

A NEW EUROPE IN A NEW WORLD

The College of Europe, Natolin Campus

Opening of the academic year

Warsaw, 3 November 2004

Ladies and gentlemen:

Today it is my pleasure to address an audience including the Rector, ministers, parliamentarians and diplomats, in this most prestigious university amphitheatre here at Natolin. The Rector, by giving the name of Montesquieu to this year's group of graduating students, has made them a part of our finest cultural and political tradition, and I extend my warmest congratulations to him.

It was, indeed, the eighteenth century that wrote out in full capitals such words as FREEDOM, MAN, PROGRESS and REASON. The century of the Enlightenment connected 'both sides' of the Atlantic, contributing to the independence of the United States, the French 'revolution' and the constitutional movement.

At the present stage of our relations, we have to be vigilant to keep that flame burning - the flame of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.

A recent history

If Europe exercised its influence on the US and its Constitution, the 'young republic across the ocean', as the eighteenth-century illuminati called it, would have the opportunity, two centuries later and on three occasions, to bring back the triumph of democracy to the continent 'of the Enlightenment': on the first two occasions, through war against imperialism and fascism; on the third, with the fall of the Wall. The year was 1989.

However strange it might seem, the year 1989 destroyed a Wall. At the same time, however, it marked the collapse of a certain idea of the West. A new Europe was born; the world of the cold war came to an end.

No longer was the Soviet Union the justification of the West's existence, the key to its identity. The 'Soviet empire' was extinguished, and with it disappeared the certainties once provided by the bipolar order.

In the 1990s we finally managed to activate some of the mechanisms of a multilateral international order which was first conceived in 1945 but was put on ice when the cold war broke out. Here I may mention the Rio summit on the environment (1992), the Vienna summit on human rights (1993), and the Beijing summit on women's rights (1995).

We have also evolved such innovative concepts as the duty and right of peaceful and democracy intervention, and have integrated former adversaries into our joint collective security mechanisms.

Those were the times of Mr Clinton and Mrs Madeleine Albright. The US was then acting, admittedly, in a condescending fashion, and still considered its own role to be essential; nonetheless, the US also paid attention to its allies and, indeed, showed its ability to cooperate with them in the Balkans.

That decade came to an abrupt end on 11 September 2001, and we entered a new world.

On 11 September 2001, the Americans' perception of the world changed. War entered their own urban space for the first time. For the world, the West split into two.

That day, on which, as a 'Le Monde' headline put it, 'we were all Americans', returned us not to the century of the Enlightenment but to a century of darkness.

On that day, the shadows of isolationism and unilateralism began to take ominous shape, as was later confirmed by speeches (e.g. Bush's at West Point in June 2002), and even by a number of best-sellers. Those who then held the floor were Bush, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Kagan.

Between 1989 and 2004, the historic year of the reunification of Europe, has intervened the transition from a world with two Europes and one West to a world with one Europe but two Wests - one European, the other American.

How and why have things ended up like this? The earlier crises involving the two sides of the Atlantic (Suez in 1956; the Korean war; Vietnam and Cambodia) all referred in one way or another to the Soviet Union. Today, however, the 'enemy' is a different one - and the US, Europe and the world too are different.

No empire lasts a whole century

In the US, the generation of 'illustrious' founders of the Marshall Plan or the Atlantic Alliance is by now all but extinct. The US today is a country whose logic is **IMPERIAL**. Once, all roads led to Rome; today, for many and above all for the Americans, all roads pass through Washington.

In the external sphere - and to say so is not to indulge in a facile anti-Americanism - the US Administration offers a black-and-white view of the world ('who's not with me is against me'), encouraging 'crusades' and 'wars of civilisation' against an 'axis of evil' (Iran, Iraq, North Korea), spilling over to 'rogue states' such as Syria or Libya (I am using words employed by Bush himself and his Administration).

