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**The state of transatlantic relations: What will be the impact
of EU enlargement?**

Ladies and gentlemen.

Not as an expert, but as a practitioner and certainly somebody who cares and often worries about the health of the transatlantic relations I must admit that a large percentage of Europe's politicians seem to spend half of their lives worrying about the health of the transatlantic relationship. A somewhat smaller percentage in America does the same. Fifty years ago it was no different. Were we right to be worried then and is there any reason to be more worried today?

1. In my view there is good reason to nurture this relationship all the time. It is our only chance to defend our common values in an ever more dangerous world. If the enemies of a liberal, free and democratic society can force a wedge between the United States and Europe, we risk losing all.

Doubters will of course question whether our values are common. They will point to the differences between statist Europe and the individualistic America, between an American society with strong religious beliefs and secular Europe, between pacifist soft power in Europe and strident hard power in the US.

I reject this entirely. What unites us is our defence of freedom and our belief in democracy as the best way of defending that freedom. Those of us from Central and Eastern Europe know the value of freedom perhaps better than those who have enjoyed it for far longer.

2. But the doubters will not give up there. What about Iraq, they will say; what about 'old' and 'new' Europe? There is no point in denying the strain which this episode has put on the relationship.

For me the worst element of this disagreement was the apparent enjoyment of these divisions by some prominent politicians on both sides of the Atlantic. In the States, some politicians seemed to try to make divisions within the European Union even more severe than they already were; basically they believed that a divided Europe is the best sort of Europe for American interests. In Europe other politicians saw this quarrel as a chance to demonstrate Europe's independence from the USA, something which they long for without being prepared to pay for.

In this context let me say that it has taken time for the Europeans to realize what a profound shock September 11th was for the American people. Equally it has taken time for some Americans to realize that even the greatest power in the world needs allies and multilateralism, if not to win the war then certainly to win the peace which as we know is much different. Today I think both these facts are understood by policy-makers on either side of the Atlantic.

My feeling is that the lessons of Iraq have been learnt and we now understand each other better than we did before the conflict. I would rather see Iraq as part of an early 21st century learning process (is an easier concept to deal with) than as a fault line in the trans-Atlantic relationship.

3. In my 3rd point I would like to say that if we are to work together to defend our common values, then we clearly need to tackle our weaknesses.

We Europeans tend to think of American foreign policy as quite arrogant and based on a very simplistic view of a complex world – remember the famous remark 'it's true they have the money bags, but we have all the brains'. Americans often think of Europe as being a kind of mess, incapable of taking rapid decisions and generally squabbling amongst

ourselves – remember that other famous remark about the absence of a European telephone number on foreign affairs.

On the American side this perception in my view results partly from real problems with European foreign policy, partly from a misunderstanding of the importance of soft power as opposed to military power but also from a misconception about the nature of the European Union. Americans tend to apply American logic to a very different European situation. Arizona and New Jersey can't have different foreign policies, so how is that possible for France and Poland! As we know the European Union is not a Federal State with a centralized government and is unlikely to become one in our lifetimes. It is a unique set of institutions to which sovereign governments have delegated authority in certain important areas of policy.

But this unique institutional arrangement has proved itself capable of achieving major policy breakthroughs. The completion of the internal market, the common commercial policy and the creation of the Monetary Union are just three examples in the domestic sphere. The triumph of the enlargement of the Union to the countries of central Europe only fifteen years after the end of Communism is of course in my view the greatest triumph of all of which we all should be very proud.

In foreign affairs it is true that the Union concentrates on soft power rather than hard power. Member states have for long been military free riders under the American shield. However the Americans underestimate the importance of soft power and contribute only a minute proportion of the money, which the Europeans invest in development aid and other forms of soft power.

This is unfortunate because we must tackle foreign policy crises at their roots rather than acting as a global fireman going from conflagration to

conflagration. Unless we tackle world poverty and injustice and attempt to spread democracy through example and persuasion, we will carry on going from crisis to crisis.

But it is true that we Europeans have not been united on many foreign policy issues and we really do need to tackle these weaknesses. We will not create a unified foreign policy in the Union in the short term; the differences between the member states on some key issues are too great. However, we are taking positive steps in those many areas where we do have common views and the key institutional advance is the nomination of a Union Foreign Minister, who will combine in his responsibility both the pure foreign policy development at the Union level and the use of the Union's soft power. It is true that this has to be confirmed in the ratification referenda of the new Union constitution, but agreement between governments was an important step.

4. My 4th point would be the recent enlargement to eight countries in central Europe and to the islands of Cyprus and Malta. Will this enlargement make a major difference to EU foreign policy and the transatlantic relationship or not? My answer has to be both a no and a yes!

My 'no' reflects my feeling that on the majority of issues the new member states hold similar views to the old members. Look at the track record of my country, Poland, over the last few years; it has agreed with almost all the foreign policy decisions taken by the Union. The new member states are not going to change dramatically either the substance or the style of EU foreign policy.

However there is also a 'yes' in my answer and this reflects subtle differences which may eventually prove to be decisive.

On transatlantic relations, the new member states will I am sure share my view that the alliance between the USA and Europe is crucial to guarding our freedom and promoting peace in the world. We know first hand the value of American support through those years when we were either dominated by the Soviet Union or, in the case of the Baltic countries, part of it. We also all have substantial ex-patriot groups living in the United States, many of whom were helped out of poverty and oppression by a generous America, which accepted them or their forefathers as migrants. These ties are very deep and they will continue to influence foreign policy in our own countries but also in the Union as a whole for generations to come.

On the other hand, this does not mean a blanket acceptance of American foreign policy actions, when they appear to be unreasonable from our perspective. The support by governments in the region for the intervention in Iraq was not unanimous and support in the population never became a majority sentiment. But it does mean that the new member states value good relations across the Atlantic as a permanent factor in peace and stability above the occasional foreign policy dispute.

- 5 Let me say that the greatest success of EU foreign policy has undoubtedly been in extending the area of peace, stability and economic progress across its own neighbourhood. The enlargement to central Europe was a great triumph. The stability brought to south-eastern Europe through the Stabilisation and Association Process with the offer of eventual membership of the Union has had a dramatic impact.

The arrival of the new member states will I believe ensure that the European Neighbourhood Policy deepens our relationship with eastern Europe and with the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. The Polish Government is certainly going to push for stronger links with the

east – after all this is Poland's particular neighbourhood. Other new member states will have similar views. And enlargement has also increased the number of member states who are clearly in favour of Turkish membership of the Union which is already seen in the European Parliament .

These developments are good news for the transatlantic relationship. It is also America's interest to bind as many of the states of Europe into a Union, in which democracy and the rule of law are guaranteed. This is by the way also good for American business. This process is stimulated by the European Neighbourhood Policy that aims at increasing regulatory convergence in the continent and stimulating economic cooperation and growth.

Enlargement has then, in my view, further strengthened a relationship which was in any case not suffering from a terminal decline, but which suffers occasional bouts of weakness.

The new member states but also the old members know that freedom for future generations and peace and democracy in the world depend on this relationship remaining strong. We will both either prosper together or fail separately.

Thank you