

Transatlantic Relations

French viewpoints and British perspectives

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Introduction

Over the course of the past fifty years, the alliance between Europe and the United States has kept the peace and put an end to the threat which hung over us. And it has done so despite points of contention, and sometimes open disputes, which have never seriously threatened the stability of the alliance.

However, what is new and which the Council believes justifies this unprecedented consideration of the issue, is the fact that we are dealing with a new United States and a new Europe. A new United States, sole superpower in the world today, more confident than before and without any rivals who might challenge its political hegemony. But equally a new Europe, particularly with the birth of the Euro and since the French and the British have taken steps towards creating a European defence identity, notably at the Saint-Malo summit.

That leading figures of both countries, chosen for their expertise and their experience, should exchange views and compare their assessment of the situation, was timely and necessary. It was agreed that both the British and the French were insufficiently informed about the United States. Our overview of the conclusions drawn therefore begins with a call for the development of university American studies and for us to learn more and deepen our understanding of the United States.

In considering the misunderstandings which have sometimes given rise to choppy waters in transatlantic relations, we began with those concerning international political life. What emerged was the wish to see a dialogue being engaged with the United States from the moment a problem is identified, so as to communicate clearly Europe's position. We should not wait until the United States has established its definitive position on an issue before trying to put forward the European point of view. By then it is too late and there is a real risk of quiet disagreement leading to open clashes and resentful disappointment.

The French and British participants raised the question of how to achieve a balanced dialogue and, when this comes into play, a balance of responsibilities. This is more than just a question of who pays the bill; it is a matter of vision and commitment and here the Saint-Malo joint statement has shown the way forward. It was clear to all that such a process will take time and a little effort in raising the awareness of our allies across the Atlantic. Rather than advocating a structural reform of the Alliance, participants argued more for a process of first pre-establishing common European positions and to then put these forward at the level of the Alliance.

On the subject of cultural misunderstanding - and noting along the way that this is felt just as keenly in London as in Paris - this was subjected to a certain amount of dispassionate debunking. After all, the United States continues to admire Europe and Europe in turn can no longer imagine its culture without the US influence on it. However, there remain slight but significant differences between French perceptions and those of the British.

Finally, the impact of the Euro was considered. The colloquium did not agree with those who predict that it will fail. The majority view was that the new currency would lead to a new balance in European-US relations in this field. At the same time, both sides of the Atlantic must find agreement on essential principles - the free market, economic growth, monetary stability.

A clear recommendation emerging from the colloquium was that those in charge of the Euro and of the dollar should work closely together within the IMF. The idea was launched of moving beyond cooperation between the two big central banks to working towards a

“Central World Bank” responsible for overseeing the international monetary system as a whole.

The future of transatlantic relations thus rests on firm foundations and the Alliance will continue to be at the heart of these. Neither the French nor the British participants cast any doubts on this. Institutional adjustments will come into play, but discussing and proposing these was not within the remit of the colloquium. On the other hand, we were agreed that the leaders of our two countries should offer the citizens of Europe a “dream”, a vision which would give the States of Europe a renewed and increased confidence in their destiny and a greater faith in the value of the ideals on which their democracy and their institutions are founded.

We are asking the French and the British people to work for a Europe that has greater presence on the world stage, that offers greater authority and leadership and that displays greater optimism in international life, just as the United States have in the past and continue to do. We ask them to work ceaselessly, and this is our mission at the Franco-British Council, to move and grow closer together. This is a necessary step on the path to redefining a new transatlantic relationship.

From the opening of the seminar, and throughout, it was emphasised that transatlantic relations lie at the heart of the Franco-British relationship. The issue is as real and important today as it was fifty years ago. The French and the British, whilst retaining their different perceptions, are agreed in acknowledging that the Atlantic Alliance plays a fundamental role on the European and international stage and forms a solid bond between its members that remains constant through the sometimes chaotic progression of the allies' relationships. It was emphasised that the Alliance had not just maintained the peace in Europe for fifty years and guaranteed the liberties of the citizens of the Member States, but that it continued and would continue to be the guarantor of Europe's security. This is because both sides of the Atlantic meet on the common ground of shared values and because both Europe and the United States are in favour of the status quo. Equally on economic matters, there is agreement on fundamental principles, despite differences that do arise.

