

## Foreword

**D**ENNIS BARK is an unabashed Atlanticist who believes that what Americans and Europeans have in common is far more important than what divides them, and that as allies they have a responsibility to provide clear and strong leadership in a world badly in need of it.

The collapse of communist regimes in 1989–1990 gave Americans and Europeans an unprecedented chance to do so. But during the decade of the 1990s, while this opportunity was open to them, they ignored the logical consequence of the end of the Cold War; namely, the obligation to set new economic, political, and diplomatic goals to replace the common front they had maintained while the Iron Curtain divided Europe. Instead, they remained within the comfortable confines of their respective backyards, from which, in the wake of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, they safely hurled insults at each other, thus demonstrating aspects of leadership that were unworthy of the word.

If the twentieth century was marked by an American-European partnership of unprecedented mutual interests, and by an appreciation of common values, and for some by a friendship made of trust, affection and respect, this book's title suggests that the once-storied relationship is coming apart. For many the Atlantic Divide has widened. Indeed, a great many things have changed since the first quarter of the twentieth century when Theodore Roosevelt invited his good friend, French ambassador Jean-Jules Jusserand—married to an American from a New England family—to attend cabinet meetings in Washington.

These changes are the subject of the author's reflections on differences

between Europeans and Americans. Bark focuses on our varied habits of life about which widespread ignorance exists in both America and in Europe. His observations are neither pro-American nor anti-European, but they are astute, and they warrant careful reading as he sets out what our differences are, where they come from, and how they affect our judgments of each other. He points out as well that Europeans think they know a great deal more about America than they really do, and conversely that Americans are blithely unaware of how little they know about Europe.

In a series of essays that describe significant differences between America and Europe, Bark sends his readers a clear and powerful message; namely, that we Europeans should pay greater attention to the values we share with America, as we did following World War II and during the first decades of European unification, until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Europeans should cast aside our prejudices and jealousies, and especially our absurd sense of superiority that is sometimes conducive to hatred. At the same time, Americans need not inflame these tendencies by needlessly dealing with their European counterparts in an overbearing or dismissive manner, such as drawing a gratuitous distinction between “Old Europe” and “New Europe.” A more respectful and nuanced approach, the norm when European elites conduct business among themselves, is very much in order and much more effective.

These latter considerations, far from new, as Bark is well aware, also concerned Jean-Jules Jusserand. He knew America well, and, in fact, served as president of the American Historical Association in 1921, and received the first Pulitzer Prize in American History in 1923. Jusserand was unusually prescient in his final letter to his American friends; a letter, virtually unknown today, that Bark cites with effect. Written late in his life and after his retirement from the French diplomatic service, he called his message, “farewell forever:”

The sands in the hour-glass are running low; I must take leave, probably forever. May peace, prosperity, happy homes be the meed of your energy, good sense and kind hearts. When we judge each other we are not bound to applaud all that the other does, nor even to avoid expressing our blame

when there is cause; but blame must not be peppered with sarcasm and irony; the tone should be that of the affectionate reproach to a loved brother. . . . Remember this also, and be well persuaded of its truth: the future is not in the hands of Fate, but in ours.

Europeans should also develop greater respect and tolerance for the history, heritage and habits of life of our oldest and most important ally, because as Bark accurately concludes, many Americans and Europeans who still seek a harmonious relationship, strongly endorse Edmund Burke's conclusion drawn more than two centuries ago: "Nothing is so strong a tie of amity between nation and nation as correspondence in law, customs, manners and habits of life. They have more than the force of treaties in themselves. They are obligations written in the heart."

From my Parisian perspective, much misunderstanding between America and Europe (and especially between America and France) comes from a decline of confidence in who we are and where we are going, but it comes also from our failure to recognize that the idea of Europe has little in common with the American idea of freedom. Our misjudgment of what defines the American character also, and too often, takes the form of unwarranted criticism such as, for example, castigation of globalization, as though this term defines a grand American conspiracy. This approach sometimes verges on anti-Americanism as many European leaders attack the straw man that they derisively call the American economic model. Americans, of course, tend to contribute, albeit inadvertently, to the shrill temper of differences of opinion because, as a people, they are much more direct than we are and prefer to analyze issues in terms that are often black and white. Europeans generally take exception to this analytical approach and are more prone to view the world's complexities in different shades of gray.

Bark points out that the issue is not whether one American or European view of the world is better than the other. His concern is that they are different, and that without understanding the reasons why, Americans and Europeans lose their way in the dark, with a predictable result. In the darkness we continue to hold one another in a fond embrace, while stepping on each other's toes and trying to lead at the same time.

