CHAPTER VI

The Fly in the Soup

Changing Relationships

If there is a fly in the soup—and there always is—it comes from us, members in good standing of the human condition. Sometimes active, and at other times passive, the fly in the soup never plays the same role twice, but it is always there, in one way or another when we converse and consort with each other. Often it can be seen in how we form, interpret, and manage our relationships. It is frequently contained in our opinions, heard in the tone we use to express them, and present in how we listen. And, it is always set forth in the conclusion, drawn by the Duc de La Rochefoucauld in the seventeenth century, that we as human beings seldom meet other people of good sense, unless of course, they share our opinion.

Rochefoucauld's conclusion, as it applies to past flies in the soup, also describes the most recent arrival, known as "globalization"—that is to say, the international arena of trade and commerce, industry and manufacturing, finance and investment, stock markets and banking, knowledge and services, politics and peacekeeping, diplomacy and defense, terrorism and national security. In fact, however, it is not globalization itself that is affecting our relationship, but our different reactions to it. As one French political commentator observed in late 2006, "of all the globalizations it is that of Islamic Fundamentalism that has proved the most successful, at the very time that Europeans and Americans are drifting apart."[1]

In America, globalization is discussed as representing new challenges and new opportunities, as well as new threats. In the EU, the word is used similarly by some Europeans, but not by others. The result is confusion. There is general consensus in America and Europe that national marketplaces are operating today, perforce, in an international arena defined by global competition; but there is not agreement on either its desirability or its significance.

The view endorsed by those Americans and Europeans who believe in the efficacy of free markets was put into words, perfectly, by the president of the European Commission in September 2005, in an article published in the *International Herald Tribune* entitled ''Europe must open up to the globalized world'':

> In the new, global century, change takes place at a breathtaking speed. We must manage this change, not try to resist it. In order to promote freedom, security and prosperity, we need to reap, not reject, the benefits of globalization. . . .
>
> We can respond more effectively together than apart. The EU has the scale, with 450 million [479 million, as of 2007] people, and the means. We must have the confidence, energy and determination to act, because the world will not stop for Europe.[2]

Barroso's concerns were shared by many other European leaders as well, including the new, conservative chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, the socialist prime minister of the U.K., Tony Blair, and the prime minister of Denmark, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. But there are also those who react to the world of the twenty-first century in a different way; to wit, the conclusion drawn by the prime minister of France following defeat of the European constitution at the end of May 2005: ''Globalization is not an ideal; it cannot be our destiny.''

So employed, globalization is a catchy word for an old fly in the soup; namely, *the essential difference*. However the word may be used, it is nonetheless a twenty-first-century description of a history of discoveries, occurring one after another and often at long intervals, that has been going on for five hundred years. The latest event is the invention of a worldwide

web of communication, one of whose incidental casualties is the death of the information monopoly used by European politicians for centuries to manage rule from the top down. In a little-known book[3] published in 2000, globalization's progression was summarized as follows:

> This web represents a further shrinkage of the world's cultures that has been going on since the Age of Discovery, when the seeds of a global economy were sown for both goods and ideas. Since the 1500s the process of amalgamation of the world into one intellectual and commercial enterprise has been rapidly accelerating. This contraction has been made possible by physical and electronic travel via ships and navies, automobiles and airplanes, telegrams and telephones, radio waves and television broadcasting, fax machines and satellites, and today by the convergence of computers with telecommunication.
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> Before the Age of Discovery the first part of human history was expansion outward, from the original human homeland into every corner of the globe, where unique cultures developed to fit into local environments. Since then the increasingly sophisticated modes of transportation and communication that enable goods and ideas to move across the seas, earth, and sky, have been gradually redefining the human adventure. What is now changing is the speed with which ideas and commerce travel about the world, whether they concern astronomy or physics, fashion or food, engineering or computing, stock markets or financial markets. In the year 2000, ideas and wealth move in real time via the Internet. The Internet gives a quantum leap to this process of acceleration. This is nothing less that a revolutionary change.[4]

What we are witnessing today is a product of evolution, which is always affected by revolution at unpredictable intervals. Taken together the cumulative power is huge. The issue is not whether we wish to accept or reject globalization as our destiny, because the choice is not ours to make. It has already been made for us by the force of things.

