

**The European Union and the United States:
An Exceptional Experiment Contends with American Exceptionalism**

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Prepared for presentation at the Sixth Pan-European International Relations Conference—
“Making Sense of a Pluralist World”—of the Standing Group on International Relations (SGIR),
European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), Torino, Italy, 12-15 September 2007. An
earlier version of this paper is to appear in Kjell Engelbrekt and Jan Hallenberg, eds., *The
European Union: An Emerging Strategic Actor?* (London: Routledge, forthcoming). The author
thanks Jan Hallenberg for his always valuable comments and suggestions and Prakash Adhikari
and Yury Bosin for their research assistance.

The relationship between a forward-looking European Union engaged in an exceptional experiment and an overbearing America convinced of, and infatuated with, its own exceptionalism has been deeply and profoundly strained. Despite extensive and deep-seated transatlantic affinities, the world's two foremost liberal collectivities increasingly part company on what ways and means of conducting interstate relations are most appropriate. The EU's pioneering experiment with institutionalism, constitutionalism, and transnational—even supranational—governance is little celebrated on the western shores of the North Atlantic. Instead, it is American exceptionalism that is celebrated, particularly by Americans of a particular persuasion but also—historically—by at least one Frenchman, Alex de Tocqueville, who is credited with coining the term. As practiced of late, an American exceptionalism which has long sought to set the United States apart has done just that. A wedge has been driven between the United States and the EU and its members, both collectively and individually, as well as between the United States and much of the rest of the world. The marked asymmetry of hard power resources it enjoys has enabled the United States to stand apart and go its own way. Doing so, however, has eroded its soft power (and undermined the utility of its hard power). Consequently, a shift in the balance of soft power resources between the United States and the EU is underway.

As a result of the American exceptionalism in evidence during the early years of the twenty-first century, the relationship between the United States and the European Union is not what it could be—or what it should be. If the EU-U.S. relationship is to be righted (and lost U.S. soft power recovered), U.S. strategy will have to be reoriented. In particular, “strategic unilateralism and tactical multilateralism” must be abandoned in favor of a return to “strategic multilateralism and tactical unilateralism.”

Commonalities

By any reasonable calculation, that which unites America and Europe vastly outweighs that which divides them. Their peoples march not to different drummers but to the same beat. Contrary to the superficial but too oft-cited quip of one prominent neoconservative, they are not from different planets. Indeed, Americans and Europeans

are bound by a common historical, cultural, and religious heritage.¹ Even though it has taken different, though hardly incompatible, forms (and turns), the two also share a common political and economic ideology: liberalism (despite social democracy's evident, and unfortunate, lack of appeal in the United States). America's conservatives, whether of the "neo" or "paleo" variety, undoubtedly would be loath to admit it, but the values held dear by Americans and Europeans are virtually identical.

America and Europe share a common political and economic space. Their peoples comprise a transnational political community; their economies are joined in a complex, interdependent market; their states inhabit a highly developed democratic security community that serves as a model for the rest of the world.² The EU is a confederation not unlike—and no less unique than—that which Americans began constructing in the late eighteenth century. These two western, democratic, capitalist—i.e., liberal—unions should be as one, together seeking solutions to traditional and nontraditional challenges alike, whether in Europe or elsewhere, and jointly exploiting, even creating, opportunities. The transatlantic special relationship should be between not the United States and Britain, nor, as it was during the cold war, the United States and (West) Germany, but between the United States and Europe, as embodied in and represented by the European Union, as a whole.

Since the cold war's end, the United States has repeatedly declared its commitment to the broadening and deepening of the liberal world order it led the way in constructing after World War II. Under President George H. W. Bush, that commitment was evident in the call for a "new world order." The Clinton administration repeatedly highlighted the importance of enlarging the democratic community of free market economies. Since 2001, America's third post-cold war administration has given voice to that commitment with its oft expressed fealty to liberty, freedom, and democracy.

Within the EU, all of this—liberty, freedom, and democracy; a democratic community of free market economies; a (regional) new world order—has long thrived. Of late, however, the United States has been increasingly estranged from this singular

¹ Europe and America share as well the decadence described by Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present*, New York: HarperCollins, 2000.

² See Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, eds., *Security Communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

collective that most exemplifies the vision so ardently embraced by America. This estrangement is not simply a function of the cold war's end and the demise of a threat that bound the United States and what was then Western Europe together in common cause. After all, the administration of George H. W. Bush had worked closely with European allies and friends to ensure an orderly, nonviolent end to the cold war in Europe, (re)unify Germany, lay a solid foundation for a new European order that included a place not only for the cold war's victors but also for Russia, and build widespread European support for a war in Southwest Asia in 1991.³ That pattern of post-cold war cooperation continued under the Clinton administration. Former member states of the Soviet empire were integrated into ever broader European economic and transatlantic security institutions. Unpleasantness in the Balkans was, eventually, confronted jointly; in the context of Balkan challenges, American leadership was not deemed incompatible with genuinely collaborative decision making and action.

The U.S. decision to take advantage of the attacks of 11 September 2001 by initiating a preventive war against Iraq put at risk a close U.S.-European relationship that had long been regarded as highly institutionalized.⁴ Ironically, an administration which frequently invokes the ideals of liberty, freedom, and democracy successfully alienated much of the populace and leadership of the regional political, economic, and, increasingly, security institution which most embodies those very ideals. That is quite an accomplishment, particularly in the wake of the outpouring of European sympathy for and declarations of solidarity with the United States after 11 September.⁵ An inordinate amount of political capital has been squandered. An America willing to join forces with, indeed embrace, the likes of a decidedly undemocratic, illiberal Pakistan proved unable, or worse yet, unwilling, to find a way to accommodate Europe, particularly France and Germany, two of the EU's core members. From the U.S. perspective, of course, if the EU, especially recalcitrant France and Germany, were only to follow the inspired U.S. lead, all would be right with the world (or at least the EU-U.S. relationship). Because of

³ See P. Zelikow and C. Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

⁴ On the institutionalization of EU-U.S. relations, see Rebecca Steffenson, *Managing EU-US Relations: Actors, Institutions and the New Transatlantic Agenda*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.

