# The US Shift Towards 'Smart Power' and its Impact on the Transatlantic Security Partnership
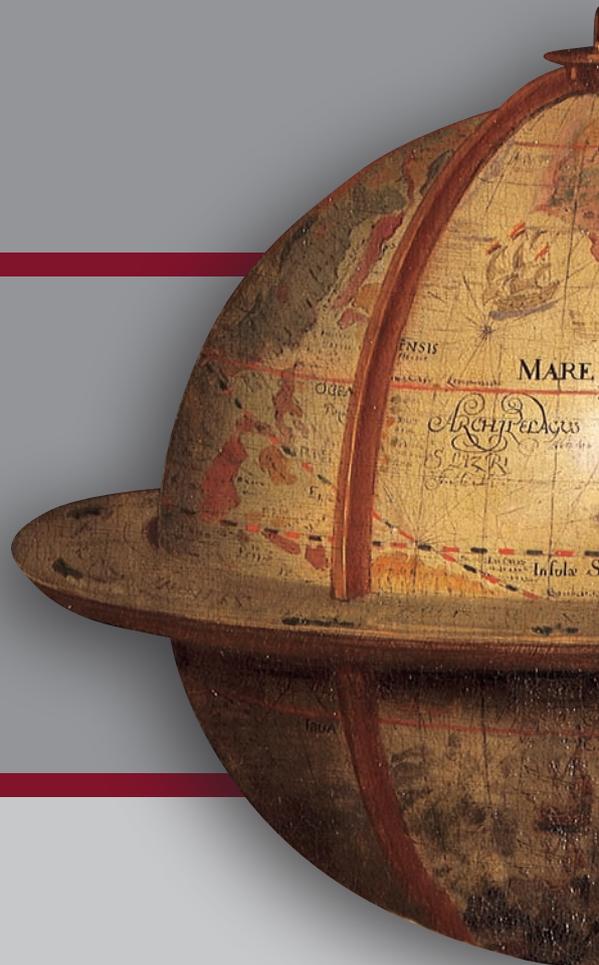
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# The US Shift towards 'Smart Power' and its Impact on the Transatlantic Security Partnership

## Sophie Lecoutre

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## About the Author

Sophie Lecoutre holds a Master's degree in European Studies (2008) from the Institute of Political Science of Lille, France, which included an exchange year at the University of Virginia's College of Arts and Sciences, United States (2007). In 2009, she completed the MA in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (Marcus Aurelius promotion) at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. She is currently carrying out an internship at the French Permanent Representation to NATO in Brussels. This paper is a shortened and updated version of her Master's thesis submitted at the College of Europe.

## Abstract[1]

Beyond the opposition 'EU – civilian and soft power' versus 'US – military and hard power', it is time to consider significant changes in foreign policy on both sides of the Atlantic. On the one hand, the EU is trying to develop its military capabilities; on the other hand, the US is aspiring to modernize and rebuild its civilian capabilities. This paper focuses on the recent developments which have occurred in the United States as well as on the impact of these changes on the transatlantic security partnership. It asks to what extent the US turn towards 'smart power' constitutes a significant shift in US security strategy likely to have an impact on the transatlantic security partnership. Since the election of Barack Obama, the debate on US instruments of power and influence has become particularly relevant. In fact, a new foreign policy doctrine based on the concept of 'smart power' is emerging in Washington, D.C. This doctrine relies on the idea that the combination of 'hard power' and 'soft power' will allow the United States to build an appropriate framework to tackle today's unconventional threats. The new US President intends to strike a balance between the three 'Ds': defense, diplomacy and development, by rebuilding the civilian diplomatic and development capacities. The emergence of American 'smart power' represents a significant shift in US national security strategy, and although it is too early to judge the extent to which the new US administration is willing to embrace this concept in practice, a new impetus is given to the transatlantic security partnership.

## 1. Beyond 'Mars and Venus': Why Do We Have to Reconsider the Opposition 'EU – Soft Power' versus 'US – Hard Power'?

Beyond the well-known opposition 'EU – civilian and soft power' versus 'US – military and hard power', it is now time to consider significant changes in foreign policy on both sides of the Atlantic. On the one hand, the European Union is engaged in a process to develop its military capabilities ('hard power' tools). This process takes time, but the EU has already launched several capability initiatives; the adoption of the 'Declaration on Strengthening Capabilities' in December 2008 attests to the EU's will to remedy its military capability shortfalls.[2] On the other hand, the United States is aspiring to modernize its civilian capabilities and to develop its 'soft power' tools. Drawing lessons from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – in which military victory seems impossible – the US has begun to realize the limits of military power. In fact, the growth of US defense budgets contrasts with the civilian capability shortfall and the lack of support for diplomacy and development. But since the second mandate of the Bush administration, the United States has been reconsidering the necessity for rebuilding non-military instruments of US national power.

These recent developments on both sides of the Atlantic seem to render Robert Kagan's approach obsolete: we cannot assert today that "Europe is turning away from power",[3] whereas the US is "exercising power in an anarchic Hobbesian world".[4] We cannot continue to oppose consistently the US and the EU as if they operate on two different planets with radically different understandings of the instruments of power. I will focus here on the recent developments which have occurred in the United States and their potential impact on the transatlantic relationship.

Since the election of the new US President, the debate on US instruments of power and influence has become particularly relevant. A new foreign policy doctrine based on the concept of 'smart power' is emerging in Washington, D.C. This doctrine relies on the idea that the combination of 'hard power' and 'soft power' will allow the US to build an appropriate framework to tackle today's unconventional threats. 'Smart power' seems to be the keystone of the new US foreign policy, a concept

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[2] Council of the European Union, *Declaration on Strengthening Capabilities*, Brussels, 11 December 2008.
[3] R. Kagan, *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, London, Atlantic Books, 2004, p. 4.
[4] Ibid.

that can be explained as follows:[5]

*Thesis:* 'hard power': "power to coerce" through military, economic and financial power.[6]

*Antithesis:* 'smart power': "power to attract", "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments"[7] (based on the policies, culture and political ideals of one country). Examples of 'soft power' tools are diplomacy, development and communication (public diplomacy).

*Synthesis:* 'smart power': neither 'hard', nor 'soft power', but "the skillful combination of both".[8] According to the CSIS Commission on Smart Power, "smart power means developing an integrated strategy, resource base, and tool kit to achieve American objectives, drawing on both hard and soft power".[9]

Though the United States has tended to over-rely on 'hard power' over the last few years, today there is a will to "restore the full spectrum of US national power"[10] by rebuilding 'soft power' tools. The new US President intends to strike a balance between the three 'Ds' – defense, diplomacy and development – by rebuilding US civilian diplomatic and development capacities. Such a shift in US foreign policy could constitute one of the most significant changes in US national security strategy in decades. It will also mean that Joseph Nye is likely to replace Robert Kagan as the main theorist of US foreign policy.[11] Six years ago, Joseph Nye concluded his book on *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics* by asserting: "America's success will depend upon our developing a deeper understanding of the role of soft power and developing a better balance of hard and soft power in our foreign policy. That will be smart power. We have done it before, we can do it again".[12] This paper aims to analyze the new focus of the US administration on the integration of US instruments of power and influence: to what extent does the US turn towards 'smart power' constitute a significant shift in US security strategy likely to have an impact on the transatlantic security partnership?

