THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S IMAGE OF EUROPE: FROM AMBIVALENCE TO RIGIDITY

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Abstract

Throughout the history of post-War international relations, the image of Europe held by successive American administrations has been defined by a longstanding ambivalence between recognition of Europe as an equal partner and reduction of Europe to secondary status. The George W. Bush administration's image of Europe starts from the same fundamental opposition and is organized around three main elements: Europe is regarded as broad, secondary, and ultimately unrealistic in its approach to security.

In an article published in *National Interest* in 2000, Zbigniew Brzezinski (2000, pp. 17-32) outlined his view of Europe. Building an integrated Union will never achieve a military design, he argued: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains the only regional organization equipped to respond to the security challenges of the post-Cold War period.

On this view, transatlantic relations remain asymmetrical and tilted towards the US, a depiction which breeds criticism and resentment in Europe. For example, Christoph Bertram and Timothy Garton Ash give a trenchant theoretical reply to Brzezinski's argument. They consider the development of a European defence identity to be inevitable. Indeed, Ash argues that this, rather than the introduction of a common currency, should have topped the political agenda. A European Union (EU) with real operational military capabilities would, in the not so distant future, become an equal partner to the United States. The US should wish for nothing better: the new Europe would be a genuine partner in the exercise of leadership and the pursuit of the international system's global stability (Brzezinski, 2000, pp. 30-31).

This debate provides a good illustration of the relatively open tensions in relations between the US and the major European States. But new questions have arisen since the fall of 2000: is the George W. Bush administration following in its predecessors' footsteps when it comes to relations with its European allies? Does it entirely accept Brzezinski's representation of Europe? Was September 11 a watershed event, one that is

causing the administration to develop a new image of Europe? (Specifically, does the administration regard the European Union as less of a bit player?) More generally, all these questions suggest that we should investigate the mutual impact of structural changes in the international system and the strategic practices of States on both sides of the Atlantic since the end of the Cold War, particularly given that September 11 has introduced strains of uncertainty and anxiety into the post-bipolar world of the past ten years.

The American image of Europe is not independent of the larger system of global strategic representations. During the Cold War, the image of the Soviet Union as enemy provided an analytic framework which confined foreign policy within certain boundaries. The American image of Europe was informed by the bipolar international system and Washington's desire to buttress the free world's positions in the Old World. It was grounded in security considerations, which required, to be sure, that Western Europe be an ally, but also, and most importantly, reduced it to a series of second-string States subject to US constraints (Hobsbawm, 1994, pp. 239-252; Bideleux and Taylor, 1996, pp. 2-3; Anderson, 1996, pp. 126-127).

The disappearance of the Communist bloc reshaped the security picture in Europe. It can reasonably be supposed that this would have had an impact on Washington's representation of European strategic issues. Does this mean that Europe is becoming an equal partner in defence or a rival? Since the end of the Cold War, no US President has failed to come up with a pithy phrase to summarize his conception of Europe. George Bush Sr. called for "a Europe whole and free." Bill Clinton for a "peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe"; George W. Bush outlined his vision of "a Europe whole, free and at peace" on June 15, 2001 at a joint press conference in Warsaw with the Polish President. What do these slogans mean in practical terms? Precisely which institution is conceived as the key player in the new security environment, NATO or the European Union?

As can be seen, our questions spring from a research tradition which seeks to analyze the function of images in international relations. This tradition has been enriched by contributions from new theoretical approaches in recent years. Since the innovative work of Kenneth Boulding (1956), Uri Brofenbrenner (1961, pp. 46-56) and Robert Jervis (1970), image studies have been used extensively to understand the decision-making process in foreign policy. Initially, the focus is on identifying values, the building blocks of images (Eldridge, 1979, pp. 158 ff). According to Boulding (1959, p. 423), "It is what we think the world is like, not what it is really like, that determines our behavior." Numerous studies have attempted to explain conflicts using this approach, leading to a proliferation of "enemy image" studies (Frank, 1965; Eckhardt, 1991, pp. 87-95; Rieber, 1991). More recently, scholars have applied the image approach to situations that are not necessarily conflict-driven. They are expanding the field of study and investigating the decisive influence of leaders' representations of the problem on strategic policy development (David, 1994; Sylvan and Voss, 1998). The way the situation is conceived

provides the basis for the decision-making process, which seeks appropriate means for addressing the identified problem. This representation of the problem is largely conditioned by image, defined as the decision-makers' assessments, positive or negative, of another State or entity that is comparable in terms of capabilities and culture (Sylvan and Voss, 1998, p. 19; Cottam and McCoy, 1998, pp. 116-124).