⁵ Most dramatically symbolized by *Le Monde's* 12 September 2001 declaration that "We Are All Americans."

what it aspires to become, and what it has already become, however, the EU is constitutionally incapable of simply following the lead of an America convinced of its exceptionalism.

Shared Interests, Divergent Ways and Means

The divide between the EU and the United States is due less to the pursuit of divergent interests than to the embrace of divergent ways and means, or *modi operandi*.⁶ The two have far more interests in common than not. There is a remarkably broad, enduring EU-U.S. consensus on a vast and varied array of core interests. Shared interests, admittedly, may give rise to particular objectives that are not fully shared. Yet contestation is focused less on *what* interests to protect and advance than on *how* to protect and advance shared interests. There are few significant disagreements on, for instance, the virtues of constructing and maintaining an open, liberal world order, promoting democracy and human rights, advancing international prosperity, ensuring access to resources, preventing and resolving interstate and intrastate conflicts, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combating terrorism, and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of international institutions. These and other prominent interests are embraced fully by both. The significant, unresolved differences revolve around *how*—just what it is that must be done—to build and maintain an open, liberal order, promote democracy and human rights, advance prosperity, ensure access to resources, prevent and resolve conflicts, prevent proliferation, combat terrorism, and improve the functioning of international institutions.

At dispute are not interests but the appropriate ways and means of advancing interests. That was painfully evident in the buildup to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. A shared interest in combating terrorism led EU members to support U.S. efforts to destroy al Qaeda in its Afghan redoubts and to topple Afghanistan's Taliban regime. But the United States and the European Union parted company on the road to Baghdad. For many EU peoples and their leaders (though, admittedly, not all), U.S. allegations about the linkages between (1) Iraq and 11 September, (2) Iraq and al Qaeda, and (3) Iraq and

⁶ For useful discussions of EU-U.S. differences, see Nikos Kotzias and Petros Liacouras, eds., *EU-US Relations: Repairing the Transatlantic Rift*, New York: Palgrave, 2006.

the declared global war on terror, were without merit. European support for combating terrorism and the specific objective of regime change in Afghanistan did not extend to support for regime change in Iraq, the use of unsanctioned military force to accomplish regime change, or preventive war. The U.S. rationale for abandoning the strategy of containing Iraq was unpersuasive. A similar logic applies if regime change in Iraq is seen not only as a response to 11 September and part of a war against Al Qaeda and other terrorists and their supporters but also as a specific objective of a shared interest in promoting democracy and human rights. There is little reason to presume that EU peoples and their leaders would have preferred the indefinite continuation of Saddam Hussein's rule or that they were indifferent to the fate of the Iraqi peoples. Too many were simply unwilling to sign on to an internationally unsanctioned military campaign waged by a meager "coalition of the willing" assembled, led, and dominated by a superpower that seemingly had cavalierly dismissed concerns about the necessity, timing, legitimacy, and legality of the operation. The U.S. failure to uncover even a hint of Iraq's allegedly vast WMD programs and its singular lack of preparation for the aftermath of regime change, particularly the insurgency and civil war that followed Saddam Hussein's downfall, have not exactly prompted Europeans to question their refusal to support the United States.

While the Iraq war, particularly the buildup to it, brought to the fore the EU-U.S. divergence on international ways and means, the divergence is not centered on, or limited to, Iraq. Iraq merely served to illustrate, starkly and dramatically, the differences in the contemporary European and American approaches to the conduct of international affairs. Europe is seeking to shed its past through a cooperative, collective search for an alternative to the practices that led to the disastrous world wars of the twentieth century.⁷ Not only is America not constructively aiding and abetting that search, it is actively undermining the liberal, post-realist course mapped out by a progressive EU. America's recent practices have been so counterproductive that even a return to traditional realism⁸ would represent an improvement.

⁷ See Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Daniel Verdier, "European Integration as a Solution to War," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2005, pp. 99-135.

⁸ As opposed to the offensive realism of John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: Norton, 2001.

For the EU and its members, liberal internationalism rules. The EU is not only an exceptional experiment, it is an exceptional *liberal* experiment. Embodied in the European Union are the principles, norms, rules, conventions (informal as well as formal), institutionalism, and processes that serve as the foundation of a liberal order. As practiced under the reigning orthodoxy—a volatile admixture of neoconservatism and assertive nationalism⁹—of the early twenty-first century, American exceptionalism has served to undermine the principles, practices, and instrumentalities the EU and its members exemplify. In no small measure, the EU is intended to be an antidote to the militarism of old; as evident in the 2003 *European Security Strategy* (ESS) the EU's members recognize that tackling today's key challenges requires a mix of military and nonmilitary means and seek to ensure that the resort to force is indeed a last resort. The United States is more inclined, particularly since 11 September, to think that every nail must be hit with a military hammer.¹⁰

Juxtaposed to the strategic multilateralism of the EU is the strategic unilateralism and, at most, tactical multilateralism of the United States. While multilateralism is the answer for the EU, the United States wonders about just what question the EU might have had in mind. The EU has unequivocally embraced multilateralism; the United States today would rather keep its distance. Indeed, it has shunned international obligations and launched an assault on multilateralism. The EU venerates the substance and processes of multilateralism; the United States regards multilateralism as a constraint on its freedom of action and an action retardant that is best circumvented. The EU bows before the altar of international legitimacy; the United States worships only sovereignty (its own of course, not that of others) and the freedom of action it is thought to provide.¹¹ For the EU and its members, the support of the UN Security Council or another appropriate international body is required if the use of force is to be legitimate. For the United States, the blessing of the Security Council is at most a nice-to-have; the Council and other international bodies are most valuable when they follow the U.S. lead; their

⁹ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *American Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003.

¹⁰ See Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹¹ See Peter J. Spiro, "The New Sovereignists: American Exceptionalism and Its False Prophets," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 6, November/December 2000, pp. 9-15.

lack of support should give little pause—superpowers don't need permission slips. The EU and its members embrace conventions such as the Kyoto Protocol. Though signed by the Clinton administration, the Protocol was summarily dismissed by its successor; other international accords are subject to a similar fate.