American and European efforts to deal with our constantly changing world accent and reinforce our transatlantic differences and affinities in

various ways. In this sense globalization does not mean we stop behaving like Americans and Europeans, but it does mean that our relationships become intensely more private, more professional, more public, and more complex. Nor does globalization replace our history, our heritage, or our habits of life, but it does mean we must pay greater attention to protecting our faith in the value of what we have in common, forged not by politicians in time of need, but created by individual Americans and Europeans over the course of centuries.

Our relationship is made of many things. A very public part of it, of course, is about how we deal with each other on diplomatic levels. An equally important but much less visible aspect concerns the private and professional lives of millions of Americans and Europeans bound together in a multitude of ways. Some of these connections come from the ties formed by trade and commerce; others come from educational exchanges, and unexpected ones arrive daily via the continuing revolution in computer and communication technology.

The oldest connections were created by European explorers, and the newest ones are made of millions of electronic messages flying across the Atlantic each day. During the intervening five centuries our universe has become one of accelerated time and shortened distance, and also more complex, as the ties we share have drawn us closer.

Communication between America and Europe has never been easier. The great oceanic divide no longer poses the transportation problems it once did, either. A visit to Europe or to America is still an adventure, but it is much easier to get there and it takes a fraction of the time it took before World War II. During 2000–2001 more Europeans and Americans than ever before—twenty-four million traveling back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean—visited one another: approximately thirteen million Americans to Europe, and more than eleven million Europeans to America.

The close nature is reflected in the hundreds of weekly airplane flights between Europe and America, in passenger and freight ship traffic, in thousands of daily telephone calls, and in the number of packages that travel back and forth for anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays. E-mail

communication generates more than 1.5 billion messages sent between America and Europe each day, just as thousands of Americans and Europeans exchange information, continuously, on the Internet.

The extent of the European-American commercial relationship is staggering, just as the vastly different kinds of companies involved are fascinating. Most Americans, as well as Europeans, are surely unaware that such well-known European car brands as Aston Martin, Volvo, Jaguar, and Land Rover are actually owned by one of Detroit's "Big Three," the Ford Motor Company, although many Americans know that another of Detroit's "Big Three" is owned by Daimler-Chrysler of Stuttgart.

The famous *American Heritage Dictionary* is a property of the French corporation Vivendi and RCA Records is owned by the German company Bertelsmann. American corporations are just as well represented in Europe via McDonald's hamburgers, Starbucks coffee, and the clothing manufacturer Gap. And that point has a counterpoint. American clothiers Brooks Brothers and Casual Corner are owned by an Italian conglomerate, Burger King belongs to a British firm, and Nestle SA of Switzerland owns Taster's Choice coffee and Dreyer's Ice Cream, a company founded in California. Another example is Holiday Inn, the quintessential American success story of the creation of a motel chain, started in the early 1950s. It takes its name from the 1942 film of the same name, in which Bing Crosby sang "White Christmas" for the first time; but the owner is a British firm.[5]

The interrelationship is also found on college and university campuses, where a major component of European and American academic life consists of visits and exchanges of all kinds. European and American students study at each other's universities and American and European professors teach and conduct research in the humanities and sciences at those same institutions. Of the top ten countries where Americans study abroad, European countries account for six of those places, and the top three are the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain. Of the nearly 600,000 international students—many of them European—enrolled at approximately 125 American colleges and universities, 70 percent of them pay their own way. During 2003 they contributed over $13 billion to the American economy and made up 4 percent of total enrollment.[6]

Ties are also defined by the impact of trade and investment; that is to say, the American-European business dealings that result in capital expenditures, in jobs, and in the movement of goods back and forth between countries. Each year America sends one-third of its exports to the European Union, 25 percent of the EU's exports arrive in America, and more than thirteen million Europeans and Americans go abroad to work for companies on both continents. In 2000, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, American direct investment in Europe was about 650 billion dollars, and European investment in America amounted to almost 900 billion dollars. Americans and Europeans share 50 percent of the global economy, and engage in annual trade and investment in excess of 1.5 trillion dollars.[7]

There are numerous observations on the character of this relationship. One of them, made long ago, is the conclusion attributed to John D. Rockefeller that "friendships founded on business work better than businesses founded on friendship." Another, of more recent date, comes from the president of the French American Chamber of Commerce in Paris who noted in February 2003 that the economies of America and Europe are "so closely intertwined that trying to take measures against the other would be equivalent to shooting oneself in the foot."