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[5] H. Hertzberg, "Smart Power", *The New Yorker*, 26 January 2009, http://www.newyorker.com/ talk/2009/01/26/090126ta_talk_hertzberg, retrieved 11 February 2009.

[6] J.S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, Public Affairs, 2004, p. 5.

[7] Ibid., p. X.

[8] R.L. Armitage & J.S. Nye, "CSIS Commission on Smart Power – A Smarter, More Secure America", *CSIS – Bipartisan Commission on Smart Power*, 2007, p. 7, http://media.csis.org/ smartpower/071105_CSIS_Smart_Power_Report.pdf, retrieved 5 February 2009.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 4.

[11] M. Kabalan, "Obama May Use Soft Power", *Gulf News*, 22 January 2009, http://www.gulfnews.com/opinion/columns/world/10277824.html, retrieved 26 January 2009.

The analysis is mainly based on official speeches from members of the previous and current US administrations, reports published by American and European think tanks, institutes and research centers, interviews with officials from the European Commission, the Council of the EU, the French Ministry of Defense and US-CREST as well as conferences attended at the US Mission to the EU and at the European Commission. First, I will focus on the efforts made by the Bush administration to modernize non-military instruments of national power and determine why invest-ments in 'soft power' tools have been limited. Then, I will analyze the Obama administration's projects, which aim to rebuild civilian diplomatic and development capacities and identify the conditions under which the administration can successfully implement a 'smart power' strategy. Finally, I will outline the impact of this change in US foreign policy on the transatlantic security partnership.

## 2. Bush's Failure to Incorporate 'Soft Power' in US National Strategy

### 2.1. Reliance on 'Hard Power': Bush's First Term Based on a Unilateralist Militaristic Foreign Policy

#### 2.1.1. *"There are more musicians in the military bands than there are US diplomats"*[13]

There is no denying that Robert Kagan exerted significant influence over the White House during Bush jr's first term, advocating the use of 'hard power' to achieve US foreign policy goals. There was a tendency to assimilate 'soft power' to popularity, and the Bush team considered that US foreign policy should not be guided by such an ephemeral element.[14] Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld even declared that he did not understand the concept of 'soft power' in itself.[15] The influence of realist thinking on US foreign policy was expressed by military activism and unilateralism. The Bush administration was convinced that 'hard power', the most direct and visible source of American power, could allow the US to achieve its foreign policy objectives.

As a result, there has been a significant contrast between the growth of the US defense budget and the lack of support for development and diplomacy. Military spending totals nearly $500 billion annually – excluding Iraq and Afghanistan –,

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[12] J.S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics,* op.cit., p. 147.

[13] J.A. Holmes, "Where Are the Civilians? How to Rebuild the US Foreign Service", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 88, no. 1, January – February 2009, p. 150.

[14] J.S. Nye, "The Decline of America's Soft Power", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 3, May – June 2004, p. 16.

[15] Ibid.

whereas the State Department's budget totals $36 billion.[16] The Pentagon is unquestionably the best resourced and best trained arm of the US government. It can even be argued that the Pentagon spends more on health care for military personnel than the government allocates to foreign assistance and diplomacy.[17] This imbalance between US funding for defense and US funding for diplomacy and development demonstrates that US policymakers conceive of defense, diplomacy and development – the three pillars of US national security – separately.

Even though development was elevated as a third pillar of US national security in the US National Security Strategy of 2002, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has weakened year after year. There have been significant staff cuts which have led to the closing of missions in several countries. Not only USAID, but also the Department of State (DoS) has suffered from under-funding. Anthony Holmes has explained that there were 6,636 foreign service officers and 4,919 support staff in the DoS in June 2008.[18] This amounts to a ten percent increase over 25 years, but there are 24 more countries in the world and US national interests are less concentrated than in the past.[19] Holmes estimates that the DoS needs two to three times as many people as it has today.[20]

*2.1.2. Consequences of the Imbalance between Defense, Diplomacy and Development*

With the Bush administration giving priority to 'hard power' tools, the Department of Defense (DoD) became the default agency for US foreign engagement. Given that the Department of State, USAID and other civilian agencies are weakening, the DoD is acting to fill the vacuum. In that context, the Pentagon's role is expanding in stabilization and reconstruction operations, nation-building and development activities as well as humanitarian assistance. This expansion of the military outside of its core competence was enshrined in the Department of Defense's Directive 3000.05[21] which designates stability operations as 'core missions' of the US military.[22] Hence, stabilization and reconstruction missions are elevated to the same level as traditional combat missions. However, the risks associated with such a situation where

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[16] J.S. Nye, "The US Can Reclaim Smart Power", *Los Angeles Times*, 21 January 2009.
[17] Holmes, op.cit., p. 150.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., p. 151.
[20] Ibid.
[21] "Directive on Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations", 2005.
[22] N.M. Serafino, "Peacekeeping and Related Stability Operations: Issues of US Military Involvement", *Congressional Research Service*, 24 January 2007, p. 11.

the military is replacing the civilians cannot be denied.

The military is, however, not trained and ill-suited to perform civilian tasks like reconstruction and stabilization activities after a conflict. Not only are soldiers not trained to perform functions traditionally suited to DoS or USAID personnel, but military objectives can conflict with US foreign policy and development goals. There is a risk that "US foreign and development policies may become subordinated to a narrow, short-term security agenda at the expense of broader, long-term diplomatic goals and institution-building efforts".[23] Moreover, the deployment of the military to perform stabilization and reconstruction tasks can be counterproductive, as soldiers can be seen with suspicion by the local population. In such a case, the coherence of US foreign policy as well as the image of the US abroad are put in jeopardy.

The growing involvement of the Pentagon in development activities can also have unanticipated and unfortunate consequences. Between 1998 and 2005, the DoD's share of US Official Development Assistance (ODA) rose from 3,5% to 22%, whereas USAID's share decreased from 65% to less than 40% in the same period.[24] The Pentagon is rivaling USAID even though it does not have the necessary expertise and comparative advantage to deal with development activities. Moreover, Bush neglected critical elements of 'soft power' based on dialogue, communication and persuasion. As a result, the Bush administration has been the most unpopular administration in US history. According to a survey from the German Marshall Fund of the US, in 2002 64% of Europeans viewed US leadership in world affairs as "desirable", and it fell to 36% in 2004.[25] In fact, neglecting 'soft power' instruments was a huge mistake, all the more as the US is engaged in a 'war of ideas'. Only at the end of his first term, Bush realized that US military power was an inadequate basis for sustaining American power over time, and he tried to alter his strategy.

