked a full exposure of what happened and, more important, the thinking of all those in high office who were complicit. Instead, European citizens were treated to high minded perorations that torture on European territory was anathema, and the granting of transit rights to expedite torture almost as heinous. They went hand in hand with outraged com-

38. Marty’s inquiry relied to a large extent on flights logs recorded by the European Union’s air traffic agency, Eurocontrol. The final report was issued in June 2006 as: “Alleged Secret Detentions and Unlawful Inter-State transfers of Detainees Involving Council of Europe Member States” (Strasbourg: Council of Europe). The Europeans’ pattern of studied silence about illegal or ethically dubious American actions in the “war on terror” was evident as well in the SWIFT affair. The SWIFT – Society for Worldwide Inter-bank Financial Telecommunication – is a consortium based in Brussels. SWIFT handles nearly all transactions among accredited financial institutions. It routinely provided American authorities with confidential information about international money transfers since 2001. This was confirmed by the European Central Bank, the Bank of England, and other central banks. The Belgian justice ministry promised an investigation. The EU commission declared it a “matter for national law.” It soon disappeared from public discourse. See Helena Spongenberg, “Belgium to probe US monitoring of international money transfers” *EU Observer* June 27, 2006 and “European Central Bank knew about US data access” *EU Observer* June 29, 2006. Also, Dan Balefsky and Eric Lichtblau, “Swiss Official Says bank Broke Law by Supplying date to U.S.” *The New York Times* October 14, 2006.

39. The buck passed to national chancelleries did not stop there. Incessant questioning in Berlin and London met with peevish responses. From the former came the one admission of an official being accessory to an illegal kidnapping. Otto Schily, Interior Minister in the preceding Schroeder Government, admitted that he had been aware of the seizure of German citizen Kalid al-Masri by the CIA after he had been lured to Skopje, Macedonia. Schily stressed the polite inquiries he had made about Herr al-Masri’s whereabouts. The Merkel government was further shaken by a near simultaneous embarrassment by charges that German intelligence officers in Baghdad had aided the Americans in pinpointing targets at the outset of the war. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, SDP Foreign Minister in the Merkel government and, at the time, chief of staff for Gerhard Schroeder, came up with the ingenious ploy of assuring everyone that the latter’s only role was to identify cultural sites to be avoided in the American bombardment, most especially an archive of ancient Jewish artifacts. The appearance of evidence that the said German officer from Baghdad had received a medal from Central Command at its Florida headquarters for his meritorious service evoked a hesitant semi-admission that blamed earlier denials on faulty communication. It then became known that Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer met with the official to congratulate him on a job well done. Despite the new German government’s acute discomfort, it strenuously opposed the Bundestag’s looking into the matter. An investigation eventually was forced by the three party opposition’s ability to muster the necessary one-third vote. It has exposed Steinmeier’s and Schily’s direct involvement in the Kunarz and al-Masri affairs. The salient facts are covered in *Der Spiegel International* “German Foreign Minister Under Fire” January 29, 2007.

plaints that there was no certain evidence that any of those odious things had occurred. Since the CIA was disinclined to provide a guided tour of the facilities in operation or the occasion to chat with the hooded enemy “combatants” stashed in its phantom planes on the tarmac of remote airstrips, the standard of proof demanded could never be met.

The conclusions to be drawn from this bizarre affair are unsettling. It is highly unlikely that any Western European government would itself engage in torture or follow a policy of rendition. Yet, because the Americans relieved them of the moral and, it seemed, the political responsibility, they were quite content to turn a blind eye. *Raison d'état* offered the necessary justification for acting as accessories before and after the fact. But, if *raison d'état* dictated that the promised information was so valuable as to set aside their reservations, why should it not provide compelling grounds to be honest in presenting the matter to their own populace? Is this not tantamount to the sanctimonious hypocrisy the United States is accused of? Most seriously, if some European leaders believe deep down that they may need a roughhouse America to fight their corner in an existential battle against the dark forces of Islamic fundamentalism, that grave judgment cannot be kept their personal secret.

Public admission by President Bush in September 2006 that “black sites” had been used by the CIA and renditions made left European leaders in the lurch. While not mentioning the location of the sites, and using euphemisms for the word torture, Bush now confirmed the reality that governments in Europe had been accessories to acts they themselves had declared atrocious. They therefore paid the double cost of appearing to their publics as deceitful and all too pliable in dealings with Washington. Moreover, their lost credibility was of scant regard in the political calculations of an American president driven by election season concerns.⁴⁰

The behavior of European officials was irresponsible in two crucial respects. One, it widened the already yawning credibility gap between elected leaders and the electorate. The distrust rooted in the lack of a common frame of thought and vocabulary was vividly on display in the French and Dutch referenda on the EU Constitution. It shredded Tony Blair’s credibility. It is a continental-wide phe-

40. President George Bush Press Conference September 5, 2006 address to the American Legion National Convention August 31, 2006. The Europeans had made themselves all the more vulnerable to Bush’s blunt admission by their behavior on the occasion of the US-EU Summit in Vienna. There, they reacted to the President’s vague redeclaration that he “wanted to close Guantanamo” by pronouncing themselves “satisfied” and ready to lay the matter to rest, in all its aspects. Austrian Chancellor Schussel, his host, took it upon himself to silence European journalists asking awkward questions about Iraq, accusing them of disrespect for a country that, they should remember, had saved them all 60 years ago. See “Solana backs Bush on secret prison move” *EU Observer* 7/09/06.

nomenon. The deception and flummery on the rendition/abduction matter feeds the sentiment that politicians cannot be trusted to tell the truth or to do the right thing. Europe as a whole is weak because of its divisions. The further enfeebling of national leaders in this manner heightens the sense, and reality, of a would-be community operating without competent, accountable public authorities.

Two, a Europe devoid of helmsmen is a Europe fated to remain in thrall to the United States. It will be hard to stand up to willful American leaders when they do something wrong but that they highly value. It will be equally hard to talk straight to their own publics about the terms of Euro-American dealings. Instead, they will be open to the kind of blackmail used by Condoleezza Rice in threatening to expose their mendacity unless they bit their tongues about torture. Blackmail became a standard tactic in the United States' address to Europe during the time of troubles over Iraq. Usually that involved the invocation of European history, the shameful parts of it. Europeans were the appeasers of evildoers. Europeans were fearful of acting to promote the freedoms of others. And, there was the most malignant charge: Europeans were anti-Semites, at their innermost self. This slander was directed at those countries that had not lined up with Washington, i.e. Belgium, Germany and France. France was singled out as the object of a smear campaign in Congress and the press. Every manner of old ghost was stirred up. France was the intellectual home of twentieth century anti-Semitism; Vichy collaborated with the Nazis; de Gaulle had defamed the Jews. Current events were cited to validate the accusation, *inter alia* anti-Jewish incidents perpetrated mainly by Arab immigrants, and criticism of Israel's actions in the occupied territories. The Bush administration did nothing to calm a campaign in which many of its most vocal supporters participated. French leaders, supported by the country's Jewish community, defended France against the charges while avoiding assiduously making it an issue in then fraught dealings with Washington.⁴¹ For them, inhibition was the counsel of prudence. For the United States, there were no bounds.