Our trade and commerce are thriving, in spite of our sometimes differing views on globalization. There is, however, another fly in the soup which may prove more disruptive. American and European memories of what we have in common, and of why it is important, are fading, and for some they do not exist at all. For many in Europe knowledge of the connection between Christian humanism and the continent's cultural identity is imperfect, and for many others it is irrelevant. And, for many in America, the unique tie between Christianity and democracy, so eloquently described by Tocqueville, is all but forgotten.

In the course of the last thirty years it has become popular for some in America to denigrate the impact of Europe on the New World as debatable at best, and as exploitative at worst. Some have chosen to conduct

protests against observance of Columbus Day. Others describe the history and philosophy of European civilization as the legacy of ''dead, white males,'' and assert that their contributions are no longer germane to a world of diversity. Indeed, in many textbooks used in American secondary schools, the history of Europe and America is described as one of oppression and invasion, while the history of Islam, for example, is described as one of expansion and social mobility.[8]

As the American melting pot continues to boil, there is less and less attention to European history and culture, and simultaneously more and more criticism of Europeans. Younger Americans have little knowledge of the instrumental role played by the French in the American War of Independence and know equally little about their own history between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. As a consequence, an increasing number of American students cannot present an intelligible explanation of European influences on the making of America.

The same point applies to younger Europeans as well. During the ceremonies commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Allied landing in Normandy, held in France in June 2004, French political analyst Dominique Moïsi was stunned to hear French high school students discuss whether the Battle of Normandy had been an American invasion or an American liberation, as though it were a legitimate question. ''It was,'' he wrote, ''the first troubling sign of the deterioration of the knowledge and understanding of the past. . . . What can the future of transatlantic relations be if the past is not taught properly in France, and European history is completely ignored in the United States?''[9]

From the vantage point of our respective backyards Moïsi's question has frightening implications. Without a knowledge of our history, our heritage, and our habits of life, current events have no context. Without a historical context, events have no meaning. They float, aimlessly, on a sea of ignorance, and when they collide the damage can be severe. The appearance of this fly in the soup, whose character is made of disaffection, is recent, and also ironic in the American-European world where the quality of education and enlightenment have always been matters of pride.

The transatlantic community seemed extraordinarily strong in the days following the terrorist attack on America of September 11, 2001. European newspapers assured their readers that, ''We are all Americans now,'' and millions of Europeans genuinely felt that way. That conclusion had a historical context. It was about supporting each other in a time of need.

In the weeks that followed, however, such sentiments were gradually replaced with headlines of criticism; if you will, with the reappearance of an old fly in the soup named ''discord.'' There was less talk about amity, and more about what Americans and Europeans disliked about each other. Many Europeans and Americans watching this transformation, both political leaders and private citizens, began actively to contribute to it. In tone and tenor their sarcastic speeches and ironic letters to the editor suggested a dialogue of the deaf. Were Europeans and Americans really listening to each other? Some drew attention to the values that Europe and America have in common. But few mentioned the obvious point that friends who enjoy each other's respect and trust do not always agree. Was this because our historical memory had become so short? Or, because Americans and Europeans really saw the world so differently?

Some Americans thought the answer was yes to both questions, and one of them, Robert Kagan, wrote a simplistic, but provocative essay about it in the summer of 2002. It was entitled ''Power and Weakness'' and began with the premise that ''it is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world.'' Kagan summed up ''today's transatlantic problems'' as ''a power problem;'' namely, that ''American military strength has produced a propensity to use that strength. Europe's military weakness has produced a perfectly understandable aversion to the exercise of military power.''[10]

The superficial merits of the comparison notwithstanding, American military power is not synonymous with being the indispensable nation. Many Americans and Europeans are well aware that they occupy the same world, and that they have seldom seen it through the same lens. But even though Americans and Europeans have not always shared the same views, and have not always pursued the same goals, they have always recognized that differences of opinion are not the same thing as irreconcilable divides.