## 2.2. Modernizing and Rebuilding Non-military Instruments of National Power: A Failed Attempt of Bush's Second Term

### 2.2.1. Bush's Initiatives to Develop Civilian Instruments of National Security

During his second term, Bush tried to put more emphasis on non-military instruments

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[23] S. Patrick & K. Brown, "The Pentagon and Global Development: Making Sense of the DoD's Expanding Role", *Center for Global Development – Working Paper,* no. 131, November 2007, p. I.
[24] Patrick & Brown, op.cit., p. 4.
[25] "Transatlantic Trends 2008 Partners", *The German Marshall Fund of the United States & the Compagnia di San Paolo*, 2008, p. 6, http://www.flad.pt/documentos/ 1221060132G9cYR3ke7Be26BN1.pdf, retrieved 22 February 2009.

of national power. This shift in US strategy was mainly advocated by the new Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who explained that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had demonstrated that "military success is not sufficient to win",[26] thus justifying a "need for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security".[27] As a result, different initiatives were taken between 2004 and 2008 in order to develop non-military instruments of US power.

The centerpiece of Bush's efforts to develop civilian instruments was the creation of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) under the Secretary of State in July 2004. The goal of this office is to develop mechanisms to strengthen civilian capabilities and to improve inter-agency cooperation in planning and conducting stabilization and reconstruction activities. One of the main achievements of the S/CRS has been the creation of the Civilian Response Corps, officially launched by Condoleezza Rice in July 2008. The former Secretary of State is convinced that "stabilization and reconstruction is a mission that civilians must lead"[28] in order to allow the military to focus on its core responsibilities. This inter-agency body will be composed of three separate pools of trained civilians which can rapidly respond to stabilization and reconstruction emergencies. The Active Component (CRC-A) is a team of 'first responders' composed of diplomats and interagency federal employees (coming from the DoS, USAID and other executive branch agencies). The CRC-A was created in 2006 and will ultimately consist of 250 members.[29] Today the majority of CRC-A members is deployed in Afghanistan. The Standby Component (CRC-S), created in 2006, is composed of active and retired federal employees and will ultimately comprise 2,000 members. These volunteers are available to supplement the Active Component in case of need to respond to stabilization and reconstruction emergencies, as in Lebanon, Nepal or Darfur. Finally, the Reserve Component (CRC-R) will ultimately be composed of 2,000 volunteers from civilian life, from the private sector and from state and local governments, who will bring additional skills for stabilization and reconstruction activities.

Another key element of Bush's new approach was the emphasis on interagency cooperation and coordination, that is to say the need to integrate civilian and

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[26] R.M. Gates, "Landon Lecture – Kansas State University", Manhattan, Kansas, 26 November 2007, http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199, retrieved 12 January 2009.
[27] Ibid.
[28] US Department of State – Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, "Civilian Response – The Newsletter of S/CRS", issue no. 6, August – September 2008, p. 5, http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=499F, retrieved 21 March 2009.

military activities. The *Counterinsurgency Manual* published in 2006 highlights this change: "Although military efforts are necessary and important, they are only effective if integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power".[30] The establishment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan and in Iraq is in line with this approach, as PRTs are joint civilian-military teams.

Finally, Condoleezza Rice launched an initiative to reorganize the personnel and the practices of the DoS: 'transformational diplomacy'. With this new approach, democracy promotion and nation-building are at the core of US strategy, which is based on diplomacy as such, foreign assistance and 'soft power'.

### 2.2.2. But "building up civilian capacity is easier to advocate than to execute"[31]

Beyond the self-satisfied speeches of the Bush administration, it seems that there has been a gap between political commitments and reality, between the level of ambition and the financial resources devoted to new projects. It can be argued that "the adoption of Nye's approach by the neo-cons of the second Bush administration was mere rhetoric. Neo-cons offered not different goals but a calmer and more measured path towards the same ones".[32]

In fact, civilian instruments remained underfunded and understaffed at the end of Bush's second mandate. For example, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) did not have an adequate level of funding to meet its ambitious mandate. In January 2009, only 112 persons were working in this office,[33] and the Active Component (CRC-A) was composed of only 15 members.[34] Congress was particularly hesitant to provide the adequate funding for this program and the S/CRS 'survived' because it was mainly funded by the DoD.

In addition, it seems that the military is still replacing civilians on the ground, and it might be difficult to reverse this tendency as it has become common practice. Although the *Counterinsurgency Manual* specified that "it is better to entrust civilian

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[29] Ibid., p. 15.
[30] D.H. Petraeus & J.N. Mattis, *Counterinsurgency Manual*, Headquarters – Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 16 June 2006, p. 34, http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24fd.pdf, retrieved 3 April 2009.
[31] D.E. Sanger, "A Handpicked Team for a Sweeping Shift in Foreign Policy", *The New York Times*, 1 December 2008.
[32] Kabalan, op.cit.
[33] Nina M. Serafino, "Peacekeeping / Stabilization and Conflict Transitions: Background and Congressional Action on the Civilian Response / Reserve Corps and other Civilian Stabilization and Reconstruction Capabilities", *Congressional Research Service*, 5 February 2009, p. 14.
[34] Ibid., p. 15.

tasks to civilians",[35] it also mentioned that "if adequate civilian capacity is not available, members of the military forces must be prepared to fill the gap",[36] and "the soldier must then be prepared to become [...] a social worker, a civil engineer, a schoolteacher, a nurse, a boy scout".[37] In fact, soldiers are now used to replace civilians and if the CRC is not rapidly staffed, soldiers are likely to continue performing civilian tasks in the coming years.

Regarding interagency cooperation and coordination, it seems there is a huge gap between the objective and reality. When he was in Afghanistan in July 2008, Ambassador Herbst declared: "our office has wonderful cooperation with the military".[38] Yet interagency cooperation is limited because of institutional rivalries between the Pentagon and the DoS. On the one hand, presidential directive NSPD44 assigns the State Department the lead responsibility for the development of civilian capacities and the coordination of the interagency process. On the other hand, Directive 3000.05 designates stability operations as core missions of the US military. This ambiguity regarding task sharing between the DoD and the DoS limits the cooperation between them. For example, each of the US-led PRTs in Afghanistan includes 50 to 100 soldiers, but none of them has more than a half-dozen civilians.[39]

Lastly, it can be argued that Rice's initiative to transform US diplomacy failed. It was mainly about diplomacy to support the neo-cons agenda. The principal shortcoming was the lack of funding, as poorly trained and underfunded diplomats cannot undertake the activities she advocated. Even if we cannot deny that there was a shift in Bush's strategy between his first and his second term, results were below expectations at the end of his presidency.

## 3. Aligning 'Soft Power' with 'Hard Power': Obama's Will to Integrate US Instruments of Power and Influence

### 3.1. Emergence of a New US Foreign Policy Doctrine Based on 'Smart Power'

*3.1.1. "You can be too hard, you can be too soft, but you can't be too smart"*[40]

Since 2004, a new philosophy of action has emerged in Washington, D.C., based on

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[35] Petraeus & Mattis, op.cit., p. 41.
[36] Ibid., p. 35.
[37] Ibid., p. 41.
[38] J.E. Herbst, "Briefing on Civilian Stabilization Initiative", *Briefing by the Coordinator for the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization*, Washington, D.C., 14 February 2008, http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/nss/state/100913.pdf, retrieved 21 March 2009.
[39] K. DeYoung, "Foreign Service Jobs in Afghanistan to Grow", *The Washington Post*, 24 March 2009.

the will to find an alternative to Bush's militaristic and unilateralist foreign policy. In 2004, Suzanne Nossel wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs* trying for the first time to theorize 'smart power' and proposing to renew the doctrine of liberal internationalism.[41] On the one hand, she argued that "smart power means knowing that the United States' own hand is not always its best tool" and she tried to restore the value of multilateralism.[42] On the other hand, she explained that the US should take into account all instruments of US power: "unlike conservatives, who rely on military power as the main tool of statecraft, liberal internationalists see trade, diplomacy, foreign aid and the spread of American values as equally important".[43] Joseph Nye was the first to give a clear definition of 'smart power' which is "neither hard, nor soft, it is both".[44] He is convinced that integrating all US instruments of power and influence, military and civilian instruments, 'hard power' and 'soft power' tools, will help the US tackle tough global challenges. Suzanne Nossel and Joseph Nye can be considered the 'founding parents' of 'smart power', but we should not underestimate the role different think tanks have played since 2004 trying to provide a policy and intellectual framework for the new administration.

