

**ADDRESS BY MICHELE ALLIOT-MARIE,  
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“Renewing the Transatlantic Security Partnership”  
CSIS, Friday, January 16, 2004**

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

I'm very pleased to be here at the CSIS today.

As you know, I enjoy my visits to the U.S. and I am honored to be with such a brilliant gathering of experts on international and strategic questions.

After my meetings in Washington, I shall be leaving tomorrow for New York to discuss several current dossiers with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

I wanted to be with you this morning to talk about the transatlantic partnership.

### **1. The state of the transatlantic relationship**

Let's be frank: 2003 was a difficult year for everyone, for the Franco-American relationship and for transatlantic relations in the broader sense.

Iraq of course is the main source of these difficulties. I'm not going to go back over the circumstances surrounding the war in Iraq; the important thing is to look to the future.

The stabilization of Iraq is in everyone's interest: the Iraqis' of course, the Mideast's obviously, but it's also in the interest of relations between the West and the Muslim world. We all want Iraq to be sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous.

But quite aside from the problems over Iraq, many observers on both sides of the Atlantic are worried about what they call the “continental drift” and the weakening of the transatlantic link.

### **A – Is there a transatlantic divergence?**

In support of that thesis, divergences between the U.S. and Europe are usually cited over things like:

- the willingness to rely on the use of force and the resources allocated to the armed forces (Cf. Robert Kagan's thesis);
- international crisis-management and the role of the United Nations;
- relations with the Arab-Muslim world;
- the more, or less, liberal management of the economy;
- and certain fundamental social factors such as the place of religion in society, the death penalty, public responsibility in social protection, etc.

To sum up, some intellectuals in France say we have to get used to the idea of the U.S.—having a younger and increasingly non-European population—going its own way and moving away from the transatlantic approach to world affairs.

Certain differences and substantive changes are undeniable:

- the more-marked aging population of Europe. This influences the need to preserve to the maximum the comfort of its peoples through a generous social protection system;
- different historical and geographic experiences. These may lead the Europeans to search instinctively for dialogue and compromise;
- a different sensibility vis-à-vis the Arab-Muslim world, whereas the Americans are intent on resolutely facing the new challenges to security, especially after 9/11 which ended any illusion of a country being immune to external risks.

So differences do exist.

I think, nevertheless, that they are being exacerbated today by certain radical neo-conservative ideas, the very antithesis of European sensibilities.

Is this situation going to last? What lessons are to be learned from the problem of Iraq, and also from the management of other current international conflicts? It is probably too soon to say.

For my own part, I am convinced that these differences are exaggerated, and that in the world today what brings us together is far more important than what divides us.

## **B. France and the transatlantic link: myths or realities?**

From this point of view, it is something of a paradox that France should sometimes be stigmatized in Washington as a strategic adversary of the United States. To listen in some quarters, France is supposed to be trying to develop a counterweight to the United States, especially through European integration. Nothing strikes me as being further from reality than this summary vision of Franco-American relations.

Let us consider objective facts, indisputable social, economic and strategic realities:

- a) France, like the U.S., is a country rich in its ethnic and religious diversity. We share for the most part the same values and an identical wish to see democracy and human rights promoted through the world;
- b) Our economies are increasingly interdependent. France, after the UK, is the second-largest direct investor in the United States, and a fact often forgotten is that French companies employ more than 650,000 Americans in the United States. France is also one of America's foremost partners in high-technology sectors, in space for example;

c) Above all, France is America's oldest ally. So many of our soldiers have died side by side, and in a few months we will be commemorating together the 60th anniversary of the Normandy landings.

France is still today a major partner of the United States on security issues, within NATO and outside. To shoulder its responsibilities, France has made a major effort to modernize its armed forces, which is reflected in the defense budget.

Our two countries cooperate every day in addressing the major challenges of our time:

- against terrorism of course: the tragic events of 9/11 showed what a huge challenge it represents;
- against the spread of weapons of mass destruction, which is continuing, and
- in dealing with regional conflicts.

