

A Reflection on European Security

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I think I can truly say you've been too kind because after a build-up like that I'm not sure I can get through this without disappointing everyone. Nevertheless, I look forward to being able to share with you some reflections on the themes that we were able to discuss and during the last two days. The first thing I would like to look at is why should an American be concerned about European security at all.

I think its a fair question. First of all, if we looked back five hundred years ago, Spain discovered America, and continuously from that time on there's been one strategic theater involving Europe and America. Spain's discovery of America was an event which changed Spain's position in Europe and thus set the tone for the kind of linked, or interdependent, futures that Europe and America have experienced ever since. When you go forward through the other centuries almost everytime there was a major war or fighting in the Americas, a strategic element linked the fortunes of both America and Europe. For example, when Britain and the Netherlands were fighting over control of the North Sea, the city of New York, which was then the dominant strategic position on the western edge of the Atlantic Ocean, changed hands from the Dutch to the British. And when the French and the British were fighting the war of Austrian Succession, the North American British colonies were fighting with the British against the French in Canada, which is why in the United States they call the conflict the "French and Indian War".

The struggle for our own independence was also very connected with Europe. We were assisted by loans and material from - no surprise here- the Netherlands and France, and we were also assisted militarily before the end of the war by French forces. Even

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after the severing of the colonial tie, the trans-Atlantic space continued to be one strategic theater. During the Napoleonic Wars, the United States doubled in size by the purchase of Louisiana from France, a sale triggered by difficulties to France in its relations with Haiti. Although it's hard to imagine exactly how the French made the calculation, it was a good deal for us. On the negative side though, before the Napoleonic Wars were over the British had burned down Washington.

When you go forward to the 19th century you see the same European-American dynamic interaction. There was, for example, during our Civil War very intense diplomacy from both the North and the South with European countries; and soon after the war's ending, we bought Alaska from Russia - also another very good deal. By the end of the 19th century, the composition of the American population had changed so radically because of the massive influx of people from Ireland, Scandinavia, Germany and from Central and Southern Europe that today, supposedly, the largest ethnic group in the American population is German, and the two countries that have the highest percentage of their population having emigrated to the United States are Ireland and Sweden. All in all then, there is fair reason for an American to be concerned about European security. After all, we've had the Consulate here for 200 years for a purpose. The concern is not new; it's something that has gone on now for five hundred years. It's not ominous. It's not threatening. I think the interest is normal.

The second question I'd like to look at is where the current partnership comes from, where it originates. And since you have to choose something to start with, what I would like to start with is something that happened almost fifty years ago to this week - actually it happened on June 15, 1947. George Marshall, who had been the senior American military officer during the Second World War, had been asked by President Truman to be Secretary of State. He accepted. Soon afterwards, he was invited to go up to Harvard University to deliver an address to the graduating class. There, Marshall, who was a man who knew how to get to the point, delivered certainly one of the most famous statements of American public policy in our history, and a statement which truly changed the kind of world that we lived in. It's only eight paragraphs long. I'd like to quote some of what he said and go through it with you because I think it does explain a lot how America has looked at Europe and European security, and at our connection with Europe for two generations. And I believe it will continue to influence how we look at Europe into the next century.

He said that the problem that had to be addressed was the dire state of the European economy and that the solution to this lay in finding a way to restore the confidence of the European peoples in their own future. I'll read now a little bit from what George Marshall said: "Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions

in which free institutions exist.... Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full cooperation, I am sure, on the part of the United States government. Any government which maneuvers to block the recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us. Furthermore, governments, political parties, or groups which seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically or otherwise will encounter the opposition of the United States.”

He went on to say that it wasn't for the Americans to decide how Europe should be rebuilt. What the Europeans had to do was to get together and draw up some plan that was satisfactory to themselves about how they saw Europe being rebuilt. The US would then offer advice in trying to draw up a plan, and the US would not be lagging in providing support for it. From an American point of view, that policy, to me, shows some of the more enduring qualities of the approach we've adopted to Europe and to other aspects of our foreign policy. Within two years NATO was founded.

In preparing for this speech I went back and read a number of things, finding among others a reference made to a quotation about the founding purposes of NATO from the first Secretary General of NATO, Lord Ismay, which read that NATO was founded “to keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down”. Such a view didn't fit Marshall's description of why we were involved with Europe, though. The main purpose of NATO then and now (and I'll be very brief) is the political purpose, which is to protect and promote the values of free institutions; the second is to foster cooperation among members on political and military questions; and the third is to consult on joint action in response to an attack.