Until that is, after September 11, 2001. Since then something new has emerged. It is growing discordance, propelled forward by ignorance, jealousy, arrogance, and mistrust. It has led some to ask whether Americans and Europeans have forgotten why we are partners and friends, and others to observe, from commanding and sometimes neoconservative analytical heights, that the differences cannot be resolved.

Kagan concluded his essay with the observation that, ''. . . it is more than a cliché that the United States and Europe share a set of common Western beliefs. Their aspirations for humanity are much the same, even if their vast disparity of power has now put them in very different places. Perhaps it is not too naively optimistic to believe that a little common understanding could still go a long way.'' Indeed, it is not naively optimistic. But arriving at ''a little common understanding'' requires a little common knowledge, and the willingness to listen. Both seem to be in short supply in America and Europe.

The European-American relationship is not made of just two elements called power and weakness. It is made of many things which fit together in complicated ways. An accurate measure was taken in a speech in Wilton Park, England in January 2000, well before the acrimony about who is strong and who is weak, and perhaps in response to mounting criticism in Europe that America was becoming a ''hyper-power.'' The measure was offered by then U.S. ambassador to NATO Alexander Vershbow, an American with European ancestors. ''Democratic Europe and North America are bound together,'' he said, ''as no other two regions in the world. We are inextricably linked in a fortunate tangle of kinship, society, science, letters and commerce. Our remarkably similar values and world views would inevitably bind us. The relevant reality is this: We and you—North America and Europe—could not extricate ourselves from each other's intellectual, cultural, business and national lives at this point even if we wanted to.''

Vershbow's views were, and are shared by many Americans and Europeans. In Europe the ''Atlanticists,'' as they are sometimes known, believe in a European Union with strong political, economic, and military insti-

tutions that complement those of America, rather than serving as a rival to them. Together, as friends and allies who hold each other in high regard, the Atlanticists argue that Europe and America have both independent and joint roles to play in technological advancement, the promotion of human rights, the development of free markets, the settlement of international conflicts, in defending freedom against tyranny, and in contributing to the preservation of peace.

On the American side of the Atlantic they believe in a strong America that leads judiciously and decisively, together with Europe, that earns respect as a consequence of responsible behavior and prudent conduct. Although from today's perspective it may seem like a long time ago, President George Bush put it very well during his visit to Warsaw in June 2001, shortly before Heidi Simonis was getting ready to deliver her speech in New York City about peace in Europe. "Our goal," Bush said, "is to replace the false lines that have divided Europe for too long. . . . My nation welcomes the consolidation of European unity and the stability it brings. . . . And all in Europe and America understand the central lesson of the century past. When Europe and America are divided history tends to tragedy. When Europe and America are partners, no trouble or tyranny can stand against us."[11]

If the conclusion has not lost any of its validity—and it was reiterated by both American and European leaders during President Bush's visit to Europe in February 2005—what are the reasons for existing unhappiness?

Interpreting September 11, 2001

Following the attack on the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon, the American government rewrote the rules governing national security. In the parlance of the defense analyst, this meant an unprecedented reevaluation of American threat perceptions, military structures, and strategic doctrine. In the language of the historian, it meant that America's response to the unprovoked attack was declaration of an unconditional "war on terrorism," to begin in Afghanistan. It was a response that, initially, found overwhelming support in Europe, part of which included

fighter aircraft sorties flown by Dutch and French pilots.[12] The ensuing consequences for the terrorists of the Al Qaeda network were devastating. But there were also unexpected consequences for the Atlantic alliance.

By December 2001 the Taliban had been defeated in Afghanistan. ‘‘As a mirror of the American capacity for reaction to unforeseen crisis,’’ wrote the Paris daily *Le Monde*, ‘‘the events of Sept. 11 have provided grounds for astonishment. . . . By comparison, Europe appears to be a giant ensnared in its own rules and procedures.’’[13] Less clear, however, was whether Europeans had understood how the American government, and millions of Americans, interpreted the assault on their freedom.