The emergence of a 'smart power' strategy is in line with a 'progressive realist' foreign policy. 'Progressive realism' was suggested by Robert Wright in 2006 in an article in the *New York Times* as "a realism that could attract many liberals and a progressivism that could attract some conservatives".[45] This new foreign policy paradigm can reconcile "the humanitarian aims of idealists with the powerful logic of realists".[46] Beyond the well-known opposition between realism and idealism, 'progressive realism' seems to be the appropriate foreign policy doctrine to sustain American power over time. This new doctrine implies a realist assessment of the threats and of the limits of US power and emphasizes the necessity of cooperating with other countries and within international institutions (we can also use the concept 'cooperative realism'). As Joseph Nye argued, a 'progressive realist' policy stresses "the importance of developing an integrated grand strategy that combines hard military power with soft attractive power into smart power".[47] During his speech at

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[40] Hertzberg, op.cit.

[41] S. Nossel, "Smart Power", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 2, March – April 2004, p. 6.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., p. 1.

[44] Nye, *Soft Power : the Means to Success in World Politics*, op.cit., p. XIII.

[45] R. Wright, "An American Foreign Policy that Both Realists and Idealists Should Fall in Love With", *The New York Times*, 16 July 2006.

[46] Ibid.

[47] J.S. Nye, "Progressive Realism", *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs – Harvard University*, Cambridge, 25 August 2006, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/1593/progressive_realism.html, retrieved 6 April 2009.

the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in December 2009, Obama endorsed this new thinking (progressive or cooperative realism) by asserting that he rejected the choice between an idealist and a realist approach of foreign policy.[48]

### 3.1.2. 'Smart Power' Strategy: the Keystone of Obama's Foreign Policy

'Smart power' has become the core principle of Obama's foreign policy and an analysis of Obama's speeches, as well as speeches by Joe Biden and by Hillary Clinton, demonstrates that all advocate a 'smart power' strategy. During a speech at the Woodrow Wilson Center in August 2007, Obama already claimed: "we need to integrate all aspects of American might" and "we must improve our civilian capacity".[49] He also explained that he will not hesitate to use the power of American diplomacy, as "the lesson of the Bush years is that not talking does not work".[50] During her confirmation hearing, Clinton explicitly endorsed 'smart power' as a new foreign policy strategy: "We must use what has been called 'smart power' the full range of tools at our disposal – diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal and cultural – picking the right tool or combination of tools for each situation".[51] This new approach of the Obama administration is also perceptible in Joe Biden's statements. In his speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2009, the US Vice President focused on two key elements of a 'smart power' strategy: cooperation and partnerships with other countries as well as dialogue. He asserted: "we will work in partnership whenever we can, alone only when we must".[52] Contrary to Bush's approach, Biden stressed the necessity for cooperating with nations around the world and added: "We believe that international alliances and organizations do not diminish America's power [...] So we will engage. We will listen. We will consult".[53] These statements reveal the influence of American think tanks. In fact, many people who were working in these think tanks and research centers are now working for the new administration.[54] It means that the people who elaborated the 'smart power'

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[48] B. Obama, "Obama's Nobel Remarks", Oslo, 10 December 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/world/europe/11prexy.text.html, retrieved 20 December 2009.
[49] B. Obama, "Speech at Woodrow Wilson Centre", Washington, D.C., 1 August 2007, p. 3, http://www.cfr.org/publication/13974, retrieved 8 January 2009.
[50] Ibid., p. 4.
[51] H. Clinton, "Nomination Hearings to be Secretary of State", Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., 13 January 2009, p. 12, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/01/115196.htm, retrieved 31 March 2009.
[52] J.R. Biden, "Speech at the 45th Munich Security Conference", Munich, 7 February 2009, p. 2, http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&sprache=en&id=238&, retrieved 7 April 2009.
[53] Ibid., p. 3.
[54] For example, seven members of the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) have been offered a position in Obama's national security team.

approach have now the opportunity to implement it.

Implementing a 'smart power' strategy will take time, but one year after Obama's arrival in the White House, we can already see some signs of implementation. Obama's first decisions in office aimed at marking the policy reversal after the end of Bush's terms: he issued orders to close the detention camp at Guantanamo within a year and to put an end to the CIA's use of 'enhanced interrogation' methods (in order to ban torture). According to Nathalie Nougayrède, "ce geste sur les valeurs – la fermeture de Guantanamo – ressuscite le soft power américain auprès des Européens".[55] In addition, Obama's new strategy in Afghanistan constitutes a first sign of implementation of a 'smart power' strategy. It reveals a new focus on civilian efforts: not only has Obama promised to send more troops to Afghanistan, but he has also emphasized the need for increasing the number of civilians on the ground. According to the President, agricultural specialists and educators, lawyers and engineers need to be deployed because US "efforts will fail in Afghanistan and Pakistan if we do not invest in their future".[56] However, when I asked an American diplomat working at the US Mission to the EU about his position on this civilian 'surge', he emphasized the need for security reinforcement first, as it is very difficult to deploy civilians if the environment is not secure enough.[57] In addition, the NATO Foreign Ministerial meeting on 3-4 December 2009 demonstrated that security reinforcement on the ground through additional military efforts has become a priority.

### 3.2. Rebuilding the Civilian Diplomatic and Development Capacity: a Challenge for the New Administration

*3.2.1. Elevating Diplomacy and Development: "yes, we can!"*

One of the key priorities of Obama's 'smart power' strategy is to rebuild the diplomatic and development capabilities in order to strike a new balance between the three pillars of US national security (defense, diplomacy and development). First, Obama has pledged to make diplomacy a priority: he is willing to strengthen the Department of State through long-term investments in expanding and training the diplomatic staff. In addition, Obama intends to create a new "Office of Conflict Prevention and Resolution" which will "support high-level negotiations and provide

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[55] N. Nougayrède, "Le Sommet de l'OTAN et le Retour du Lien Transatlantique", *Le Monde*, 2 April 2009.

[56] B. Obama, "Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan", Washington, D.C., 27 March 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/27/us/politics/27obama-text.html, retrieved 7 April 2009.