Of course, when NATO was founded the specificity of its purposes was very clear because the joint response was framed in terms of responding to a Soviet attack. I think if there is a lesson from those fifty years, from the situation as it was then in 1947-1949 and how we've gotten to where we are now, the first lesson I would draw is that if the United States and its allies agree on the measures to be taken for their own security, they can have security. There are obviously a lot of discussions over how the arrangements should be made, but I don't believe that capacity should be questioned. Fate is in our hands.

I thought a lot about the title of the conference because (as I don't think in Spanish, I think in English) the term “Seguridad Europea” (European Security) is somewhat ambiguous. In the first instance, I think it means security in Europe, which I just talked about. Still, it means at least two other things to me, beginning with security for Europe. In other words, not security right “here” but security that deals with issues and threats that come from “nearby” and which, in turn, involves the question what would Europeans do - indeed, what would Europeans and Americans want to do - regarding these issues and threats.

Now, I'd like to focus on one aspect of the discussion which has been missing from the discussions these past two days, and this is one which concerns some public

attitudes that are present in the debate over NATO enlargement and some of the reasons put forth to support NATO's intentions. One wouldn't really know it from the discussions we've had, but there are well meaning, well-informed, thoughtful individuals who don't agree with NATO enlargement. Therefore, I think it's fair, given the nature of the kind of relationship that Americans and Europeans should have, that we be allowed to go over the reasons quickly just to know what they are.

First, I'd like to start off with some results of a poll last month in the United States. 86% of the people polled said that President Clinton should focus on domestic policy and only 7% said he should focus on foreign policy, whereas (and this is relevant to the comment I made yesterday that we've turned back half of the money we used to spend on foreign policy) 61% of those polled favored maintaining NATO despite the end of the Cold War. It's interesting to note, therefore, that in the discussion in the United States there is no credible opinion that says the object of policy should be the end of NATO. Instead, the debates are over, to paraphrase, "since the whole world has changed, how do you continue having a constructive security relationship including NATO with our European allies?" Only 20% of the people polled followed the debate on NATO enlargement, but among that group a large majority favors enlargement. Almost twice as many fear that Russia will threaten its European neighbors if NATO is not enlarged. In other words, these people think that Russia would threaten its neighbors if there is no enlargement because such a decision means these countries will never be our allies, despite whatever changes their political system has gone through and in spite of the political language in the NATO Charter. We would thereby dig deeper a line that divides Europe. Finally, a slight majority would broaden NATO's mission to include interests outside of Europe.

And so here I'd like to go over some of the arguments that have been raised about NATO enlargement itself. Here, the place to start is with George Kennan, a most distinguished American diplomat and diplomatic historian, who wrote at the beginning of this year that "expansion would be the most fateful error of American foreign policy in the entire post-Cold War era." He explained that "expansion" (what President Clinton's Administration calls "enlargement") would inflame the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion. "Expansion" would have an adverse affect on the development of Russian democracy and would restore the atmosphere of the Cold War of East-West relations. Another argument was put forward by the British historian Paul Kennedy, who had written the "Rise and Fall of the Great Powers". His theory was that the greatest risk to the United States was "imperial overstretch"; that Washington, in his analysis, was about to repeat the mistake made by London in East Europe during the 1920s and 30s by giving security guarantees to borders in Eastern Europe without changing the military strategy adequately in order to be able to uphold that commitment; and that, as a result, there would be a large and dangerous gap between the objectives of policy and the assets made available for military strategy.

The third argument goes back to the question of drawing lines, although this one is a little harder to deal with: Some people would say if you don't enlarge, you're reinforcing a line that already exists and others would say if you do enlarge, you're drawing a new line. So, no matter how you do it, no matter what NATO does, I'm afraid there's a line in our future. The fourth argument is one I certainly think ought to be thought about more as it relates to Kennan's warning that, since European security increasingly depends on a series of arms reductions agreements that have been concluded in the last ten years (particularly the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe), enlargement of NATO would impede progress in arms control. Indeed, the head of the security council in Moscow, Mr. Rybkin, said this week that NATO "expansion" would make the ratification of Start 11 "almost impossible". Finally, I'd like to mention the fifth and quite common argument, which is that NATO is a special purpose defense alliance and that "expansion" of it would simply destroy its purpose.

