

ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

NEWSLETTER



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Editorial

Atlantic Partnership meets with the Prime Minister's approval.

I was prompted to write to the Prime Minister after reading his interview with *The Times* (21st May) where he spoke at some length about relations between Europe and North America. I congratulated him on his words about the importance of the relationship and for his calling for the establishment of a body which would include politicians from Right and Left on both sides of the Atlantic who would work to sustain the relationship to which he promised his support. I explained to him that such an organisation did already exist in Atlantic Partnership – and could we have his support?

The Prime Minister replied: 'I was interested to learn of the work of the Atlantic Partnership. I wish it every success. I hope that organisations like the Atlantic Partnership can contribute to a better understanding between Europe and America. It is important that all involved in maintaining the links between Europe and the United States continue to explain, inform and educate. Our special relationship with the United States is key to our standing as a strong world and European player. It gives us a unique position in Europe. It is not a question of choosing one relationship over another. British interests lie in maintaining strong relations with both Europe and the United States.'

*The Rt Hon Michael Howard QC MP
Chairman, Atlantic Partnership*

What the papers are saying

Article for *the Times* by Michael Howard

Atlantic Partnership Chairman, Michael Howard wrote for The Times (11th July 2002), 'Like all relationships, the one between Europe and the US needs constant attention'.

When was the last time relations between the US and its European allies were so fractious? Things seem to have got to the point where the very word "allies" may no longer be appropriate. With every new day some new issue seems to surface as a fresh source of division and dissent. Just as you think things can't possibly get worse, they do. What is happening to the Atlantic relationship that has seemed so strong for so long? Does it matter? And what, if anything, could or should be done about it?

It is surely the case that the list of issues on which Europe and America now hold seriously different views is longer than it has been for a generation. There is discord on defence, with growing irritation in Washington over what is seen as the pretentious posturing of European countries over their so-called European Defence Initiative. The Americans see falling European defence budgets accompanied by new and unnecessary command structures which seem to involve needless duplication of the command structure that already exists within Nato.

On the Middle East a difference in emphasis has become a yawning gulf. American attempts to pre-empt the outcome of Palestinian elections have evoked predictable European fury. Even Tony Blair has found it impossible to maintain the public support he has previously offered US Administrations.

As though these problems were not enough, deeper cultural divisions have become more intense. Many Europeans regard the use of capital punishment in the US as morally repugnant. Many Americans ascribe what they regard as a lack of total commitment to the antiterrorism cause to latent European anti-Semitism. And Iraq is yet to come.

These divisive issues are all serious and important. But in one sense they are just surface manifestations of deeper forces and trends.

The truth is that Europe and North America are in serious danger of growing apart. The centre of gravity in North America is shifting westward. It is no accident that both Microsoft and Silicon Valley are on the West Coast. The attention of America's policymakers will increasingly be drawn to the challenge of China, at once both a huge

potential market for US goods and its only serious longterm rival for superpower status.

The ethnic balance in North America is changing. There are more and more Hispanics with more and more influence who look south rather than east. There are more Asiatic Americans. Neither group shares the traditional transatlantic ties with Europe.

And in Europe part of the impetus for European integration derives from a desire to establish a rival centre of power to the US, motivated in some quarters by explicit anti-Americanism. Does it matter? There are many of us who believe it does.

Most of the greatest challenges the world faces can best be overcome by Europeans and Americans working together. But if each of those challenges becomes a cockpit for transatlantic rivalry, an opportunity for one to score points off the other, the outlook is very gloomy. The challenges will be much more difficult to resolve.

A good example is to be seen in the contrasting outcome of the two most recent trade rounds. In Seattle, the US and the EU were on opposite sides. The talks ended in dissent. At Doha a genuine effort was made to work together to overcome the difficulties. Although many questions remain on the implementation of the agreement that was reached there, it was, at least, an agreement, with the potential for future progress.

What can be done to avert the dangers and promote and sustain the partnership? The key element must be a determination, on the part of all the governments involved, to manage these disagreements on specific issues within the overall context of preserving the partnership intact. The sound volume of dissent should be kept as low as possible. Points of friction must not be allowed to become points of fracture.

One specific measure would be the establishment of a standing conference of representatives from both sides of the Atlantic to try to identify likely causes of tension in advance and, where possible, take measures to resolve those issues before they caused real difficulty.