During the Cold War, many studies of the American image of the Soviet Union were published (Ramel, 2000, pp. 532-533; Eckhardt and White, 1967, pp. 324-332; Siverson, 1972, pp. 203-210; Starr, 1984; Koopman, Snyder and Jervis, 1989, pp. 119-138; Bossuat, 1994). As this line of research became more refined, it improved our understanding of the conditions under which images emerge and typologies develop. As dependent variables, images are highly complex objects located at the intersection of several disciplines. Scholars do not agree on the origins of images. The two leading schools are the psychological/psychoanalytical (Conover, Mingst and Sigelman, 1980, pp. 325-337; Freud and Bullit, 1966) and cognitive (Herrmann, 1986, pp. 841-874; Herrmann and Fischerkeller, 1995, pp. 415-422) approaches. The factors in the creation of images can be divided into *soft facts*, the set of biases a government brings to bear on an event (the idiosyncratic aspect), and *hard facts*, which are structural in nature (e.g. social change, an economic slump, challenges to cultural identity, contact with other leaders, collective and individual memory (Fiebig-von Hase, 1997). In the search for the determinants of mental images, the analyst must forsake single-cause explanations. The other area in which this line of research has added to our knowledge is the construction of typologies of tendencies within the ruling elite. One example is the well-known study by Ole R. Holsti and James Rosenau (1986, pp. 375-409), which distinguishes among Cold War internationalism, Post-Cold-War internationalism, and semi-isolationism.

While discrepancies between analyses resting in different disciplines can be found (particularly with the rise of political psychology), image analysis seems to be increasingly robust methodologically (Kaplowitz, 1990, pp. 39-82; Herrmann, Voss, Schooler and Ciarrochi, 1997, pp. 403-433), and is being enriched today by contributions from constructivist theory as applied to international relations. The advantage of this approach lies in the way it conceives the construction of images: it carries image analysis beyond the realm of foreign policy and attempts to understand the importance of images in the structure of the international system. Constructivism applies sociological concepts, such as Anthony Giddens' key categories, to international relations; it reads international phenomena on the basis of intersubjective representations shared by State actors and classifies images in terms of those representations (Klotz and Lynch, 1999, pp. 51-63; Adler, 1997, pp. 319-363; Checkel, 1998, pp. 324-348). The structure of the system, suggests Alexander Wendt (1992, pp. 391-425; 1994, p. 384-396; 1995, p. 71-81), consists of rules, knowledge and shared ideas.

We do not claim to apply in this article a strictly constructivist methodology. Rather, we propose to use Wendt's propositions to shed new light on the Bush administration's image of Europe. In other words, we will assess changes in transatlantic

relations with attention to the impact of American images of European otherness (which vary depending on the State in question and the institutions under consideration, beginning with NATO and the EU) on US strategic practice. While the end of the Cold War wiped away the United States' enemy image of the Soviet Union, there has been no equivalent transformation of its image of Europe, which is fairly rigid and still consists of the same major elements.

We will begin by describing the main elements of the Bush administration's image of Europe. and particularly the values that inform US actions in Europe. The Bush team started out with an ambivalent image of Europe and regarded the emergence of a European defence identity with deep misgivings. September 11 did not materially affect this view. The Bush administration's picture of Europe is broad, fuzzy and generally subordinated to US interests.

We will then consider the American image of Europe as a dependent variable, using a series of explanatory hypotheses to understand the reasons for its persistence among officials in Washington over a period of decades. In this second section, our focus will be on mechanisms such as the United States' role and self-definition as a superpower. rather than on psychological or even legal factors (Sabbag, 2001, pp. 135-162). Our purpose here is not to provide an exhaustive discussion of all the forces at work but to underscore the key structural factors that promote the durability and rigidity of the American image of Europe. In the conclusion, we will compare our results with John Duffield's findings (2001), in order to make a contribution to the theoretical debate on post-Cold War transatlantic relations.

