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Speech of
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Thank you Bob [Zoellick] for your warm words of introduction

Dear Friends,

It is a real pleasure to be with you this evening for this Arthur Burns Memorial Dinner. I understand that many of you are alumni of this terrific initiative. I want to give a special thanks to Ambassador Klaus Scharioth, whom I have known for many years, and to our friends from Goldman Sachs, for hosting us this evening.

You have kindly asked me to speak about Europe's role in the world and the state of Transatlantic relations. I have to say that relations between the United States and Europe are fine. There are some disagreements, yes. And there are many more issues in which we work together.

Tonight, allow me not to talk about us, but rather to have a look at how we are going to deal with the rest of the world and face together the future. In New York and with this kind of audience, let us lift our eyes from the crises of today and look at the contours of the new international landscape of tomorrow. Let us look at some deeper trends, analyse their implications and see what we want to do about them. The past is prelude, as they say. So, to assess the state and future of the international system, let us go back first to its origins.

After 1945, the system was based on inter-state relations. At the same time, the World saw the first real attempt to build an international system based on rules and multilateral institutions. Peace and stability should be ensured through co-operation based on rules - not a raw balance of power, nor empire. This was new, and revolutionary. The US played the leading role in shaping it. To do so was a deliberate and far-sighted choice. It is striking that Dean Acheson's memoirs are called "Present at the Creation". But today, that international system is in serious trouble. Because the world it was built for is no more.

New problems are emerging that the system was not meant to address. Migration or the risks associated to proliferation are obvious examples. But more fundamentally, the reason is that power is shifting away. It is shifting both between and within political systems.

Between political systems, from the West to new players. Within political systems, from government to markets, the media, and NGOs. This shift of power is a political consequence of globalisation. People in this town know very well that governments' room for manoeuvre is limited by Standard and Poor's ratings, just to give an example.

Journalists assembled here know that media scrutiny is intensifying and changing. Fifteen years ago we spoke about the CNN effect. By this we meant the pressure that big media organisations can put on governments. Darfur is an example of today. People demand that something must be done. They put pressure on governments. And they are right to do so.

Today people are talking about the You Tube effect. This potentially gives the same power to any individual with a video-camera and an internet connection. NGOs have grown in power too. It is a mark of our time that more people are working in our NGOs than our armies. Because of democratisation and individualisation, there is less leadership all around.

Who wants to be a follower if you are constantly told that you can be what you want to be? This is true within domestic politics but also internationally. So, governments, especially Western ones, have lost relative power. As a result, the ability of our common, old Transatlantic house, ran in close chambers, to "lead" the world, has been weakened. We have to open up to others.

What could we do? My first answer is that there is no alternative to multilateral co-operation. But we need to give new forms to that cooperation, which reflect the problems and power distribution of today's world rather than that of 1945. For us in the West, it also means making space at top tables. At the UN Security Council of course. But also in terms of IMF votes. And, why not, G-8 membership.

It is not for me to advocate precise modalities of how we integrate new players at the top table of global diplomacy. But I am certain that we must. We should bear in mind that how China, India or Brazil will behave in future depends on how we treat them on the way up. Moreover, we need to make greater efforts with countries like Mexico, South Korea, South Africa and others. They are natural allies on the question of multilateral governance.

Our experience in the European Union is clear: we have been more successful when we have worked with other partners. Take the example of Congo, among many. We sent a military force at the request of the United Nations. Our soldiers worked with theirs. And we all together managed to crown with free and fair elections a very complex democratic transition.

Still in Africa: Darfur. I am convinced that part of our weakness to solve the crisis there is that we have not managed yet to develop a good working partnership with the African Union. And to engage China and others. We can not do it alone. Nobody can. We have to work together.

The same lesson applies to the Middle East Peace Process. Here we have the familiar Quartet of you Americans, us Europeans, the UN and the Russians. Now we are realizing that maybe we four are not enough. And we are reaching out to the Arab Quartet.

It is probably true to say that the future global system will in some ways be a system of continents and continent-wide regimes. Take the European Union, the African Union and ASEAN Plus. The integration in Latin America. When I travel across the Middle East I wonder whether it will remain the big exception: rife with tensions, over-armed and under-institutionalised?

Bringing in new players to the top table. And strengthening regional co-operation. These are necessary steps. But in themselves, they are not enough. In today's world, we must be ready to transcend the inter-state paradigm.

To tackle the dark side of globalisation, we must mobilise new networks of actors, from the public, private, and NGO sectors. In some cases, such new constellations have already been tremendously important. Take the "drop the debt campaign" and how it fed into the G-8 Gleneagles Summit.

We need to bring together the people who can bring about change on the issues that matter. These may be diplomats and politicians. But increasingly they will be business leaders, NGOs, journalists.

Dear Friends,

Apart from being more creative about bringing together new players, we also need to ask how this will lead to more effective action. This brings me to the matter of trust. What the current system often lacks is trust among the relevant players.

Trust is the basis of everything. Its absence cripples the international society and may lead to serious, sometimes tragic misunderstandings. And it is the task of politics, and the task of us, politicians devoted to the international relations, to create trust where it does not exist.

I see a deficit of trust in several areas:

- between the West and the Muslim world. The cartoon crises and Palestine are vivid proof. (By the way the Muslim world also exists within our own cities);
- between the nuclear haves and have nots: There is a growing tension around the balance between the disarmament and non-proliferation sides of the coin.
- between energy consumers and suppliers. Look at the current scramble for energy. Or at how Russia, Algeria, Iran are flirting with a "gas OPEC" option. Market principles are violated.
- between developed and developing world on how to tackle climate change. The debate on the science is settled. But how to distribute the necessary adjustments? I would like to be assured that we can all agree on a strategy of "cap and trade".

How can we address these trust deficits? I believe we need to think about new bargains. For example on the environment. Or on forms of dialogues between cultures. Sometimes, we may need to be more serious about upholding our side of old bargains.

For instance on disarmament - if we want to remain credible when we rightly challenge those that openly break the non-proliferation rules. Upholding our side of the bargain also applies to the Doha Round. This is about removing barriers and creating jobs, and hence hope, especially for the developing world. But it is also about demonstrating that global multilateralism can work.

Above all, we need to revive the view of politics as the art of building trust where it does not exist. That is the first step. The second is to create fair and clear rules and strong institutions to apply them. We will need them to navigate the choppy waters of the next 50 years.

Let me leave you with a quote from Jean-Jacques Rousseau:

"The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty."

Thank you very much.