Washington's ultimate blackmail weapon is the unspoken threat of leaving Europeans, and the world it inhabits, to their own devices. European fears of an American reversion to isolationism are as pervasive and profound as they are baseless. The dread evoked by the prospect that the United States' power will be retracted lurks in the background of every transatlantic crisis. Yet, there is no evidence or logic that suggests it is at all likely – no matter what Europe does. America's vital national interests are global. There is no serious current of informed opinion that argues otherwise. Every survey of public attitudes yields

41. The affair is summarized by Paul Gallis "France: Factors Shaping Foreign Policy, and Issues in U.S.-French Relations" CRS Report for Congress May 19, 2006 pp.11-12.

the same conclusion. Americans are overwhelmingly internationalist in perspective. In addition, they value the contributions of other friendly nations – the Europeans above all. To frighten oneself with the bogeyman of past American flights from responsibility is to ignore reality – and, therefore, politically immature.

Timidity, in addressing America and in addressing their citizenry, will earn few credits in Washington. European leaders with little self-respect prompt visceral disrespect and scorn across the Atlantic. Daniel Fried drove that point home in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a few weeks before the Brussels Forum, in which he was anything but coy in excoriating Europeans for creating terrorists by their abject failure at integrating Muslim immigrants.⁴² He pointedly added that “Five years after [9/11], violent Islamic extremism in Europe continues to pose a threat to the national security of the United States.”

Was there reason or logic for European elites to take Rice’s platitudes about partnership as more authentic than Rumsfeld’s rumblings about a different, more “flexible” alliance? Was there reason or logic to give credence to Fried’s honeyed words in Brussels while overlooking his acrid tone before Congress? No. But there is an explanation. It is called wishful thinking. That illusion, sadly, has not been dispelled either by Washington’s ignoring of its allies in the critical first phases of the Lebanon crisis or President Bush’s wholly unilateral choice to raise the stakes on his Iraq gamble or his truculence *vis à vis* Iran.

42. Reported in “US Rips European Integration Failures” *Spiegel International* April 6, 2006.

5. Economics

In the economic realm, Europe is America's equal. Particularly on commercial matters, its strength balances that of the United States. The two powers are not symmetrical, but of matching weight. The size of the aggregate economies of the European Union, their larger share of international trade, their enormous direct investment in the American economy and – above all – the authority lodged in the Commissioner for Trade to negotiate for the community means that the dynamic is quite different. The deference, the evasiveness, the defensive mentality so prominent in the security sphere gives way to a relatively high level of confidence and assertiveness. Europe is a force Washington must reckon with.

Yet, the United States dominates the economic relationship, broadly conceived. The American advantage lies not in the constellation of power. Rather, it resides in the pervasive influence of ideas elaborated and promoted by Americans. These are ideas about how economies work, national and global, the merits and demerits of contending policies, and what advice should be dispensed to the rest of the world by free-market countries – whether directly or via multilateral bodies like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. They derive from classical economic thought, forming an encompassing social philosophy. Neo-liberalism prescribes not only how to maximize economic yield, but where to set the limits of state intervention across a wide span of governmental affairs, what are appropriate measures to use in appraising distributional effects of market and state, and the nexus of private and public interest. Implicit are ethical norms as well.

Neo-liberalism seems to be riding a powerful historical wave. Triumph follows triumph: the collapse of the Soviet Union; the discrediting of state socialism; the supplanting of communist systems by political and economic liberalism; the spread of free enterprise around the globe; the progressive opening of international markets of trade, capital and currencies; consonant unprecedented wealth creation; and multifaceted globalization with unfettered economic intercourse as its engine. The United States is central to these phenomena. It is the cynosure of neo-liberal thought; the exemplar of neo-liberal practice; the vocal critic of statism in all its forms; and a country now led by true-believers in the pure creed. American academic economists set the intellectual agenda, they and journalists propagate the faith, American government innovates with privatization of otherwise public functions, while American society embraces and expresses an extreme form of the individualism/self-reliance/mobility model that historically has been its hallmark. Superior growth over the past decade is advertised as telling evidence that validates American ideas and American practice.

Openness in Europe to the American package has grown apace with neo-liberalism's intellectual and political successes in the United States. Britain, for well known historical, cultural and philosophical reasons, has been at once an auxiliary church of the denomination and an eager acolyte. That is an apt metaphor for Tony Blair who visualizes himself in very much that role with a good measure of proselytizer thrown in. On the continent, a neo-liberal sub-culture has emerged, concentrated in business circles. It also has an attraction for conservative political parties emboldened to consider diluted versions of the doctrine as a means to vitalize torpid economies and to draw converts from among an increasingly unhappy populace. Angela Merkel and Nicholas Sarkozy illustrate this phenomenon. The European Union Commission, most strikingly President Jose-Manuel Barroso, is an apostle of the new teaching. The heralding of canonical flexible labor markets as the antidote for what ails Europe's slow growth economies is of course in line with the principles of open markets and deregulation that are part of the Commission's mission. Of no less importance, it is the current *leitmotif* of neo-liberal preaching, acquiring doctrinal status as the truest test of belief. Barroso went so far as to approve ill-considered remarks by a Commission colleague, at the height of the German electoral campaign last September, that a Merkel victory would provide a much desired tonic to the European economy. That he could see nothing wrong in compromising Commission neutrality is a straw in the wind of how powerful a force doctrinal truth *à la* neo-liberalism has become.

News media are playing a crucial role in the propagation of American style economics. The London based, English language *Economist* and *Financial Times* exert an influence out of all proportion to their circulation. Both always have had a free-market, small government bias. That has turned into doctrinaire advocacy in recent years, the Bush years. The *Economist's* cheerleading for the current Washington administration often leads it to sing its praises in ways that contradict the journal's supposed principles. Editorial sympathy for reckless tax cuts, indulgence of huge budget deficits, and down-playing the consequences of the yawning trade deficit is out of line with its strictures against such profligate policies when addressing other countries' behavior. One can readily imagine the severe chastisement *Economist* writers would dish out to those feckless governments who had neither America's clout *nor* its cachet as the mother lode of liberal economic nostrums. In its moments of giddy enthusiasm, the august *Economist* reads like a journalistic relay station for the American Enterprise Institute.