Ignorance is also present on the American side (of the Atlantic), however, especially as it concerns the reasons why so much of European life is structured by rule and governance from the top down. So Bark describes the essential difference between America and Europe, one of rule from the bottom up, and rule from the top down, respectively. In particular, in an essay intended primarily for an American readership, he provides a useful historical sketch of the reasons underlying the lure of socialism in Europe—a concept of rule from the top down that traces its practice to a feudal and aristocratic past. This essay, however, is enlightening for European elites, too, many of whom consider rule from the top down—whether from the left or from the right—as the twenty-first-century incarnation of eighteenth-century enlightenment.

Here the author pointedly draws our attention to the major debate that raged during the enlargement of the European Union that continued unabated during the decade of the 1990s. It was the struggle over the proper role, size, and power of government. Initially, Americans interpreted as convergence the European adoption of what America already had: an internal market for goods, services and capital flows, a common market, a single currency (the euro) and the expansion of Europe to the east (just as the United States, much earlier, had gone west).

In the vacuum left by the end of the Cold War, however, birth of unexpected progeny has taken place. Today, we are experiencing growing disagreement among Europeans and Americans on the value of individual liberty and free marketplaces, versus the asserted safety of state control and government-mandated equality.

The fly in the soup is that there exists in Europe a contradiction between the Anglo-Saxon “ultraliberal” free-market model of the United Kingdom and America on the one hand and the centralized state and welfare dependence practiced by France and Germany on the other. Because of the economic policies followed in Ireland, that country is becoming a model of freedom and free-market forces at work, just as the governments of France and Germany maintain allegiance to an aged and statist social model that is out of step with the demands and challenges presented by globalization and rapid technological innovation.

The case of Germany is noteworthy. West Germany was reconstructed

with the principles of a free-market economy long before Margaret Thatcher came to power in the U.K. in 1980, at a time when the Anglo-Saxon “ultraliberals” were socialists. The Germans, indeed, have departed completely from the Fribourg school of economic and social thought and hence, from the classically liberal economic and social model they promoted under the leadership of Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard.

Bark’s judgment, as pro-American as it is pro-European, is simple and straightforward: the health of our transatlantic relationship, despite our differences and because of the values we share, is vital to us both. On both sides of the Atlantic Divide there is agreement that the world is without strong leadership. America and Europe have an obligation to provide it and we can do so much more effectively together than we can separately.

In the best of times or in the worst, we enjoy a relationship made of many things—of differences and disagreements, but also of rich histories and proud heritage. That does not mean we always admire each other, or that we always like each other, but it does mean that we have a joint and persuasive interest in the success of each other’s undertakings. In principle these are not contradictory, but complementary, as Austrian Nobel laureate Friedrich Hayek defines the principle ingredients of classical liberalism: “the sacredness of truth . . . the ordinary rules of moral decency . . . a common belief in the value of human freedom . . . an affirmative action towards democracy . . . opposition to all forms of totalitarianism.”

It should be self-evident that the Europeans, and especially the French and Germans, must build on their own strengths, with their own efforts. But we Europeans cannot leave it at that and bask in the glow of self-righteousness from within the European Union. America cannot act as the police of the world on its own, nor should it be expected to do so. Europe must show that it possesses the political will, the military power, and the economic strength to take an active role in preserving peace and order in a world tragically lacking in both. Without this resolve, Europe cannot play a role on the world’s stage as a dependable and respected partner, and America, at risk to itself and to Europe, will become the de facto gendarme of the world without a mandate to do so.

That Europe is without leaders of real stature and conviction, and that Europe as a “union” is in disorder, cannot be denied, which is why Bark

concludes his book with three essays on freedom and order. What Americans and Europeans both need is strong leaders, with the courage to define clearly where we want to go and how we want to get there. What is today especially depressing to partisans of European unity is the inability of Europe's leaders to recognize and support the strengths of free markets at a time when the state is becoming increasingly incapable of meeting the needs of a world in social, economic and political turmoil. To illustrate, Bark cites French president Jacques Chirac's simplistic assessment of free-market philosophy: "Le libéralisme, ce serait aussi désastreux que le communisme" (*Le Figaro*, March 16, 2005): "liberalism would be as disastrous as communism." What is especially telling in this assertion is the central concern underlying it: that the freedom to choose offered by free markets represents a threat to the monopoly on state power held by those European political leaders who rule from the top down, irrespective of their political persuasion.

As we are fond of saying in France, however, "the worst is not always a certainty"—*Le pire n'est pas toujours sûr*. Looking to the future many argue, on both sides of the Atlantic, that Europe should be able to make a fresh start once the present generation of leaders has retired from the political stage; that is to say, when a new generation of statesmen and -women take the reins of political and economic life in 2007 and thereafter.

Few Americans, and even fewer Europeans, have the knowledge, background and ability to write a book like this one. Dennis Bark does, and has. He identifies the differences that separate us, and provides us with reasons that should compel us to narrow the divide. In doing so he presents us with a *tour de force*. This book will delight many, and anger some, but it cannot be ignored.

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