



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

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**Herman Van Rompuy
President of the European Council**

"TRANSATLANTIC RESPONSES TO GLOBAL INSECURITY"

**Dinner remarks at
Brussels Forum of the German Marshall Fund**

Conrad Hotel, Brussels

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address this dinner of the German Marshall Fund. I should like to take this opportunity to say a few words about Transatlantic relations.

The German Marshall Fund is a testimony to the long and profound history of the relationship between America and Europe. General Marshall announcing his Plan in 1947; Chancellor Willy Brandt thanking the American people with the establishment of this Fund, in 1972.

However, the political question for us today is how to translate this shared history and our shared values into a shared future.

In order to do so, it is not enough to simply multiply expressions like "transatlantic dialogue" or "strategic partnership".

Nor is it enough to explain how incredibly interconnected our economies are. The flows of transatlantic trade, investment and people are certainly impressive, but shared interests are not in themselves a guarantee for converging policies.

It is not even enough to list the essential values we share on both sides of the Atlantic: democracy, freedom, the dignity of the human person... To respect these, is not the same thing as to act upon them together.

P R E S S

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Our values, our interests, our multiple dialogues create an extraordinary basis for a strong Transatlantic partnership. In order to forge a common destiny, what one needs above all these, is a common story. A story about one's place in the flow of time. We have to, as they say, read from the same "script".

During the Cold War, Europe and America did share the same narrative: defending the Free World against Soviet communism. This compelling story shaped fully our sense of political reality. It tied our destinies together.

Two decades after the end of the Cold War, we cannot be so sure anymore that the basic political experiences of Europeans and Americans are the same. I suppose this lack of narrative is what is fundamentally behind some of the Transatlantic ripples and other misunderstandings one finds in the press these days.

Working closely together begins with accepting that the counterpart may have different interests from yourself. Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, this still comes as a surprise to some people.

Both Europe and America are entitled to ask the other: what do *you* bring to the table? In Transatlantic relations, this question is often avoided - through guilt or arrogance or I don't know what. However, stating clearly what we need from the other and why, would make our relationship more mature. It is the only sound basis for cooperation. The only easy relationship is an empty relationship.

Anyway, here we are: Europe and America in a rapidly changing G20 world, both searching a new role and a new place. A Transatlantic area of 800 million people: the richest consumers, the best-educated workforce and the freest citizens in the world. What will our common political story be?

I think the E.U. and the U.S. should together find the responses to old and new forms of global insecurity, and invite others to join us. That is how I see our common story.

Threats of a new kind undermine the security of our free societies and the networks these societies are built on. Terrorism. Market disruptions. Energy shortages. Climate change. Cyber attacks. No single country can impose its will or its rules on a world adrift. To share the burden and to lead the way, why not start with *two*? Europe and America are destined to be those two.

I am not primarily thinking of military or nuclear insecurity, although even in military security Europe is an indispensable partner of the U.S.A. Let me just say that 30.000 European soldiers in Afghanistan is no small feat. Especially taking into account the reservations of European public opinion. And for all the talk of new global partners, I do not see, any time soon, comparable numbers of troops from these new global partners patrolling in Kandahar, Kabul or Kunduz.

The European Union, although not a fully-fledged military power, has a naval mission off the Somalian coast which does not refrain from using its force.

After the "August War" between Russia and Georgia, it was the EU which sent its observers to guard the cease-fire; a cease-fire which was brokered by French President Sarkozy, then rotating President of the European Council. Today, we have hundreds of men and women in the field along the border area. I do not have to point out that this particular job could hardly have been done as credibly by any other player.

We are very much in favour of President Obama's initiative to prevent nuclear terrorism and control nuclear proliferation. As President of the European Council, I will promote that position at the Nuclear Summit in Washington next month.

Today's main threats are of a new and different nature. Transatlantic cooperation is therefore required on new frontlines. Security nowadays is not just about troops and a nuclear umbrella. It is about restoring civil order by judges and policemen. It is about regulating markets by financial watchdogs. It is about defending networks by "e-sentinels". It is about protecting the environment by "climate wardens".