Looking at each other

Since the end of the Cold War, Europe has had to adapt itself to a new United States, a more confident United States for which the old continent represents less of a priority than in the past and which pays greater attention to its other non-European partners. Europe - and Europe, too, has changed - must adapt itself to this new situation and determine, within its institutions, the new balance it wants to develop in its relations with the United States. Partners, not adversaries; allies, not satellites. One thing is certain: the partnership no longer operates solely through France or through Great Britain, but through Europe. This too is a major new factor.

The United States of the end of this century is not the same as the United States that saw the birth of the Atlantic Alliance. It has been too easy for us in Europe to forget that 5 million immigrants, mostly Hispanic-Americans, have settled there over the last decade, more than at any other time in the country's history. Population movements and industrial shifts have shifted the centre of gravity of the United States towards the West and the Southwest. Rural areas are becoming poorer but remain important in national politics, exerting a conservative and even isolationist influence. A population of poor whites has joined part of the black minority in being excluded from mainstream society. The combined weight of the

West and the Southwest has realigned Washington's policies more towards the Pacific and Asia, to the detriment of Europe. And Europe has lost part of its intellectual influence, particularly in the universities. Its image has become blurred. It has become less important in the eyes of the Americans. It now only has a limited role in the concert of nations alongside other, emerging partners.

And yet in the eyes of the Europeans, the United States still arouses the same albeit ambivalent fascination. US society is still characterised by its dynamism. Its message reaches out across the whole world. There is certainly less now of Europe in the US, but more of the US in the world. Fascinated by the United States, some participants considered that Europe looks more and more to it whereas Europe counts for less and less in the United States.

In the field of foreign policy, conflicts occur. Europeans see a contradiction between the aims and the methods of US policy, held by some to be sometimes destabilising because inappropriate; they see the US as presuming to relegate Europe to a regional role whilst reserving for itself a global one; they see the US as tempted to place itself above the law in disregarding the United Nations Charter and the trade charter when these work against US interests. Thus the European attitude towards the United States is changing: the British are distancing themselves more; the French are harbouring more distrust. In order to rebalance the relationship, some suggested that European leaders should be encouraged to offer a "dream" which would motivate Europeans and give them a new confidence in their destiny.

Someone said that attitudes towards the United States were often formed on the basis of generalisations and held on the basis of wrongly interpreted facts. Certain conclusions could thus be disputed. Some felt that in fact the demographic fabric of US society has changed less than had been claimed. One paradox lay in the fact that isolationism had in its time been created by European immigrants. People complain that the US is ignorant about Europe, but in fact it is Europe which no longer knows its partner. The ignorance of the European elite about the United States is a matter of grave concern. It has been said that Europe has "disappeared from the US radar screen". It might be suggested, rather, that international affairs have ceased to capture the interest of the US public; that a gap is growing between an elite which remains interventionist and a population which is turning inwards.

An analysis of US policy today exposed some interesting paradoxes: US behaviour has been criticised as working against what appears to the Europeans as necessary to protect the environment; yet has concerned itself more than anyone with the danger posed by the nuclear stockpiles in the Kola peninsula and elsewhere in the ex-USSR. And is it possible to understand US society without taking into account US policy on drugs? As regards judicial executions in the United States, subject to strong condemnation from Europe, are these not the other side of the coin of the extreme libertarianism which rules there? And if the US opts for armed interventions with no human losses, is this not in response to a closely defined concept of the country's vital interests, something which Europe does not always understand?

