

TENDENCIAS EN LAS POLÍTICAS DE EEUU PARA LOS PRÓXIMOS CUATRO AÑOS

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During the Iraq war there was a lot of anger, anxiety and tension between our countries and I got a first-hand view of it. Now, as I come here to Spain and to Europe, I find that we are in a somewhat different phase, although I am not exactly sure what that phase is or how to describe it.

Clearly, I believe the good news is that Europeans on the one hand and Americans on the other have gotten past the initial shock of recognition that I would say characterized the period immediately before the Iraq war and then for some time afterwards. And what was recognized was how different really the average American attitude towards world affairs is from the average European attitude. During the Cold War, we had for many good and for many practical reasons submerged a lot of these differences. These differences were not as great during the Cold War to begin with, but the existence of a common threat which was not doubted fundamentally on either side of the Atlantic, the fact that there was broad agreement on both sides of the Atlantic, that there was mutual strategic dependency characterized the Cold War period. The vast majority of Europeans believed they absolutely required America's military strength to act as a deterrent against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Americans, after 1947, came to believe and understand that Europe's security was a vital national interest of the United States. And I think that what we did not realize at the time was the degree to which this very substantial mutual dependency tended to smooth over a lot of the disagreements that the United States and Europe had in a lot of areas.

Anyone who remembers the Cold War knows that it was a bumpy period, that it was not all love and kisses for fifty years, and there were even occasions when Europeans were as morally indignant and opposed to US actions as they were during the most recent Iraq war. Certainly during the Vietnam war, European opposition was substantial and perhaps more substantial in some respects than it was during the Iraq war. The Vietnam war, however, did not undermine or even threaten to undermine the basic transatlantic relationship. Why was that so ? For an explanation, I would turn again to the fact that whatever Europeans thought about the amoral and unfortunate behavior of the United States in Vietnam, the Europeans still depended on the United States for their fundamental security and that made for a great deal of forgiveness or willingness to overlook. What the rift over Iraq demonstrated is that in the post-Cold War period that kind of tolerance is not going to exist in the same way and that when the US acts in a way that Europeans or the majority of Europeans find offensive, there is no dam to hold back the torrents of anti-American policy that can pour out in Europe. I learned somewhat ahead of my American colleagues just by virtue of the fact that I was living in Brussels for three years that Europeans, with the exception of some eastern European countries, do not feel dependent on the United States for their fundamental security. The average European does not believe they need the United States any more to protect them from whatever dangers may or may not exist out there. This could change in the future. I do not wish it to change in some ways because it would mean that a

greater threat had emerged, but it is the reality, and it means there is much less forgiveness of American failures in European eyes. That is one reality that we all face.

The second reality that we all face is that the United States and Europe really have different views of the world. This difference can be measured in all kinds of metrics and in terms of actions. I do not think it is a controversial statement anymore to say that Americans on the whole tend to favor the use of military force more than the average European does. There was a time in the past year or so when I think a lot of Europeans hoped this was all some sort of George W. Bush aberration and that the American government had been seized by a cabal of neo-conservatives with George W. Bush at their helm. I think and hope that the truth has sunk in more deeply and that, if Europe has a problem with America today, it is a problem with America and not just with one President. Therefore, there is this shock of recognition that this is the America that exists today, an America that has gone to war, has used force nine times in the last twenty years if you go back and start counting with the war in Grenada, the war in Panama, etc., which is on average once every less than two years the US has sent substantial forces abroad. The United States does still very much, and certainly after September 11th, believe in the use of force and is unwilling to see that use of force overly constrained by deference to international institutions. I just think that is a reality which Europeans have come to understand. Although polls are always dubious things to quote, there is an interesting and striking poll number that resulted from the German Marshall Fund asking last summer in a poll of the United States and eight European countries a very straightforward and in a way philosophical question: "Can there ever be such a thing as a just war?" "Is war ever necessary to achieve justice?" 82% of Americans answered that war can be necessary to achieve justice. In Spain, the number was 26%. This is not with regards to any particular war, such as the Iraq war or the Vietnam war, it relates to war in general. Setting aside who is right or wrong, we are facing an enormous gap in perspective which transcends individual politicians and which we have to deal with.

I think where we are today is that we recognize a couple of things. First of all, the old strategic partnership of the Cold War is over because that world has disappeared. A strategic partnership based on circumstances that no longer exist cannot be re-created. And, secondly, as we look forward to the future, we must take into account the very fundamentally different ways in which most Americans view the world as opposed to the way most Europeans view the world. I just want to make it clear that I understand that there are differences of opinion on both sides of the Atlantic. You cannot talk about European public opinion any more than you can talk about American public opinion. Nevertheless, there are some general tendencies regarding the ways to view the world and they are different on either side of the Atlantic. And so the challenge for us is to acknowledge those differences and ascertain where that leads us. Does it lead us to complete separation or towards some new way of organizing our relationship which takes account of these fundamental differences and figures out how to make the most of them? I share Eduardo Serra's opinion that we Americans should not act alone if we have any choice at all. It is not desirable for us to act alone, but not so much out of material considerations insofar as other countries may assist the United States with money or troops but rather because of the psychological and the philosophical considerations. I think it is a great mistake when people think that Americans as a people have no concern about what the rest of the world thinks about them, and especially what their closest democratic allies think about them. Americans do care. And it will be difficult for the United States to proceed forward in the next few years without some sense that its democratic friends and allies around the world, in Europe as well as Asia and elsewhere, are to some extent with them. And so that is something that is of value.