The Bush Administration's Current Image of Europe

Throughout the history of post-War international relations, the image of Europe held by successive American administrations has been defined by a longstanding ambivalence between recognition of Europe as an equal partner and reduction of Europe to secondary status. The George W. Bush administration's image of Europe starts from the same fundamental opposition and is organized around three main elements: Europe is regarded as broad, secondary , and ultimately unrealistic in its approach to security.

An Ambivalent Starting Point

In 1973, Henry Kissinger (1979, p.81) believed firmly in trying to implement the ideas of Jean Monnet. He thought that the United States had a duty, in the post-War period, to support a politically united Europe with supranational federal institutions, which could become an equal partner for the United States (Brandon, 1992, p. 6). However, he vastly preferred bilateral diplomacy with European governments to talks with Community institutions, which he likened to "walking on eggs" (quoted in Brandon,

1992, p. 6). This is the spirit in which successive US leaders have regarded Europe. They paid lip service to Europe's political status, particularly as a unifying institution; when it came to strategic practice and foreign relations, Europe remained in the shadows. In this sense, Europe as an institutional construct was not really considered a potentially equal ally in terms of capabilities and culture, but more an actor subordinated to US geostrategic interests. American administrations swung back and forth between support for greater European autonomy based on growing political integration (accompanied by scaled-back US involvement in Europe) and for the status quo, leaving the US considerable room to manoeuvre.

The Bush administration's foreign policy has not been immune to this ambivalence. From the outset, the administration wanted to establish a new division of labour and slash the US presence in Europe, particularly in the Balkans. Condoleezza Rice, Bush's National Security Advisor, believes the US should let the Europeans run their own peacekeeping missions in Europe and focus its attention on other regions, such as the Gulf and the Middle East (M. Gordon, 2000). At the Wehrkunde conference in Munich, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was very evasive about American involvement in Europe, causing considerable concern among European officials. But this position has softened under the force of regional events. President Bush (2001), Condoleezza Rice (2000a) and Secretary of State Colin Powell (2000; 2001a) have reaffirmed the American commitment to the Balkans and promised that any withdrawal of US troops would be gradual and would be carried out in consultation with US allies.

The current US image of Europe betrays a classic NATO-first conception, relegating European aspirations to autonomy to no more than a pious hope.[1] The Janus head is an appropriate icon for this American view. On the one hand, the US tends to recognize that Europe needs to have a more dynamic and responsible defence role. On the other hand, Janus' other face is determined to limit that role at all costs in order to safeguard classic alliances. Washington's impulse is reign in Europe. Its attitude provides an object lesson in Platonic reminiscence: the European idea is, first and foremost, what the US conceives it to be.

Three Basic Issues, Three Major Components

This current image of Europe, strongly tinged with conservatism, turns around three key issues: missile defence, European capabilities, and the creation of a genuine Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP); NATO and the issue of NATO enlargement; and, above all, the partnership with Russia. This way of framing the issues suggests that the Bush administration regards the Europeans as sharing common values and has some desire for them to acquire greater autonomy. Upon analysis, however, this desire quickly evaporates, since the latent values (Holt and Silverstein, 1989, p. 3) behind US foreign policy betray a classic conception of transatlantic relations,

particularly when it comes to continued US involvement in Europe, as Condoleezza Rice (2000a) herself has stated.

The American missile shield plan. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld claims there is a bipartisan consensus in Congress in favour of the missile shield; the question is not whether the project should go ahead, but how and when. At the beginning of May 2001, the Bush administration decided to create a Global Missile Defence. Washington says this is a firm decision and the project is necessary to defend the US against "rogue states". As currently conceived, the missile shield, which is similar to Reagan's 1983 plan, will not neglect the allies, starting with Europe. Bush has stated, "The dangers ahead confront us all. The defences we build must protect us all" (Vershbow, 2001).

