

**Transcript of Remarks by Francis Fukuyama, Bernard L. Schwartz
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Well, thank you Dan [Hamilton]. I would really like to thank the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS and the Center for European Policy Analysis for inviting me. I am sorry I did not get a chance to attend your session this morning, but this is actually not the second lunch talk I have given today so I have been a little bit busy this week. I wanted to talk about the general question of European-American relations, because I think they have changed a lot. Now, I know this is a room that is largely filled with Central and Eastern Europeans so when I talk about Europe, I understand there are really important differences between the people that might be represented in this room and the French and the Germans and Dutch that were the original core of the EU. So if I seem like I am over generalizing I beg your forgiveness in advance because I understand those differences are quite important. But it is an interesting question for the future as to which way attitudes will default once you get further integrated in the EU and we proceed away from the Cold War. I am of the school that says that despite all of the conferences on how to improve transatlantic relations and deepen transatlantic understanding, that the differences that have been revealed between the United States and a certain set of Western European countries is very deep and goes beyond the short-term policy choices that were made by, let's say, the Bush administration over the past four or five years, and that they are going to be with us for some time to come. And at the end of the talk I will give a sort of prognosis for the future, about some trends that may play out.

Before the Iraq War, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida issued a statement talking about what they viewed as the differences between Europe and the United States. Although I have differed with both of them on a lot of issues, I thought they were pretty accurate in this particular account on why we are different, and they basically listed four issues. The first had to do with the welfare state and social solidarity, the second had to do with sovereignty, the third had to do with the use of military force, and the fourth had to do with religion. Those were not exactly their list, but it is a bit of a gloss on their argument. Let me go through each of these in turn because there are characteristically different ways that these things are seen on different sides of the Atlantic.

Welfare state and social solidarity. I think we are all living in liberal democracies, but every democracy makes a different trade-off between liberty and equality. These are the twin principles on which all of our societies are based. I believe that the European preference has clearly been for more equality at the expense of a greater degree of individual freedom (which is the American preference). And I think it is quite common in Europe to believe that dignity is the result of communal solidarity that is shown

primarily through the modern welfare state. Whereas in the United States, there is a much more individualistic understanding of the sources of dignity. Americans think that dignity comes through individual effort and work. It is actually quite different how this plays out with immigrants. I think that in the United States there is actually a fairly quick and sure route towards citizenship and acceptance in the broader society through work or through the contribution of your labor. Whereas more typically in Europe the way immigrants are integrated, or more often not integrated, is in participation in the social safety net and in the whole set of institutions that underlie those social protections. And clearly many Europeans feel that the U.S., in its promotion of globalization, has been doing this deliberately to undermine this social model. Now, I know that a lot of people believe that the European or the Western European welfare state is simply unsustainable, and I suspect that this is probably true. But my reading of the debate in Europe over this is that this has not registered at all seriously, as evidenced in the response of French young people to the very minor changes that the French government had suggested to labor laws there. So I think this is going to be an abiding source of difference.

The second issue has to do with sovereignty. I think that the European Union was based on a reading of history of the twentieth century indicating that national sovereignty was the root of the two terrible wars of that century. In this respect, I think that 1914 was a more formative event than 1939 for many Western Europeans, because this was seen really as a case of out-of-control sovereignty that was a product of the nation-state itself and not a particular ideology grabbing hold of a particular nation-state that was the root of this tremendously costly war that, really in a certain sense, ended European civilization (certainly the European civilization that had existed up through the beginning of the twentieth century). And so the whole EU project has been one that has tried to replace important elements of sovereignty with other supranational, transnational forms of organization. I think that Americans remain absolutely committed to the nation-state as the fundamental unit of account in global politics. There is a tremendous amount of reluctance to cede sovereignty to international organizations for reasons that I think go back to John Locke. Americans believe that legitimacy in any political institution ultimately comes from the consent of the governed and therefore if you do not have democratic legitimacy under a constitutional framework, you do not have legitimacy, period. And there is a huge problem that when you get into international sphere with supranational organizations that require ceding important elements of sovereignty to officials that may be unelected, whose delegation you cannot control, and the like. I think this is something that affects both the right and the left in the United States. I think the people on the right do not like the United Nations and all the entanglements of international law. And people on the left do not like it when it has to do with economic globalization and the ability of multinational companies to move jobs and the like. And so there are different versions of it, but that is something that I have detected no changes in, in terms of American views.