International governance, also enthusiastically embraced by the EU, is regarded as an oxymoron by the United States. In the EU, international law is considered a vital component of international governance; the distinction between domestic and international law is increasingly blurred; national, European, and international law are being woven into a seamless tapestry. In the United States, resistance to the intrusions and constraints of international law is widespread; minor legal provisions such as the Geneva Conventions are held to be quaint and obsolete; freedom of action trumps adherence to principle. International law is used by the weak to constrain the strong. For the EU, that is precisely the point; as the sole superpower, the United States sees little benefit in empowering the weak. The International Criminal Court, a darling of liberal internationalists, is backed by the EU's members as a matter of course. Aligning itself with such upstanding members of the international community as Cuba, China, Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Russia, and Syria, the United States has consistently sought to undermine the fledgling ICC. The EU's fondness for reciprocity is looked upon askance; from the U.S. perspective, it is far better to do unto others before they do unto you than to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. While the EU insists on due process and the rule of law, even in the face of terrorism, the United States employs extraordinary rendition, secret prisons and military tribunals, compromises *habeas corpus*, and circumscribes civil liberties. The EU values openness, transparency, and accountability; the United States cloaks its actions in secrecy and seeks to evade responsibility and accountability.

The marked convergence of interests and no less marked divergence of international ways and means are evident in the 2003 *European Security Strategy*¹² and the 2002 and 2006 versions of *The National Security Strategy of the United States of*

¹² *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, Brussels, December 2003. Available at <http://www.iss-eu.org/solana/solanae.pdf#search=%22European%20Security%20Strategy%22>; accessed August 23, 2006.

America.¹³ Not only is there a notable convergence of interests, there is broad agreement on the central challenges—terrorism, proliferation, regional conflicts, and state failure, for instance—that must be confronted. In the ESS, however, the commitment to multilateralism is not undermined by pointed reminders of the value of unilateralism. Instead, the United States is reminded on the first page of the ESS that “no single country is able to tackle today’s complex problems on its own.”¹⁴ The EU and its members recognize that “we are stronger when we act together” and that “international cooperation is a necessity.”¹⁵ In their view, clearly, anything other than an unequivocal commitment to multilateralism would be counterproductive. The absence of unilateral hedging is also apparent in the extended treatment of international law, international institutions, and international regimes. This unadulterated high regard for international law and institutionalism in the ESS has no real counterpart in the U.S. strategy documents. A grudging acknowledgement of the potential contribution of international institutions is accompanied by remarks about the alleged advantages of “coalitions of the willing.”¹⁶ Notably absent from the ESS is any discussion of the virtues of the preemptive or preventive use of force, a much noted feature of the U.S. NSS in 2006 as well as in 2002. Indeed, the White House declared in the 2006 iteration of its strategy document that “The place of preemption in our national security remains the same.”¹⁷

In the NSS and elsewhere, the United States continues to give voice to “the [liberal] ideas that conquered the world”—peace, democracy, and free markets.¹⁸ But the principles, norms, rules, conventions, institutions, and processes that would serve to ensure the world governance allegedly provided by the U.S. Goliath is liberal rather than illiberal no longer receive the support from the United States that they once did.¹⁹ They are too often dismissed and undermined rather than promoted. The post-World War II

¹³ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, DC: The White House, September 2002, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2006); and *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2006).

¹⁴ *European Security Strategy*, p. 3.

¹⁵ *European Security Strategy*, pp. 18 and 19.

¹⁶ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2006, p. 48.

¹⁷ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2006, p. 23.

¹⁸ Michael Mandelbaum, *The Ideas That Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy, and Free Markets in the Twenty-first Century*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2002.

¹⁹ Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World’s Government in the 21st Century*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2005.

U.S. embrace of strategic restraint, the “binding effects of international institutions” and “increasing returns to institutions,” and the open, accessible domestic political order emphasized by Ikenberry is too little evident in U.S. strategy and behavior today.²⁰ In effect, the United States has withdrawn from the “constitutional bargain” in which the United States agreed “to operate within mutually acceptable institutions, thereby muting the implications of power asymmetries, and other countries... agree[d] to be willing participants....”²¹ “Strategic restraint” and “reassurance” have been expunged from the strategic lexicon of the United States. As practiced during these early years of the twenty-first century, American exceptionalism, with its extraordinary emphasis on safeguarding the country’s sovereignty, has put at risk the liberal world order the United States labored to construct during the second half of the twentieth century—the order to which the EU and its members remain committed. If the current form of American exceptionalism persists, that liberal world order, and U.S. leadership of it, will not.

Exceptionality and Exceptionalism

This marked divergence in the international ways and means preferred by the EU and the United States is rooted in what is distinctive, even exceptional, about each. The differences are deeper and more fundamental than implied by the essentially mundane observation that one is a state and the other is a collection of states—or that one is a democratic state and the other is a collection of democratic states. Even democratic billiard balls are not identical. The European Union is often characterized as becoming, even eternally becoming (and is beset with doubts about its “actorness”). Since what is now the European Union evolved out of the European Economic Community (ECC) and the European Community (EC), that characterization should perhaps not come as a surprise. It sells short, however, the remarkable accomplishments of an exceptional experiment. After all, what were six with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 and the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 have become

27. Others are not so patiently waiting in the wings. Meaningful political and economic

²⁰ G. John Ikenberry, “Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order,” *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Winter 1998/99, pp. 43-78. See also G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

²¹ Ikenberry, “Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order,” p. 77.

integration accompanied the growth in membership and an institutional evolution that began with the ECSC, the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Economic Community and continued with the merger of the three communities in 1967 and the creation of the European Union with the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992.²² A complex institutional and legal infrastructure complete with executive, legislative, and judicial bodies has been constructed.²³ Common policies have been developed and adopted across a diverse array of issue areas. Among those common policies, notably, are the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and European Security Strategy.²⁴ With the introduction of the Euro on 1 January 2002, the EU's single market was joined by its single currency. The EU, of course, will continue to evolve. In that sense it is still becoming. But so are other actors, state and nonstate, including the United States.²⁵ At this point it must be concluded that the EU has become; it is.²⁶