The *Financial Times* is typically more sober, more thoughtful. It is made of sterner stuff. It normally keeps its distance from American political fads. Its criticism of the American Iraq escapade has been unrelentingly severe. On the

substance of economic thought and policy, though, the *FT* is doctrinaire. Its leaders, its regular columnists, most of its invited contributors and its news coverage all take a staunchly neo-liberal tack. An overstatement? Consider a string of strongly worded editorials in early 2006 that: *inter alia*, took a searching look at the endemic American budget deficit without a single mention of the Bush tax cuts; examined at length growing income inequality in the United States while managing only one brief, tag-on sentence in the pen-ultimate paragraph that referred to tax policy; refused to state a preference in the Italian election whose two standard-bearers it condemned equally because they both had not made firm commitment to labor market reform (not a single other issue was deemed worthy of even a mention)⁴³; castigated French student demonstrators as spoiled, privileged and averred that the only answer to the riots in French immigrant communities was, predictably, flexible labor markets. When President Dominique de Villepin impetuously went down that rocky path, he managed to provoke near universal rejection, by both its intended young beneficiaries and France's business community. This was interpreted as just further evidence of how hidebound the French are.

The obsession with flexible labor markets, as much euphemism for cutting back workers' rights and clout as practical response to the pressures of relentless global competition, has emerged as an all-purpose panacea for socio-economic ills. Its consecration as touchstone of belief and acid test of liberal economic conviction tells us how far much correct opinion has moved from theory to doctrine to dogma. Liberal economic correctness may be a more elite phenomenon than American style political correctness; but is a far more potent phenomenon. There is more than meets the eye here. Surely, one cannot ascribe such glaring omissions and incomplete logic to low journalistic standards or intellectual inadequacy. The key to the riddle is evident when we remind ourselves *that neo-liberalism embraces both an economic doctrine and a social philosophy*. The two have been wedded from the philosophy's origins in the late eighteenth century. In the United States, the ascendancy of neo-liberalism has been unimpeded by ideological aversion to its socio-political dimension. Belief in the virtue of limited government, rejection of the idea that the state is the embodiment of a collective will or responsible for the collective welfare, conviction that individualism and self-reliance are the ethical foundation stones of a healthy social order, and belief that wide inequalities of wealth are compatible with political equality form a package that is quintessentially American. In Europe, large popular majorities and a majority of elites eschew or significantly qualify each of those postulates. So while the economic doctrine is making noticeable advances,

43. Leader "A Grand Coalition Could Solve Italy's Problems" *Financial Times* March 20, 2006.

the concomitant socio-political ideology remains marginal to the mainstreams of political thinking.

A couple of examples put the contrast in sharp relief. Former Federal Reserve Bank Chairman Alan Greenspan could feel no compunction in advising a Congressional committee that the preferred way to deal with the belatedly acknowledged budget deficits, created by the profligate tax breaks for the rich he backed, was to cut the Medicare/Aid and Social Security entitlements.⁴⁴ That is an act of reverse Robin Hoodism – take from the poor to give to the rich. This was despite his record of having authored the grand Social Security bargain of the 1980s which predicated a steep hike in employee contributions on a pledge to reserve the burgeoning trust fund to meet future costs. No European counterpart would dare to engage in such *legerdemain*. Nor is it likely that they have had their social philosophy shaped by the novels of Ayn Rand – as Mr. Greenspan admirably has acknowledged.

A second example is provided by the *Wall Street Journal*, the *FT*'s brother in laissez-faire arms. The former makes no bones about its dedication to radical political changes aimed at drastically reducing government social programs, expanding tax benefits for corporations and the wealthy, and getting government regulation off the back of business. Its agenda has become bolder and its editorial voice shriller with each success. Its British counterpart, though, is circumspect to the point of dissimulation about the link between doctrinal economic liberalism and reactionary social philosophy, as evinced above. To resort to the euphemism “reform” for measures that may have reactionary effects is commonplace. A bald avowal of political faith *à la* the *WSJ* would be jarring to many of its readers, thereby discrediting the narrower economic policy message. In fact, the link is not logically unavoidable. It is possible to adapt domestic practices to the competitive realities of globalized markets, including some reasonable loosening of labor regulations, while retaining the essence of the social market philosophy. That is demonstrated by the experience of the Scandinavians and the Netherlands. Improved efficiency in national economic performance need not be at the expense of economic security (broadly defined as employment security rather than job security) or social justice. Stark juxtaposition of the Anglo-American model to a postulated French-German model is tendentious insofar as it ignores others' innovations, while caricaturing the latter. France has the highest per hour productivity in Europe (American productivity places it in the middle of the EU pack), and German capital goods remain the most competitive in the world – the main reason it is the world's biggest aggregate exporter.

44. Testimony of Federal Reserve Bank Chairman Alan Greenspan before the Senate Banking Committee February 15, 2003.

Neo-liberalism's spread in Europe has set the stage for a nasty confrontation between the crusaders for neo-liberal economics at all costs and the resistance of large swaths of a European populous who find it alien, harsh, threatening – and American. The Merkel electoral collapse on this very issue, the events in France, and the shipwreck that is the Lisbon “reform” Agenda are tell-tale signs of what may come. Strikingly, it is American style versions of free-marketeering that are meeting an explosive reaction. Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands – among others, have made important alterations in their continental social market models. Those changes have met with wide approval and noticeable success. All three are home-grown products.⁴⁵ They are outgrowths of local values and experiences that conform to the spirit of their societies. They are not doctrinaire impositions. None has been hatched in American universities, American think-tanks, or the pages of the neo-liberal press.

The treatment of the “Scandinavian” models in neo-liberal intellectual circles is illuminating. They are cited as confirming the ineluctable truth that market openness, especially labor markets, is the sole route to economic growth. Yet, little close attention is given to what those countries actually have done. Restrictions on terms of employment indeed have been eased. But the government has maintained, even reinforced, its active role in ensuring employment while keeping intact other elements of their social welfare system. The former meets with favor; the latter is discomfiting. For “big” government, however market friendly and informed its policies may be, is doctrinally indigestible for those of the neo-liberal persuasion. For their vision of what Western societies should look like, i.e. like the United States, is challenged by those countries that successfully have separated the amended truth of economic doctrine from socio-political philosophy.

45. The Swedish strategy is explained and assessed candidly in “Wage Formation in Sweden, 2005” Stockholm: Swedish Institute for Economic Research. For a summary of the path-breaking Danish strategy of employment security, see Bruce Stokes “Jobless, the Danish Way” *National Journal* 3/4/06.