Other differences were noted: in the eyes of the Americans, the problem of public safety in the cities and suburbs is not just linked to economic growth, employment, and social exclusion. It is rather, and above all, a matter of law and order. The reluctance of the US to act in certain areas, for example, by ratifying the Ottawa Convention on antipersonnel mines. This explains why the image of the US has become tarnished both in the minds of

the French, and also of the British, who are often more critical than the former and certainly more critical than are the Italians or the Germans.

It is thus very tempting to criticise the United States, particularly on international issues. But what would happen if the US economy collapsed following a Wall Street crisis, as several observers have predicted? The US might move towards a further cut in commitments abroad. Europe might ask itself if it wants the United States to turn in on itself. Is it not the case that the dominant US tendency is always to isolationism?

This analysis was hotly disputed, especially by the French side. It was countered that isolationism is no longer an option for the US or Europe anymore. As Europe becomes more American, it shows itself to be more sensitive to the key responsibilities which, in the past, had been held by the United States: support for the UN, for an international society governed by the rule of law, in short for a world where the weak are protected from predators. Conversely the United States is moving towards the "realpolitik" dear to Europeans in the past, but also followed by Henry Kissinger.

In any case, US foreign policy remains of utmost importance for Europe. But the mechanisms by which decisions are reached are slow and complex, and when they lead to a policy being applied, it is too late for Europe to assert its point of view. In order to influence this process, we need to act before it gets underway, as in fact the United States does at various stages of European decision-making. In this respect it was noted that the passing of a generation educated either in Europe or by academics from Europe, or composed of immigrant Europeans, had markedly altered the landscape.

Moreover, the old British-American "special relationship" is no longer a determining factor. There are still ties in the realm of nuclear weapons and intelligence, but the British side emphasised that there had been deliberate shift by Britain towards Europe. The British do on occasions adopt a position closer to that of the United States than of other European partners, including France; but was that not a reason to exploit the advantage Britain drew from this for the benefit of Europe?

The participants were unanimous in wanting the European point of view to be taken into consideration more than it was at present by those in the United States who prepared and defined their country's foreign policy. Everyone acknowledged that it was not possible to influence this policy once it had already been determined. It was therefore crucial to re-establish lines of communication through which Europe could influence the direction taken by US policy.

A precondition of this is that Europe should be better informed about US realities. And this conclusion to the debate - organised around the different yet converging French and British perspectives on the United States - was unanimous. On the British side, it was noted that the United States was not seen as a foreign country, and this did little to promote the development of American studies. It was emphasised that the universities of the United Kingdom should award much greater priority to the United States in courses offered to students.

On the French side, the same poor coverage of US issues was noted and was even held to be "dismaying" by one participant. We cannot any longer take such knowledge for granted.

Transatlantic misunderstandings

Three areas were covered.

On the issue of **security and peacekeeping**, the assessment of recent results of the transatlantic relationship was overall extremely negative, although there was tentative optimism about the future. There is certainly a narrow course to steer between two hard necessities: it is not possible, particularly during Yugoslavian crises, to do nothing. Public opinion would not tolerate this, especially as the international situation, economically and politically, seems to demand action. On the other hand, it is not possible to do everything. Where should the middle line be drawn? It is necessary to adapt the action to the circumstances and to modify it according to the objectives to be reached.

The record of peacekeeping operations, particularly in the former Yugoslavia, was held to be very poor. For reasons of logistic support the Europeans were only able to, or only wanted to, act with the United States. Too often what had been done had been done too late and after having missed more favourable opportunities for taking action. We would like to think that we have learned from past experiences. We have swung between attitudes based on realities of power and others linked to the rule of law. The search for stability has been the key objective, perhaps too much so at the cost of finding long-term substantive solutions.

The overwhelming reality remains that the European Union has little to say and little influence on the issue of security and peacekeeping. And yet has 1,900,000 men in the armed forces, (i.e. around 500,000 more than the United States) and its spending on defence is equivalent to 60% of the US security budget. One of the participants pointed out that the results are thoroughly shaming: with the very significant resources allocated to its security, Europe is incapable of sending beyond its borders anything more than a "little army corps" to defend its interests or assert its policies.