I would not be surprised if the current economic crisis would force us to again redefine and expand the concept of security. Just as the terrorist attacks of 9/11 produced a sea change in security thinking, so will the financial crisis.

It is no coincidence that tomorrow you have a session on the 'Geostrategic consequences of the economic crisis'.

Market volatility itself can be a security risk. Especially when it is not just banks and businesses but States that are getting into financial trouble. I understand the American interest in how the EU deals with Greece. You do not want a "second Lehman Brothers" and rightly so. Eighteen months ago, people on this side of the Atlantic were not happy with the collapse of the *first* Lehman Brothers either... We both have a responsibility for issues that affect the other as well. So let's work together on financial and banking regulation.

I should like to mention two other new fronts of insecurity: climate change and cyber crime.

In the mythical past, the famous empire of Atlantis was engulfed by the sea. Let's take this as a metaphor for climate challenge... Saving the planet from a climate catastrophe and the resulting global insecurity is a daunting task. But, in the name of Atlantis, Europe and America should take up the challenge together!

The EU and the US should lead the way in green technology. Together we can set the norms and standards, not only in climate politics but also in technology related regulation; it is the best chance we have so the rest of the world will follow suit. A transatlantic co-operation is needed on an industrial carbon market and on a global verification and compliance regime.

I am glad to announce that in today's European Council, all Heads of State or Government agreed we should work closely with the USA on climate issues.

Our societies live by the grace of a free flow of goods, people and information. Networks are the arteries of the global economy. They are vulnerable. Think of the internet and telecommunications, banking and money transfer systems, airports and energy grids. Cyber attacks against these nodes of modern life are no chimera: they can happen (and do happen) every day. This changes our perspective on security. To quote a very valuable recent study on EU-US relations, "the goal of ensuring territorial integrity must be complemented by the goal of securing the critical functions of our society."¹

¹ *Shoulder to shoulder: Forging a Strategic U.S.-E.U. Partnership*, Daniel S. Hamilton and Frances G. Burwell, 2009, p. 14

We must enhance our resilience against these threats; learn how to anticipate and deal with disruptions. Both the U.S. and Europe are so deeply embedded in global networks that we can only do this together. Our connectedness is at stake. I would propose to take up *this* task not in the name of Atlantis, but in the name of Columbus, the great Transatlantic connector!

In all these areas, Europe and America can stand shoulder to shoulder. Building upon the Transatlantic past and upon our values and interests, that is the mission which we can make into our common story.

A final remark: we can only work together if we have respect for the political constraints under which our partner works.

One example: six weeks ago, the European Parliament rejected an EU-US agreement on the sharing of data (SWIFT), on the ground that civil liberties were not sufficiently protected. It came as a surprise to some in Washington. This parliamentary vote is a political reality, however. I sincerely hope we can find a solution with all the EU institutions involved and I will work on that. However, this vote *also* made me think of the European experience with the Kyoto Protocol, which the U.S. Congress never ratified..., but then again, last Sunday showed a different mood in your Congress! I should like to congratulate President Obama on his historic success of passing health care reform legislation.

My point is, such votes - even if divisive - are exactly what we share. The most striking thing that Europe and America have in common is our pluralist democracy. Pluralist democracy means having a variety of standpoints competing on the political stage, with perpetually uncertain outcomes. Internally, neither in the EU nor the USA, can we say that consensus is always achieved. In Washington, you often have bipartisan disagreements. In the European Union, one can add to those, the divergences between the 27 Member States.

We must not treat every disagreement as a crisis or a breakdown. They are rather a sign of the depth of the Transatlantic relationship. What unites us, is more fundamental and more long-lasting. Once again, the only easy relationship, is an empty relationship!

Therefore I should like to thank the organisers for bringing us all together.
Thank you.