But just what has the EU become? What kind of beast is it? In a forthcoming volume, Engelbrekt and Hallenberg ask whether the EU is Machiavelli's fox or lion.²⁷ Arguably, it is neither. It is, instead, more appropriately thought of as Isaiah Berlin's hedgehog.²⁸ In international relations as in philosophy, hedgehogs are relatively rare creatures. Why should the EU be considered a hedgehog? Because it is an exceptional experiment informed by a central, big idea. The EU is an experiment in the constitutionalization, or domestication, of interstate relations. "Governance" is the watchword; it is the means by which the systemic anarchy beloved by realists is to be

²² An account of how U.S. support for European integration has changed is provided by Geir Lundestad, *"Empire" by Invitation: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

²³ See A. Stone Sweet, W. Sandholtz, and N. Fligstein, *The Institutionalization of Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

²⁴ Michael E. Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; and Michael E. Smith, "Toward a Theory of EU Foreign Policy Making: Multi-level Governance, Domestic Politics, and National Adaptation to Europe's Common Foreign and Security Policy," *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, August 2004, pp. 740-758.

²⁵ At issue, of course, is just what the United States is becoming.

²⁶ Too much should not be made of the rejection of the EU constitution by French and Dutch voters in 2005. The EU's development has not been linear. Setbacks have been overcome in the past.

²⁷ Kjell Engelbrekt and Jan Hallenberg, eds., *The European Union: An Emerging Strategic Actor?* London: Routledge, forthcoming.

²⁸ Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967 (1953).

tamed.²⁹ The distinction between domestic and international is not merely to be further blurred, it is to be rendered meaningless.

The inspiration for this exceptional experiment can be traced to the Enlightenment, particularly Kant's visualization of "perpetual peace." As Russett and Oneal have pointed out, the EU embodies the liberal, Kantian tripod of democracy, economic interdependence, and international law and institutions.³⁰ Yet the EU is more than that. To a much greater extent than any other group of states, the EU's members have pooled their sovereignty, investing it in a supranational polity to whose decision making they accede.³¹ The EU gives the lie to the realist assertion that international institutions act only when member states, particularly the leading member states, act. This institution cannot easily be dismissed as a mere dependent, or intervening, variable. The EU exerts an independent force on events and the behavior of member states.³²

The European Union is a hedgehog that has demonstrated its ability to act strategically. It has leveraged economic integration to facilitate political integration. It has played a leading role in shaping the development of the international trade system. Its members pooled their monetary capabilities to create the Euro, which quickly emerged as a rival to the U.S. dollar. It has held out the prospect of membership to promote political and economic liberalism; its post-cold war expansion effectively projected order and stability eastward. And it is now balancing against U.S. power.³³ As

²⁹ On the EU and supranational governance, see Wayne Sandholtz and Alec Stone Sweet, eds., *European Integration and Supranational Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

³⁰ Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.

³¹ On the EU as a polity, see Walter van Gerven, *The European Union: A Polity of States and Peoples*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

³² On the EU as an international actor, see C. Bretherton and J. Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, London, Routledge, 1999; S. Meunier, *Trading Voices: The European Union in International Commercial Negotiations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005; Christopher Piening, *Global Europe: The European Union in World Affairs*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997; and Carolyn Rhodes, ed., *The European Union in the World Community*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998. For a discussion of the challenge to neorealism posed by the EU, see Simon Collard-Wexler, "Integration Under Anarchy: Neorealism and the European Union," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2006, pp. 397-432.

³³ Barry R. Posen, "European Union Security and Defense Policy: Response to Unipolarity?" *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, April-June 2006, pp. 149-186.

Kupchan put it, “Europe’s political union is in the midst of altering the global landscape.”³⁴

The central idea that informs members’ interactions with each other also informs the collective’s interactions with others. Since legitimate liberal orders, whether domestic or international, are founded on governance and constitutionalism, the supranational governance enjoyed by EU members is to be shared with the international community. The way to improve, if not transform, interstate relations is to domesticate them. This hedgehog, as Karen Smith has noted, has adopted a “distinctive foreign policy” that emphasizes “the acceptance of the necessity of cooperation... and a concentration on non-military means....” In an approach focused on the promotion of governance, the role of law is necessarily central: “most of the EU’s relations are actually conducted through the establishment and operation of legal agreements with third countries and regional groupings.”³⁵ The EU’s relationships with other members of the international community are marked by a complex web of formal contractual arrangements and conventions—mirroring those upon which the EU was constructed—intended to codify rights and obligations. Both among its members and between the EU and others, the legalization of its foreign policy serves to further the constitutionalization and institutionalization—i.e., domestication—of interstate relationships.

Juxtaposed, and opposed, to the central animating *idée-maîtresse* of the EU hedgehog is American exceptionalism. American exceptionalists take exception both to the concepts that inform the EU project and to the notion that it is an exemplar that should be broadly replicated. Those ascendant today are little inclined to embrace international governance, constitutionalism, institutionalism, and the domestication of interstate relations. An American lion that is the king of the jungle is not to be house broken (much less domesticated).³⁶ It is today largely unimpressed by the virtues of the liberal, Kantian tripod, to say nothing of the surrender of sovereignty inherent in the EU

³⁴ Charles A. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002, p. 119.

³⁵ Karen E. Smith, “The European Union: A Distinctive Actor in International Relations,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, Winter/Spring 2003, p. 107. See also Michael E. Smith, “Diplomacy by Decree: The Legalization of EU Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 39, Issue 1, March 2001, pp. 79-104.

³⁶ Perhaps more accurately, the United States is a lion that thinks it is a hedgehog. It isn’t clever enough to be either a hedgehog or a fox, whether Machiavelli’s or Berlin’s.

model. That acceptance of a diminished sovereignty and supranational authority underlies America's abiding unease with the EU experiment. As was evident during the Clinton administration, even America's liberal internationalists have been able to summon little more than a studied ambiguity in their regard for the EU. The challenge posed by the EU's exceptional experiment thus is profound. It provides an increasingly attractive alternative to the hegemonic role, and rule, of the United States.