Use of military force, I think, is extremely important. And this really came to a fore in the buildup to the Iraq War. Americans believe that military force – and, again, this is a generalization that you will have to pardon, but this still remains largely true – Americans believe in the potentially moral uses of military power. And I think that it is perfectly

natural when you think of American history beginning with our revolution against monarchical authority in the American Revolution. This goes through the American Civil War. The United States lost 600,000 people in the civil war, but it was morally redeemed because it led to the end of slavery and preserved the union; continuing through the Second World War and the Cold War, which were seen as, I think, largely successful efforts to use America's great military power to achieve ends having to do with democracy, the spread of human rights, and the creation of a just and open world order. And, needless to say, Europeans, when they look at their militaries, they are the ones that invented the modern state that was based on this concentration of military force, and if you look at the history of Europe it has been an extraordinarily violent part of the world over the course of the last 400-500 years. But, clearly, there is a very different attitude towards the potentially moral uses of forces, which I think is directly at the root of many of the conflicts over the use of force in the Middle East in 2003.

And finally – I think this is widely recognized – the role of religion. It is interesting to me that in Europe there is actually less separation between church and state than there is in the United States, at least in formal terms. So the German state collects taxes on behalf of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, and the Dutch society is organized into pillars largely defined by religion. But when it comes to the actual practice of religion and the expression of private religious belief, there is a night and day difference between the two societies. I am going to say a little on how this is changing in the United States towards the end. It is not just any religion. As my former colleague, Seymour Lipset used to say, American religiosity is shaped by the sectarian nature of Protestantism that the original settlers of North America brought with them and that led, first of all, to a durable support for democracy (as it was decentralized and created a market-like condition under which religion could thrive). But it also very much influenced the moralism with which Americans view politics, and certainly international politics.

Now, to these fundamental issues you can add a couple of other points of difference. There have been very divergent perceptions of threat. Since September 11th, I think that Europeans – at least initially – assimilated Al Qaeda and the September 11th attacks to the kind of terrorism, the low-level terrorism, which means bombs in trash bins and this sort of thing (that Europeans experienced more extensively than Americans in the 1970's and 80's), whereas Americans saw this as a more apocalyptic beginning of a period in international relations, where the stakes would be enormously higher.

And then finally, I think this is critical in many of the differences: there are very different perceptions of what is going on in the Middle East. If you just look at the news coverage on a European News Network, compared to the way that is covered in the U.S., you will see that the difference does not begin in overt policy decisions made in the respective capitals; it really has to do with the conflict and how the rights and wrongs of that conflict are perceived on both sides of the Atlantic. So it is not a surprise that we have these sorts of differences. The one characteristic of American exceptionalism (there is a very easy way to sum up the difference) has to do with the way America is typically different not just from Europe but also in the way that America is virtually different from every other developed democracy in the world. And I would summarize it as follows:

America is a continent largely free of Socialists and Europe is a continent largely free of Republicans. And that means that both of them have democrats or European Center-Right parties, and I think that in the long run, collaboration between Europe and America has largely been based in that area of overlap. But in the absence of the overarching threat that was posed by the Soviet Union and the Cold War, it has become a relatively narrower basis of collaboration than previously.

Let me just talk about a few future trends, because I think that there are some reasons for optimism and then some reasons for pessimism about how any of this might change over time. Let me start with the reasons for optimism. I think that what is going to happen is probably a greater convergence in threat perception as time goes on. I think that it has already happened to some extent, in the way that Europeans and Americans view the Middle East and the threat of terrorism and the like. And I think that will involve the Americans somewhat scaling back their perception of what is at stake and what is threatening us (and then it takes the Europeans ratcheting up their sense of imminent peril). And a lot of that really has to do with my view of what the threat is in fact, because for a long time I have believed that most important threats we face from radical Islam was really not people sitting in caves in Afghanistan or in Madrassas in Pakistan, but it is actually from young, well-educated Muslims living in communities in democratic countries in Western Europe. And, in fact, this has been a pattern from Mohammad Atta to Mohammad Bouyeri, to the people that are accused of wanting to put bombs on airplanes in Britain over the summer. It is, I think, clear that there is something quite radicalizing about the situation living in that kind of community of Muslim minorities in contemporary Western Europe. And I think that because of the incidence of riots in the French *banlieus* and the continuing shift of attitudes in these minority communities. I think that there had been a general recognition that this is actually quite a serious problem. And although in the equality part of liberal democracy, we have differences in our approach to the welfare state, we still are relatively united on the freedom part of it. And I think the most immediate challenge that this poses to our way of life is in the realm of freedom. The inability of the pope to make this long-winded historical disquisition on some long-dead pope becomes an enormous political issue where he has to mind his p's and q's and so forth. And that is just the tip of the iceberg that is threatening of an important liberal principle in all of our societies, and this is one where Americans and Europeans really ought to see eye to eye.