Despite this participants were more hopeful for the future. There was good collaboration on the ground - especially Franco-British - in particular in Bosnia, where the two armies learned (or re-learned?) to know and appreciate each other. Past failures were no longer an obstacle to cooperation. This progress fostered the Saint-Malo joint statement, which was felt to have several merits. It set objectives without getting locked into a debate on the institutions needed; it recognised the European Union as the main vehicle for security efforts; and it agreed to strengthen NATO despite the end of the Cold War.

What role will the Europeans play in the Atlantic security system? This seemed to be less than clear. The current division of responsibilities is no longer acceptable to the United States and is just as unacceptable to the Europeans. The imbalance is continuing to increase. However, it seems unlikely that the United States will want to return to a new isolationism. No one seemed to question the need to find a way out of the current impasse.

At present Europe does not benefit from its spending. It does not really have a policy. One participant wondered if it would not be possible for us to agree on a certain number of criteria, which would serve as a basis for European action in the field of security and peacekeeping. Before any such action, all the possible avenues of diplomatic action would have to be explored first, European policy and planning would have to incorporate the principles which underpin the United Nations Charter, and the legal precedents set by resolutions of the Security Council would have to be taken into account. The Europeans would also have to be careful not to contradict the new strategic doctrine of the Alliance when deciding on independent actions for the European armed forces.

Reality surely dictates that we have to effect common actions, i.e. with the United States, as the Europeans equally cannot act without being able to use US resources, whether it be for the transport of troops or for operational intelligence. And this in turn must surely imply that we need to communicate with the Americans at a very early stage, well ahead of crises so that the European point of view is taken into consideration.

Doubt was expressed as to the efficiency of the air strikes. Can these be considered as the last resort? Are they enough? What about the right to intervene? What has become of the "duty" to intervene? Has the celebrated rapprochement between France and NATO been accepted without mixed feelings or second thoughts? What are its limits?

When the conflict to be resolved runs so deep that it can only be ended by separating the parties involved, should we really be opting for this formula termed "the Cyprus scenario", at the risk of drawing more parties into the conflict? Public opinion in our countries will not accept massacres and the denial of human rights. Yet we must ask ourselves if we are prepared to go all the way to committing intervention forces, with all the risks that entails. Europeans are in a hurry to act and at the same time are incapable of doing so without outside support. In this context, our two countries should perhaps surrender the very individual position-taking they have adopted in the past. France finds itself having to move closer to NATO, Great Britain to its European Union partners. This argument was challenged. It was asked whether France was truly ready to move closer to the United States and to give up adopting independent positions. Were European countries ready to commit themselves enough financially to give real credibility to their military resources? The leading position of the US in weapons stems from their considerable investment in the field of research; there are no signs that Europe is committing itself in the same direction.

It is true that the Saint-Malo joint statement demonstrated a will to act in order to reach a form of European defence, but it will not be possible to manage without appropriate structures and a certain public profile to this policy. Europe's citizens have got to be motivated. Few at present are ready to sacrifice their lives for the European flag or for the Atlantic Alliance.

A debate arose around the theme of institutions of partnership between the United States and Europe, on the issue of security, division of responsibilities and European autonomy, all in the context of the backdrop of past experiences, most particularly in the former Yugoslavia.

Recent history demonstrates that without the United States, Europe is incapable of acting in accordance with its objectives, but with the United States, the situation is no better because the political and strategic price to pay is enormous. France moved closer to NATO in 1995 in the hope of seeing a real European-US partnership formed, but disappointment followed. For a balanced partnership to be established, Europe will have to form a common front.

In fact, this notion of a division of responsibilities with Europe playing second fiddle may actually be a distraction. Instead of a formula like that of the Contact Group used for Kosovo, we would perhaps do better to devise a structure that fits within the European Union. Perhaps the crisis should be used to undertake a restructuring of the institutional framework.