6. Politics

American and European politics are coming to resemble each other more and more. This is obvious to any casual observer – especially to a casual observer. Here is a domain where form can be as important as substance; and it is matters of form that are most easily exported across the Atlantic. Nearly everywhere in Europe, one encounters features of what used to be a distinctly American style of electoral politics: eager use of professional experts in the art and science of electioneering, the stocking of government offices with political operatives to spin policy issues, stress on techniques of communication, 24/7/365 polling, focus groups, phone banks, theatrical conventions, endless campaign seasons. Some of this falls into the fad category; and transatlantic fads flow in only one direction. We can be both bemused and amused by some of the enthusiasms for modes or persons American. It is titillating to see British politicians hiring veterans of the Gore and Kerry campaigns apparently in the belief that their technical skills can be usefully applied by candidates more savvy than their former employers. So, too, is the spectacle of Nicholas Sarkozy seeking private consultations with Tony Blair in autumn 2006 to learn how to sell American style market economics to skeptical voters rather than running the risk of being found dealing directly with suspect purveyors straight from “K” Street. Or, seeing blandly detached German news broadcasters transform themselves into rabid, if unacknowledged, partisans of candidate Ms Merkel in what looked like a contrived imitation of their US cable counterparts. But there is more to the phenomenon than mere imitation, and that deserves the attention of serious observers.⁴⁶

Three aspects are most notable. First is the striking asymmetry in the extent to which each figures in the political vision of the other. The United States bulks large in the minds of government leaders, if somewhat less so in electorates preoccupied with parochial concerns. Every ruling elite must keep an eye on what is going on beyond its borders while being vigilant about domestic politics. Happenings in either sphere can affect success or failure in the other. The America factor in Europe stands out, though. The tenor of a country’s dealings with and status in official Washington circles are the stuff of political discourse. They

46. European politicians’ growing fascination with American political methods combines with internal trends that point toward the style of politics, electioneering above all, pioneered in the United States. Those trends, *inter alia*, the loosening of party structures, the blurring of doctrinally based political formations, and – above all – the media’s reshaping the way individual citizens relate to the public sphere have been analyzed with prescience by the French diplomat Jean-Marie Guéhenno in *La Fin de la Démocratie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), published in translation as *The End of the Nation-State* (University of Minnesota Press, 1995), and his *L’avenir de la Liberté* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999). He could have predicted the French adoption of American style primaries along with the bizarre “debate” format of two parallel interviews that is contrary to all French traditions and philosophy.

determine elections, viz. Germany 2002 and 2005. Saliency for voting publics varies. Where it is high, America impinges whether the popular predisposition is favorable or unfavorable, along a continuum from Poland through Britain and Germany to France. The converse does not hold for politics in a self-centered United States. Attention to the intricacies of politics and policy-making in European capitals (including the EU end of Brussels) is limited, even in Washington's corridors of power, compared to the fixation of their counterparts on American doings. The American public is desirous of acting multilaterally with its European allies – in principle. But it is a marginal political factor, at best. We should remind ourselves of how John Kerry made his plan for eliciting a greater European contribution to the Iraq effort through more sensitive diplomacy the centerpiece of his criticism of the Bush strategy. It had no discernible electoral impact.

European leaders' sensitivity to how they are depicted in the American media, viewed by Congress, and regarded within an administration is consonantly high. Think of Tony Blair's assiduous apple polishing on his trips to the United States, even before 9/11. Let us consider, too, Jacques Chirac's obsession with making known to Americans his love of the country, and his notoriously thin skinned reaction to criticism from that quarter. Chirac on occasion has called in the bureau chief of an American newspaper or news journal to correct alleged misinterpretations or unjustified criticism of French policy. It is unimaginable that George W. Bush, or for that matter Bill Clinton, would invite the Washington correspondent for *Le Figaro* or *L'Express* for a *tête-à-tête* in the Oval Office in order to set right something they had published about American actions in the Persian Gulf. Similarly, European embassies in Washington now actively court Congress in recognition of its powers as well as its prejudices. Placatory gestures have become part of standard diplomatic routine for European missions. In this regard as well, there is no reciprocal behavior since American administrations find it neither dignified nor necessary to stoop so low. A second, related consequence of the "Americanization" of European politics is that it is a distraction. America's omnipresence is like the weather: in Mark Twain's words, everyone talks about it, but no one does anything about it. Meanwhile, that talk consumes an awful lot of time to the neglect and/or distortion of substantive problems.

To toy with the issue of Europe's openness to all manner of American influence without confronting its serious strategic and economic implications is to divert political energies into a cul-de-sac. To allow Washington to toy with European countries, and their continent-wide institutions, as not quite serious actors on the world stage, is to acquiesce in one's own denigration. Debates over what are the right responses to globalization are distorted by the intertwining of those

causes and manifestations that are somehow American with those that stem from structural and market realities independent of the United States' own activities. The challenge of making thoughtful adjustments in the continent's social model is handicapped by having one viewpoint draw inspiration from an inappropriate American experience while another rejects American practices out of hand. Thinking through how to attenuate the several threats to Europe from the Middle East's four crisis points is hampered by the constant focus on what a willful, powerful United States is doing and thinking, as well as what it might do or think. Some of this is inescapable. Having one's policy options circumscribed by American actions is in the nature of things. The resulting loss of control over Europe's environment is exacerbated by undue circumspection in striving to widen the margin for maneuver. To have national and intra-European political life muddled by an intrusive America factor compounds the matter.

There is a touch of the *Stockholm syndrome* in this. The United States is so controlling of the environment in which Europeans live and think that accommodation to American preferences and wants looks to be a seeming condition for meeting their own needs. This is especially true with regard to security matters, economic doctrine, the operational side of electoral politics or organizational management. The first is structural; the latter are more ideational and cultural. Constraint characterizes the one, faddism and fashion the other. All are strengthened by the perception of American success and America as the model of the future. Discernible features of the Stockholm syndrome are undue empathy with the mindset of the dominating party, a heightened sensitivity to what may arouse its hostility, acute awareness of one's own vulnerability, eager readiness to "understand" why it is behaving in a controlling manner, and borrowing its vocabulary as necessary to communicate with it.

The psychology is similar. Convenience – intellectual, emotional, political – prevails. By contrast, the constant maneuvering to gain policy or mental space is overly stressful. Yes, independence is attenuated. However, it often is easier just to take the framework provided by the United States as given. Strenuous efforts to fabricate one's own against the current of American will and fashion are avoided. That many outside the United States – other governments, political elites, and intellectuals – are going with the current makes doubly difficult the task of asserting autonomy. The conviction must be strong that the struggle for autonomy is important enough to make the exertion in an attempt that may well prove unavailing. As in the case of Middle East policy noted above, the stakes are indeed high, but neither the psychology nor the political logic is favorable to the West Europeans tacking away from Washington. The determination, implicit or explicit, of European leaders to yield to American leadership is made easier by bending over backwards to credit American interpretations and assess-

ments. Buying into the American frame of mind in this way, of course, reinforces all the inertial elements that perpetuate the Stockholm syndrome.

