

Foreign Minister of Finland endorses CTR proposal for a Transatlantic Solidarity Pledge and Reformed US-EU Partnership

On January 27, 2010 Foreign Minister of Finland Alexander Stubb formally endorsed a number of policy proposals for a more strategic U.S.-EU partnership made by the Center for Transatlantic Relations and seven other U.S. and European think tanks in our joint report [Shoulder to Shoulder](#). In a speech at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, Stubb endorsed the call for a Transatlantic Solidarity Pledge, in which the U.S. and the EU would come to each other's assistance in the event of a terrorist or man-made disaster. He also endorsed proposals for a transatlantic free trade initiative and partnership in energy sustainability, among other recommendations to revive and recast the U.S.-EU partnership for a new era.

In Stubb's view, while recent trends in EU-U.S. relations have been favorable, the changing global environment requires a new type of transatlantic partnership. Foreign Minister Stubb presented five concrete proposals for strengthening the transatlantic partnership:

1. A solidarity pledge. The EU and the United States would commit themselves to act jointly in a spirit of solidarity in the case of civilian crisis situations such as a terrorist attack or natural disaster.
2. Measures to support a transatlantic green economy. The EU and U.S. must show joint leadership in the global transition towards a low-carbon economy.
3. A fully-fledged free trade area.
4. Gradual opening up of transatlantic cooperation to other countries besides the EU Member States and the United States.
5. Establishment of a "marriage council," i.e. a group of experts led by two prominent personalities from both sides. The group's task would be to outline a set of proposals on how to reinvigorate the transatlantic relationship.

The New Atlantic Decade
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland,
Alexander Stubb
Chatham House, 27 January 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There can be few more inspiring places than Chatham House for a politician to be able to analyze and freely debate the state of transatlantic relations. Chatham House has always been more than a venue in St James' Square – it is a respected forum where we can learn from the past and engage the challenges of the future...and today we get to fill this space with a favourite theme that is probably as old as this building itself: Atlantic relations.

I am naturally humble to speak about transatlantic relations to a predominantly UK audience. Perhaps I can try to gather some street credibility by telling you, that I am married to a Brit and my children have a dual nationality – Finnish and British. I have myself lived in US for five years and UK for two years.

The transatlantic partnership reminds me of a grumpy old couple that have lived, loved and fought together. They are capable of cruelest of arguments and noblest of solidarity and they cannot escape their shared history. But they are not quite sure how the relationship will play out in their changing neighborhood.

My remarks today will focus on the relationship between the European Union and the United States. My intention is in no way to underestimate the importance of NATO to the Atlantic partnership. I consider NATO commitments and the EU-US relationship to be complementary.

I feel it is time for the grumpy old Atlantic couple to renew their wedding vows. Let me try to do that by making two claims and five concrete proposals.

1. Common history and values are not enough.

2. It is time for a new partnership.

3. Five concrete proposals.

1. Common history and values are not enough

My own political and personal outlook is shaped by the Atlantic spirit. I am a diehard European who has studied and worked in the US. Liberal democracy, rule of law and open market economy are obvious guiding principles for me. As an undergraduate at Furman University in South Carolina, one of my favorite classes was modern political thought. I believe in the continued relevance of Locke's, Montesquieu's or Tocqueville's insights. Europe and America share a number of very fundamental values. Political authority is subject to democratic scrutiny and accountability. Our societies are based on liberty and freedom which support creativity and unleash the potential of the individual. I am sure that these values will continue to carry weight and influence in the emerging multipolar world. Our partnership provides a solid foundation to build upon.

The Atlantic world has not lost its economic supremacy nor its leadership in economic governance. It is still the most integrated, most advanced and most influential region of the world. The EU and the US account for about a half of the world economy and three quarters of global finance. Together we drive world's standards, regulatory regimes and best practices in business and government. We are also well positioned to lead in many of the future growth sectors. For example, recent OECD data shows that the EU and the US are, by a very large margin, the largest sources of patent applications in the area of environment-related technologies.

The Atlantic community continues to be inclusive and enabling. It has been shaped by contributions by Canada, Norway, Turkey and many other nations in addition to the US and the EU. It now embraces countries in central and eastern Europe and beyond. The emergence of new, rapidly growing economies around the Atlantic basin that we share history with (e.g. Brazil, Mexico, in Africa) is an opportunity that will further increase the economic importance of the Atlantic.

The EU-US relations have rarely been this good. The depth and scope of cooperation are astounding. The atmosphere has improved a lot from what it was a few years ago. Yet, there is a feeling of uneasiness on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States is flirting with the world outside Europe and assessing its global network of partnerships. At the same time the Americans are frustrated with the weak and politically divided European Union. And who could blame them? Europe is punching below its weight in foreign policy.

The Europeans, in turn, fear that their relative role in the world affairs may face a rapid decline on account of the growing importance of the emerging economies. We are afraid of a G2 world dominated by the USA and China. In a nutshell, the challenge we face today is not about diverging opinions on political issues but about adapting the partnership to the changing global landscape.