The second reason for thinking why there might be more of a convergence or more cooperation is simply what is going to happen in the United States. I guess everyone is telling us that the Republicans are going to lose at least the House. The ability of republicanism, or a quite conservative version of republicanism, to remain dominant in the United States is at least questionable. The basis for cooperation in Europe has always been between the Center-Right in Europe with the Center-Left in the United States. Then you might see some shift as the pendulum swings back.

There are also several reasons for pessimism in how developments will play out on both sides, but particularly in the United States. First one has to do with this really interesting sociological fact about the United States, which is another component of American

exceptionalism – one which makes a certain class of American voters different from their European counterparts. That is to say, working class Americans who are in the bottom half of the income distribution, who in Europe would reliably vote for Socialist or Social Democratic party, in the United States can vote for either a Republican or a Democrat. These are the famous Reagan Democrats who from the 1930s up until the Reagan revolution voted for the Democratic Party, but since the 1980s have voted fairly reliably for the Republican Party. And what makes America very different from Europe, is that people who in Europe would vote on the basis of their economic self-interest, in this country vote on the basis of certain cultural or value issues, having to do with patriotism, the family, gay rights, a whole set of social issues that are simply less meaningful to most European voters (Poland may be slightly different, but I think that this is a pretty safe generalization). And my own view on American politics is that we are overdue for a major shift back to the left after 30 years of conservative hegemony. You probably have a lot of excesses of deregulation, rapidly growing economic inequality, but somehow people whose earnings are 1/200th that of their CEO in the company that they work for still vote for the same party that their CEO votes for, because of these cultural issues. And the problem with the Democrats is that they have not figured out how to crack this – you know, there was a time when they could attract that kind of voter into their camp, and they have not figured out how to do this. And I think that the Iraq war, in a sense, is going to be a much more superficial issue in the fates of these parties in the long run, instead of solving the problem of how do you attract this particular group of voters into the Democratic column.

A second reason of caution about the convergence issue. Again, I think there is reason to believe that the *de facto* threat perception should be moving closer, but just because you have the same threat perception does not mean that you are not going to be able to fight about a lot of other things, particularly how you deal with that threat. And I think there is a lot of room for disagreement and a lot of indulgence in a kind of *Schadenfreude*. I noticed this at the time when the French riots and the bombing, when Americans were kind of patting themselves on the back and saying to themselves “At least we are not the French” when it comes to something like this. So it is not clear that facing a common threat will lead us to some kind of a policy agreement.

I think a further issue is that American demography is changing in ways that are quite important, in terms of ethnic and other ties. I lived in California for about ten years and sometimes you fail to perceive this being in Boston or Washington or New York, but a lot of the country is just not of European origin any longer. California will have a non-white majority soon, and the pull of ethnic voters will be increasingly strong over time and will take away this instinctive European bias that we have.

The final point just has to do with religion. I think religion is one of those issues that are widely misunderstood both in Europe and in the United States. For example, the evangelicals and conservative Christians are usually thought of as a poorly educated, rural, predominantly southern or western group of voters. But in fact – just to plug my own magazine, there is quite a good article about this in the current issue of the *American Interest* – that has been changing a great deal and now, if you look at the overall

socioeconomic profile of conservative Christians, it is clear that is not that different from the rest of the country as a whole. And the biggest growth in conservative Christian communities has been among relatively high income, suburban voters. So anyone that thinks it is a matter of class or anyone that thinks economics will trump religion in the future is not right about that.

So that is my general sense of where things are going. Obviously, things can change a great deal as a result of accidents, or accidents of leadership, and one of the deficits that we have on this side of the Atlantic is the lack of the latter. And with that I will stop, and Michael [Wyganowski], thank you.