In any event, there is a real need to equip Europe with an independent defence capacity which would have France and Great Britain working together at its core, even if this will be a

long process and one which has to be effected in the context of a necessary restructuring of NATO. The Saint-Malo joint statement outlined the potential form that such a European capacity could take. The Europeans will have to define their responsibilities within it, while its geopolitical limits clearly must be defined by the European continent. The question then is whether the Europeans will accept a role confined to policing the Balkans. Europe's interests are wider than this and include the Middle East and the Maghreb. If the Atlantic Alliance is to be reorganised, these realities will have to be taken into consideration and agreement will have to be reached on the legitimacy of actions undertaken under the aegis of NATO, which certain participants raised doubts about. However, a lot will of course depend on how the United States reacts to these European demands. The reality is that the United States does not want to alter a balance, which it is satisfied with, neither does it want to change institutions, which it believes have proved their worth. It was suggested that perhaps a solution might be found in the much-discussed reform of the Security Council, in particular with the expected widening of the group of permanent members.

In any event, no changes can be expected before the presidential elections in France and in the United States as regards France's relations with NATO. The shared intelligence relationship between the UK and the US also is seen as an impediment to rapprochement between the UK and its European partners.

Cultural misunderstandings between the United States and Europe: although a certain difference of approach emerged, the British are at least as concerned as the French, about US cultural supremacy. At least that is what emerges from recent opinion polls.

It seems there is a positive duty on Europeans to defend their culture, and not just within the limits of legal institutions. The reality is more complicated than that: it cuts across various divisions and this explains the difficulties encountered by the European Union in tackling the issue. Cultural Europe is a living organism; it is structured and grows organically, by networks and the proliferation of initiatives. Herein lies its strength but also its weakness because Europe, whilst it must respect its own diversity, lacks sufficient means to act. In fact it is not just intellectual or artistic considerations which need to be taken into account, but also human realities. Too few are aware or stop to think that culture in Europe also means some three and a half million jobs, which need to be protected. Here there is a great difference between the United States and Europe, as culture receives some state support in all the European countries including Great Britain, something, which is not true of either the United States or Japan.

Culture cannot be treated as just another commodity. This is why the "cultural exception" was argued for at the time when the GATT negotiations on tariffs threatened to endanger what we can only term as the European cultural industries. Europe, in its talks with the United States, is not just serving its own interests but is also acting on behalf of other societies, other civilisations, facing a speaker indifferent, if not hostile, to what happens beyond its borders.

The British side suggested that this attitude might be explained through the model of relations between the centre and the periphery. We find ourselves in a world dominated by a superpower surrounded by peripheral states who unknowingly shadow its actions and reflect its image, and this applies just as much in the cultural sphere. Whilst US culture is transparent, Europe's is difficult to decipher. US culture is the reflection or the response of a society faced with the problems of its time. It is transmitted through a widely spoken language. Its message is universal. Perhaps the success of Hollywood is due to the fact

that the 'American dream' was invented in order to integrate successive waves of immigrants. That being so, Europe, here too, must be able to offer a dream.

The role that cinema has played in the development of cultural relations between Europe and the United States is fundamental. The cinema has been a powerful media in the Americanisation of the world and it would be naïve to think that it had not profited from a certain help outside the world of culture, such as inter-governmental agreements (e.g. the Blum-Byrnes Agreement of 1946). In addition to this, US cinema has the great advantage of being able to recoup its spending simply on the national market alone. It is then easier to market films across the rest of the world. This state of affairs suggests a future of an Americanised world, where just the odd island survives to testify to other cultures in a sea of mass-produced cultural products.

This pessimistic vision was challenged. It was remarked that after all, US culture itself was an active consumer of European culture and vice-versa. So soon after the Oscar ceremonies which saw European films being fêted (a few days before the colloquium), who could doubt that the Americans held a "deep respect" for European culture and cinema?