The missile defence issue, which has been on the transatlantic relations agenda since the late 1990s, upsets the Europeans for several reasons, even though President Bush has said he wants to discuss it in a cooperative spirit. To begin with, while they agree that the arsenals of rogue States are a legitimate concern, the Europeans feel that limited or "national" defences undermine the transatlantic security relationship. Furthermore, defences of this nature could promote the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and derail multilateral cooperation in this sphere. Last but not least, some European governments fear that opting for the missile defence, at the expense of expanded negotiations on the ABM treaty, may have a lasting impact on relations with Moscow and therefore on European security (Daalder and Goldgeier, 2001, p. 86).

On all these issues, the US tends to favour discussion but, at the end of the day, the administration is fuelling European fears and suspicions about US security intentions. The main consequence of this major difference, in the foreseeable future, will be to drive a wedge between Europe and the US (Gordon, 2001, p. 33). This first issue points to the first component of the Bush administration's image of Europe: the leading allies, members of NATO, or of the European Union do not take the threats to the West seriously enough. They are not looking where they should; they are much more concerned with the failed States, which need lavish economic and financial assistance to rebuild and to maintain their stability. In the view of the Bush administration, this is a short-sighted attitude.

European defence capabilities. Since the Helsinki summit in December 1999, the European Union has held to a fairly strict agenda for building the CESDP. The drive to achieve the headline goal by 2003 continued apace under the Portuguese and particularly the French presidencies. It involves strengthening the Union's permanent structures and, most importantly, creating a Rapid Reaction Force of 60,000 troops plus support logistics. It is in line with the European desire to create a comprehensive crisis management and conflict prevention capability, which would allow the EU to intervene in situations where NATO as such is not involved (Dumoulin, 2000, pp. 11-19). This dimension of European defence policy was driven by the Kosovo effect and by the European consensus on the need to intervene, spurred by the neutral countries' strong position in favour of greater humanitarian involvement by the EU in Petersberg missions.

Many questions surrounding the creation of the force have yet to be resolved. The EU will be judged by the resources the member States allocate to honouring this military commitment. In short, the money must follow, a contentious matter for the Europeans (Howorth, 2000, pp. 43-46).

At first, the United States welcomed the European plan. On November 20, 2000, Madeleine Albright stated: "We, along with the other Allies, are working closely with the European Union to make this initiative a success" (Daalder and Goldgeier, 2001, p. 79). But the American support was mainly for show: US nervousness about a European Rapid Reaction Force quickly became apparent and has been a constant from the Clinton administrations to the new Bush team. For example, Madeleine Albright was quick to point to the potential risks involved in the creation of a European force. Her 3D doctrine opposed the creation of a force that could eventually become an embryonic European army and lead to a *decoupling* of Europe's security from that of the US, a *duplication* of capabilities that NATO already possesses, and a certain *discrimination* against European NATO countries that are not EU members (Daalder and Goldgeier, 2001, p. 79). This fear was shared by William Cohen (2000, p.2), Clinton's Defence Secretary, who issued a warning to the Europeans just before the European summit in Nice in December 2000: they must, he said, develop "open, transparent" mechanisms if NATO is not to become a "relic of the past".

The new Bush team is taking the same line (Vershbow, 2001). For example, Colin Powell stresses that the American position is to keep European forces from duplicating NATO's operations and planning (Powell, 2001b). US foreign policy is therefore based on fear of the emergence of an independent international player with specific defence capabilities. And although the appearance of such a player depends in large part on the will of certain members of the EU, such as France (Walker, 2001), and seems uncertain at the moment due to European social priorities (Yost, 2000-2001, pp. 97-128; Holmes, 2000, p. 5), this fear remains constant within the American ruling elite. It also reflects a core US position on Europe: *NATO first* (Nye, 2000, pp. 51-59). Here we see the second component of the Bush administration's image of Europe: the European defence identity is secondary, NATO is primary. The development of new institutions must not undermine NATO or challenge the United States' position in the regional security system.