Let us recall that at Guantánamo the Geneva Convention is violated, that there has been torture in Iraq and that the US wants nothing to do with the International Criminal Court. In the internal sphere, the Patriot Act is all but in breach of the constitution.

Six months on from the invasion of Iraq, only 45% of Europeans favoured US hegemony in international relations, while 78% saw American unilateralism as a threat to world peace and 71% wanted the EU to become a world superpower rather than a mere 'free-shooter' on the international stage.

In the wake of 11 September, the Americans asked themselves: 'why do they hate us?', referring to the Muslim world. Since the Iraq war, their question has been: 'why doesn't the world like us?'.

Europe and the US: two different planets?

Europeans can help answer those questions.

Europe's unwillingness to comprehend that imperial logic has led to a situation where 83% of Americans and 80% of Europeans now believe that Europe and the US do not share the same social and cultural values (German Marshall Fund poll, 2003).

In Europe we do not tolerate the death penalty, but Americans do. Even Turkey has recently abolished capital punishment so that it can one day join the EU.

Americans and Europeans are united by common threats, as was made clear by the events of 11 March in Madrid. That appalling carnage also changed the 'European way of life'. We are equally vulnerable, yet each side of the Atlantic sees the other side as a stranger, and conceives the enemy differently.

Before Iraq, it appeared utopian, if not almost heretical, to speak of a European strategic vision.

Among the Fifteen, indifference, powerlessness or simply one or other national preference stood in the way of the very idea of a security vision specific to the EU.

The Iraq adventure did not divide the Europeans: it simply made their disunion visible.

The Iraq war led to the birth of a European public opinion.

It led to the disintegration of the CFSP because the Member States had different analyses of the threat, and could not reach agreement on the objectives of US policy or on the proper role of the Union. Only in December 2003 did the European Council adopt the document on 'a secure Europe in a better world' - the 'Solana document', which, it must be said, only once refers to the 'transatlantic relationship'.

The questions to be asked after the 11 September and the Iraq war are the following:

- *Is the world more dangerous today than it was before the rise of international terrorism?*
- *What is the relationship between force and law most suited to the new circumstances?*
- *Is the world a better place with Saddam Hussein ousted?*
- *Have we defeated international terrorism in Iraq?*
- *Have our relations with Islam become closer or more distant?*
- *Which is more respected in the world, the US or the EU?*
- *What is Europe's vision of the world, and what is the world's vision of Europe?*

I leave it to you to answer those questions, but would nonetheless like to share a number of ideas with you.

On the one side we have the hegemonic military power - no longer exactly a 'young nation', and a country which has, since 2001, been increasing its military budget by 9.7% per year.

On the other side is Europe - an old continent, obliged by the events of recent years to decide at one and same time on two basic issues, namely its identity and its geographical shape (the European Union is not the same thing as Europe) - all this, furthermore, in a context of far-reaching institutional reform and with a constitution to adopt.

No-one doubts that international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction represent the greatest threat to security in Europe. However, we do not perceive the fight against terrorism in the same fashion as our friends across the ocean, and the differences are of major import.

The American accent is on issues of sovereignty and military security. Europe fights for universal values to make it clear that we do not act believing that 'might is right', but, rather, we aim to identify not only the manifestations of terrorism but its **CAUSES**. We in Europe are therefore concerned to develop the dialogue with civil society, on a basis of cooperation, integration and multilateralism.

It was not always so. We Europeans too have a past of imperialism, colonialism and ethnocentricity. Today however, we use a different language.

Curiously, we learned such words as *consensus*, *permanent compromise*, *constant negotiation* and *continuous dialogue* - which now seem so European and so federalist - from the eighteenth-century American figures Madison and Hamilton (whose opinion would be so useful today ...).

Those terms are part and parcel of the EU's success, and pertain to a European culture based on law, on legal norms and on the peaceful settlement of disputes.

