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NOTE BIO AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
cc. aux Membres du Service du Porte-Parole

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Transatlantic Relations

Publication of a Report by the Commission's Forward Studies Unit, the Brookings Institution (Washington DC) and the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Ebenhausen)

The SPP made clear that this document is intended as a useful academic background paper for decision-makers as they contemplate crucial decisions in the run-up to the Transatlantic Summit in Madrid, and beyond. It does not necessarily represent the views of the Commission, nor the US Administration nor any other government. It in fact covers a broader timeframe than the Madrid Summit, analysing the current state of relations, and looking at possible avenues that the relationship might take.

Christophe Bail, of the Forward Studies Unit, presented this document to the press and made the following marks, roughly paraphrased:

The report focuses on two conflicting forces in the EU and the US: the fragmentation of political structures and the globalisation of societies. The former is leading to an increased concentration on domestic issues while the latter could lead to a more outward-looking transatlantic relationship with a greater emphasis on the involvement of civil society. Several worldwide challenges weigh upon both sides - population growth, unseen security risks, international crime, pollution etc - which call for a multilateral response spearheaded by transatlantic leadership.

The relationship could take one of three turns:

- 1: Drift, and subsequent decline
- 2: US primacy, leading to a lop-sided relationship
- 3: Partnership, in which both sides work closely with equal strength and influence.

Decision-makers are likely to choose from among the following avenues in their attempts to avoid steer the relationship and avoid drift:

Continued fine-tuning, within existing policy instruments. This will avoid major drift, but will be found wanting in the longer term.

Renewing the transatlantic security alliance. This will be tempting, although some argue that the preconditions for such a renewal are not yet in place, and in many cases the new security threats will take outside NATO and WEU territory.



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FROM : SERVICE PORTE-PAROLE
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SUBJECT : Transatlantic relations - P. Guilford
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Economic integration. This would have to make sure it remained compatible with the WTO. A TAFTA may be both too narrow in scope and yet too ambitious in timing. A transatlantic economic space would perhaps be more realistic.

Coordinating approaches to global and regional challenges. This is the least developed part of the relationship, and would need to overcome stiff domestic resistance, but it deserves a lot of attention from policy-makers.

A comprehensive partnership agreement. This would cover the full range of issues, and would need an overarching structure, although probably not a new treaty, to implement it. It would depend on a successful outcome to the IGC and to the development of a proper European defence identity, and would mean joint EU-US leadership in the solving of global issues. While it may be desirable, it will not be clear whether either side is ready for such a relationship until after the IGC and the US elections.

Best regards,
N. G. van der Pas