[57] "Conferences at the US mission to the EU", question asked to Mr. Lou Bono (Environment, Science, Technology & Energy Unit Chief), Brussels, 17 April 2009.

the expertise and capacity to seize opportunities or address crises as they arise".[58]

Moreover, Obama is willing to launch a comprehensive program of public diplomacy: he wants to open "America Houses" in Muslim countries "with Internet, libraries, English lessons, stories of America's Muslims and the strength they add to our country".[59] He also aspires to create a new "America's Voice Corps" which will be composed of trained young Americans "who can speak with – and listen to – the people who today hear about us only from our enemies".[60] Through these programs, Obama wants to reverse the perception of American arrogance and to restore the US image in the world. This new emphasis on strategic communication, particularly with the Muslim world, was made clear during Obama's interview with *Al Arabiya* one week after his arrival in the White House and during his speech in Cairo in June 2009. Pointing out the fact that he has lived in Muslim countries, Barack Obama repeated several times that his job is to "communicate to the American people that the Muslim world is filled with extraordinary people who simply want to live their lives" and to "communicate to the Muslim world that the Americans are not [their] enemy".[61]

Not only does Obama intend to invest in diplomacy, but he wants to put a strong emphasis on US foreign assistance and development. During his campaign, Obama pledged to double US aid to $50 billion by 2012. Moreover, the new US President is willing to invest adequate resources in order to restructure, to empower and to properly staff USAID as well as to reform the infrastructure that manages US foreign assistance.[62]

Beyond this will to strike a new balance between the 'three Ds', the new President is promoting an interagency approach in order to integrate civilian and military capabilities. For example, he is willing to create "Mobile Development Teams" (MDTs) which will bring together personnel from the Pentagon, the military, the DoS and USAID (to be deployed for state-building, counter-terror and post-conflict operations[63]). Moreover, Obama plans to increase the authority and the coordinating role of the National Security Council with a Deputy National Security

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[58] *Strengthening Our Common Security By Investing In Our Common Humanity* – Barack Obama and Joe Biden's Strategy to Promote Global Development and Democracy, http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/Fact_Sheet_Foreign_Policy_Democratization_and _Development_FINAL.pdf, retrieved 8 April 2009.
[59] Obama, "Speech at Woodrow Wilson Centre", op.cit., p. 5.
[60] B. Obama, "Interview with Al Arabiya", *Al Arabiya TV*, 27 January 2009, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/01/27/65096.html, retrieved 12 February 2009.
[61] Ibid.
[62] *Strengthening Our Common Security By Investing In Our Common Humanity*, op.cit.
[63] Ibid.

Advisor empowered to develop integrated strategies.[64] However, according to François Raffenne, "il sera difficile de renforcer l'autorité décisionnelle du NSC car cela irait à l'encontre de la tradition américaine de peu centralizer".[65]

### 3.2.2. Conditions for a Successful Implementation of a 'Smart Power' Strategy

Several obstacles might impede the US President from implementing his projects such as a budgetary restraint, due to the current financial and economic crisis, and Congressional restraint. How is Barack Obama trying to overcome these obstacles? Is it realistic to rebuild US civilian diplomatic and development capacities in a context of deep recession?

Obama's 2010 budget request submitted to Congress on 7 May 2009 reveals that the President is willing to stick to his goals. He advocated $53,9 billion for the Department of State and other international programs,[66] of which $36,5 billion for foreign assistance (a 2% increase over the 2009 budget). It is explicitly mentioned that this budget "includes funding for the first year of a multi-year effort to significantly increase the size of the Foreign Service at both the Department of State and the USAID".[67] Obama considers that new investments in civilian capabilities will relieve the burden on US troops and save money in the long term: "it is far cheaper to train a policeman to secure their villages or to help a farmer seed a crop, than it is to send our troops".[68] At the same time Obama requested an increase of the Department of Defense's budget: $663,8 billion for 2010, including $130,0 billion to support counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and in Iraq.[69] This constitutes an increase of 4% from the 2009 budget. Obama's budget request incorporates Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' recommendations to adapt the Pentagon to unconventional wars. Gates advocated a shift in priorities: he proposed boosting the funding for intelligence and surveillance equipment and increasing the size of the

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Interview with Mr. François Raffenne (Desk Officer for North America – "Délégation aux Affaires Stratégiques" – French Ministry of Defense, Paris, 24 March 2009.

[66] Executive Office of the President of the United States – Office of Management and Budget, "US Department of State and other International Programs", 7 May 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fy2010_department_state, retrieved 10 January 2010.

[67] Executive Office of the President of the United States – Office of Management and Budget, "A New Era of Responsibility – Renewing America's Promise", 26 February 2009, p. 88, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/fy2010_new_era/a_new_era_of_responsibility2.pdf, retrieved 8 April 2009.

[68] Obama, "Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan", op.cit.

[69] P. Towell, "Defense: FY2010 Authorization and Appropriations", *Congressional Research Service*, 14 December 2009, p. 3.

Army while also cutting the funding for traditional weapons systems.[70]

Given the current economic crisis, it was a real challenge for Obama to convince Congress to support his budget proposals by increasing both the DoS' and the Pentagon's budgets. On 9 July 2009, the House approved H.R.3081 which provides $49 billion for State Department and foreign operations funding for 2010,[71] $4,9 billion less than the administration's request.[72] On the contrary, Congress authorized in October 2009 a total of $680,2 billion for the DoD's budget, $14,9 million more than Obama requested.[73] Moreover, the administration is likely to submit a supplemental funding request to Congress in February 2010 as the approved budget does not take into account Obama's announcement on 1 December 2009[74] that he intended to deploy 30,000 additional troops in Afghanistan in 2010.[75]

Even if it seems that Congress supported most of Obama's proposals, it was more reluctant to increase the DoS's budget than the Pentagon's budget. For example, the House bill did not match the administration's request concerning the Civilian Stabilization Initiative: whereas Obama requested $323 million for this initiative (a 331% increase over the 2009 budget), the House bill provides only $155 million[76] (but this still constitutes a significant progress, as Congress authorized only $75 million for this initiative in 2009). Bipartisan support in Congress is indispensable in order to implement Obama's projects. That is why the government has to develop communication strategies to convince Capitol Hill of the 'added value' of civilian capabilities, all the more as it is difficult to demonstrate the short-term impact of civilian capabilities on critical challenges (like Afghanistan).

It seems that Obama overcame most budgetary and Congressional constraints. However, strong leadership from the presidential level and political will from the different agencies are still key conditions to succeed in developing civilian capabilities and in integrating these capabilities with other tools of US power. This is all the more necessary as "some obstacles to personnel cooperation cannot be

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[70] E. Bumiller & C. Drew, "Military Budget Reflects a Shift in US Strategy", *The New York Times*, 7 April 2009.
[71] S.B. Epstein, K.H. Nakamura & M. Leonardo Lawson, "State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs: FY2010 Budget and Appropriations", *Congressional Research Service*, 2 November 2009, p. 1.
[72] On the same day (9 July), the Senate passed its bill (S. 1434) which totals $48,8 billion for State Department and Foreign Operations Funding for 2010.
[73] Towell, op.cit., p. 2.
[74] However, the approved budget reflects Obama's review of US strategy in Afghanistan as it was completed in March 2009.
[75] Towell, op.cit., p. 6.
[76] Epstein, Nakamura & Leonardo Lawson, op.cit., p. 10.

entirely overcome by legislation",[77] given the huge differences in cultures, values and perspectives between US military and civilian personnel. If Obama succeeds in implementing his new strategy, this might have a significant impact on the relations with the European Union.