This omnipresent and contagious culture is a pillar of our union and of our multilateral vocation. To share sovereignty is to simplify it. To give a recent example, had Spain not been a member of the eurozone it would have been very difficult for it to withdraw its troops from Iraq, and the peseta would have had to be devalued. Today, the financial markets can cause greater damage than weapons.

With regard to multilateralism, we may say, paraphrasing Churchill on democracy, that it is the worst form of international governance apart from all the rest.

We Europeans view the terrorist threat in a broader context, taking account of poverty, regional conflicts, environmental deterioration, epidemics, etc.

In Europe, we have witnessed a long line of evils over our history. We believe that what was once our greatest evil - the wars which ravaged us for centuries on end - is now a thing of the past. We Europeans see ourselves as a different and better West, more prosperous (we have 25% of the world's GDP and a currency that rivals the dollar) as well as being quite as democratic as the US but also socially and economically more humane.

This vision that we have of ourselves is a source of irritation to the US.

Thus, for the Americans we are 'Venus', while they see themselves as 'Mars' - the god Mars and the planet Mars. Those forces impel them to privilege might over right because they feel vulnerable.

Europe is, nonetheless, aware of the profound changes that have happened since the 11 September, in terms of both the nature of the threats and the limitations of the existing international order.

Europe needs its own autonomous defence capacity. This does not mean acting outside the alliance that we have with the US through NATO.

2 November 2004

Today is itself a very special day for determining the lessons to be learnt by the Americans from their Iraq adventure.

Never since the end of the second world war had the outcome of a US presidential election given rise to such expectation.

Irrespective of the result (probable but not yet final), we know that the situation in Iraq is the product of the personal style of certain members of the US Administration.

Abraham Lincoln once said that 'it was not best to swap horses while crossing streams'.

Whoever wins, we have to make an effort to improve our transatlantic relations, and the sooner the better: Europe and the US cannot afford a divorce.

The world too has changed

In today's world, it is not only threats that acquire a planetary dimension.

The information and communications revolution has brought the furthest-removed parts of the world into contact with each other, as well as stimulating political awareness in far-distant regions.

This revolution has also increased our interdependence. No single country can provide answers on its own to the challenges of our day: terrorism, the human management of mass immigration, underdevelopment, the preservation of the environment, etc.

Iraq has shown us that the international system lies at the heart of all irreversible change - but what kind of change?

Objectively, and in response to some of the questions above, we have to say that the world is no better a place than it was before the Iraq war. Indeed, it is a more dangerous place.

However, it would be even more so if we were not now seeking the bases for the reinvention of the West - a task which requires joint action on both sides of the Atlantic.

Our relations are, besides, characterised by a substantial economic and environmental agenda. The proof of this lies in the billions of dollars' worth of trade between the two sides that goes on every day. Also crucial here is the Kyoto impetus, now that Russia has given the green light.

Interdependence obliges us to walk side by side and move beyond the tension generated by certain pejorative labels. We have to reflect seriously on the fact that the world's major democracies have denigrated each other.

If we are to embark on a joint process of reinvention, we must first remember Churchill's observation that even the strongest nation needs allies, something which is true even if those allies have their own opinion.

Together we can define our values, our interests and our means of action, and bring them together within a geopolitical vision. All in all, we need to ask: what should we avoid doing to each other? what have we to learn from each other? what should we do together?

As a matter of vital priority, we must get rid of the '*old Europe / new Europe*' dichotomy, or the notion that the only valid criterion for judging modernity is one's degree of friendship with Washington.

I believe that the new Europe belongs to us all: it is the Europe of the 25. The old Europe is in the Balkans, in Ukraine and Belarus.

Only imagination is more important than knowledge (Einstein)

The world has entered on an epoch of geopolitical transformation which is no longer that of US domination. Nor is it one of European or Asian domination. We need to recall that changes in the international system have always been perceived as threatening.

