

Warsaw 2007 - Background papers

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EIN POLICY ROUNDTABLE ON

FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES

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Background

Pursuing economic integration but leaving foreign policy issues in a kind of limbo risks reducing Europe's role on the world stage. Boosting Europe's security and defence capacity, enhancing its ability to act in the world, and maintaining a vibrant transatlantic partnership, would create a stronger Europe in a safer world. The EU faces a wide array of challenges from beyond its borders that require a strategic response. By coordinating European policies and instruments - including trade, aid, defence, policing and diplomacy - and developing hard uses for soft power to achieve agreed common objectives, Europe gains influence. When Europe decides to pull together, speak with a single voice, and have a recognisable common policy, its power is considerable. But the EU still needs to develop the capability to be "global Europe".

Over the past five years, the EIN working group on Foreign Policy Challenges focussed on the role of the transatlantic relationship, stressing the importance of preventing future rifts in relations across the Atlantic. The US and the EU must invest more political capital in developing a stronger sense of mutual purpose based on a 'community of action' - reinforcing common analysis, shared appreciation and joint action. Sixty years after the Marshall Plan was set up, there is still no closer partnership in the world than that between the United States and Europe.

Policy-makers, pundits and the publics on both sides of the Atlantic increasingly agree on the strategic challenges facing the EU and US. The GMF 'Transatlantic Trends' survey for 2007 again

shows that many Americans and Europeans share similar fears and aspirations. Energy dependence and international terrorism were among the threats by which Americans and Europeans felt most likely to be personally affected. A solid majority - 64 per cent in both Europe and the US - supported contributing troops to international reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. 60,000 European peacekeepers serve from Congo to Kosovo, from Afghanistan to Indonesia.

Given the common values and shared interests, strong political and economic ties, and long experience of successful cooperation, the countries of the European Union and the United States remain each other's natural partners. Neither the US nor the EU can succeed by acting apart. Nor do relationships with third parties possess the depth of the transatlantic partnership. The transatlantic marketplace alone accounts for 60 per cent of world GDP and covers 40 per cent of world trade, with exchanges worth over €1.7 billion a day.

At the 2006 EIN summer university in Lyon, the policy roundtable considered ways to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons - including the use of finance and trade sanctions. Getting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process back on track with new diplomatic and economic incentives must also be brought to bear by the EU and US together, possibly in the framework of the EU's new neighbourhood policy. Equally, more efforts are needed in developing coherent strategies towards China and Russia.

The transatlantic relationship remains a core factor of European security and must be firmly anchored in all EU policies. The asymmetry of US-EU military power, while irreversible, should be reduced. EU "soft power" and US "hard power" approaches to international issues should complement each other, rather than work at cross purposes, as they might. American and European policy-makers should attempt to 'define the mission together', rather than let the 'mission define the coalition'.

Five possible areas to explore further at this year's summer university in Warsaw are:

- ? Should the EU and US develop a transatlantic institutional structure to coordinate policies?
- ? Is the EU capable of taking military action to prevent nuclear proliferation in states like Iran?
- ? What might be the impact of Brazil, China, India and South Africa on foreign policy in 2025?
- ? Are the EU's development, trade and foreign policies capable of matching China's in Africa?
- ? Will creating a European external service help to meet the EU's foreign policy challenges?