There are answers to these questions, but I think the easiest thing to point out is that the answers have to come in terms of policy. What we're talking about here are political choices, not simply debating points. Therefore, I'd like to look at some of the suggestions raised in a recent article by former secretary of state, James Baker, a man who's known for being fairly hard-headed and realistic. He emphasized the point that the core essence of NATO is its political function; that is, to try to ensure that there is an environment conducive for free institutions and that the success of that function has to be the test. The fact that the Cold War has ended and that there is no longer a Soviet threat directed at the Western Alliance is not a reason for giving up an institution that has helped create an environment conducive to the spread of free institutions. He went on to suggest that just as NATO had met the old threat, surely the Alliance should be adaptable enough to meet new threats, and that the new threats would probably require less conventional responses to deal with them. He cited in particular some of the things that have been mentioned here such as the development of task forces and different means of cooperation within the Alliance. He also suggested that because the future is not subject to prediction (which is something worthwhile remembering - a little humility about the future is normally in good order), it was terribly important that NATO continue as a place for consultative relations both among members and with other actors in the area.

So, as all this shows, there is in the scope of European security a rich agenda that includes enlargement, the Founding Act, the discussion of arms control agreements, operations by the OSCE, and the EU's participation. Regarding the EU, however (and the following is important as it reflects a certain strain of thought in American public opinion), people in the United States do raise the question: "Why are Europeans ready to pledge their honor to protect the borders of countries in Eastern Europe, but they won't allow their tomatoes in?"

The final thing I'd like to do is to ask some questions, as it says in the title of the conference 'to the next century', which should be a very risky thing to talk about, but I want to try. What concerns me is (and this a point John Roper made very eloquently yesterday) what about security by Europeans. What about not just dealing with sort of our own in-house problems and worrying about ourselves or dealing with the people who are right next to us and the problems they might cause for us in our neighborhood. Rather, what about trying to look a little further ahead and trying to look a little farther away. The address made by your Minister of Defense yesterday was very far-seeing in this regard because he repeatedly recalled that, in the end, healthy societies have to do this in order to prepare for their future. And so there are a couple of thoughts that came to me that I wanted to share with you.

First, some things about the United States: There continues to be a great influx of immigration into the United States. Actually, in recent years we've had more immigration in total numbers than at any other time in our history. I live in New York; 42% of the people in New York - 42% - were born outside of the United States, while in Los Angeles the statistics say it's 43%. This is a society that is changing; about 15% of the American population are African Americans, and roughly 15% are Hispanic Americans - a percentage that's rising. However, the group that is rising most in relative terms are Asian Americans. And the reason why I'm mentioning this is because (as a result of immigration and the ties that are born from it) we are becoming more Asian in our outlook as a society, which is a tendency particularly true of elites.

Case in point: If you look at all the other secretary of states in the last fifty years, when they made their first trip overseas they went to three or four European capitals, then they went home. When Secretary of State Albright came to Europe, she went to three or four European capitals: She then went to Moscow, Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing, which was the right thing to do. This was a realistic, smart, intelligent thing to do because relations with those countries are becoming increasingly important for us, as they are to Europeans, aslo. True: Our relations with Moscow have long been very important but, due to the specific character of our historical diplomatic relations, it wasn't necessarily where you started out to visit as secretary of state.

There's also been a shift in the choice of foreign policy channels to work through. Just as Europeans have shifted much of their energies in their foreign policies to working through European institutions, in the last decade the United States has been accomplishing a lot more with the Mexicans and Canadians (for example, in NAFTA), which only makes sense: they live right next to us. In addition, we've started more consultations with countries in the Asian-Pacific region, which absorbs the majority of our foreign trade. And as I just indicated with Secretary Albright's trip, the bilateral relationships with Russia, China and Japan have increased in importance, particularly in terms of dealing with issues that aren't strictly, say, US-Japanese issues; here, I'm referring to matters of

mutual concern for Japan and the US in Guatemala, for instance. Seen this way the fabric, or the network, of foreign policy is becoming much more dense and diversified.