American exceptionalism holds that the United States is unlike other states, that it is qualitatively different.³⁷ The United States is no ordinary country; it is an outlier.³⁸ Its origins, values, creed, development, and institutions are unique, set it apart, and make it special. For American exceptionalists, "distinct," "unique," and "special" translates to "superior." In their view, America is a model that is to be venerated and emulated; it represents the ideal to which others can only aspire. America is not an exceptional "city upon a hill" because it is predominant; it is predominant because it is an exceptional "city upon a hill"—even, as embellished by Ronald Reagan, an exceptional "shining city upon a hill."³⁹ The United States was destined to be globally preeminent, much like it was destined to expand westward across North America. For some, America's preeminence is even divinely ordained. With god on its side, there is little need for the legitimacy that might be imparted by the accoutrements of institutionalism, constitutionalism, and international governance; America has all the legitimacy it needs. Exceptionalism therefore justifies exemptionalism; the standards that apply to others do not apply to an exceptional America.⁴⁰ America establishes both its own standards and those to which

³⁷ Perhaps the seminal treatment of American exceptionalism is Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996. An account of its development is provided by Deborah L. Madsen, *American Exceptionalism*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998. On the distinctive American creed and its implications for foreign policy, see Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981.

³⁸ Unlike the citizens of ordinary countries, particularly ordinary major powers, "Americans deprecate power politics and old-fashioned diplomacy, mistrust powerful standing armies and entangling peacetime commitments, make moralistic judgments about others people's domestic systems, and believe that liberal values transfer readily to foreign affairs." Joseph Leggold and Timothy McKeown, "Is American Foreign Policy Exceptional? An Empirical Analysis," *Policy Science Quarterly*, Vol. 110, No. 3, Fall 1995, p. 369. For a classic treatment of the American style in foreign policy, see Stanley Hoffmann, *Gulliver's Troubles, Or the Setting of American Foreign Policy*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.

³⁹ As noted by Howard Zinn, "The Power and the Glory: Myths of American Exceptionalism," *Boston Review*, Summer 2005, available at <http://bostonreview.net/BR30.3/zinn.html>. Accessed 18 August 2006.

⁴⁰ Michael Ignatieff, "Introduction: American Exceptionalism and Human Rights," in *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 1-26.

others struggle to measure up. In this view, an exceptional country that stands apart can only be sullied by close associations with the great unwashed; it cannot but prefer to go it alone. After all, it was America that was chosen by providence to save the world from itself by bestowing upon it the blessings of liberty, freedom, and democracy—a special mission for which America alone is qualified. In the words of Melville, “And we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world.”⁴¹

In the Manichean version of American exceptionalism apparent during these early years of the twenty-first century, there is little evidence of the post-World War II, twentieth century strategic restraint and reassurance written of by Ikenberry.⁴² And the Kantian tripod of democracy, economic interdependence, and international law and institutions is less prominently featured in U.S. strategy than it was during the 1990s, when a far less virulent strain of American exceptionalism was in evidence. Only the commitment to an open, interdependent economic order remains essentially intact. The heavy-handed manner in which the United States has sought to swell their ranks has spurred and alienated democratic allies and friends, who, even if they are not actively balancing against the United States, are little inclined to bandwagon behind it.⁴³ As for international law and institutions, exceptionalism has begat exemptionalism. Inconvenient legal provisions are ignored or rationalized away and obstructionist institutions are marginalized or bypassed.

⁴¹ As quoted by Denis Donoghue, “The True Sentiments of America,” in Leslie Berlowitz, Denis Donoghue, and Louis Menand, eds., *America in Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 229. As Donoghue summarized America’s sentiments, “America is to play the crucial redemptive role in history and establish democratic government throughout the world...” (p. 232). In the same volume see also the essay by James Chace, “Dreams of Perfectibility: American Exceptionalism and the Search for a Moral Foreign Policy,” pp. 249-261.

⁴² Ikenberry, “Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order” and *After Victory*.

⁴³ For discussions of the presence or absence of balancing, whether hard or soft, against the United States, see Robert A. Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Summer 2005, pp. 7-45; T. V. Paul, “Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Summer 2005, pp. 46-71; Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “Hard Times for Soft Balancing,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Summer 2005, pp. 72-108; and Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander, “Waiting for Balancing: Why the World Is Not Pushing Back,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Summer 2005, pp. 109-139. On the extent of the alienation produced by American exceptionalism, see Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes, *America Against the World: How We are Different and Why We are Disliked*, New York: Times Books, 2006.

During the course of his address at the closing session of the United Nations Conference in June 1945, President Harry S. Truman, the Democrat who is probably most often quoted by Republicans, asserted that

We all have to recognize—no matter how great our strength—that we must deny ourselves the license to do always as we please.... If any nation would keep security for itself, it must be ready and willing to share security with all. That is the price which each nation will have to pay for world peace. Unless we are willing to pay that price, no organization for world peace can accomplish its purpose. And what a reasonable price that is!⁴⁴

It is difficult to imagine any of the assertive nationalists or neoconservatives who have occupied the leading positions in America's third post-cold war administration giving voice to such politically incorrect sentiments. America's exceptionalists have yet to recognize that even the world's sole superpower will have to pay a price for turning its back on the liberal, institutional order it led the way in constructing after World War II. When their loyalty is taken for granted or too often unrewarded and their voices are ignored or shouted down, allies and friends, even democratic ones, will head for the exit.

Asymmetries

America's exceptionalists have been able to take advantage of an EU-U.S. relationship that is decidedly asymmetrical. Of course, the EU is not in a unique position. There are none whose relationship with the United States is other than asymmetrical. The international predominance of the United States since the cold war's end and the Soviet Union's demise is striking.⁴⁵ That predominance is one of the central defining characteristics of the contemporary world order. The structural bipolarity of the cold

⁴⁴ Harry S. Truman, Address in San Francisco at the Closing Session of the United Nations Conference, 26 June 1945; available at <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=73&st=&st1=>; accessed 2 August 2006.