Explanations were available in Europe. The majority of them contained the same judgment: Americans were in a state of shock. One such conclusion came from an Englishman with many friends in America, Christopher Patten, who was also EU commissioner for external affairs. In early 2002 he explained that the Europeans did not ‘‘fully comprehend the impact of a grand innocence and a sense of magnificent self-confidence and invulnerability being shattered in that appalling way.’’[14] A year and a half later the same point was still being made by a distinguished professor in Paris, Pierre Hassner. He argued that the new and notable difference between America and Europe was that America now recognized it was no longer a sanctuary, in contrast to Europe, which had long since become accustomed to its vulnerability.[15]

These two, related interpretations made it much easier for Europeans to condemn what they considered to be precipitous and unilateral American behavior, and to criticize America for its naiveté in contrast to Europe’s worldly wisdom. Novelist John le Carré did both by writing in *The Times* of London in early 2003 that ‘‘America has entered one of its periods of historic madness, but this is the worst I can remember.’’[16] This conclusion appealed to a great many Europeans, but found little sympathy with Americans.

Not only had American freedom been violated, but so had the freedom of all those who had died in Pennsylvania, in Washington, D.C., and in New York City, men and women from at least seventy different countries.

It is true that many Americans were appalled that anyone, even terrorists, would want to kill innocent people in such a barbaric way, but American reaction was not one of shock.

Americans were furious. Their reaction was an aspect of the American character that few non-Americans have ever understood well.[17] A notable exception was Winston Churchill, whose words captured perfectly that certain trait of the American spirit: "The United States is like a gigantic boiler. Once the fire is lit under it, there's no limit to the power it can generate." The last fire had been started by the unprovoked Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The attack on September 11, 2001, also ignited a fire, and was similarly a fatal miscalculation. Americans were not prepared to stand idly by and let terrorists strike again. So they took steps to combat it. Americans considered themselves in a war being waged against freedom, and intended to remain at war until they defeated the enemy. In so doing life was given to another American proclivity. John le Carré had called it a period of "historic madness," but those who knew Americans well recognized it as a view of the world in which good is pitted against evil, and expressed in terms of, "either you are with us, or you are against us."

Often critical of Americans for focusing on the short term, many Europeans who had only met Americans via television did not recognize that American outrage also reflected a limitless capacity to right what they see as wrongs against them. Americans began by immediately taking great comfort in publicly supporting each other as one out of many, of which the appearance of millions of American flags throughout the country was a symbol. It was an instinctive reaction and not, as some Europeans suggested, a "politically correct" response or an attempt to restore confidence in Wall Street's financial prowess.

There was, however, misunderstanding in America as well. Some Americans misinterpreted the initial outpouring of sympathy and support from Europe, and assumed that the Europeans were just as angry. That was evident, so it was assumed, in their immediate response. The first

European head of state to visit the twin towers' site, almost at once, was the president of France, Jacques Chirac.

In Germany Chancellor Schröder addressed the Bundestag to express "unconditional solidarity" with America, eulogized New York City as the world's "symbol of refuge," and won parliamentary approval to send German forces to fight with American forces in Afghanistan. It was the first deployment of German troops outside of Europe since the end of World War II—a decision of monumental import for the Germans, but whose significance went unrecognized by the American government and unnoticed by Americans. Moreover, and not unsurprisingly given America's defense of Berlin, thousands of Berliners demonstrated at the Brandenburg Gate to express their support. In addition, German businesses as well as individuals contributed, almost immediately, the enormous sum of $42 million to help survivors and aid families of victims.[18]

Misunderstanding was further complicated by the reaction of the American government to NATO's response. The alliance invoked Article 5 of its treaty for the first time in its history, the article which considers an attack against one member an attack against all. The European members prepared a list of military responsibilities they could confidently undertake during the first phrase of the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. But the American government's gratitude was not as enthusiastic as European leaders may have expected.

Some American national security advisors maligned the offer, explaining that Europe's limited military capabilities would not be much help. Others argued that Europe's offer "was a ruse to tie America down." "The Bush administration," wrote Robert Kagan, "viewed NATO's historic decision to aid the United States under Article V less as a boon than as a booby trap. An opportunity to draw Europe into common battle . . . even in a minor role, was thereby unnecessarily lost."[19] It was a gratuitous and short-sighted policy decision, but a response consistent with a view of the world that is black and white.