A recent think tank analysis – “Shoulder to Shoulder: Forging a Strategic USEU- Partnership” -- put it succinctly: “the world that created the transatlantic partnership is fading fast”. In the complexity of today’s global politics, Europe’s historical ties with America and the liberal order they created are still relevant. But they are not enough.

I will give you three examples:

- At the Copenhagen climate summit the United States and the Europeans failed to agree on a common approach, despite a number of shared interests. There were shared goals, but no effective joint action.
- In the Doha round of trade negotiations, we have been unable to build upon our shared instinct to create an open, rules-based global economy. We agree on the need to fight protectionism, but we are unable to break new ground.
- Let’s be honest about Iraq as well. We failed to find a common line in 2003.

My conclusion is that our relationship is strong, but we do not know how to use it to shape the world around us.

2. It is time for a new partnership

The emerging multipolar world requires a new type of transatlantic partnership. I am not alone arguing this. Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos of Spain has noted that “transatlantic relations are going to need a strategic change, in vision and in ambition” and that “the two great Western blocs must manage to respond to a changing world”.

In the coming decade, we need to cope with a world consisting of several powerful actors and a much broader set of values and interests. The scale and scope of global challenges are multiplying. Climate change, economic governance, fragile states and some of the major political conflicts from the Middle East to Afghanistan can only be tackled in the context of transatlantic solidarity.

The joint action in Afghanistan is a key part of the present transatlantic agenda. And by the way, I will be promising increased Finnish support to Afghanistan at the London Conference tomorrow. We will be deploying fresh development cooperation and civilian and military crisis management resources. A larger proportion of Finland’s development cooperation funding will be directed to the northern provinces of Afghanistan. Finland’s participation in the EU police

mission will also increase. The strength of Finnish military crisis management personnel will be increased by a third.

However, we should be wary of letting any single conflict to distract us from the fact that our relations are much deeper and broader.

Not only do we have external, global changes that create a need for a renewed transatlantic partnership. There are also current, internal developments on both sides of the Atlantic that are conducive to taking the EU-US relationship to the next level.

First, the EU is implementing the Lisbon Treaty to create a more unified and active foreign policy. The EU now has institutions that would allow it to punch at its weight internationally. I also detect willingness in Europe to take on more global responsibilities, as has been the case with the climate change. I for one will do my utmost to build on this momentum.

Second, the Obama administration has demonstrated new pragmatism and openness. It is actively looking for partnerships and has reinvigorated multilateral fora. American foreign policy has approached European thinking on some key issues such as Iran or the Middle East peace process. The US foreign policy is driven by three “D’s” – diplomacy, development and defense – as outlined by Secretary Clinton. This opens up avenues for transatlantic cooperation and effective multilateralism.

A recent increase in the number of think tank analyses about the state of transatlantic relations reflects that the moment is opportune for action. Examples of recent contributions include: “Alliance Reborn” and “Shoulder to Shoulder” from the American side; and “The Obama Moment” and “Towards a Post-American Europe” from the European side. We have on the table a wealth of practical proposals to enhance the transatlantic partnership. I feel that it now rests upon policy makers to operationalize these ideas to make a difference at a global level.

What then needs to be done?

I would argue that we need a more strategic approach in the EU-US relations. This means:

- 1) capacity to set common goals on global issues;
- 2) ability to agree on coordinated measures to achieve them, and
- 3) leadership in bringing others along.

This is not simply important. It is essential if we want to do things and succeed together.

3. Five Concrete Proposals

NATO is currently formulating a new strategic concept as a response to changes in global conditions and security threats. This work, spearheaded by a group of experts, is potentially a very important process for NATO. I do not see why the EU and the US could not engage in a similar joint stocktaking and setting of strategic objectives for the broader transatlantic context. In order to relaunch the EU-US partnership, I propose the following immediate actions:

1. A solidarity pledge. The Lisbon Treaty provides that the Union and its Member States act jointly in a spirit of solidarity in the case of a terrorist attacks or natural or man-made disasters. The transatlantic partnership could be strengthened by adopting a similar joint pledge, underlining solidarity in civilian crises. This would signal a qualitative change in the relationships based on solidarity. By acknowledging the importance of civilian crises it would bolster our mutual resilience. The political pledge would not in any way weaken commitments under NATO, but would rather complement them.

2. A transatlantic green economy. The EU and US must show joint leadership in the global transition towards a low-carbon economy. We must remove barriers that stand in the way of green growth. We already have high-level institutions such as the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) and Transatlantic Energy Council. We need to use them more efficiently to achieve tangible results.

3. A fully-fledged free trade area. We need to put our money where our mouth is. Time to stop beating around the bush – we must create a free trade zone between the EU and US.

4. Open up transatlantic cooperation to others. The emergence of new, dynamic players is an opportunity not just for the Pacific region, but also for the Atlantic rim. The Atlantic Ocean brings together a dynamic group of countries with varied strengths and a shared background. We should gradually open up cooperation to interested Atlantic nations. The long term goal should be a vibrant Atlantic basin with shared values and a thriving economy.

5. Set up a “marriage council,” i.e. group of experts led by two prominent personalities from both sides. Their task would be to outline a set of proposals on how to reinvigorate the transatlantic relationship. This “council” could draw upon recent analyses and submit their proposals to the upcoming EU-US Summit.