To cite just a few examples in a very long list of joint actions:

- France and the U.S. are cooperating in Afghanistan where together we are training the Afghan army and where our special forces are hunting down al-Qaeda terrorists in southern Afghanistan alongside American forces;
- the joint operations of our Navies in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and Caribbean against terrorism and all forms of trafficking;
- anti-terrorist cooperation, confidential by definition, between our intelligence services and judicial and police institutions;
- our joint action in the framework of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) which is aimed at intercepting smuggled cargoes of weapons of mass destruction.

I could also mention our joint action in the Balkans and Africa.

So there's nothing driving France and the U.S. to separate paths at this time—rather to the contrary as we face the same international challenges: the continuation of hard-core regional conflicts; globalized terrorism; the continuing risk of the spread of WMDs; threats to the environment; pandemics; poverty; uncontrolled migrations; the growing number of bankrupt states, and so on.

### **C In the interests of efficiency, we have to work together on clear-cut bases**

The real question in my view is the following: Hasn't the time come for all people who share the same fundamental values to sit down and discuss how to deal together with all these problems?

But before this can happen, matters between us have to be clear, and we shouldn't be reticent about expressing a few home truths:

a) Yes, we want our democratic model to become the norm in the world. But we know that democracy can't be decreed and for the graft to take, it has to take into account the historical and socio-cultural realities of countries where it is being implanted. So let's discuss together how best to promote it!

b) Yes, terrorism is a great threat to world stability and development. The fight against its perpetrators is a national and international priority. France suffered from terrorism far earlier than others did, so it has gained some real expertise here. The cooperation between our intelligence services clearly reflects our common concern. But anti-terrorism efforts will succeed only if we also address the causes of terrorism, namely the sense of frustration in the face of injustice and poverty. The humiliation is exploited by fanatics. So let us work together to eradicate blind violence, but also its roots!

c) Yes, the United States is the world's foremost power, and we are pleased it is a friend and ally. France definitely does not seek systematically to counter the US in the world or to diminish its influence.

We simply want to promote our vision of things as we respect that of others. So let us discuss how to make the most of today's globalized world while preserving the earth's diversity which is an asset for all.

d) No, France is neither anti-Israeli nor anti-Semitic. It was one of the first countries to recognize Israel and cooperates closely with that country.

Admittedly there have been hateful anti-Semitic acts in France. The president is absolutely determined on this issue, and the government is being very vigilant.

e) However, we should be listening more to the Arab-Muslim world: the sense of injustice and humiliation is really very widespread. It is being used by terrorist networks.

So it's up to us to show consideration for its civilization which is very old; understanding for its problems which are very real; determination to resolve collectively the Israel-Arab conflict; and resolve to help the Arab world enter modernity.

We must help moderate Muslims counter the rise in a radical Islam which has come about through the bankruptcy of many states and the exploitation that's been made of this by power-hungry fanatics.

That is our common responsibility to meet together, but each with our own cards as this is a complex and sensitive problem;

f) Yes, the Atlantic Alliance is important for us. It is our collective guarantee in a world full of uncertainties. We must continue to adapt it so that it remains an effective instrument in the service of our common security.

The accelerated development of Defense Europe will strengthen the Alliance because it shows that the Europeans are determined to shoulder more of the responsibility.

g) Yes, the UN is our common home. It is not just an organization like any other. It is the international norm of reference.

It is also the place for dialogue and collective action. So it is up to us to make it work better by adapting its composition and missions to the new international realities.

h) Yes, the world is becoming multipolar. The word should not be considered politically incorrect or hostile to the United States. Who can fail to see the emergence of China, India and Brazil? Who can ignore European integration or the place of Russia?

These poles of influence are not necessarily antagonistic. The multipolar world must be one of partnerships. And we must make sure that the privileged link between the European and American poles of influences is maintained. Let's say quite simply that the sole alternative to the multipolar would be chaos.

## **II FOR A STRONG, RENEWED TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP**

When you consider the enormity of the task ahead to manage our planet more rationally and more justly, the energies of us all will not be too much. Each part of the world, every country must contribute.