Hence, Europe and America have become enablers of each other's dysfunctional behavior. American impulsive activism, domineering attitude and supreme self-confidence induce Europeans to indulge their penchant for passive deference. Their lack of self-assertion and ever-readiness to give Washington the benefit of the doubt, in turn, encourages American leaders to treat them as subordinates.

7. Praxis

This paper has argued that undue deference to America and things American by European elites is pervasive, often subtle and damaging to the health of the Atlantic relationship. It is rooted in the psychology of both parties, affecting in myriad ways how they interact. Is it likely to change? What are the conditions for it changing?

One conclusion is clear. There will be no initiative from the American side to modify the relationship. Washington enjoys too many advantages from it to want significant behavioral changes. The practical benefits of having what is potentially the world's second strongest power center unsure of its identity, deficient in will, and ready to find compensation in dependence on the United States are manifest. To the current Bush administration, this state of affairs suits perfectly their dedication to exercise hegemonic dominance. It promises supporters and allies on American terms when America wants them. On another plane, Americans' sense of self, along with their sense of the country's exceptional place in the grand scheme of things global, is confirmed by two aspects of these Euro-American realities. One, emulation across the Atlantic conforms to what is seen to be the natural order of things. Two, the absence of serious challenge, political or conceptual, spares Americans either critical self-examination of those postulates so basic to the national persona or the exertions required to keep down a rival. The family ties with Europe strengthen both feelings since the unique virtues of American society are taken to be the ultimate expression of Western civilization's superiority generally. In this respect, everything having to do with China or Japan belongs to a different mental and emotional space.

There is yet another factor at play on the American side. For many, there are deeply ingrained negative images of the Europeans that are satisfying and reassuring. They tap the remembered experiences of the old Europe Americans exchanged for the bright light of the new World. They have been reinforced by the horrific events of the twentieth century. These negative impressions deepen the sentiment that Americans and America are special.⁴⁷ Moreover, they offset and counteract the irritating assertions that European culture is somehow more refined, more sophisticated, has finer aesthetics and human sensibility. Rejected as "snobbery", these notions remain bothersome to the offspring of a demo-

47. The recrudescence of largely dormant negative attitudes toward Europe at the height of tensions over the invasion of Iraq is placed in cultural and historical perspective by Timothy Garton Ash in "American anti-Europeanism?" *The New York Review of Books* February 13, 2003.

cratic culture that supposedly abandoned aristocratic pretence.⁴⁸ Historically, Americans have coped with this implicit challenge to their superiority by at once disparaging the importance of those archaic aspects of society and surpassing them in self-conscious artistic displays – private and public. There still is, though, an element of “class culture” tensions in the Euro-American relationship, albeit one that has weakened over time and is partly overtaken by the populist appetite over there for American pop culture.

What of the Europeans’ readiness to change? One is reminded of the light-bulb joke: “how many psychoanalysts does it take to change a light-bulb?; one, provided it really wants to change”. There are few signs that any significant slice of European elites has the motivation, conviction and intestinal fortitude to seek a break in the politico-psychological dependency relationship with America. Even most French would have a bad case of the nerves if they ever felt that Europe were truly on the brink of autonomy. There are a number of reasons for this uneasiness.

Europe is inhibited by historical memory, by moral uncertainty and by political habit. In some critical respects, Europeans have freed themselves from the dead hand of the past. The postwar European community-building project was inspired to a large degree by the conviction that the continent’s collective history was the common enemy. It has succeeded admirably. Today’s politics has both benefited and been handicapped by that success. Gone are the overblown ambitions and lethal rivalries. European is at once post-modern and post-heroic. Gone, too, are a sense of purpose and direction. Continental European politics are suspended somewhere between a national past and a truly supranational future. The new Europe was made possible more by a process of political subtraction than political addition. That is to say, the domination of public affairs by prosaic concerns and tame ambitions has allowed Europeans to shed those parts of their make-up that would have impeded the process of integration. National passion, ideological commitment, the impulse to draw lines of all kinds between “we” and “them” – they have dried up. The civilian societies that have evolved, due in good part to this phenomenon, are also marked by a reduced sense of collective duty, aversion to danger and sacrifice, and an introspection that borders on the egocentric. Members of these civilian societies have found it convenient to live under America’s protective umbrella and in America’s

48. This last element helps to explain the visceral passions aroused by any French challenge to American primacy. The dyspeptic Congressional reaction to French temerity in the struggle over Iraq is better understood against this backdrop; so is Condeleezza Rice’s testy vow to “punish” France. A masterful, illuminating examination of French political culture and politics is provided by Rod Kerwood *France and the French: A Modern History* (New York: Overwood Press, 2005).

shadow. The need to make hard choices, to pronounce and to act are not felt as imperative when the United States, for better or worse, has been handling matters beyond Europe.

8. The Question

In the light of the glaring fact that Washington is handling them for the worse, especially in the Middle East, will that complacency be shaken? What practical political *cum* policy meaning attaches to the fact that public opinion in every Western European country outside of Britain views the United States as the main threat to peace?; that negative feelings about the Bush presidency are eroding positive attitudes toward America and Americans generally? Do the endangerment of access to Gulf oil due to civil strife in Iraq and the nuclear standoff with Iran augur a rethink of deference to American diplomatic leadership in the region? Does the accompanying heightening of terrorist menace? Expedient concern for the national interest suggests that elites would be moved at least to contemplate a more independent line along with greater assertiveness in the preparation of joint efforts. Popular feeling seems favorable to such a departure from the transatlantic norm. Yet, the evidence presented above points in the opposite direction. Solidarity with America, on terms set by Washington, is prized above all else. Candid talk is freer, but not where it counts – at the top. Only a catastrophic political explosion in the Middle East with a strong anti-American impulse conceivably could shake that logic. Total disintegration of Iraq and/or an Islamist coup in Saudi Arabia could be of that magnitude. Even in those dire circumstances, however, the odds are that the habitual European reflex to rally with America, and to accept Americans at the head of the table, would reassert itself. No amount of muttered criticism of Washington's ill conceived actions that produced such a disastrous failure would still that reflex.

Envisaging that kind of scenario puts in bold the truth that intellectual judgments in themselves are not sufficient to induce behavioral change, however necessary they may be. Necessity is the mother of invention – or so it is said. Experience and history tell us otherwise, as do behavioral experiments. The psychology of perceived necessity is complex. Adversity or threat in and of itself does not trigger improvisation. Even the survival instinct does not always spark innovation. Denial, or avoidance, is normally the first reaction when facing adversity in trying to reach an objective or to satisfy an interest. Reiteration of a standard repertoire of responses follows. True innovation tends to occur only *in extremis*; and even then behavioral change is more likely to begin with adjustment at the margins rather than alteration of core beliefs and patterns of action.