⁴⁵ As Brooks and Wohlforth put it, "the United States has no rival in any critical dimension of power. There has never been a system of sovereign states that contained one state with this degree of dominance." Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4, July/August 2002, p. 23. For other discussions of American predominance, see William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Summer 1999, pp. 4-41; and Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005, pp. 31-40.

war, after all, war gave way not, as expected by some observers, to multipolarity,⁴⁶ but to unipolarity. The United States is not merely first among equals, it is first. There is little reason to think that unipolarity will not persist. Not only is the United States a full-service superpower with 24/7 global reach, there is no peer or even near-peer competitor on the horizon. Even China, everyone's favorite candidate for peer or near-peer competitor status, is no position to pose a credible across-the-board challenge.⁴⁷ For at least the next quarter century, the likes of China will present no more than a regional challenge. The United States has long been regarded as a hegemon. Given the extent of U.S. predominance, it should come as little surprise that characterizations of the United States as an empire, not all of them negative, are not uncommon.⁴⁸

By most traditional measures, the United States has it all. Only in the economic realm can the EU be said to measure up. With the U.S. GDP weighing in at \$12.4 trillion (20.4 percent of world GDP) and the European Union's at \$12.2 trillion (20.1 percent of world GDP), there is essential economic parity between the two. The U.S. GDP, however, dwarfs those of the largest EU economies—Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy—with the largest, that of Germany, coming in at only 20 percent of the U.S. GDP.⁴⁹

America's military predominance is pronounced. The resources it devotes to defense and its military capabilities are without rival. In 2005, U.S. defense spending exceeded \$500 billion and accounted for almost half of total world military expenditures. That not only amounted to more than the next 46 countries combined spent on defense, it was two and a half times greater than what was spent on defense by the then 25 members of the EU. The expenditures of the EU's highest ranking defense spender, France, totaled less than 9 percent of U.S. defense spending. Not insignificantly, U.S. defense

⁴⁶ See, for example, John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Summer 1990, pp. 5-56; and Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Fall 1993, pp. 44-79.

⁴⁷ The notion that China is poised to challenge the United States on the economic front is demolished by Lester Thurow, "A Chinese Century? Maybe It's the Next One," *The New York Times*, 19 August 2007.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002; Andrew J. Bacevich, ed., *The Imperial Tense: Prospects and Problems of American Empire*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003; and Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire*, New York: The Penguin Press, 2004.

⁴⁹ GDP (purchasing power parity) data are for 2005. Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, 2006, as available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>. GDP data available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html> (accessed 23 August 2006).

RDT&E—research, development, testing, and evaluation—expenditures exceeded the total defense expenditures of every EU member. France’s total defense spending came to only two-thirds of U.S RDT&E expenditures.⁵⁰

Its defense spending has bought the United States unparalleled military superiority. The United States exercises both nuclear and conventional preeminence. According to Lieber and Press, the United States is on the verge of possessing a nuclear first-strike capability against the likes of Russia and China that will render mutual assured destruction obsolete.⁵¹ Its conventional forces are no less “strategic” than its nuclear forces. The global reach of U.S. air, naval, and, even, ground forces has been demonstrated repeatedly and convincingly. America’s four air forces possess unmatched reach, precision, and lethality; its navy is the world’s only real blue-water navy; its conventional ground forces are without peer; all are strategically positioned throughout the world. While the United States has worldwide power projection capabilities, EU countries possess few theater power projection capabilities, much less significant sustainable inter-theater capabilities. And the qualitative gap between U.S. military capabilities and those of others continues to grow. Even the most advanced militaries in Europe and elsewhere struggle to keep pace. In the transatlantic military division of labor, it is the United States that does the heavy lifting.

Even considered separately, America’s economic, military, diplomatic, geographic, technological, and educational advantages are sufficient to give pause. It is, however, the *combination* of economic and military primacy, a privileged position in world and regional political, economic, and military bodies, a fortuitous geographical location that provides protection against many ordinary trepidations, technological dominance, and a system of higher education that is the envy of the world, which is overwhelming.⁵² American predominance is not only multidimensional, it extends across

⁵⁰ Calculated using data provided by Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, 2006, at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2067rank.html>; accessed 24 August 2006. On the U.S-European gap in defense R&D spending, see Andrew D. James, “The Transatlantic Defence R&D Gap: Causes, Consequences and Controversies,” *Defence and Peace Economics*, Vol. 17, No. 3, June 2006, pp. 223-238.

⁵¹ Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, “The Rise of U.S. Nuclear Primacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2, March/April 2006, pp. 42-54; and Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, “The End of MAD? The Nuclear Dimension of U.S. Primacy,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Spring 2006, pp. 7-44.

⁵² This point was also emphasized by Brooks and Wohlforth, “American Primacy in Perspective,” and Walt, *Taming American Power*.

the playing field. To an extent previously unseen, the United States has it all; it is simultaneously atop all the traditional measures of hard power. In the aftermath of the cold war, the international market for hard power has been cornered by the United States.

Despite the tremendous resources at its command, however, the United States increasingly is finding that others, including, notably, the EU and its members, are refusing to follow its lead. That refusal is not merely the result of a natural, though somewhat belated, post-cold war balancing behavior. What is at work is less traditional balancing—hard or soft—than a new found repulsion. The recent practice of American exceptionalism has served to repel not only those little inclined to follow the U.S. lead but traditional allies and friends such as the EU and its members. As a result of the arrogant, imperious manner in which its hard power is perceived to have been employed, the United States has squandered the vast political capital it possessed in the wake of 11 September and seriously undercut its legitimacy and a previously credible claim to leadership. When America lost its bearings after 11 September, the reassurance provided by its notable post-World War II strategic self-restraint and demonstrated commitment to institutionalism, multilateralism, openness, and transparency was undermined. Its ability to co-opt, persuade, and attract was severely, if not yet fatally, eroded. As was vividly evident in its take-it-or-leave-it attitude toward the UN Security Council during the buildup to the war in Iraq, the world has not turned on the United States; the United States has turned off (indeed, blown off) the world.