In the event, American and European military forces joined together in the effort to destroy the Taliban and the Al Qaeda network in Afghani-

stan. It began in the late autumn of 2001 and would continue for many years. But European views of how to deal with terrorism's long-term threat to freedom were mixed.

During 2002, as American officials began developing the rationale for an invasion of Iraq, European doubts expressed about the wisdom of going to war in the Middle East were seen by Americans as betrayal. They believed that America's new national security strategy was reasonable, morally just, and deserved unequivocal European support. Produced by the American president's National Security Council, it was made publicly available on the Internet in the autumn of 2002. The policy was based on two propositions: (1) America's responsibility for homeland security obligated it to take aggressive action, in coalitions with others or alone if necessary, "to create a balance of power that favors human freedom: conditions in which all nations and all societies can choose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty," and (2) America's unmatched military power presented a unique opportunity for the expansion of freedom throughout the world, and therefore, implied an imperative to shape a new American century.

These propositions assumed that threats could not be managed by conventional containment and deterrence, and, further, that the war on terrorism could not be won "on the defensive," but must be taken to those who would attack America, or any other country. This approach reflected the American conclusion that the issue was black and white; that is to say, terrorists needed to be taught a lesson. The concept of deterrence was based on an expanded arsenal of options, which included using preemptive attack as a weapon of defense. Embedded in this policy was the assumption that America's European allies would agree with the conclusions and support the strategy's implementation.

Also contained in this approach, however, were seeds which could divide the Atlantic alliance. The purpose of the strategy was to eliminate terrorism with military force, not to intensify discussions with Europe about the various faces of the threat, many of which Europeans thought were shrouded in different shades of gray. Nor were the recommendations developed by the National Security Council the result of an American-

European agreement on what constituted dangers to freedom and peace, and how to react to them.

Equally serious was that the Europeans faced two dilemmas of their own making. In their effort to stand for peace in a united Europe, they had let their own military capabilities grow weak. Their minimal defense expenditures limited military options, and weakened their ability to provide convincing leadership. As one journalist later put it, Europeans want ''to maintain the role they have long enjoyed—leading the world debate. But without the power to back up your perspective, such leadership can prove elusive.''[20]

The Europeans thus produced their second dilemma. They did not share a common vision. There were at least three, in Berlin, London, and Paris. Americans saw within the European Union independent and assertive European countries that wanted to be equal partners in consultation and decision, but which did not speak with one voice. The debate among Europeans stood in counterpoint to the American preference to define clear alternatives between what is right and what is wrong, and then to choose one or the other. Failure to act, most Americans believed, was inherently more dangerous than taking a false step—and they saw this view corroborated in the history of war and peace in Europe. The result was not only acrimony within the European house, but a once whole Atlantic alliance was pulled apart as well.

That seeds of discontent sprouted was inevitable. The reaction from Europe's intellectuals was entirely in keeping with their response to the East-West confrontation during the Cold War. Their principal contention, which they considered morally beyond reproach, was that the new threat to peace was not terrorism, but America's response to it. Others in Europe, such as Sir Roy Denman, former ambassador of the European Commission in Washington, D.C., held very different views. In mid-2002 he concluded that ''the Europeans have no influence because they have no policy,'' and suggested that there were three lessons the Europeans had not yet learned:

> Unless it gets its act together it will not count. It needs to stop lecturing Americans on why they should behave like Europeans. And European leaders should spend less time with worldly State Department folk and more with businessmen, the Congress and grassroots America.[21]

A related consequence was that the most important dysfunctional organization in the world, the United Nations, was locked in disagreement. Still another was a selective and insulting personalization of differences by Europeans and Americans alike. As the disagreement bore upon relations between France and America, a British commentator called the disaffection exactly what it was, a tragedy: "If each of the world's two great republics," he wrote, "has come to view the other as not so much misguided as insane, it is the result of a decade in which the two countries grew more and more alike, and more and more sympathetic, to the point where nothing short of mass murder could pull them apart."[22]

The antidialogue—that is to say, Americans and Europeans steadfastly refusing to listen to each other—continued during 2002 and into 2003. Americans, to a significant degree, asserted that they understood the real threat terrorism posed in the post–Cold War world, and that those Europeans who did not agree, failed to understand. When American leaders discussed the merits of preemptive war the primary issue in the immediate term was where to use massive military power, not whether it was justified nor whether a combination of other options should be pursued first. When some European governments endorsed the approach, and others rejected it as premature, various European and American leaders began to draw the disingenuous conclusion that fundamental differences divided "New Europe" from "Old Europe" and "Old Europe" from America.

