



FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

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**FPA Annual Dinner
May 7, 2003**

Featuring:

**Javier Solana,
Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union & High
Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy**

SECRETARY-GENERAL JAVIER SOLANA: — Thank you Mr. McDonough for those kind words of introduction. May I thank also Gonzalo de Las Heras, Noel Lateef and everyone at the Foreign Policy Association for giving me this opportunity to speak to you.

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be your guest this evening. I share the great esteem in which this Association is held. Your record in the field of public education on world affairs is without rival. And it is a pleasure to be among so many good friends, not least Colin Powell.

I was intrigued to read in the recently published history of the FPA by Don Dennis, that this Association first came into being in 1918 as the "Committee on Nothing at All". In Brussels we still have committees on nothing at all. If at least some of them one day become as useful and relevant as the FPA I will be very pleased.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there have been many recent theories about the global order. Theories are fascinating. But they are just theories. Sometimes they fail to capture the complexity of the real world. Often they ignore the intensity of feeling of those directly involved. If you are an Israeli or a Palestinian, if you are from Bosnia or Kashmir, then foreign policy is not a matter of theory. It is a matter of life and death.

Handling those problems is an immense responsibility. It requires dedication and persistence. It requires firmness but also humanity. These are all qualities I see in Colin Powell. They are the same qualities needed to make a partnership work.

Colin Powell and I have a pretty good partnership. Not because we agree on everything. We don't. But when we disagree we talk and listen to the other's views. When we have to disagree, we do so in a way that preserves our areas of agreement and our friendship. We use the phone a lot, but never the megaphone. The bottom line is our mutual commitment to the transatlantic partnership.

That partnership has been under strain recently. Colin, you have said, "untidy truth is better than smooth lies". I agree. Where the differences between us are genuine, we should acknowledge them. But where the differences are false or exaggerated, we should say so.

The history of the United States is a history of construction: that of the European Union a history of reconstruction. Construction of your "city on the hill" was an enterprise of optimism and vision. The architects of the United States looked to the future.

The vision of the European Union has been reconstructed on the ashes of the past. And history still weighs heavily. For five centuries Europe was the centre of the world. Europeans covered that world with empires, ideas and inventions. Europeans spread laws and markets. But in the last century, Europeans also spread two global conflicts, two ideologies of tyranny. Wary of ideology, the post-war European project has been a thoroughly pragmatic venture. Almost every decision of any importance has been the result of negotiation and compromise.

Consider too the contrasts of geography. You have distance: we have proximity. You have few neighbours: we have many. You are set between two shining seas: we share one of those seas, but are bound also by vast continents. We are and will remain many countries: you are one.

Recent differences of perception have emerged. For Europeans, the removal of the Soviet threat brought a new sense of security. As our borders became secure we cashed in our peace dividend. By contrast, 9/11 has shattered your century-old feeling of security through geography. We must work to close those gaps of perception.

Recognizing differences is one thing; exaggerating them or distorting them is quite another. So let us avoid false labels. It is as false to label Americans as inveterate unilateralists as it is to label Europeans as soft-headed pacifists.

While many Europeans opposed the recent military action in Iraq, they overwhelmingly supported military action in the first Gulf War, in Kosovo and in Afghanistan. There are more European than American troops in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. It may be that those European troops in Afghanistan soon become part of a Nato deployment.

Europeans may insist that force is used within the framework of law, but they also understand that sometimes force must be used to uphold law. So we want to add some muscle to our civil power. Europe's leaders are committed to improving our military capabilities, making them more deployable and ensuring inter-operability

with the United States.

We must not confuse differences in method with differences in aim. I want to be absolutely clear on this point. The European Union may have been divided about the means of Iraqi disarmament, but no one contested the objective of disarmament. And Europeans had no doubt that Iraq under Saddam was a brutal and murderous regime. The European Union has never been divided in its solidarity with the American people after 9/11 and in its determination to fight terrorism together with the United States.

The European attachment to a multilateral approach in those issues is a matter of empirical conviction, not of malign strategy. Our experience tells us that sovereignty shared is sovereignty magnified. To misquote Sir Winston Churchill, multilateralism is the worst form of international government - except all the others that have been tried.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the disappearance of our "best enemy", the Soviet Union, the transatlantic partnership must be one of choice. Today, we work together through conviction more than through geo-political necessity. It is a partnership to which each side must bring capabilities that need not be identical, but must be useful. It is a partnership of democracies, for democracy.

We are no longer a partnership against something, but a partnership for something. Our common mission is to defend and expand the boundaries of a stable, durable and peaceful liberal democracy; to share with others the rights and opportunities that we enjoy.

In democracies we cannot afford to ignore our public opinions. In partnerships we cannot afford to ignore our partners. Different voices must be heard and respected, not ostracized or punished.

There is no better example of shared success in our common endeavour than the imminent enlargement of the European Union. Today, around the meeting rooms in Brussels sit 25 states, eight of them part of what we used to call the "Soviet bloc". The consolidation of law, democracy and markets in these countries represents more than regime change: it is system change.

Enlargement of the European Union will bring us new vitality, new capacities, and new unity. The enlarged European Union will therefore be an even more valuable partner.

- A partner that shares with the United States the basic values of freedom and democracy.
- A partner with a population almost twice that of the United States and four times that of Japan.
- A partner with an economy roughly equivalent in size to that of the United States, and with a new and strong currency.

- A partner with important historical, political and economic ties with every region in the world.
- And finally a partner with the legitimacy that comes through the collective action of a union of 25 sovereign states.

Many of the things that the United States wants from Europe can be better delivered through the European Union. Some of them can only be delivered by the European Union, as in the areas of trade, and increasingly justice and home affairs.

The European Union is more than the sum of its parts. Therefore, I am concerned when I hear, for the first time, influential voices asking whether the United States would be better served by disaggregating Europe. Such an approach would not only contradict generations of American wisdom, it would also be profoundly misguided. I am however, comforted that the voice with the greatest authority in the United States does not share these views. For it was President Bush who said in Berlin "When Europe grows in unity, Europe and America grow in security."

Ladies and gentlemen, the United States and the European Union must commit themselves to a number of vital issues in the coming months and years. Let me mention the most important of those.

First, the fight against terrorism. After 9/11, we massively stepped up our cooperation in that area. But the fight is far from over. We need even more police cooperation, more intelligence sharing, more efforts on what I would call global homeland security.

The same can be said about the fight against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We must have a shared analysis of threats and shared strategies to counter these threats. This means a serious examination of what has worked and what has not worked in the international regimes on non-proliferation. It also means working together on vital issues such as export controls.

Concerning Iraq, it is now our common interest after the war to work together pragmatically and with the United Nations to consolidate peace and democracy in that country.

Peace in the Middle East has been on our agenda for a long time. The publication of the Quartet's roadmap offers a real opportunity to at last get the process moving again. We cannot afford to miss that opportunity. We may not get a second chance. The European Union stands ready to work with its partners in the Quartet and all other parties concerned to bring about a just and lasting peace.

Finally, we must attack, through aid and trade, the disease and poverty that blight many parts of the developing world. As the two richest regions in the world, we have a particular responsibility here. Growing inequalities and persistent poverty are morally unacceptable and politically dangerous. We must try to find common ground on the Doha Development Round before the Cancun meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Each crisis is an opportunity to learn and to move forward. As President Bush said in his speech to the Bundestag last year, “the magnitude of our shared responsibilities makes our disagreements look small”. We have a job to do. Let us do it as partners of choice. That is my ambition. That is my commitment.

Thank you.

[End Transcript]