Hard power, which the United States possesses in abundance, isn't necessarily fungible. It cannot automatically be converted into soft power, the ability to co-opt, induce, shape, and attract rather than command, conquer, coerce, or impose.⁵³ The United States' extensive hard power enables it to ride roughshod over others; doing so, however, undermines U.S. soft power—"its ability to attract others by the legitimacy of U.S. policies and the values that underlie them."⁵⁴ Increasingly, the use of hard economic and military power unaccompanied by adequate soft power and the legitimacy

⁵³ The concepts of soft and hard power and important ideas about the nature of the relationship between the two were developed by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., in *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1990; *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go it Alone*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002; and *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2004.

⁵⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Decline of America's Soft Power: Why Washington Should Worry," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 3, May/June 2004, p. 16.

it imparts poses the risk of entering a vicious downward spiral. Hard power employed in concert with a plenitude of legitimizing soft power offers the more appealing prospect of a sustainable and virtuous upward spiral. The situation the United States finds itself in today resembles the former more than the latter. Its recent conduct is widely perceived as a betrayal of the values, ideals, institutions, and culture that underlie the notion of American exceptionalism and served as the source of a once enormous reservoir of soft power and legitimacy. The erosion of America's soft power has in turn undercut the effectiveness of its tremendous hard power and its much-prized ability to lead. Effective, sustainable leadership requires soft as well as hard power resources. America's power to attract, and therefore lead, is less today than it was during either the cold war or the post-cold war era's first decade. An administration maligned for doing "social work" during the 1990s was actually using its hard and soft power to do the world's work.⁵⁵ And in doing so it was accumulating rather than squandering soft power and legitimacy.

This erosion of U.S. soft power and legitimacy has rebounded to the advantage of the EU and its members. No less striking than the pronounced imbalance of hard power in favor of the United States is the shifting EU-U.S. balance of soft power in favor of the EU. According to Huntington, "Soft power is power only when it rests on a foundation of hard power" and "hard power generates soft power."⁵⁶ A state's, or an organization's, soft power is based less on its hard economic and military power, however, than upon its values, ideals, institutions, and culture and their appeal to others. Soft power is not simply derived from hard power and it isn't necessarily subordinate to hard power. America's hard economic and military resources continue to dwarf those of the EU. Europe's military power is more NATO's than the EU's. Yet, as the United States has discovered (to its great chagrin), soft power need not yield to hard power. Europe did not line up alongside the United States against Iraq in 2003 as it had it 1990-1991, when America was led by an administration more attuned to the advantages of employing hard power in concert with soft power. It is the soft power approach preferred by the EU rather than the tougher, hard power approach advocated by the United States that has thus

⁵⁵ Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 1, January/February 1996, pp.

⁵⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, pp. 92 and 109.

far prevailed in the international response to Iran's nuclear ambitions. It is unlikely that the EU's hard military power will come to match that of the United States. But it need not. Neither its soft power nor the legitimacy ascribed to it is a function of hard military power. Indeed, through the skillful use of its soft power "Europe has made hard power less necessary."⁵⁷

In a unipolar world presided over by an imperious, if not imperial, superpower, the appeal of the EU's values, ideals, institutions, and culture—its ways and means of doing business—are ever more evident.⁵⁸ The Europe to which states of the former Soviet external and, even, internal empire are most strongly drawn is the liberal Europe of a soft-power EU. Though not yet recognized as such by the United States,⁵⁹ it is the European Union that is the new Europe. Old Europe is the U.S.-dominated NATO Europe. Its remarkable post-cold war expansion is powerful evidence of the attraction the EU holds. The prospect of EU membership has been central to the post-cold war remaking of Europe. Its significance is difficult to underestimate. As Carl Bildt has argued, "...there is no way to explain the swift and smooth transformation of societies from Estonia to Bulgaria without referring to both the magnetism of the EU and the model it was able to provide. Hard power can certainly bring down regimes, as Iraq demonstrated, but in order to build new regimes, soft power is largely required."⁶⁰

Unlike the United States, the European Union has appropriated the concept of soft power, embracing it as a comparative, even competitive, advantage. Eneko Landaburu, the European Commission's Director General for External Relations put it well: "The EU is... a real player on the world stage because of its wide-ranging and comprehensive set of 'soft-power' tools."⁶¹ Even if the EU's embrace of soft power amounts to little more

⁵⁷ Parag Khanna, "The Metrosexual Power," *Foreign Policy*, No.143, July/August 2004, p. 67.

⁵⁸ As Khanna, "The Metrosexual Power," pp. 67-68, put it, "Brand Europe is taking over. From environmental sustainability and international law to economic development and social welfare, European views are more congenial to international tastes and more easily exported than their U.S. variants.... [R]egional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Mercosur, and the African Union are redesigning their institutions to look more like the EU."

⁵⁹ Or by an infamous former U.S. secretary of defense long plagued by a profound lack of strategic insight.

⁶⁰ Carl Bildt, "Europe Must Keep Its 'Soft Power,'" *Financial Times*, 1 June 2005, available at http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/bildt_ft_1june05.html; accessed 26 August 2006.

⁶¹ Eneko Landaburu, "Hard Facts about Europe's Soft Power," *Europe's World*, Summer 2006, p. 33; available at

http://www.europesworld.org/PDFs/Issue3/EW3_1.3_Landaburu_hard_facts_about_Europes_soft_power.p

than making a virtue out of necessity, that is more virtue than the United States currently can lay claim to. The EU today can stake a more credible claim to the moral high ground than can the United States. It is the United States, not the EU, whose exercise of hard and soft power alike is burdened by Guantánamo, Abu Graib, and Haditha. It is the United States that has sought to leave open the door to torture. It is the United States that has denied prisoners of war (sorry, “detainees”) their basic rights. But it is the members of the European Union (and others) that are seeking to ensure the future of a liberal world order endangered less today by the usual suspects than by a United States that had long been its foremost advocate. And it is the EU that now stands as the champion of a liberal order; whether the United States (other than rhetorically) will again stand for anything more than itself is to be determined. The EU, it is tempting to conclude, represents the liberal, post-realist future; the United States, the realist past. Alas, that future remains under construction; and the past has yet to be sufficiently deconstructed.