For it is clear that there will continue to be tensions. The question is whether their cumulative presence will be such that this great historic partnership will degenerate into rivalry or, even worse, hostility.

If it does, the world in which we live will become a much less safe and less prosperous planet to the great detriment of all its inhabitants.

The author is Chairman of the Atlantic Partnership.

Richard Perle and General the Lord Guthrie address Atlantic Partnership Breakfasts

US defence guru Richard Perle and former Chief of the UK Defence Staff, General The Lord Guthrie were guests of honour at Atlantic Partnership breakfast meetings (June and July respectively). A select group of opinion formers and decision makers was briefed on matters relating to relations between the USA and Europe with particular reference to defence and security matters. Chatham House rules prevailed amongst the journalists present.

Guests included the US Ambassador, Lord Black, the Editor of the Times - Robert Thomson, Sir Victor Blank, Lord Sainsbury, Lord Saatchi, Lord Powell, and Anji Hunter.

We will be launching Atlantic Partnership breakfasts in Paris and Berlin in the Autumn. The Atlantic Partnership Panels will be launched at a breakfast on the 16th October.

People in Atlantic Partnership

We are currently setting up panels of influential opinionformers and decision makers from both sides of the Atlantic who would be prepared to think, speak, and write about the transatlantic relationship. When disagreements occur they will help us ensure that the issues are looked at in a broad perspective and the importance of sustaining the Atlantic relationship is always kept in mind.

Once the panels are launched we will press release soundbites from panellists on issues as they arise. They will also be featured on our website. www.atlanticpartnership.com

The following have agreed to be on our panel.

- Friedrich Merz - Head of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag
- Dr Christoph Bertram - Head of the German Institute for International Politics and Security
- Josef Joffe - Editor, Die Zeit
- Andrew Roberts - Historian and freelance journalist
- Sir John Weston - former Ambassador to UN and NATO
- Lord Owen - former Foreign Secretary and Cross Bench Peer
- Sir Malcolm Rifkind - Former Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary
- Lord Renwick, Labour Peer and former Ambassador to Washington
- Prof Malcolm Chambers of Bradford University
- Barbara Thomas, Deputy Chairman, Friends Provident
- John O'Sullivan - editor of the UPI and former speech writer to Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister

Transatlantic Round -Up

The Middle East
Europe is making a mess of its intervention in the Middle East, argue some German commentators, which is a shame, says Katja Ridderbusch from *Die Welt* (Berlin) as 'the region is crying out for effective mediation, but the EU hasn't the slightest idea how to go about it' (quoted in *The Week*, 6th April). This is not through any lack of money, which is abundant (the EU has paid over £2 billion to the Palestinians since 1994 and is Israel's biggest trading partner). The problem is that the Europeans are split in their allegiances. The French and Belgian tend to be pro-Arab and the British more pro Israeli whilst Germany is reluctant to put pressure on Israel. 'Which makes it all the more bizarre that Germany is now suggesting it send its own troops to Israel as part of an EU peacekeeping force, says Nikolas Busse in the *Franfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (quoted in *the Week*). In all, the Americans have little choice but to handle the problem on their own.

Aisha Labi from *Time Magazine* (30th April) agrees. 'European voices were among the loudest chastising the US for its lack of engagement in the region, while European envoys tried gamely but ineffectually to fill the voice with mediation efforts of their own. Their failure...made

humiliatingly evident the need for American leadership.'

Why do Europe and the US see Israel so differently, asked Michael Elliot in *Time*? He was struck by a BBC journalist's air of incomprehension at a demonstration in Washington in support of Israel: The journalist had asked: 'weren't the Americans really rather "simple" when it came to the realities of the Middle East?' Many American Jews, not surprisingly, are furious at the European response...why do Americans and Europeans see the tragedy of the Middle East in such different way? One reason, says Elliot is that the European media cover the misery of the Palestinians more. But he dates the growth of European sympathy for the Palestinian cause to Israel's 1982 incursion into the Lebanon, and the massacres at camps Sabra and Chatil.' A second reason is that: 'modern Europeans have a deep sense of guilt about their colonial adventures...As the Jewish settlements growing the West Bank, Europeans became uneasy. Israel seemed to be adopting policy of colonization that, to modern European eyes, was not just morally reprehensible but it was also bound to end in tears.'

Is anti-Semitism at the heart of the problem?