Denial can take a variety of forms. Sublimating differences while going out of one's way to stress points of agreement is one. An example is the silence in European capitals on how Euro-American thinking diverges on the medley of Middle Eastern crises. Another was the eagerness to embrace George Bush's evasive, non-committal remarks on Guantanamo in Vienna in June 2006 as a

sure sign that he was responding positively to European expressions of concern. A second form of denial is to interpret differences, however sharp, as aberrant. That, too, is evident in the pronounced strain to declare the 2003-2004 conflict over Iraq an isolated, self-contained event. In fact, the revolt by the French, German and Belgian governments around the Bush administration's Iraq invasion *was* a one-time event, if a quite significant one. It was not part of a plotted campaign to alter the structure of the Atlantic relationship, albeit the affair rekindled briefly the French dream of a Gallicized Europe embarking on its own destiny. It should rightly be seen as another one of those occasional outbursts, which like isolated summer thunderstorms, does not change the established pattern of things despite the dramatic *sturm und drang*.

The key points to keep in mind about the Alliance's Iraq crisis are: (1) it was a serious rift in the sense that it was due to a clash of fundamentally different approaches to a critical set of international issues; and 2) European leaders in the end came to the judgment that rapprochement with Washington was their overriding objective – no matter what. Repeated hammering on the point that the tempest did not bring down the house misses the point. It reflects the keen desire to ensconce as incontrovertible truth that no fundamental differences did, do or will exist. This assertion is buoyed by taking as an article of faith that the Atlantic partners are pre-destined to act as brothers. *Reiteration* of this received truth is both a device for pushing away discomforting, more complex realities and itself a behavioral method for avoiding the need to engage critically the United States, with its predictably challenging diplomatic effects. Reiteration is a way of reassuring oneself that nothing basic has changed, that the *status quo ante* (and a satisfactory one) can be restored. Thereby, a known past is preserved while avoiding the need to contend with an unknown new state of affairs.

Cognitive dissonance has been much studied, primarily in respect to more mundane social behavior.⁴⁹ It is germane to structured political behavior as well. In the case of America's Western European allies, there is a strain between the premium placed on fraternal ties with the United States, on the one hand, and the desire to meet national interests that are contradicted by certain aspects of American conduct, on the other. Tolerance for the resulting cognitive dissonance is variable. Generally speaking, avoidance is easier than resolution. The type of behavior noted above, and detailed in earlier sections, is indicative of that. For

49. Staple literature in the field of social psychology includes: Joseph Brehm *Explorations In Cognitive Dissonance* (New York: John Wiley, 1962); Leon Festinger *Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford University Press, 1958); Festinger ed. *Conflict, Decision and Dissonance* (Stanford University Press, 1964); Charles Insko *Theories of Attitude Change* (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1967). See, too, Howard Gardner *Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing Our Own and Others'* (Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard Business School Press, 2004).

governments that are inclined to evade tough choices, falling back on the idea that solidarity with America must take precedence offers welcome reprieve from the agony of decision. Seeing things that way is all the easier when the damaging consequences of misguided American policies are most likely to register down the road a ways. That, at least, is the hope.

In the economic sphere, the issue facing Europe is of a different order. It entails resisting the uncritical assimilation of ideas/practices of American lineage. The key is heightened awareness of Europe's social identity and philosophy set against the background of its history. American style capitalism is not compatible with the value placed on social cohesion in Europe. The pure American model of neo-liberal economics produces a level of insecurity and a grossly distorted income distribution that Europeans reject. The American notion of a weak, passive state deferring to the private sector is out of line with overwhelming popular and, still, most elite sentiment. American faith in the benevolent workings of unfettered markets is shared by only a distinct minority. The social peace and political stability of postwar Western Europe is the most profound change for the good the continent has ever known. Its conservation is an imperative. Certainly, it has been connected to the routinizing of economic prosperity, for all. Maintaining that prosperity does require a measure of adaptation. No persuasive evidence exists that it must entail emulation of the American system. Considerable evidence exists of alternatives. Logic and history both point up the peril of buying into Americanism miscast as universal truth.

A model exists for the Europeans charting their own course. It is provided by the innovation of Economic and Monetary Union. That historic enterprise was conceived, developed, and launched by Europeans with little if any input from the United States. The official American line, constant throughout the long gestation period, was that Europe's progressive integration served American interests, and once EMU became recognized as a crucial element in that project, it deserved Washington's backing. By contrast, there was a good deal of intellectual static in the transatlantic atmosphere. A number of prominent American economists with Washington policy backgrounds inveighed against the folly of the project.⁵⁰ Their Cassandra like predictions of its ignominious failure were couched in the language of economic analysis, but the clear sub-text was that the Europeans were not politically mature enough to succeed in so delicate an undertaking. Their European counterparts responded professionally and with-

50. Martin Feldstein "EMU and International Conflict" *Foreign Affairs* Nov/Dec 1997 vol. 76 no. 6; Rudiger Dornbusch "Euro Fantasies: Common Currency as Panacea" *Foreign Affairs* Sept/Oct 1996 vol.75, no.5.

out emotion. Policy makers sensibly ignored the former. On EMU, European leaders in national capitals, Brussels *and* Frankfurt, moved with sober diligence to take their fate into their own hands.

9. France, Germany, Britain

The path that Europe takes in its relations with the United States depends in greatest measure on the orientation of its major countries. Brief synoptic appraisals of the outlook in France, Germany and Great Britain follow.

9.1 France

Many French leaders can envisage a more autonomous relationship with the United States. So, too, can a large slice of France's political and intellectual elites. It is unique in this respect. Yet the country's potential leadership of a Europe moving toward that end is curtailed in two critical respects. One is internal, the other external. They intersect. The French are highly pragmatic when it comes to dealing with the practicalities of life. Their romanticism expresses itself primarily in the persona of their collectivity – France. The “certain idea of France” that animated de Gaulle is widely held among the French in general, albeit in modified form. Therein lies the rub. For the sense of distinctiveness – in what it is, its difference from America, its place in the global scheme of things – is rooted in a deep felt French identity. That sentiment is European only by extension. Jacques Chirac's harping on the idea of “Europe” as one of the poles in his multi-polar view of how the world system should be constructed has an unmistakable Gallic tinge. It surely is perceived as such elsewhere in Europe.