Change is on the way, but we need a strategy for managing it peacefully and democratically. The key points for such a strategy are as follows:

- in the US, whatever the internal quarrels there is only one power, be it named the White House or the Congress. In Europe, the Iraq war has brought to the fore the great paradox of our external policy: there is an internal division, even as we create ever-improved mechanisms and procedures for acting 'with one voice' - and as provided for in the future Constitution.
- the international agenda has to include among its priorities the notion of legitimate, peaceful and democratic intervention, and the best framework for this is the UN. The Europeans can display their universal and egalitarian model of international relations. We must also give a clear 'no' to preventive war and to the idea of installing 'democracies with missiles'.

Without an effective UN there can be no solutions, whether in Iraq, in North Korea or in any other region. The legitimacy of the UN remains as vital as ever.

However, rather than use the organisation's limits as a pretext for unilateral action or a means for blocking the US veto, Americans and Europeans - and others too - need to consider how best to reform an institution which is having to face a divide between the three concepts which should be fundamental to organisations based on legal norms, namely: validity, justice and effectiveness.

An injection of (not a lesson in) morality and ethics

In this debate we need to be realistic.

In 2004, the US will spend USD 400 bn on defence - twice the total expenditure of the 25, or five times that of the UK and France combined. Some of these funds will, it is true, go on ensuring that Europe too is defended and on maintaining a non-isolationist policy. Even so, what minister of defence would go before his parliament today to ask for an increase in military spending?

The debate needs to be moved forward to the point where we can answer the question: 'what do we get from the money we spend?'

It is said that military spending tends to follow in the wake of political and economic spending, but that is now changing. Some EU Member States (France and the UK) have substantially increased their defence expenditure (some by as much as 20%). Others (e.g. Germany) are engaged in the ever-greater professionalisation of their military. The aim is not so much to challenge the US as to gain greater autonomy.

I am aware that this area has traditionally been viewed as intergovernmental. However, I cannot conceive of a meaningful future in which the institutions would define the framework of action and its legitimacy while the Member States determined the political commitment and the economic and military means.

It may be years until the US moves beyond the trauma of 11 September. It is, however, much more urgent for our Member States to make the effort to commit themselves more deeply to the Union in the areas of defence and strategic planning.

We are the world's biggest development aid donor, and the source of 60% of all humanitarian aid. This gives us a certain legitimacy in affirming our influence. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the EU has won distinction by holding the country together; in the Balkans, we have displaced the US as diplomatic arbiter.

Despite the limitations of the Lisbon strategy, we are a trading power and we have much to offer in the fields of human rights and democracy. We are therefore a point of reference, for Europe (for those countries which have not yet joined us) and for the world. In Europe, we have just undergone a process of reunification, and we are already thinking of the next enlargement and how it will bring us up to 500 m.

We all seek the same degree of protection against terrorism and organised crime. We all seek the benefits that arise from stability, prosperity, solidarity, democracy and freedom.

It is for this reason that we attract citizens from everywhere. Today, the West is both MORE and LESS than what it once was. In population terms, there are less of us. Half of humanity hails from Asia, from a world that is not monotheist. The only monotheistic faith that is advancing is Islam.

Immigration is the great challenge for the entire West; and today the keywords are assimilation and hybridation.

Migratory flows have taken on huge proportions, and, for many, foreigners - the Other - are suspect because they induce fear that we will lose our own identity.

This supposed loss of identity sows doubt and uncertainty among many of us, out of fear that those perceived as aliens, as foreigners, have come here to stay. Montesquieu speaks of this in his 'Persian Letters', replying to the question: 'how can one be Persian?'

Fear may be the factor explaining a return to primary identities. This is dangerous if identity is defined ethno-culturally, and such an attitude could prove the greatest threat to the European project.

When we speak of immigration, it is vital not to invoke fear as a defining feature of Europe's social and political project.