The future of NATO: from enlargement to relations with Russia. To Colin Powell (Powell, 2001b), NATO remains the primary alliance; it constitutes the backbone of European security arrangements. Nothing can be done without NATO, which is to say nothing can be done without the Americans. The Alliance has ensured the security of its members in the past. Today, it provides security guarantees in light of new threats such as AIDS, drug trafficking, environmental degradation and the proliferation of arms of mass destruction (Powell, 2001c). Obviously, NATO must make some changes due to shifting strategic issues and the emergence of new threats. The Bush team recognizes the altered strategic concept adopted in 1999, which confirms a shift in the Alliance's activities

towards peacekeeping operations and crisis management. However, President Bush tends to emphasize the Alliance's original defensive mission (Daalder and Goldgeier, p. 81).

On the issue of NATO enlargement, Colin Powell (Powell, 2001c) has come out in favour of adding more new members in order to enhance European security and promote its unification: "NATO enlargement is a key part of the process of uniting all of Europe. A decision to invite in qualified new members is among the most serious the Alliance could make. It threatens no one, the enlargement of NATO, and contributes concretely to stability in Europe". The Republican Party's platform in the 2000 presidential elections set the administration's tone on this issue. It called for a dramatic expansion of NATO not only in Eastern Europe (with the Baltic States, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania) but also, and most significantly, in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The purpose is to develop closer cooperation within NATO in dealing with geopolitical problems from the Middle East to Eurasia. The program therefore takes a broad and rather fuzzy view of Europe.

But since the end of the Cold War, these classic American priorities when it comes to European security have been disturbed by another recurring image: the view of Russia as a force that must be contained. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Communist system, Washington has generally leaned towards strengthening its dialogue with Moscow, but the dialogue has been strained by a deep-seated ambiguity in US foreign policy: there is a tension in American strategic practice between recognition of Russia as a true partner and the lingering view of Russia as a threat (Walker, 2000, p. 471). During the Kosovo crisis, Russia was never invited to informal NATO meetings. Colonel Walsh, the French ambassador to NATO, reported that the doors were closed to Russian representatives despite the ostensible partnership with Russia, which was supposed to promote closer cooperation. Today, the suspicious attitude towards Russia persists. The US does want to engage Russia in a closer partnership, as the opening of a NATO information office in Moscow in February 2001 demonstrates. However, American leaders tend to lay the responsibility for the outcome of negotiations at the feet of the Russians. They feel it is up to Russia to adjust and to respond favourably to American demands (Vershbow, 2001). This approach neglects the internal political mechanisms that condition Russian behaviour and determine the external environment, as developments since 1985 confirm (Daalder and Goldgeier, 2001, p. 84).

Since September 11, there have been indications of a possible shift in the White House's attitude towards Moscow. President Putin gave the Americans his moral support and condemned the terrorist groups responsible for the attack. He even offered to cooperate with Washington in its response. In October 2001, at the Asia-Pacific Forum in Shanghai, Presidents Putin and Bush came to a meeting of the minds on disarmament. Some observers believe that the October 17 announcement of the withdrawal of Russian forces from Cuba and American support for Russia's admission to the WTO indicate more than a thaw in American-Russian relations. According to Sergei Markov (2001), "the tragedy of September 11 opened the eyes of Western politicians: they saw that

Russia was definitely their ally." However, it would be premature at this stage to say that the US administration has had a fundamental change of heart and shed its long-ingrained reflexes in dealing with Russia.

These tensions would appear to contradict Michael Howard's (1997, p. 3) contention that Americans and Europeans share the same values. When it comes to the future of Europe, Americans and Europeans differ on key issues. The differences seem to point toward three fundamental values which underpin the Bush administration's image of Europe. The first is *unilateralism,* of which the missile shield is a particularly telling example. The American position flies in the face of the European approach, which is based on ABM talks and multilateralism. An opposition is taking shape here between the leading European capitals, which want to deal with the matter by judicial means, and the Americans, who want to push ahead and create a *fait accompli* (Pfaff, 2001, pp.5-6).

The second value is *classicism.* It is evident in the US preference for NATO institutions, seen as the guarantor of peace and stability in Europe. Since it took office, the Bush administration has repeatedly reaffirmed the vital and lasting nature of the Alliance, regardless of any changes in the strategic environment (Daalder and Goldgeier, 2001, p. 81). Its unequivocal support for NATO is based on the Alliance's original defensive mission and critically important role since 1945. In Washington's eyes, NATO remains the backbone of European security (Nye, 2000, p. 53).