Practical judgment does point to the twin conclusions that (1) if the need to distance Europe from America is compelling, France must partially subordinate itself to Europe in order to secure its interests; and (2) the case for doing the former can only be made convincingly by following the latter maxim. Convincing France's partners that the assessment is correct depends on the argument's cogency and credibility. Paris has a credibility problem insofar as it is perceived as instinctively self-centered and reflexively skeptical of American actions. That is an obvious serious handicap in trying to argue a case for taking an untried course which is inherently risky. Moreover, points made in a dispassionate analysis of why the status quo carries its own risks are discounted accordingly. The French reputation for vanity is a liability in this respect. The sense that *amour-propre* counts as much as tangible accomplishment, that insignia of rank can be taken as surrogates for positions of real power, is part of the background to French leaders' complex intercourse with their counterparts. In short, there is the belief that, when the chips are down, France either will put its own interests ahead of Europe's (e.g. the CAP) or let vainglory go to its head as in Paris' ritual jousting with Washington (witness dramatizing the 2003 showdown over the

second UNSC resolution on Iraq). Too few see France as a reliable producer of collective goods.

Chirac sensibly has strained to rein in displays of gratuitous criticism of the United States. He assiduously applied French diplomacy to working constructively with the Bush administration on Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. He has been studiously silent on Washington's endless missteps in Iraq. That reflects both an analysis of convergent interests and the will to show France's value and aptitude for working with the Bush administration. On that count, France has made some progress. On the Brussels front, it has scored no equivalent successes. The cumulative effect of its flouting (along with Germany) of the Growth and Stability Pact, its botched handling of the EU constitutional referendum, and Chirac's ham-handed mode of address toward new member states, have left France with diminished authority.

Still, France could make valuable contributions to a more independent Europe. It brings a global perspective to an overly inward looking community, diplomatic skill, a trenchant critique of unilateralism, and an intellectual *cum* philosophical perspective from which to question neo-liberalism as all purpose panacea. Equally, French leadership has had the courage of its convictions on international matters. It is fair to say that there was more substance than mere style in Paris' resistance to the drive to war in Iraq. We also should remind ourselves of Chirac's critical role in forcing Bill Clinton's hand on Bosnia in the summer of 1995. For these potential assets to serve the cause of a more independent minded Europe, France badly needs a partner – or, preferably partners – who can neutralize charges of selfish ambition and anti-Americanism. The German Federal Republic served that function on intra-EU matters during the era of the Franco-German condominium. Britain did on the ESDP project launched at St-Malo. Neither of these pairings looks viable at present. Indeed, there has been regression in each case.

A conjectured Merkel-Sarkozy partnership points in quite another direction. Its bases would be a conventional Atlanticism solidified by a liking of American mores, most especially its socio-economic model. However much reason there is for dubiety about a successful grafting of the American way onto either country, the similar mindset of these two leaders militates against a reorientation of Euro-American relations. Sarkozy's self-defining foreign policy address, given in Washington in September 2006, was notable for its firm rejection of a more Euro-centric approach.⁵¹ Decrying the "arrogance" of Jacques Chirac in confronting Washington over Iraq, he was fulsome in his praise of things and think-

51. Nicholas Sarkozy address at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies Washington, D.C. September 12, 2006.

ing American. This is not surprising given his close family ties to America. The speech, labeled “lamentable” by Chirac, was indeed sobering for those with hopes of a more independent minded Europe.

Madame Ségolène Royal offers a different prospect. While there is a superficial similarity in a common call for constructive change, her thinking appears to be oriented by established French reference marks. Her attitude toward things American is discriminating, her convictions as to the intrinsic virtue of French ways deeper, and her sense of where lies the proper balance among France as a nation, the European Union, and the world of globalization less Davos-minded than Sarkozy’s. How these dispositions might translate into a set of coherent policies designed to foster a Europe keener and better able to stand on its own feet would depend on several factors – not least the outlook of her fellow European leaders with whom she would be inclined to deepen cooperation.

9.2 Germany

Germany was cast as the keystone of the post-Cold war Europe by many, including the administration of Bush the Elder. Its location at the heart of the continent, its economic prowess and its enlightened view of its national interest all suggested as much. German leadership seemed a given, even as the exact bearings that would orient it remained to be determined. Chancellor Helmut Kohl was keenly aware that all eyes were directed at his suddenly reunified country. He was seized by anxieties that its neighbors would see Germany as domineering, by virtue of its very weight if not its intent. He was apprehensive, too, as to how his fellow countrymen could handle the pressures now placed upon them. Kohl’s response was a strategy of calculated self-abnegation. That meant two things: embedding Germany in an ever closer union of EU members; and lending its full weight to the great challenges of the new era. The former was a condition for the latter. Thus, he moved vigorously to Europeanize the symbol of postwar Germany’s renewal and the object of fears about its newfound power – the *Deutschmark*. That sacrifice added credibility and leverage to German efforts aimed at consolidating the liberal revolution in the former Communist lands to the East, knitting ties between the two ends of the continent, and ensuring that a Europe whole and free would be part of the wider community of Western democracies.

Notable success on all counts meant that Germany could be a “normal” country. That implied a country with no exceptional restraints, prerogatives, or obligations. So it has been. Germany has moved by deliberate stages to clear obstacles, constitutional and political, to deploying military forces abroad under international legal authority. Under Gerhard Schroeder, it chose to oppose the

American intervention in Iraq and, through Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, offered its own way of thinking about the tangled problems of the Middle East. It also has exercised the normal right to be parochial when national conditions make that expedient. A stuttering economy has been occasion for successive German governments to cease acting as the EU's paymaster and to cross swords with the Commission on several prosaic matters of community regulation. For Germans, normality still implies risk aversion. Much of the German political class was deeply unhappy with the estrangement from Washington. That feeling stands out in the celebration of the nominal Euro-American rapprochement, as Germans take an upbeat view of prospects for a revived transatlantic concert. In addition, Angel Merkel's accession to the Chancellorship puts at the helm of government someone whose visceral feelings about the United States are very positive. They color thinking about matters of economic management in addition to foreign policy questions.

America continues to provide an existential reassurance that counts more in Germany than it does elsewhere in Western Europe. That pronounced sentiment among elites coexists with popular opinion that holds intensely negative views of the Bush administration laced with fears that its feckless actions could aggravate Middle East conflicts and heighten threats coming from the region. An open question is whether the two sets of attitudes could continue to coexist in the event of a major new crisis for which the United States were widely held to be responsible. In such an eventuality, the current grand coalition may prove less an asset than a liability since a normal avenue for venting discontent would be closed off. An analogous phenomenon in other European countries carries the latent possibility of a popular reversion from American policies taking on a transnational dimension. In such an eventuality, the German government could be expected to try acting as a moderating influence, but only so long as there is no generalized sharp turn away from the United States.

Germany still prizes community solidarity. It strongly prefers to act on the international scene in full cooperation with its partners. A significant shift in popular mood, were it to force the hand of governments, is likely to carry Germany with it. The current leadership, so eager to end the country's ostracization by Washington, would be only somewhat less eager to breast the tide of thinking and policy of its fellow Europeans. Oddly, then, today's introspective Germany led by a consensus government is as likely to be a follower as a leader.