## 4. A Turning Point in Transatlantic Relations: Towards a New EU-US Security Partnership?

### 4.1. Hopes for the Opening of a New Chapter in the History of Transatlantic Relations

*4.1.1. 'Obamania' in Europe: "anything but Bush is better"*

After Bush's 'demonization' over the last years, Europeans hope to repair the transatlantic rupture. A recent survey demonstrates that three in four Europeans supported Obama's handling of international affairs in 2009 (compared with just one-in-five during Bush's last year in office).[78] The decision in October 2009 to award Obama the Nobel Peace Prize symbolizes the Europeans' high expectations towards the new US President.[79]

Europeans did not approve Bush's militaristic and unilateralist foreign policy and Bush's aversion to diplomacy and multilateralism seriously undermined transatlantic cooperation. Moreover, there was a growing disparity between the instruments of international policy used on both sides of the Atlantic, and the number of contentious issues between Americans and Europeans was growing. In addition, it can be argued that "American policy-makers see no reason to listen to their European allies".[80] However, Europeans tend to forget that there had been a major shift in Bush's foreign policy from his first to his second term. In fact, Bush was more willing to talk with Europeans, and he was the first US President to visit the EU institutions in Brussels in 2005. This change of tone in Washington, D.C., has led to a strengthening EU-US cooperation on different issues. For example, a Work Plan on EU-US cooperation in crisis management and conflict prevention was signed in March 2008. In addition, after Bush's initial hostility to the development of the European

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[77] R.E. Hunter & K. Nadiri, "Integrating Instruments of Power and Influence in National Security – Starting the Dialogue", *RAND Corporation*, 2006, p. 3, http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/2007/RAND_CF231.pdf, retrieved 27 November 2008.
[78] "Transatlantic Trends 2009 Partners", *The German Marshall Fund of the United States & the Compagnia di San Paolo*, 2009, http://www.gmfus.org/trends/2009/docs/2009_English_Key.pdf, retrieved 11 January 2010, p. 4.
[79] A.D. Vasconcelos & M. Zaborowski, "The Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives", *EUISS*, Paris, November 2009, p. 41.
[80] J. Peterson & M.A. Pollack, *Europe, America, Bush - Transatlantic Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Routledge, 2003, p. 9.

Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), there was a significant change of tone, as the US Ambassador to NATO declared in February 2008: "Europe needs, the United States needs, the democratic world needs a stronger, more capable European defense capacity".[81] Another step was reached with the first American participation in an ESDP mission (EULEX-Kosovo since October 2008). Nevertheless, even if "the temperature of the disputes has been reduced by talking about them",[82] we should not overestimate the scope of EU-US cooperation on security issues. The Bush administration was still lacking European support on several key issues, and surveys showed that European confidence in US leadership constantly declined.[83] The shift in the US approach during Bush's second term was not sufficient to heal the wounds that Washington's reputation had suffered.[84]

The election of a new US President has been perceived as an opportunity to revitalize the EU-US partnership and to enlarge the transatlantic agenda. Despite the decline of Obama's approval ratings during his first year in office, the US President is still more popular in Europe (77%) than in the US (57%).[85] Obama's commitment to multilateralism and to diplomacy has been considered a positive signal in Europe. Some members of the new administration have emphasized the necessity to strengthen the EU-US partnership: "America has no better partner than Europe".[86] During the interviews I made, I asked people to what extent they could feel the change (at their level) in the US approach since Obama's arrival in the White House. Some officers from the French Ministry of Defense[87] emphasized that there have been certain points of continuity since Bush's second term. All the people I met (particularly in the European institutions) underlined the intensity of transatlantic contacts since Obama took office. But beyond European hopes, how can the US shift towards 'smart power' significantly strengthen EU-US relations?

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[81] V. Nuland, "US Ambassador to NATO's Speech in Paris", Speech of the (former) US Ambassador to NATO, Paris, 22 February 2008, http://www.a##rica.gov/st/texttransenglish/2008/February/20080222183349eaifas0.5647394.html#ixzz0CHM7vqPZ, retrieved 11 April 2009.

[82] C. Höhn, "What Bush Will Hand Over", *European Voice*, 30 October 2008, http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2008/10/what-bush-will-hand-over/62907.aspx, retrieved 30 March 2009.

[83] J.P. Rubin, "Building A New Atlantic Alliance", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 87, no. 4, July – August 2008, p. 1.

[84] Ibid.

[85] "Transatlantic Trends 2009 Partners", op.cit.

[86] B. Obama, "A World that Stands as One", Remarks at Berlin's Victory Column, Berlin, 24 July 2008, http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/berlinvideo, retrieved 26 January 2009.

[87] Interviews with Colonel Pesme and with Mr. François Raffenne (French Ministry of Defense), op.cit.

## 4.1.2. Towards a Convergence of European and American Strategic Thinking?

As the President of the European Commission argued, "the good news about the new [American] administration is that they are closer to our European model and our European values".[88] In fact, the 'smart power' approach adopted by the Obama administration seems quite close to European strategic thinking. First of all, a 'smart power' strategy implies a strong commitment to multilateralism which is a key European value emphasized in the European Security Strategy (ESS): "we need to pursue our objectives both through multilateral cooperation in international organisations and through partnerships with key actors".[89] In addition, the ESS explicitly mentions the need to integrate all instruments of power which has become the keystone of Obama's strategy: "the full spectrum of instruments for crisis management and conflict prevention […] including political, diplomatic, military and civilian, trade and development activities".[90]

Europeans have developed powerful civilian and 'soft power' instruments, but, aware that a comprehensive security strategy requires 'military power' instruments as well, they have engaged in a process to develop EU military capabilities. If they succeed, they will be able to combine both 'soft power' and 'hard power' instruments into a 'smart power' strategy. The situation on the other side of the Atlantic is reversed: Americans have realized the limits of 'hard power' and the new US President is willing to restore US 'soft power' and to integrate civilian and military instruments into a 'smart power' strategy. This means that Europeans and Americans are moving in the same direction: both intend to use a strategy based on the combination of military and civilian tools. However, whereas the Obama administration explicitly mentions its will to use 'smart power', the EU has never referred to this concept in its strategic documents. This convergence of strategic thinking between the US and the EU is likely to lead to a strengthening of EU-US cooperation. The shift in US strategy implies that US foreign policy might be closer to European values and more compatible with European interests. At the NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl in April 2009, Obama set a new tone for EU-US relations. He asserted that in the US there has been "a failure to appreciate Europe's leading role in the world"[91] as well as

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[88] Delegation of the European Commission to the USA, *EU Focus*, Washington, D.C., May 2009, p. 8, http://www.eurunion.org/News/eunewsletters/EUFocus/2009/EUFocus-HumRts-05-09.pdf, retrieved 26 March 2009.
[89] European Council, "A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy", Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 13.
[90] Ibid., p. 11.
[91] H. Cooper & A. Cowell, "Obama Sets a New Tone for Alliance with Europe", *The New York Times*, 4 April 2009.