For some Jews the Europeans are just plain 'anti-Semitic'. Michael Elliot is not convinced of the truth of this. 'Put at its crudest, most Europeans know very few Jews; they killed too many of them. In America, there is a thriving community for whom the survival of Israel is a passionate commitment; in Europe, there isn't.' (*Time* 23rd April)

For Charles Krauthammer, "what we are seeing is pent-up anti-Semitism, the release – with Israel as the trigger – of a millennium – old urge that powerfully infected and shaped European history" ... what European can't bear is the "armed Jew, the Jew who refused to sustain seven suicide bombings in the seven days of Passover and strikes back". (26th April, *The Washington Post*)

George F Will agreed, declaring that: 'Europe now practiced "anti-Semitism without Jews" and was playing its part in the "second—and final?—phase of the struggle for a 'final solution to the Jewish question"'. (*Washington Post* 2nd May)

This perspective incensed European External Relations Commissioner, Chris Patten, who responded with an article, again in the *Washington Post* (7th May). 'How could someone I had previously regarded as well informed and sane write this obscenely offensive rubbish? he asked. Since the evil of the

holocaust 'Europe has rebuilt democratic societies based on pluralist values and the rule of law...that democracy has occasionally been challenged by xenophobic extremism—anti-immigrant, anti-outsider and doubtless sometimes anti-Semitic.... what should we conclude about Europe from this population? When a couple of years back there was an outbreak of arson attacks against African American churches in the US should we have leaped to the conclusion that the Ku Klux Klan' was running the White House?

'Anti American prejudice in Europe is repugnant. It comes of a shock to me to find in a country I love and admire the mirror image of this—a visceral contempt for Europe.... There will be not settlement in the Middle East without the creation of a viable Palestine state and an Israel that can live secure within recognised borders...But a Palestinian state will require a return to the 1967 borders, or something very close to them, and it cannot be holed by settlements like a Swiss cheese. Without such an outcome the madness will continue'.

'President Bush told the Palestinian people today that they must replace Yasir Arafat as their leader before the United States will support an independent Palestinian State' (*New York times* 24th June). This led to some straining of relations between US and Britain. *The Guardian* wrote

that American leadership in foreign affairs tends to be “dictatorial, not inspiration”. The *Boston Phoenix* heralded Bush’s brave move saying that no other President had been willing to adamant that the Palestinian Authority needs a leader “not comprised by terror” (quoted in *the Week*, 6th July).

*The ‘Right’ on the move
Europe*

The resurgence of far right wing opinion in Europe has caused consternation and concern in Europe and America fuelling concern with some American commentators that a revival of European anti-Semitism is accompanying the extreme rightist surge.

A startled Europe is rubbing its eyes”, the *Berlin Tagesspiegel* newspaper commented. “Whether Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Portugal, France, Belgium or now Holland, everywhere the right-wing populists are on the march” (*New York Times* 20th May)

The *International Herald Tribune* considered ‘the far right’ strong showing in the first round of France’s presidential elections is the latest example of the general turn to the right across Europe in the last few years’. The rise of centre-right governments in Italy, Norway, Denmark and Portugal reflects the normal pendulum swings of European politics. More alarming is the shift of far right parties from the periphery to the centre of political debate.

Included in these is Austria’s far-right Freedom Party, which joined a government coalition in 2000. Two strongly right parties form part of Berlusconi’s government in Italy. Denmark’s anti-immigrant People’s Party supports a centre-right government in Parliament. There is now even a rise of a far right in the Netherlands with the now assassinated Pim Fortuyn’s party.

Stryker Maguire of *Newsweek* urges Europe to take heed. ‘the issues Le Pen raises are real, and Europe ignores them at its peril.’ (6th May issue). ‘The Continent is looking and sounding very much like Fortress Europe these days. And the sound and fury is coming from all over – not just France...Call it the Fear Factor – and emerging awareness of the social conundrum at the heart of modern European life. That’s the economic necessity of immigration colliding with a visceral and widespread unease about immigrants...Polls and elections across Europe reveal a hard core of discontent, not only over immigration but also two hot issues often associated with it – globalisation, seen as a cause of immigration, and rising crime. Politicians have responded by moving right in immigration – a key factor in the triumph of centre-right governments or coalitions over the past year. European have for the most part not been able to feely and openly debate this most profound and sensitive social issues except by casting a protest vote.’