What do I as an American diplomat see happening in Europe regarding your changing perspectives as you look at a new century? Well, it's obvious that, as I said, increasingly your energies are directed towards each other. Yesterday, Professor Vilanova said in reference to the situation in Bosnia that fifteen actors can only agree on a lowest common denominator and that that can not solve problems. Although I have mixed feelings about Bosnia and how it was solved, I think it is nevertheless a fair issue to think about. In my view, Europe finds it very difficult to think about the use of force in foreign policy. As it stands now, to say you have a joint foreign policy means that you are able to agree on a commercial policy, you are able to agree on humanitarian policy, and you are able to agree on foreign policy when deep-seated interests and perspectives are not at stake. Though when deep-seated interests and perspectives are at stake, you can't agree, and not agreeing means you don't act. This is not because you have a lack of institutions: This is because you have a lack of will to act. The reason why force was not used in Bosnia by the European institutions or by the Western Alliance was because Western allies did not agree that force be used. Eventually, that changed. And though the United States had wanted force used for a longer period of time, I could not make an argument I know it would have been effective. No one is picking on anyone here; still, I think it's important to understand it's not that Europeans have bad institutions. But if one wonders why nothing was done, it's simply because decisions weren't made to do it. Maybe I'm being simplistic, but that's the way I look at it.

What would I suggest as to the kind of collective approach we might have as we look ahead? Although the Minister's speech having mostly covered this ground, I'm going to go over a few things again. First, dialogue is highly important, just as the title of the conference reminds us. Dialogue is extremely important with Russia. We were told yesterday by Dr. Baranovsky that "Russia has been downgraded, marginalized, and disengaged". Whether NATO 'expands' or doesn't 'expand', Russia should not be "downgraded, marginalized, and disengaged". We need a rich dialogue with Russia. What's more, and gauging from the tenor of the discussions we've heard here (including the many valid perceptions from those this city is home to), obviously we all need a dialogue with the Mediterranean, where incidentally the United States first deployed its forces and had diplomatic establishments. We need dialogue with other areas that aren't just our home area, too: We need it with Asia. And in pursuing this dialogue, we all have to be careful that we don't contribute to the idea that because that one group of people is Catholic and Protestant, or that another group of people had ancestors who went to Orthodox churches, or some people were Muslims, that they have to be different and they have to have clashes and they have to have security problems. People who are different can find ways to cooperate.

In our own relations, as it is now there is both cooperation and competition between the United States and Europe. Quite simply, what we have to do then is to find ways to emphasize the things that we can cooperate on. If we want to be good partners, we have to have projects that we work on together. You can't have a healthy, long-term relationship with another society and do nothing with it that you care about. There are, after all, enough changes in the world for us to cooperate meaningfully on. Two weeks ago, I was in Zaire in response to the most recent crisis situation there (and this is apropos to an issue which you can read about in the newspapers - that Americans are supposedly at the French throat all the time): When we stopped at Paris after being in Zaire, we spoke to the people in the Ministries in Paris that deal with Zaire, and one adviser working for President Chirac who is depicted as being the most conservative or most difficult to deal with was asked by United States Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, "What would you like us to do?", and he said "Well, I want you to make a public statement that makes these points." It was no problem: Ambassador Richardson did it. There wasn't a fundamental clash of interests. There might have been twenty years ago, but not today. I would take that kind of cooperation as the example - if you don't make the effort, it's more likely to be seen as a clash. If you make the effort, you can find things that are positive you can collaborate on, which I think creates a dynamism that'll help move us all through some of the uncharted waters out there.

Agreeing with another point which the Minister made, I do think we have to welcome change. He mentioned globalization, scientific and technological innovation, looking East and South, and he also mentioned Spain's low birth rate. If we become timid before these harbingers of changes, we won't do very well in the future. We have to welcome change. And we have to welcome it with more than just having an attitude that we like change or that we're interested by it. By this I mean the following (and this gets to some of the comments on "think tanks" we've heard- I don't know if you need a 'tank' to 'think', but you do need to think): You can't really face the future only by having an attitude about it. You have to think about it enough so you have an objective, so you have a plan, so you have something that you want to do, welcoming change with energy.

Finally, the other point I'd like to make looks at the touchstone of (for worse probably) international relations, that is - how we make decisions about the use of force. Since I've already made some remarks about the difficulties European institutions have in constructing a foreign policy that includes contemplating that question, the following is a question that I rather have for you. I don't have the answer- but when I look at Europe I wonder how can Europeans legitimize the use of force unless the decision is made by politicians who have an immediate responsibility to the electorate that they are going to turn to and say give me your young people to go to that

dangerous place and either be shot at or to use force in order to accomplish an objective. When those decisions are made nationally, there's an immediate response. And though this may be a very American perspective, I feel when you make the decisions about the use of force not nationally but at the European level, you raise vital questions about legitimacy, objectives, and political responsibility. To this American it seems that national governments are still more capable than European institutions to make decisions on the use of force.