Q&A

Comment by Michael Wyganowski (CEPA): *Frank, thanks very much for being here and giving us this presentation. I just want to pick up on one thing you said during your presentation and thank you very much for saying this: I think there is a very different perception on both sides of the Atlantic of how various economic systems work, or not work. If you go to Europe and tell them that their economies are going down the drain and that the social insurance system is going to pull you under, they look at you glazed over: "Yeah, go back to America." So I think, Frank, you are right on the money. Professor Fukuyama agreed to take a few questions, and I see many hands there.*

Question from Dieter Detke (The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars): *Thank you very much. Dieter Detke, at the Wilson Center. I wanted to ask you about this separation between Europe and the United States, and you confirmed the views of Habermas, which was very interesting, I think. But I wanted to ask you whether you would see some sort of need, based on some sort of analysis, whether commonality with the West needs to be reestablished. You left that open and I wanted to ask you whether the West needs some stated, defined commonality in the future and whether that is possible or not, and if that is part of your thinking. And I would not exclude, in spite of what Habermas said, that he is leaving open that possibility of that ultimate commonality despite the need to oppose the United States over Iraq and the issues you mentioned so eloquently. But I wanted to ask you your thoughts about commonality within the West that can be reestablished or not.*

Well first of all, normatively, I would very much like it to be reestablished. Through the entire period of the Cold War I felt that this thing called the West existed with a set of shared values that I felt were quite important and under threat. So it has been very upsetting to see the kind of divisions that I spoke about suddenly appear. Do I expect that a concept of the West will reappear through the good efforts of conferences like this one

to stake out common ground and will it be anything like our sense of West during the Cold War? I would say no, because I think that, if you think about European politics in the nineteenth century, you had small ideological divisions, based on small amounts of national interests, and if you think about the whole concept of the West, about a region that is defined by values and institutions, it is a somewhat artificial idea that was created in the postwar period deliberately as the means of counterbalancing the Soviet threat. So the question then is do we face a common challenge to our civilization that is comparable, that will create a state of comparable solidarity. And I think that potentially yes, in the threat that is posed to our liberal values by the extreme ideological interpretations of Islam. But I must say that the record so far in coming up with a common analysis and a common strategy for dealing with that; we have not had a terribly good record of dealing with that so far. And it may be one of those situations where things have to get a lot worse before they get better, and obviously the more severe the threat, the more plausible it is to reform a sense of community. But I do not think we are there yet.

Question from Paul Schmit (Embassy of Luxembourg): *Thank you for your talk, professor. My name is Paul Schmidt, from the Embassy of Luxembourg. I very much agree on what you said about the perception of threat by Europeans and Americans. I just saw a poll yesterday about the perception of the threat caused by North Korea and Iran here in the United States: 80% of the Americans think that Iran is the threat while only 20% think otherwise about North Korea. I think that among Europeans there would be a very different outcome. What are your thoughts about that? Thank you.*

Well, in general I think that the level of threat perception by the United States is different, it has been consistently higher. And this is something that extends back through the Cold War itself, so it is not something that is new or is unique to the Bush administration (although their hyping of certain threats has certainly exacerbated that difference). I guess the question is why this difference exists. I think a lot of Americans would argue that Europeans in a sense have been able to shelter behind American power and they have not had to pass the budgets and build the forces that are necessary to deal with these kind of threats. They are not on the front line in figuring out how to deal with North Korea, yet on Iran much more. That may be part of it, but part of the problem is that there has been probably an American tendency to overstate some of the challenges we have faced over the years. But it is a question that will continue to be with us and, obviously, the perception of threat drives everything in policy. If you think the imminence of a nuclear weapon going off in an American city is pretty high, that is going to justify all sorts of other things, including preemptive war, coercive regime change, torture; lots of other things follow in the train of that assumption. And that does explain a lot of the differences we have seen.

Question from Michael Haltzel (SAIS): *I am Mike Haltzel from the Center for Transatlantic Relations. A very sophisticated and nuanced talk, and I agree with just about everything you said except that I come out with a different conclusion. Two points: number one, I do not think it makes any difference whatsoever in terms of how Americans are going to be dealing with Europe that California – if it does not already – has a non-*

white majority and that United States as a whole will by the middle of this century. If we, as Americans, believe that what unites us is ideals and not skin pigmentation and country of origin no matter how many generations back – and I firmly believe that is true – then it does not make a darn bit of difference, I just do not see that. To say nothing of all the data Dan Hamilton gave this morning on Foreign Direct Investment in the United States by Europe and vice-versa . I guess that there are so many things that link us, that I beg to differ completely on that one.