William Pfaff of the *Los Angeles Times* warned against an over-reaction, calling the Le Pen victory “a fluke”, based on the fragmentation of the French Left. His actually vote never rose above 17.9%, which is only 3.5% more than he got in 1988.’

President Bush visits Europe

On the eve of President Bush’s visit to Europe, Prime Minister Tony Blair gave an interview to *The Times* (21st May) warning ‘politicians on both sides of the Atlantic to stop trying to split America and Europe. Amid growing tension between the continents over the War on Terror and trade, he pledged to take on the voices of anti-Americanism in Europe and anti-Europeanism in the United States.’ Mr Blair said that he would welcome a forum in which politicians from Europe and the United States could meet to discuss common problems and strategy, seeing Britain’s role as a bridge builder.

Mr Blair said: “There will always be people on both sides of the Atlantic who want to pull Europe and America apart. There are some in America who simply dismiss Europe as not serious and some in Europe whose voices border on being anti-American. My sense of this is that despite the difficulties the sensible majority understand that what we have in common is far more important than what divides us.”

The anti-American voices in Europe should be taken on. “I think they are to do with jealousy about America’s position, worry about American culture dominating European culture and also because America is the world superpower and anyone who is pre-eminent always takes a bit of flack....I regard it as one of my tasks to say to people the whole time — don’t pull apart Europe and America because the only people that rejoice in those circumstances are the bad guys and America and Europe should stand together on most issues. Secondly, don’t tell Britain to choose between Europe and America.”

President George W Bush received a mixed reception when he visited Europe in June.

In France President Bush sought to finesse the clouds of discord saying; “There’s a heck of a lot more that unites us than divides us” Asked about his poor image in Europe, President Bush said “look, the only thing I know to do is speak my mind, to talk about my values, to talk about our mutual love for freedom and the willingness to defend freedom’ (*New York Times*, (26th May).

Demonstrations were reserved for his trip to Berlin. An editorial in *Berliner Zeitung* declared that Bush had really blown it in Germany. After the show of support for American after 11th September the Americans seemed to turn their

backs on Europe, acting more and more unilaterally. The “international coalition” against terror is a nonsense: American is only interested in itself’ (*The Week* 1 June).

Only in Russia did he receive a heroes welcome. Bush and Putin signed a pact for steep nuclear arms cuts on a day which President Bush declared marked the beginning of ‘an entirely new relationship’ (quoted in the *New York Times* 24th May).

“Like certain distinctive wines, President George W Bush does not travel well”, said Ben Macintyre (quoted in *The Week* 1st June). Those traits that make him popular at home – the “folksy back-slapping humour; the simple, sometimes simplistic, framing of the global issues” – provoke scorn in Paris and Berlin. However Ben Macintyre argues that the chumminess which he exudes in front of a microphone is more sophisticated than it looks – giving off an air of reassurance to Americans. The code is simply rather un-European.

Europe and USA at odds
‘Europe sees a grotesque US’ says Todd Purdum of the *New York Times* 16th May on his travels with Colin Powell. “To travel on this side of the Atlantic with Secretary of State Colin Powell is to catch a brief glimpse of a parallel universe; the heedless, insular, bellicose, unilateralist America seen by many European eyes. the grumbling also reflects real and

deep European concerns about everything from sharp differences over social policy on issues like gun control and abortion, to the administration’s decision to withdraw from the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty ... and its insistence that it will pursue its own course in Iraq’

The Times on Independence Day

In *The Times* 4th July issue Michael Gove wrote: ‘Corporate sleaze, bruised European amour propre, economic tremors, Middle East sniping and intellectual sneering all fuel a resurgent anti-Americanism that brings together in curious alliance the Observer columnist Will Hutton, Jean-Marie Le Pen, The Guardian’s George Monbiot, Clare Short and Chris Patten. ..But their disdain will not detract one iota from the pride in their country that millions of Americans will assert today. And quite rightly.

‘ the resentment articulated by the anti-American alliance of Huttons, Pattens, Shorts and Le Pens is not moral but ideological. They resent American economic success because it reminds them that their preferred cocktails of protectionism, state regulation, subsidy and intervention constrict growth. America’s practical success is a standing rebuke to their abstract beliefs.’