It is true that for Europeans, the notion of culture is probably narrower than for the Americans, which led several participants to note that little could be done to stem the flow of popular culture; and on this it could well be asked if Europe had not displayed insufficient interest. In the United States, mass culture grew alongside the democratisation of society whilst in Europe, the emphasis was more on promoting an elitist culture. Moreover, culture is linked to power. On this argument a united Europe, assuming that such a Europe would impose itself as a major power, could be the bearer of a united culture, this time a "European" one.

The third source of transatlantic tensions examined by the seminar was **the advent of the Euro and the operation of the Economic and Monetary Union.**

Seen from Washington, EMU can only have positive results as long as Europe decides to operate a policy similar to that of the United States, namely, respecting the rules of the free market and seeking dynamic economic growth. If it does, the Euro will be able to gain a greater role within the international monetary system.

Such a development of the Euro will make the European financial markets more like those of the United States. There is a link between political power and the dominance of a currency. It is therefore likely that there will be a shift in the balance based on changes to portfolios and on the Euro-dollar exchange rate.

There may be risks ahead if the central banks engage in a massive transfer of their reserve funds in favour of the Euro, particularly because of the trade deficit of the United States. The deflationary tendencies of the Central European Bank and the rise in the Euro could force the Euro zone into a certain protectionism.

The creation of the Euro has thus created some real problems today. The colloquium participants wondered if the monetary policies of the Central European Bank would take the exchange rates into account, and how the Euro zone would be represented at the IMF, the G7 and the G3.

It should also be noted that faced with the creation of the Euro zone (which might rapidly expand), the United States is still keeping under consideration the possibility of expanding the dollar zone in Latin America, whether or not in response to suggestions from the countries themselves (e.g. Argentina). [We are already familiar with the talks around the Argentine peso].

One possible consequence of the Euro could be a United States monetary policy that took greater account of external interests as the Euro zone will offer an alternative to investors and the Japanese (and others) will be able to use the Euro as leverage in their negotiations with the United States.

This positive analysis of the likely consequences of the Euro was hotly disputed. One speaker felt that the Euro would be harmful to Europe. He argued that the economic success of France and Germany over the past years was due to the independence of their currencies and to the freedom of manoeuvre that their governments had in, for example, devaluing against the dollar. In choosing to create the Euro, in aiming to make it a reserve currency, we ran the risk of handicapping European industry.

Out of the debate which followed such arguments, a number of principles were put forward and largely agreed upon by the participants. It was emphasised that it was not good for a country to have a weak currency. As for whether the Euro would become a reserve currency, only the future would tell. The investment decisions would take place largely unaffected by any attempts to encourage or discourage this process. The progress of the Euro would in any case take time. There would one day have to be an agreement between the dollar and the Euro made through the IMF, regarding the exchange rates. A proper "Central World Bank" which would be able to create liquid funds might perhaps have to be planned for. This idea was compared by some to the temptation for Wall Street to act like a world stock exchange, with all the attendant risks. Several times in the course of the debate, concern was expressed about the consequences of a potential stock exchange crash in the United States, whereas the potential failure of the Euro was for its part played down.

The political dimension to the creation of the Euro was emphasised. Some noted that it *could* restrict the freedom of the United States to take action. They could no longer easily finance their deficit through borrowing as they had in the past.

The Euro has happened because it has a political dimension. Its political consequences may already be seen at work. Its success will, however, depend on its impact on the economy. One can predict that it will lead to greater cooperation in the world of business, greater harmonisation of government policies, to more active involvement of the European institutions and to more integration in response to European public opinion.

The colloquium thus went on to conclude on this point, that the Euro could give a new momentum to Europe's political movement.

The future

At this stage of its work, the participants tried to assess what the future might hold for the transatlantic relationship. An assessment of this must naturally be based on a judgement of the chances of further European unification.