Prospects

As long as the European Union stands for institutionalism, constitutionalism, transnational and supranational governance, and the domestication of interstate relations and the United States remains wedded to the American exceptionalism practiced of late, tensions between the two will persist. Despite what neo-realists would have us believe, the characteristics of units, whether states or otherwise, are of consequence. That EU-U.S. relations are not what they could be has not much troubled those responsible for America’s grand strategy since the Supreme Court “adjudicated” the outcome of the 2000 presidential election. For neither America’s third post-cold war administration nor, especially after March 2003, its increasingly vociferous realist critics, are EU-U.S. relations a particularly high priority. Relations with the European Union were not high on the agenda either before or after 11 September. After 11 September, the United States government was preoccupied with, and all else was increasingly viewed in the context of,

[df#search=%22Hard%20Facts%20about%20Europe%E2%80%99s%20Soft%20Power%22](#); accessed 26 August 2006.

the “global war on terror” (a.k.a. “the long war” for some), Iraq (a quagmire of its own making), and the nuclear ambitions of miscreants such as North Korea and Iran.

It isn't that Europe is of little consequence; it is the EU, not Europe, that is of minor import for the United States. The EU-U.S. relationship is simply more important to the EU than it is to the United States. In the words of the EU's ESS, “The transatlantic relationship is irreplaceable.”⁶² While highlighted in the ESS, the transatlantic relationship received scant attention in the 2006 version of the U.S. NSS. The EU received only passing mention, primarily in a section focused on NATO, which was characterized as “a vital pillar of U.S. foreign policy.”⁶³ For both the administration and most of its realist critics—whether selective engagers or advocates of a perpetual U.S. hegemony, or primacy—it is NATO, not the EU, that remains the preferred multilateral instrumentality and venue of choice.⁶⁴ After all, the United States not only has a seat at the table in NATO, it has a seat at the head of the table.⁶⁵ And NATO, fortuitously from the perspective of America's neoconservatives and assertive nationalists, is unburdened by the EU's post-realist pretensions. It remains a vehicle for U.S. leadership in Europe. When the United States looks to Europe, what it sees, and most wants to see, is NATO, not the EU.

To no small extent, the future of the EU-U.S. relationship will be shaped by which alternative (or, perhaps, alternatives) in the still unresolved U.S. grand strategy debate gains ascendancy after the 2008 presidential election.⁶⁶ Neither the proponents of

⁶² *European Security Strategy*, p. 20.

⁶³ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2006, p. 38.

⁶⁴ Only the realists who advocate a neo-isolationist grand strategy are no more interested in NATO than in the EU. Since the cold war is history, they have little use for NATO; a wealthy Europe should be left to its own devices.

⁶⁵ And it thinks it owns the table.

⁶⁶ On the U.S. grand strategy debate and the alternatives noted here, see Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Winter 1996/97, pp. 5-53; Andrew L. Ross, “What is to be Done with U.S. Predominance? Grand Strategy Choices and Challenges,” in Richmond M. Lloyd, ed., *A Nation at War: Reconciling Ends and Means*, (Newport: Naval War College, 2005), pp. 35-39 (available at http://www.nwc.navy.mil/nsdm/A_Nation_at_War.pdf); Peter Dombrowski and Andrew L. Ross, “The 'New Strategic Triangle' and the U.S. Grand Strategy Debate,” in Jan Hallenberg and Håkan Karlsson, eds., *Changing Transatlantic Security Relations: Do the US, the EU and Russia Form a New Strategic Triangle?* London: Routledge, 2006, pp 146-166; and Peter Dombrowski and Andrew L. Ross, “The Political Economy of Grand Strategy: Contemporary Debates,” a paper presented at the 2005 Annual Conference of the International Security and Arms Control Section of the American Political Science Association and the International Security Studies Section of the International Studies Association on “Globalization and Security,” Denver, CO, 28-29 October 2005.

neo-isolationism, selective engagement, primacy, nor empire accord a high priority to EU-U.S. relations and their improvement. Neo-isolationists would have the United States keep its distance from any and all international institutions, particularly those such as the EU from which it is excluded. For them, America's exceptionalism is best preserved by the avoidance of corrupting entanglements.

Though cognizant of the EU's economic significance, selective engagers prefer to deal with its leading states—France, Germany, Italy, and the UK—rather than the collective and share the realist predilection for NATO. They are also distinctly unenthusiastic about institutionalism, constitutionalism, and supranational governance. However, the essentially mainstream, traditional realism that informs selective engagement is unenthusiastic as well about the notion of American exceptionalism, posing the prospect of a more normal, if not particularly special, relationship with the EU's members.

The proponents of primacy and empire have a greater appreciation for American exceptionalism but share selective engagers' lack of enthusiasm for the EU project. Primacy and empire alike require the maintenance of U.S. preeminence in Europe and elsewhere. For both, ensuring that NATO remains the dominant security institution in Europe and an effective instrument in the maintenance of U.S. preeminence is a higher priority than cozying up to an EU some of whose members would position it as a strategic counterweight to the United States.

Liberal internationalists both discount the claims of American exceptionalism and have a higher regard for the EU and that for which it stands. They recognize that the EU and the United States should be on the same course, not a collision course. In their view, the United States must turn away from "strategic unilateralism and tactical multilateralism" and return to the "strategic multilateralism and tactical unilateralism" of the Clinton administration.⁶⁷ Only such a change of course will allow the European Union and the United States to be strategic partners and resume constructing a liberal world order, a project that has been rudely, and crudely, interrupted of late by assertive nationalists and neoconservatives armed with the hubris of American exceptionalism.

⁶⁷ I am indebted to Harold Koh for this formulation. In "The Value of Process," available at <http://law.ubalt.edu/asil/koh.html> (accessed 2 September 2006), Koh attributed it to Strobe Talbot.