The Chancellor's dedication to making alterations in the entrenched social-market model of the national economy is fated to generate social frictions. Those worried at the loss of economic security created by the pace and direction of change are sure to be a constant factor in the political equation. Those vexed

that change is not progressing fast and far enough from another pool of vocal discontent. Merkel's own party is split between those who take the social dimension of Christian democracy seriously and those who are confirmed liberals. In this environment, the German government craves a calm international environment. A United States that provides the opposite will become unavoidably a contentious part of a polity under strain.

9.3 Great Britain

Britain holds the key to Europe's future relationship with America. A loyal, uncritical government in London *à la* Tony Blair denies Europe the political critical mass needed to form an independent partner of the United States. Division and ambivalence on the continent could never be overcome to a degree permissive of anything like true concert otherwise. The former is evident in nearly every ministerial vote within the Council of the EU on sensitive external issues involving the United States. A recent, telling case in point was the resolution on Lebanon hamstrung by those who insisted that it contain no language deviating from the American line re. the precise terms of a ceasefire. This was despite overwhelming popular opinion across the continent that wanted an immediate, unconditional ceasefire. Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, a number of the Eastern Europeans and Germany lined up behind Britain. Few observers doubted that the overriding element was the felt imperative not to alienate the Bush administration, rather than judgments as to the merits of contending approaches to crisis management.

The inclination to defer or mollify Washington is pervasive, as is documented above. That logic changes markedly were Britain to reposition itself to be more autonomous in its foreign policy assessments and diplomacy. In practice, it would mean greater readiness to follow its own thinking in deciding when to support or oppose the United States, on what terms. A Britain so disposed is not a self-conscious, calculating bridge between America and "Europe". Rather, it is a government with its own ideas and will that takes into account the views of all its partners, even while acknowledging the exceptional place of America in the affairs of the world. That would have a number of salutary effects: encouraging other Atlanticist governments to do likewise; taking the sting out of national rivalries, such as that between France and the Netherlands, that have them disagreeing often as a matter of mutual distaste; and providing political cover in Washington for policies deviating from the American preference. Imagining that sort of situation as producing healthier Euro-American relations is realistic. Consider France's success in inducing the Bush administration to amend the first Lebanon resolution in the UNSC on crucial points even without

the active backing of any European partner, albeit with strong pressure from a unified Arab League.

Britain has attributes that suit its playing a more independent role. British government elites retain considerable confidence in their own understanding of how the world works and what should be done about its problems. Nor have they always been shy about expressing it. Let us remember that the fiercest resistance to the Clinton administration's strategy for Bosnia, "lift and strike", came from the John Major government. Strong government, secured on a highly stable political foundation, and the assertive activity abroad it permits, is ingrained in the country's tradition. In present circumstances, a significant part of the country's political class, along with an even bigger slice of public opinion, is deeply estranged from the Bush administration. The criticism goes beyond immediate, specific sins. For most troubling to many is that America itself has gone awry. Britain's very familiarity with the United States makes that perceived reality all the more disconcerting. It is as if the well known, long tolerated, idiosyncrasies of a relative who has acted as *pater familias* for the clan have turned into a distinctly aberrant behavior pattern. The reaction is not just to condemn, but rather to take due precautions to prevent damage to common interests while searching for remedies.

As of yet, no leader of a major party has given public signs that he has reached such a judgment. David Cameron's comments about the government's overly close embrace of the White House have been calculatingly cautious. Certainly, Gordon Brown seems almost as well disposed toward the Bush administration as Tony Blair does. However, the worried viewpoint is now to be found throughout the British establishment. It is by no means inconceivable that further provocative actions by Washington, accompanied by a jeopardizing of national interests, could shift sentiment to the point where collaboration with continental partners is seen as necessary, whatever special complications that creates for Eurosceptics. Precedent then becomes important. The precedent of acting together on questions of consequence can change the sense of what is natural. To sustain an enduring arrangement that has a potential to alter the patterns of psychological and political dependency on America would require willful action by European leaders, British leaders above all. It is a great paradox that, by some objective criteria, Tony Blair was best cut out for the role. He is francophone, knows the continent, is ready to break from tradition, and has an abundance of willpower. Sadly, other motives and circumstances pointed him in the diametrically opposite direction.

Facing developments and choices of historic consequence, the will and personality of European leaders is decisive – as it always has been.

10. Conclusion

An emergent generation of continental leaders has no direct experience of the war *or* its aftermath. Nor do they view the tragic drama of the interwar decades as anything but ancient history viz. Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy.⁵² The tribulations of building a new Europe on the rubble of its twentieth century ordeal are deemed irrelevant to the present. Thus, they are not sensitive to the conditions that spawned class conflict, ideological combat and a raucous democratic politics (where and when it was democratic) on the brink of lapsing into something quite less civilized. This cultivated amnesia contributes to the less than full appreciation that present social arrangements are integral to what Europe has achieved in sixty momentous years. They are not the mere outcome of a pick-and-choose selection made by anonymous leaders in a by-gone age. They are the fruit of civilizational choices. Historical forgetfulness could have grievous consequences.⁵³

The need for a self-conscious break from the past lies elsewhere. It is in Europe's undue dependency on the United States. To continue playing the roles of subaltern, appendix and acolyte to American might and magnetism can only stunt the former while feeding the hubris of the other. Therein lies an unpromising future for all parties, including the world beyond the Atlantic axis.⁵⁴ Sixty years ago, traumatized European leaders acted boldly and bravely to seek reliance on the United States while moving to reorder their own affairs. Today, bravery in Europe's enlightened interest is to begin curtailing that reliance.

52. The former, from East Germany, is so detached from the historic postwar transformation that she sometimes gives the impression of governing a foreign country. Witness her queer public remark in May 2006 that Germany was "a basket case". It later was amended to "the German economy is a basket case". This came at a time when it had chalked up a record trade surplus, confirming its position as the world's biggest exporter of manufactures. Oddly, she joins many economic analysts in disregarding the huge diversion of the economy's capital to the eastern *Länder*, an aggregate sum in the order of 1 trillion Euros.

53. This is one theme developed by Timothy Garten Ash in his exhortation for a reenergized, reoriented Euro-American partnership in *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West* (New York: Random House, 2004). See, too, the philosophical discussion of the value – and demerits – of collective memory by Paul Ricoeur *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago University Press, 2006).

54. A guardedly optimistic assessment of Europe's latent capacity to assume an active world role that compensates for, while alleviating the excesses of American power is offered by Tzvetan Todorov *Désordre Mondial: Reflexions d'un Européen* (Paris: L.G.F., 2005). It is a development that most of the world would welcome. A poll by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the university of Maryland found that a majority in 17 of 23 countries (and a plurality in 3) would like to see a more influential role for Europe and a lesser role for the United States.