If we stretch the point, is it possible to include consideration of a European Union which might have reached the end of its development? This extreme scenario propounded as a hypothesis by one participant would lead to a final scenario as catastrophic for the transatlantic relationship as for the Europeans themselves. He asked if we really wanted a return to the 19th century, to the politics of power struggles. Was this conceivable in the nuclear age? Did we have to abandon the hope of replacing it with a world founded on respect for the rule of law, as had been decided in 1945 by creating the United Nations?

There is something reassuring simply in attempting to list the choices that would have to be made at various stages of the process involved in constructing a sort of "fortress Europe". The Europe of Europeans will not be some sort of malevolent time bomb ticking horribly away as fear mounts.

Is "The European superstate" a desirable or a fatal end? Most speakers doubted that such a development would occur, sometimes even with regret. Leaving aside this potential development, some speakers pointed to a global progressive alignment of minds on both sides of the Atlantic, operating without governments being able to affect this in any way. A sort of transnational middle class is in the process of appearing, one which finds it difficult to define its interests and which is increasingly focusing on what is close to its own concerns, that is on regional issues rather than on empires. For these, the debate on "The European superstate" is not such a real concern.

However, this alignment is not clear-cut and distinctions have to be drawn. It is true that the systems on both sides of the Atlantic grew out of the world-view of the 18th century. Yet, whilst Europe has lost its optimism and replaced it with a sense of caution, the United States has retained its enthusiasm and its confidence. In political terms this means that the Europeans prefer compromise as an end in itself, whereas the Americans have opted for the culture of leadership.

Given such conditions, what needs to be done? Europeans must first set positions that will serve as a starting-point for dialogue with the United States. The Euro is a good example of this. The same needs to be done in the matter of security.

Secondly, the institutional imbalance must be dealt with. Yes, the reform of the G7 must be implemented to accommodate the Euro. The same process must be carried out with respect to security so that the current imbalance may be remedied. Europeans are not obsessed with power or territory but with the primacy of law and the respect of others. If we want the dialogue with the United States to progress, then the Europeans will have to define their objective, which could be one of reconciling leadership and compromise. This is what is at stake in the success or failure of the relationship with the United States.

The difficulty of managing concrete problems was illustrated with some examples. It is true that some progress has been made, that cooperation across borders is taking shape, especially in industry. However, it is also true that some sensitive sectors such as that of armaments are still very reluctant to change. It seems that there is still a one-way code of practice in operation by which states are measured; this favours the "good" states, the Anglo-Saxon states judged to be responsible ones, and casts out into the wilderness the

“rogue states”, those which must not be trusted. In between these two categories, so it seems to the Americans, lies a third one which includes most of the European states, which should as a rule be treated cautiously.

What always lies at the heart of the European-US relationship is the economy - 12 million jobs in the United States are linked to European companies yet remain outside the scope of government. The British side expressed regret at the French reluctance to engage in a free trade agreement which would extend the single market to both shores of the Atlantic. At the political level, whilst it is true that the Alliance remains a key element in the transatlantic relationship as well as in US policy, some observers present at the seminar felt that the dangers faced by the world came less from the threat of US dominance and more from a lack of direction, a situation the world had suffered from in the period between the wars.

Finally, it was felt that Europe no longer provided Europeans with a vision. If this is the case, it means that Europe has become a reality. Europeans are now wise rather than enthusiastic.

The crucial role played by the United States from the very inception of European project should not be forgotten. Europe has not always followed the line expected of it by Washington, and we must be prepared for the possibility of fresh tensions arising to strain the Euro-American relationship. But the reality is that the construction of Europe strengthens the Alliance, that if the European Union progresses, this in turn helps the transatlantic dialogue to progress.

The great uncertainty which weighs upon transatlantic relations does not stem from Europe's rise to power but from quite the opposite, from the uncertainties which still hover around this subject. By building Europe, the Europeans strengthen the Atlantic Alliance.

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