It is extremely dangerous to create a reactionary identity or cultural fundamentalism. Against such temptations, let us re-read Rimbaud ('Je est un autre'/I is another'), or Amin Maalouf ('Les Identités meurtrières / Murderous identities'), or listen again to Moustaki's song 'Le Métèque'.

The most important challenge for Europe today is its relationship with the Islamic world, and this involves the flashpoints of Iraq, Iran and Palestine.

There are already 10 m Muslims in Europe, and it is in our interest to show them that our frontiers are not defined by the clash of civilisations that some seem determined to provoke.

Our planetary future

Should our field of action as Europeans extend to all continents? This is an issue on which we need to think carefully.

Europeans have proved their capacities in certain regions (the Balkans and the Euro-Mediterranean arc); nor should Africa be forgotten, even if the television news and the press only rarely show positive images of that continent.

Apart from a small number of democracy countries, Africa illustrates all the defects of the international system: from 'kleptocratic' states to pandemics such as AIDS, not to mention the most despicable dictatorships.

Europe cannot ignore this continent, to which history and experience bind it. We cannot remain indifferent to Africa's sufferings: if we do, we too will have to face the consequences.

Cooperation between both sides of the Atlantic is also vital for several other regions, namely:

- we have to move beyond Iraq. The US does not need Europe to win the war against Saddam Hussein, but to win the peace. As long as conflict persists in Iraq, the risk remains of an explosion in the Arabian peninsula which could spread and bring down today's peaceful regimes in such countries as Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco.
- Iraq leads on to the Middle East, a region with which the West has close ties. The Israel-Palestine conflict continues to poison transatlantic relations, with the US supporting Israel and Europe taking the side of international legality and favouring a viable Palestinian state.

The road map still has to be complied with. No long-term solution will work for the region unless Europe and the US pursue it together. The escalating violence in the region is both a challenge and an opportunity for transatlantic relations. The region needs a massive input of imagination and political commitment if a solution is to be found for two states that both seem bent on self-destruction.

- Afghanistan: no-one has conquered this country since the days of Alexander the Great, and anyone determined to stay in there knows they will have to remain for decades. The work of the Eurocorps is laudable, as are the joint American-European reconstruction efforts. However, to quote Joschka Fischer, are Kabul and the Hindu Kush really the right places to defend Europe?
- Asia is a distant continent but a source of anxiety. The arms race continues apace; China is flexing its muscles ever more on the world stage. India and Pakistan, historic enemies, are allied to the US. Meanwhile, North Korea is developing nuclear weapons ...
- Latin America: one day, we may see Brazil, Argentina and Mexico taking control of their own destiny and that of their continent.
- The EU still has to 'stabilise' the 'grey area' between its frontiers and Russia - in other words, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine. The last-named country raises more concern in Poland than does Turkey. Ukraine has a population of 50 m, and it would be desirable for us to ask ourselves, and to ask the Ukrainians, whether they wish to be under the influence of Russia or of the EU.

Mr Rector,

The worst-case scenario would be the following: a US bent on imperialism and a 'postmodern' Europe which had abandoned all international commitment. Such a Europe would be a rich and self-regarding 'Monaco' or 'Switzerland', provincial and unimportant.

The role of a united Europe today is to help the US overcome its own internal demons and avert the risk of a strong and confident American republic turning into an introverted and arrogant empire.

If we are to prevent such a scenario, we have to define joint objectives together. Many countries sympathise with such an effort to reorient the world on a multilateral track.

This will call for leadership and political will on both sides of the Atlantic. We Europeans have to do more and better, above all in the field of security - for only then will the US take us seriously. The US has to do less, and discover the virtues of patience, tolerance, humility and prudence.

In this way we can, as NATO presupposes, be allies and friends, capable of advancing together in a twenty-first century which is proving to be rather more complex than was predicted by the pundits of the 'end of history'.

The task will be difficult for both sides, but we must work in this direction.

Thank you very much.