But getting back to your major point, I do not disagree with any of the four or five major disagreements with current American and European, however defined, cultures. I disagree with something you said in your last comment: that these somehow were – I forget the verb – created or accentuated after the Second World War to protect us against Soviet imperialism. I do not think it was artificial at all. I mean, I think that differences exist, but we live in a real world and I would talk to you as a good Central European Sigmund Freud, who talked of the narcissism of small differences. You concentrate on the things that divide you, that are different, and ignore the 90-some percent of things that unite you. And my only point in that is this. Let's look at the rest of the world. You mentioned the statement about the pope and you could talk of the cartoon controversy. If that did not show us that we are more like each other, despite these four or five important differences, that we are more like each other than any other part of the world, I do not know what does, what should. I mean, can we think of another part of the world that Europe is more like, or the United States is. I don't think Latin America is, I don't think the Middle East, I don't think Africa, I don't think Central Asia. I think, with the exception of Japan, certainly not East Asia. I think in the real world we are more like each other than we are like anybody else. So the question then becomes do we have to reconstruct anything? I think what we have to do is understand each other better, so I think the job is there, but I am much more optimistic about accomplishing this than you are.

Well, as I said, normatively I am completely with you. I think that those shared values are extremely important and we ought to work to bridge all of these differences. But as an analyst the question you have to raise is that: doesn't actually a lot of politics work by the narcissism of small differences? And, again, I just refer back to nineteenth-century Europe and the fights that existed between European states then. It was not a deep civilizational difference that divided Germany and France in various periods. It was something much more trivial than that. That is one point. The other point is, I think, that there has been a generational change that has reduced the positive efforts to build bridges, and this is why I think the Cold War was important. I mean these institutions are still there like the German Marshall Fund, the Atlantikbrücke, or these various exchange programs. But there was a deeply embedded sense among Helmut Kohl's generation in Germany, that there was a deep debt of gratitude owed to the Americans, and on the American side there was a feeling that Europe was the center of its civilization, with a deep sense of cultural inferiority. You know, every college junior that had the means would want to spend the year in Europe taking in European culture and so forth. And I just think those things have changed on both sides. You do not have, in the current generation of Europeans, that same instinctive feeling. I mean, Europeans still like the

United States (if you go to the Grand Canyon you see nothing but Europeans). There really is a different political class. And I would say where California is different: I have just been to a lot of conferences with – for example – high level technology executives who want to sell their products in Europe, and when it comes to the EU they are completely derisive, they say that this is a land where people just do not understand what free markets are all about. So I just think that there has been the introduction, in place of this instinctive feeling of obligation that worked in both directions, I think it has now been replaced by a different set of values in younger people that do not lead to this kind of coincidence of interests. But I overall agree with you – if you look at the objective underlying facts, we should be on the same page.

Question from Christoph von Marschall (Der Tagesspiegel): *Christoph von Marschall from the German daily Der Tagesspiegel. I would like to come back to how you described threat perception, especially when it comes to terrorism. You said that Islamists in caves in Afghanistan or Koran pupils in the madrasas are not as much a threat for us than the Mittelschicht – as we would say in German – in our Western big cities. Do we really know enough about the Attas and so on? Do we really know if they came with their animosity against the West from their countries when they started in the West, or did they develop this while living in Western cities? I mean, we cannot block access to the West and Western ideals because there is this threat, so it is a double-layered question, but are we so sure we know where they developed that and how they developed that.*

Well, I have a whole other lecture on that particular subject, which I will not bore you with, but I think that it is something that needs to be studied more. But if you look in a lot of the incidents, Mohammad Bouyeri, who killed Theo Van Gogh, was a second-generation Dutch-speaking son of first-generation Muslim immigrants. As far as anyone can tell, the subway bombers in London and the airplane bombers this summer were playing cricket and drinking beer one day and all of a sudden going to the Mosque and then the radicalization really did take place in Europe itself. I believe there are a lot of good sociological reasons why this should not come as a surprise to anyone. But the record is there. But the question is how you deal with it and it is a difficult one. I think Americans have a tendency to pat themselves on the back, well we are much more successful at assimilating immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants, than the Europeans are. Now, I believe there is a certain basis for saying this – and this is where I think we actually have a lot in common with Latin Americans also and people in our own hemisphere – we have a very different concept of citizenship and community than do many European societies, so that a certain kind of assimilation is easier in this hemisphere than in Europe. That being said, our problem is mostly with Mexicans and other Latinos, much easier to assimilate than Moroccans or Turks, the numbers are different, the number of Hispanic immigrants is not that different, but the number of Muslim immigrants in Europe is higher. And, quite frankly, it is interesting if you look across Europe at all the countries that have problems in that area: they have tried every conceivable policy to deal with this. The French have integrationist, republican tradition of citizenship; the Germans have a much more ethnically and blood-based concepts; the British and the Dutch have different versions of a multi-cultural approach where they let

these communities do whatever the hell they want. And all of them ended up with a big problem. So it is not clear if you can say that generically, you need to do a better job of integration – but exactly what that entails, I think, is a policy question that is very difficult to answer.