anti-American attitudes in Europe. According to him, "these attitudes have become all too common, they are not wise".[92]

Today, Europeans and Americans have an opportunity to strengthen the transatlantic security partnership and to adapt it to new security challenges. The revitalization of a EU-US security partnership might lead to a strengthened cooperation on crisis management, conflict prevention and other security issues. However, it is too early to judge, and one of the EU officials I met asserted: "on the specific area of crisis management, I do not see so many changes, but I am not really concerned about that".[93] Such changes will take time but we can expect a strengthening of transatlantic cooperation on security issues in the coming years. Moreover, it seems that Americans are willing to learn from Europeans about the development of civilian capabilities and civilian crisis management. According to the same EU official, there are links between S/CRS and EU institutions and Americans are learning quickly from the EU's experience.[94] Such a strengthened cooperation might lead to the adoption of an updated 'New Transatlantic Agenda' (NTA), to replace the current NTA which was adopted in 1995. As Valentin Gescher from the European Commission explained, the NTA was adopted under the Spanish presidency, and as Spain presides the EU during the first semester 2010, this might facilitate the adoption of a new NTA in 2010.[95]

Moreover, as NATO is the framework for a EU-US strategic partnership, revitalizing the transatlantic partnership implies rebuilding the partnership through NATO. Tensions between the two organizations have been reduced because of US support for ESDP and France's reintegration into NATO's integrated military structure. However, the persistent Turkish-Cypriot dispute is still blocking cooperation between the two organizations. If Americans and Europeans want to facilitate the emergence of a strengthened transatlantic security partnership, they should dedicate more attention to helping resolve this contentious issue.

Americans and Europeans should develop a pragmatic approach if they want to overcome potential divisions and to give a new impetus to the transatlantic security partnership. What are the necessary conditions to renew the transatlantic security contract?

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Interview with an EU Official: Council of the EU – DGE – Brussels, 21 April 2009.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Interview with Mr. Valentin Gescher, European Commission – External Relations Directorate-General - Relations with the United States and Canada – Brussels, 26 March 2009.

**4.2. Transforming the Opportunity into Reality: Conditions for the Emergence of a New Transatlantic Security Partnership**

*4.2.1. Managing Expectations and Understanding Each Other's Needs: The Key to Creating a New Transatlantic Security Contract*

The election of Barack Obama has in Europe a messianic dimension and the level of expectations has never been so high. However, the more elevated the hopes and expectations, the bigger risk to be the disappointments. As Sandschneider argued, "expecting too much of the United States is the wrong strategy at the moment".[96] First, many of these expectations are unrealistic: Europeans should not forget that Obama will have to defend American interests first. Then, it can be argued that there will be some elements of continuity in US foreign policy and that "the most important aspect of Obama's change is not about concrete policies but about hope".[97] Europeans should manage their expectations and wait for concrete progress and change in US foreign policy. Americans also have many expectations vis-à-vis Europeans. Even if they are willing to consult Europeans more often before taking decisions, the counterpart will be that Europeans have to share the burden, too. The new tone of the Obama administration was perceptible at the NATO summit in April 2009, where Obama asserted: "We want strong allies. We are not looking to be patrons of Europe. We are looking to be partners of Europe".[98] Europeans will no longer be able to use the 'Bush excuse'; it will be much more difficult to say 'no' to the new US administration. The first issue on the transatlantic agenda which will require a clear management of expectations is the war in Afghanistan, where burden sharing has become a key issue: "as America does more, we will ask others to join us in doing their part".[99] After his announcement on 1 December 2009 to deploy 30,000 US troops in 2010, Obama expects to hear pledges of additional European troops at the London conference on Afghanistan on 28 January 2010.

Americans and Europeans will have to make efforts to understand each other's security needs and concerns in order to facilitate cooperation on security issues. There is sometimes a lack of understanding between them which creates obstacles to strengthened cooperation. For example, there is some incomprehension on the US side regarding the role of the gendarmerie in Afghanistan.[100] Moreover, both should

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[96] E. Sandschneider, "The Importance of Being Europe*", Internationale Politik – Global Edition*, vol. 10, spring 2009, p. 12.
[97] M. Zaborowski, "Obama's Change and America's Relations with the World", *ISS Opinion*, Paris, November 2008.
[98] Cooper & Cowell, op.cit.
[99] Obama, "Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan", op.cit.
[100] Interview with Mr. François Raffenne (French Ministry of Defense), op.cit.

recognize that their interests might sometimes conflict and that differences between them are likely to remain in the future (particularly because of the different strategic cultures on both sides of the Atlantic). On this issue Obama asserted: "There have been differences between America and Europe. No doubt, there will be differences in the future. But the burdens of global citizenship continue to bind us together".[101] Recognizing the fact that some differences will remain between the EU and the US will allow Americans and Europeans to avoid disillusionment in the future.

Moreover, it can be argued that "Brussels and Washington cannot afford to take each other for granted".[102] Americans should not consider European enthusiasm for their new President as complacency. And Europeans should not underestimate US demands, "assuming a commonality of interest and approach".[103] That is why strong political will is necessary on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition, a new framework for EU-US discussions could facilitate the emergence of a new transatlantic security partnership. There have been some proposals suggesting that the US President could be invited once a year to the European Council.[104] Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) called in February 2009 for the creation of a Transatlantic Political Council which would be chaired by the EU High Representative and by the US Secretary of State.[105] This body would allow "systematic high-level consultation and coordination in respect of foreign and security policy".[106] Moreover, MEPs proposed the establishment of a joint parliamentary committee in order to deepen the relationship between the European Parliament and the US Congress.[107] However, one of the key preconditions for the strengthening of transatlantic security cooperation will be the emergence of a coherent European foreign policy.

### 4.2.2. Emergence of American 'Smart Power': A Challenge for the European Union

If the European Union wants to take advantage of the current opportunity to develop a new security partnership with the US, it will have to appear as a credible and strong actor. If Europeans want to create a 'partnership of equals' with the US, they will have to act collectively and decisively. They will have to show Americans

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[101] Obama, "A World that Stands as One", op.cit.

[102] P. Adamson, "Publisher's Message", *E!Sharp*, January – February 2009.

[103] Ibid.

[104] D. Korski, U. Guérot & M. Leonard, "Re-wiring the US-EU Relationship", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, December 2008, p. 2.

[105] European Parliament, "A Closer and Deeper Strategic Partnership with the USA", *Press Release,* 25 February 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-50188-054-02-09-903-20090223IPR50187-23-02-2009-2009-false/default_en.htm, retrieved 23 April 2009.

[106] Ibid.

that it is in the American interest to communicate directly with the European Union on many security issues, instead of doing it bilaterally with member states. Therefore, it is vital that Europeans 'speak with one voice': Obama will not listen to Europe if the only thing he can hear coming from the European continent is a cacophony of voices. Europeans should have a real strategic discussion on all security issues and define a clear European position on each issue. If they succeed in presenting a unified European position on security issues, they will be taken more seriously by Americans and will increase their weight during discussions with them.