More than others, the United States and Europe which gave birth to democracy and human rights and which are the most advanced technologically, have a special responsibility. Transatlantic cooperation is necessary for world equilibrium.

Faced with the difficulties the US is encountering in certain parts of the world, it needs the support of its European allies. On its side, Europe has no interest in seeing the US lose credibility in the Middle East and then adopt a more isolationist policy. American withdrawal from the international scene could be very detrimental to Europe as has been the case in the past.

In a more global perspective, the world needs a Western alliance. A power like China, India or Brazil is not going to invest in Africa or try to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. So let us reinvent the transatlantic link, so as to give direction to the current reorganization of our global world.

To renew the transatlantic relationship, we have to put behind us the divisions that were expressed in 2003. There needs to be a clean state and a fresh start from two shared ambitions:

### **A A common vision, complementary approaches?**

Europeans and Americans have shared responsibilities in the building of a peaceful world. The objective is to bring about conditions so that the majority of the world's people have access to the benefits of modernity and stability.

We French intend to project our action in a European perspective. The Europeans contribute the example of rapprochement between nations around ambitious objectives. They propose in particular a method—reconciling peoples divided by history and the sharing of sovereignty in new institutions. They also have extensive experience of the difficulties of the process of modernization and cultural specificities, especially in the Arab-Muslim world.

The United States, for its part, demonstrates a remarkable vitality every day and a capacity to reinvent the world of tomorrow in many areas. It is capable of enormous generosity. Its military capabilities and willingness to commit to overcoming threats are a major asset when part of a collective démarche.

So relations between the US and Europe are going to remain central for both partners and constitute a pivot in international relations.

## **B Compatible methods of action that require better coordination**

The difficulties we sometimes encounter most often arise from our strategic choices. It is therefore in this domain that we must make the greatest effort to work together, while remaining true to ourselves.

a) Our actions must generate the broadest possible consensus in the international community and in public opinion. For this they must be based on international law, and it is in our interest to involve the UN as much as possible. The G8 is also a useful forum for bringing about a new mode of international government built on shared responsibilities.

b) NATO is the political instrument of the transatlantic relationship and not just a reserve of support forces for coalitions created according to missions.

As President Chirac said at the Prague Summit, France is ready to assume its full part.

It is already the second-largest contributor to NATO's Rapid Reaction Force; it also makes a strong contribution to stabilizing operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Finally it is fully supporting NATO's internal transformation process aimed at making that body an even more effective tool in the service of our common security.

c) At the same time, we also want to continue building Defense Europe in the greater context of European integration.

In our view, such a project isn't opposed to NATO, quite the contrary.

More than an illusory counterweight, we want to make the EU a stronger, more reliable partner for the United States, to the greater benefit of our common security.

Our efforts toward establishing a European defense entity are aimed at acquiring the capabilities that will enable us to face increasingly diverse and complex situations, capabilities that offer us more options when confronted with crises.

The benefits of a more active Europe were clear during the past year, with the first autonomous EU operation in Bunia, in the Congo. Launched last April, that operation, Operation Artemis, made it possible to effectively respond within an extremely short time to the risk of a major disaster in that region of Africa.

## **Conclusion: Building together a new positive mindset**

After a difficult period, all of us—French, Europeans, Americans—must resume listening to one another in a spirit of serene and trustful friendship. Overwhelming tasks await us at world level in development, health and the environment. We will have all the more chance of succeeding if we work together in a complementary way, in mutual respect.

Recent progress on non-proliferation with Iran and Libya shows that a plurality of approaches can bear fruit in the complex world we live in. A certain flexibility in the roles devolving to each of us will let us combine for the best the means at our disposal. There can be room for differences without their indicating disloyalty or a desire to undermine the other.

We must maintain a trusting, permanent dialogue in order to anticipate crises together and the means to master them; we can never have too many channels of communication. We need to develop and maintain a close working relationship through frequent exchanges.

The coming year will be as full of unexpected events and opportunities as the year that has just ended. So let us learn the lessons of the past and turn resolutely to the future. France wants this. It still believes in our old alliance.

Our hand is proffered. I am convinced that you will take it!

Thank you.