‘The same crew resents American military prowess because they have either lost faith in the nation state as a

guardian of freedom or their vision of the nation state is closed, restrictive and anti-liberal. America is simultaneously chided for aggression and isolationism—what that confusion reveals is irritation that American power exists because of that nation's self-belief and anguish that power is not subordinated to their control. Accusations of imperial arrogance flung at America are not borne out by any colonising instinct on the part of the US. American force will come down heavily on those who threaten its citizens, it can be deployed to remove tyrannies, reverse invasions and roll back oppression. But there is no desire among Americans to see their flag fly permanently over any soil but their own. Having helped nations be free, they have no desire then to subdue them to their will.'

The USA is a selfish bully argues Ziauddin Sarbar in the same edition of *The Times* (4th July). 'American's lifestyle is sustained at the expense of the rest of the world. As a hyperpower, commanding the greatest constellation of military, political, economic and cultural power ever assembled, America has structured the world to suit its own ends.... US foreign policy operates solely in the interest of America..... Never has a nation been so powerful and so insecure, so self-confident yet so paranoid, so self-centred as to believe that its way is, in the words of

Abraham Lincoln, the last best hope for mankind.'

Anatole Kaletsky argued that 'the gulf between the United States and Europe keeps widening. ...The America that is feared, distrusted and increasingly disliked in the rest of the world, and especially in Europe is the conservative country that constitutes George Bush's political heartland in Texas and the South - the America of self-righteous Christian fundamentalists, or military machismo of gun shops, lethal injections, anti-abortion zealots and gas-guzzling pickup trucks spewing out greenhouse gases. The America that Europeans find fascinating and beguiling albeit a bit frightening because of its shifting moral compass, is the liberal US of Bill Clinton, centred on Hollywood Manhattan and Silicon Valley'. Kaletsky argues that 'the gulf between the two Americas has never been deeper than it is today', thus arguing that European contradictory feelings about the US are understandable.' (*The Times*, 4th July)

Snippets

America first again : 'Europe was ready to believe the time had come for a change in the balance of economic power....[BUT] twelve months on that vision of a new economic landscape is beginning to look like a mirage. Europe has not merely failed to ride out the US slowdown; it

now actually appears to be performing worse than America. As the world economy turns the corner, it is the US that is yet again leading the way'. (*Financial Times* 22nd March 2002)

Steel: Since President George W Bush's ill-advised decision to protect the domestic steel lobby, Japan and the European Union have recklessly threatened retaliatory traffis...and each protectionist victory makes the next one more likely. In the absence of a trade promotion authority.... trade might actually slide back' (*The Washington Post* 2nd May).

Canada and Europe – more alike? Haroon Siddiqui complained in the *Toronto Star* that 'ever since the attacks of 11 September, Canada and Europe have bent over backwards to appease the United States. But what have we got in return? A finger in the eye. Instead of showing gratitude, President Bush is running roughshod over the rest of the world. In the latest outrage, Washington has slapped tariffs on Canadian lumber and European steel.' Siddiqui's suggested solution is 'for Canada and Europe to forge a separate alliance, cemented by a transatlantic free trade agreement' (quoted from *The week*, 6th April)

Changing role of NATO
'With its view that global terrorism is replacing the Soviet Union as a major threat, NATO is considering changes that

could produce the biggest transformation of the alliance since its creation 53 years ago' (*AP*, 7th May). In advance of a November summit, they are working on three fronts, by:

- dealing with terrorist threats and closing the gap between the capabilities of the US and European militaries;
- expanding NATO membership to include the new democracies of eastern and central Europe; and,
- improving cooperation with the old enemy, Russia.

The future of NATO is one of the greatest challenges facing the transatlantic partnership. It remains to be seen how much progress will be made by November in resolving these outstanding issues.



ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP – WHO WE ARE:

Patrons:

The Rt Hon John Major MP – United Kingdom
Dr Henry Kissinger – United States of America
The Rt Hon Lord Gilbert – United Kingdom
Herr K Voigt - Germany
Pierre Lellouche MP – France (Deputy)

Executive Committee Members:

The Rt Hon Michael Howard MP (Chairman)
The Hon Henry J Hyde, Congressman (Vice Chairman, USA)
Lord Powell of Bayswater (Vice Chairman, UK and trustee)
Lord Chadlington of Dean (trustee)
Mrs Meg Allen (trustee)
Jonathan Marland (Treasurer)
Catherine Fall (Director)

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