Not only will Europeans have to 'speak with one voice'; they will also have to develop a more coherent and effective ESDP, particularly through the development of military capabilities. Today, Europeans have the opportunity to strengthen cooperation with Americans on crisis management issues, but this will be only possible if the EU appears as a credible and strong actor with significant capabilities. Political will is necessary if Europeans want to remedy the EU's capability shortfall. In fact, the Lisbon Treaty innovations could give a new impetus to European defense (for example through the permanent structured cooperation). The development of European military capabilities is all the more important as Europeans want to avoid a division of labor, meaning that NATO would focus on the military aspects of crisis management operations whereas the EU would be in charge of the civilian aspects of operations. According to Robert Kagan, this division of tasks would mean that Americans are "making the dinner",[108] whereas Europeans are "doing the dishes".[109] Today, it seems that Americans and Europeans are not aspiring to such a division of labor. Europeans have more experience than Americans on civilian aspects of crisis management, but Americans are willing to put more emphasis on civilian capabilities in the coming years. At the same time, Europeans seem determined to give a new impetus to their military capabilities, in order to be able to conduct military operations more easily. It has sometimes been argued that the EU should accept to sign a 'Reverse Berlin-Plus' agreement with NATO[110] in order to allow the Atlantic Alliance to use European civilian capabilities under certain conditions.[111] According to one of the EU officials I met, such an agreement could be a good

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[107] European Parliament, "A Closer and Deeper Strategic Partnership with the USA", op.cit.
[108] Kagan, op.cit., p. 23.
[109] Ibid.
[110] R.E. Hunter, E. Gnehm & G. Joulwan, "Integrating Instruments of Power and Influence – Lessons Learned and Best Practices", *RAND Corporation*, 2008, p. 54, http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/2008/RAND_CF251.pdf, retrieved 27 November 2008.
[111] Such an agreement would be based on the model of the 'Berlin-Plus' agreement which allows the EU to use some NATO military assets for its own crisis management operations.

arrangement to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation.[112] However, it seems that this agreement will hardly be conceivable in the coming years: the EU does not intend to be assimilated only to the 'soft' side of operations, providing civilian capabilities when necessary.

The EU's ability to manage American expectations and to emerge as a meaningful and credible foreign policy actor will determine the state of EU-US relations in the coming years. Today, the EU has to revisit its policies and to propose an agenda that both the EU and the US can tackle together. There is a lot at stake for the EU and we should not underestimate the obstacles it will have to overcome if it wants to succeed.

## 5. Conclusion: 'Smart Power' – "the key to serving America's interests, Europe's interests and the world's interests"[113]

This paper has investigated to what extent the US shift towards 'smart power' constitutes a significant change in US security strategy likely to have an impact on the transatlantic security partnership. As Frank-Walter Steinmeier explained during a conference at Harvard University in 2008, 'smart power' seems to be the synonym for what we need today: "new concepts, a revitalized alliance and particularly renewed American leadership in the world".[114] This new strategic concept has progressively emerged in Washington, D.C., and intends to go beyond the traditional notions of national security by merging 'soft power' with 'hard power'. A 'smart power' strategy is supposed to restore the full spectrum of US power and is at the core of Obama's foreign policy doctrine. Becoming a 'smart power' constitutes a huge challenge for the Americans, as their 'soft power' has dramatically collapsed during the last years and they will have to invest significantly in civilian and 'soft power' tools. It is too early to judge whether Obama will succeed in overcoming the different obstacles and in going beyond rhetoric.

On the other side of the Atlantic, everybody is paying close attention to what is happening in Washington, D.C. In fact, the emergence of American 'smart power' represents a significant challenge for the EU. Europeans are aware that they are facing a unique opportunity not only to repair the transatlantic relationship after the

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[112] Interview with an EU Official: Council of the EU – DGE, 21 April 2009, op.cit.

[113] F.-W. Steinmeier, "A New Transatlantic Agenda in a Changing World", Speech at the *Conference on Germany in the Modern World*, Harvard University, Cambridge, 12 April 2008, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080413-BM-Harvard.html, retrieved 24 January 2009.

[114] Ibid.

Bush years, but also to create a new security partnership with the US. However, all will depend on the EU's ability to appear as a meaningful and credible partner. The challenge is huge, but Europeans seem to be on the right track as they are trying to strengthen their security and defense policy and they are aspiring to develop their military capabilities. In addition, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 might facilitate the strengthening of the EU as a credible foreign policy actor. And some innovations of this treaty – like the establishment of a President of the European Council – might strengthen the transatlantic cooperation, as it will be "easier and less time-consuming"[115] for the US President to develop initiatives with the President of the European Council rather than with individual member states.

Today, Americans and Europeans are willing to strengthen transatlantic security cooperation. The emergence of ideas to give a new impetus to the transatlantic security partnership reveals an amazing shift in political dynamics on both sides of the Atlantic. For example, MEPs proposed to replace the NTA by a new transatlantic partnership agreement and they recommended that EU-US summits take place twice a year "to provide the partnership with strategic direction and impetus".[116] Given the challenges of the 21st century, Americans and Europeans are going to need one another more than ever. It seems that they are moving in the same direction, as both are trying to develop the kind of power they are lacking ('soft' for the US, 'hard' for the EU). If we think about a 'power scale', both are located today at one extremity of the scale (roughly speaking: one as a 'soft power', the other as a 'hard power'), and they aspire to 'meet' in the middle as 'smart power'.

According to an EU official, there is a "convergence in philosophies, but not in forces".[117] Beyond the convergence in philosophies, it is too early to judge the extent to which the new US administration is willing to adapt to the concept of 'smart power' in practice. Rebuilding US civilian and diplomatic capacities will be a long and difficult task, and one year after Obama's arrival in the White House, it is difficult to judge whether the new US administration will manage to take up this challenge. For example, despite the fact that the Civilian Stabilization Initiative is one of the key priorities of the new administration, only 159 persons were working in the S/CRS in January 2010,[118] as developing this initiative takes time. Moreover, given the

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[115] Vasconcelos & Zaborowski, "The Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives", op.cit., p. 37.
[116] European Parliament, "A Closer and Deeper Strategic Partnership with the USA", op.cit.
[117] Interview with an EU Official: Council of the EU – DGE, 21 April 2009, op.cit.
[118] US Department of State – Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, "S/CRS - Staff List - current as of 8 January 2010", http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=4X3I, retrieved 11 January 2010.

evolution of the security environment in Afghanistan, deploying civilians on the ground remains particularly challenging and the DoD's budget is likely to increase in 2010 in order to finance the deployment of additional US troops. These develop-ments should not be at the expense of the efforts to rebuild US diplomatic and civilian capacities. On the other side of the Atlantic, it is difficult to determine if there is enough EU political will to comply with the necessity of burden sharing between the EU and the US. The London conference on Afghanistan in January 2010 will be key, as the Obama administration clearly expects European commitments of additional troops and resources.

2010 will be a crucial year on both sides of the Atlantic: on the one hand, the Congressional elections in November 2010 might have an influence on the US President who will try to deliver results before the elections. On the other hand, 2010 opens a new era for the European Union with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, providing the EU with the opportunity to become a meaningful and credible foreign policy actor.

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