I do not know what the European need is to work in conjunction with the United States. I think that sometimes Europeans think that they can deal with the world without the United States and that the United States is more of a hindrance and a threat than anything else. At other times, I do sense that there is a concern in Europe that an ultimate division and divorce between the United States and Europe would not be in either of our interests. So how do we move forward together ?

Well, partly the answer is that we approach the world and bring to the world what we each uniquely possess. As many, I am struck by the great power that the European Union does wield, especially in what you might call Europe's near abroad. Europe really has become a magnet for peoples living on the European periphery who want to partake in the European life. A very smart man who works at the European Union, Robert Cooper, has talked about the EU as a kind of liberal and voluntary empire that expands because people want to be a part of it. I am aware of all the difficulties this creates for Europeans as they think about whether to take in Turkey and Ukraine. I can only say as an American –since it is no skin off my nose- that I am in favor of the European Union accepting Turkey and Ukraine as members because the role that I can envision for Europe – and which would be vitally important to the United States- would be to bring some stability, democracy and liberal order to a part of the world at the periphery of Europe which is now very unsettled and potentially very dangerous. I think that is a vital role that Europe can play.

What about the United States ? I think that Europeans could come to appreciate that, for all of the errors of American ways now and then, the United States does have the capacity to take some existing situations that seem to be of no solution and in a naively optimistic way throw its power into them and actually change them for the better. There is a very interesting article written by a man named Steve Sestanovich, a professor at Columbia University, who talks about the US's maximalist approach to foreign affairs. This approach is not an invention of the Bush administration, it is a recurrent theme in American foreign policy. One of the examples which Sestanovich draws is the unification of Germany. Most of Europe was very slow to contemplate the unification of Germany and it really was very much the United States that stepped in, made a fundamental change and pushed through the reunification of Germany. President Ronald Reagan's decision to deploy the Euromissiles during the 1980s was another example of this maximalist approach. The general European view with regards to the Euromissiles deployment was cautious and nervous about what the Russians might do. Reagan, from that point of view, was dangerous and brash and willing to throw caution to the winds. The result, however, turned out to be quite favorable. I could provide other examples.

We are currently living through yet another example of American maximalism, of America as a revolutionary power. Although this is something that Americans themselves and that many people abroad do not like to admit, the truth is that America is and always has been a revolutionary power. When the US moves into regions of the world, it changes them. The latest area where American revolutionary power is being exercised -with still uncertain results-, is the Middle East. I have not been in Europe since the elections that took place in Iraq on January 30th. I know that in the United States, and this is true for both Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, the elections in Iraq –imperfect as they may have been- are increasingly being seen as a potential turning point, whose echo effects are being felt in Lebanon, most recently even in Egypt and perhaps in Jordan and in Saudi Arabia. Democracy will obviously not flourish overnight in the Middle East, but I think the degree of change, ferment and bubbling in the region is striking and it is the consequence of the United States using two blunt instruments: military force and the very strong rhetoric that President Bush has used in his recent important speeches regarding democracy.

When I listened to Ambassador Westendorp's comments earlier today, I noticed that the issue of democracy was not one of the topics that he discussed. In America today, and again this is across the political spectrum, we are taking great note of the fact that over the past year we have had successful elections in Afghanistan, in Palestine, in Ukraine, in Irak, elections that may be historic coming up soon in Lebanon and we have the president of Egypt announcing for the first time –we have to wait to see what the fine print will be- that he may be willing to entertain multi-party, multi-candidate elections. This is what is seizing peoples' attention in the United States. I do not know whether this is what is seizing attention in Europe. When President Bush was here and speaking to Europe he did his best to speak to Europe in the language that Europe likes to hear. He really tried very hard this time and he used the word stability over and over again because his advisers told him the Europeans get very nervous when you talk about change, that they want to hear about stability. The irony of course is that on the European continent and in the European Union all Europeans want to do is talk about change and moving forward and there is no emphasis on stability. And maybe it is not ironic. Maybe because Europe is going through so much internal change and turmoil, it wants the rest of the world to stand still and not become places of turmoil while Europe works to ride its own tiger here on the continent. That may well be the case. But nevertheless these changes have happened because of the power and will of the United States, and because we have once again pursued a maximalist objective with revolutionary impatience. This may or may not be unsettling to Europe. We will have to wait and see whether we can continue to move forward like this. How much of the American agenda is Europe willing to swallow if it appears to be more or less successful, is a question that remains unanswered. But I do believe that the future of our partnership consists not of trying to marry us up into one great strategic power that will march boldly into the world since that is not what is going to happen. The future strategic partnership is one where Europe concentrates on Europe's strengths, America concentrates on its strengths, and in the best of all worlds we have some understanding of each other, we have some measure of tolerance of each other's different world views and different methods but what joins us together is the sense that ultimately we really are aiming at a common project. That would be my hope at least.