In America there was little room for opposing views in early 2003. In mid-February the lead editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* summed up the prevailing mood vis-à-vis the American-European alliance:

> If this is what the U.S. gets from NATO, maybe it's time America considered leaving this Cold War institution and reforming an alliance of nations

> that understand the new threats to world order. . . . the Cold War is over, and the main threat to the West now is global terrorism employing nuclear and bioweapons. If NATO cannot adapt to this reality by moving its resources to meet that threat, then as currently constructed it has outlived its usefulness. What President Bush calls a ''coalition of the willing'' will become American's new security alliance.[23]

By the time the war began in Iraq in mid-March 2003 the debate between America and ''Old Europe'' was far more than just joined.[24] It had moved on to the level of concluding statements. Many Americans, both in and out of government, had decided that an alliance whose members were divided was no longer useful. More important, however, was the reason why it was divided. This was a factor of greater weight which British foreign minister Jack Straw, writing in March 2003, defined as an ''indictment of European military capabilities.'' ''For more than a decade,'' he wrote, ''—with the notable exceptions of France and Britain—most European defense budgets have fallen below 2 percent of gross national product. . . . The alliance will flourish only as long as both sides of the Atlantic shoulder the burden.''[25]

Straw's ''indictment'' was the crux of the issue. In 2002 America's defense budget, in dollar terms, was almost double that of the twenty-five other NATO members combined. America had spent 3.5 percent of its gross domestic product on defense, followed by Britain at 2.5 percent and France at 2.4 percent. The defense budgets of the remaining twenty-two members were all below 2.0 percent. In 2006 American defense spending was almost 40 percent of the world's total, seven times larger than that of China.[26]

From the American viewpoint the Europeans did not have the power to deter aggression and preserve peace, and therefore had no choice but to embrace diplomacy and negotiation as the principal tools of national security. The Europeans were lauding one history lesson—that war always produces tragic and unexpected consequences—and ignoring another—that effective diplomacy must be backed up with credible military power and the willingness to use it.

This state of affairs suggested two changing relationships: (1) in the view of many Americans and of some Europeans, Europe could not play a significant role in maintaining peace, either on the continent or elsewhere in the world, and (2) America would be forced by European default to play an ever greater role in the future. Europeans would continue to resent what they were already criticizing as "the American century," and Americans would continue to deride what they saw as arrogance born of European weakness. Some Europeans would find it deceptively tempting to brand America as the legitimate successor to Russian imperialism, while others would unreservedly share American commitment to the defense of freedom.

The result, in turn, would be twofold. Europeans would be divided by opinion rather than by an iron curtain, and America and Europe would be divided by two very different interpretations of the paths that lead to freedom and peace. Some Europeans would eventually call America's leader "the warrior president . . . [resembling] no one more than Kaiser Wilhelm II, the self-described supreme warlord."[27] And some Americans would eventually conclude, "that so long as Europe tries to build itself into a sort of soft superpower, using such things as declarations of principle and diplomacy to exert its influence rather than military might, a lot of Americans are just not going to take it very seriously."[28]

The seesaw of recrimination recalled, for some, Winston Churchill's admonition that "the only thing worse than fights with Allies is fighting without them,"[29] and suggested to others that Americans and Europeans would be wise to spend more time discussing a common vision and less time on divisive rhetoric. But to find a common vision would require agreement on common objectives, if there were any, and the willingness to devote equal attention to their pursuit. It would also require mutual respect for our differences and cultivation of our affinities. The success of such an effort, if it were to be undertaken, would depend on the strength of leadership provided in America and in Europe.