The third and last value consists in a sort of *residual paternalism,* which has been a constant of US policy since Wilson. Nothing can be accomplished in Europe without the Americans. The 20th century was one of the bloodiest in history, and it was so because of political turmoil in Europe. Twice, the US had to intervene, and it paid a heavy price. That price seems still to be present in the memory of Americans and may explain, to some extent, the fact that preventing new conflicts in Europe is a priority for US foreign policy.

September 11: A Rupture in the Image?

September 11, 2001 is destined to be a symbolic date in the collective memory of Americans and in the history of international relations. While it is too early to assess their impact on the strategic practices of States and other players, or whether they constitute a watershed in the history of international systems, there can be no question that the attacks in New York City and Washington are among the most important episodes since the end of the Cold War. They are an event in the full sense of the term, by virtue of their uniqueness; they raise the possibility of a break with the past (Arendt, 1961, preface), particularly when it comes to the inviolability of the territory of the world's most powerful nation, one which has been likened to a new Middle Empire (Mélandri and Vaïsse, 2001). The point here is not to attempt a preliminary interpretation of the event, which possesses a rare emotional force. Our purpose here is only to consider the image of Europe in the wake of the tragedy and to identify any shifts in perception. Like any crisis,

the period that is now beginning provides an opportunity to glimpse latent representations that are rarely visible at other times.

There are two sides to the Bush administration's image of Europe since September 11. The first is the symbolic and cultural facet, based on a strong link between the US and Europe. The planes that crashed into the American landmarks were targeting not only the United States but also the Europeans: they were instruments in a war on Western values as such. So the Europeans are viewed not only as allies but as friends whose support for the US expresses their attachment to the same cultural identity, rooted in liberty. Naturally, the US and Europe have many cultural differences, but their common roots constitute a shared heritage which links leaders from both sides of the Atlantic in times of crisis. Under the impact of an event of this type, the "values gap" that some analysts have discussed tends to narrow (Blinken, 2001b, p. 35).

This image of Europe as a "friend" is consistent with the American desire to strengthen the transatlantic security system against terrorist threats. [The event and the image could promote a process of cultural transformation in transatlantic relations and prompt a shift from a Lockian culture to a state of Kantian anarchy, to use Alexander Wendt's (1999, p. 279, pp. 297 ff) categories.] It is reflected in various US actions and positions in favour of closing ranks against terrorism. On September 20, 2001, the President of the Council of Europe was in Washington to sign a Euro-American undertaking to fight terrorism: "Our resolve is a reflection of the strength of the US-EU relationship, our shared values, and our determination to address together the new challenges we face" (Department of State, 2001). The agreement provided for increased information sharing and closer cooperation. At a joint press conference, Colin Powell stressed the "solidarity" and "resolve" displayed by the European Union and the United States (Powell, 2001d). As early as September 12, NATO decided that if tangible evidence were produced that the attack on the United States was directed from abroad, it would be considered an act covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The principle of collective defence would be strictly applied for the first time and various forms of assistance deemed appropriate by the allies would be provided (NATO, 2001; Robertson, 2001).

However, this image of Europe as a group of States that constitute the United States' closest allies and friends is mitigated by other considerations. First of all, the European Union is only one of the organizations involved in managing the terrorism crisis. It is no more important than others, such as the G7/G8 (Bush, 2001). Furthermore, while George Bush has stressed the United States' strong ties with European States in this fight, he has also established a certain hierarchy of nations. He has called Tony Blair a "friend" on numerous occasions, while referring to other European heads of government as "allies." Europe is not, therefore, seen as a monolithic entity but rather as a region made up of States with which the US has bilateral relations of varying degrees of importance. Finally, while the European Union, NATO and European States are viewed as allies with which the US has closer links since September 11, the Bush

administration's crisis management style has borne a strong unilateralist stamp. The European allies appear to have played a fairly consistent role in averting an overly emotional and excessive reaction by the US, but they have not been viewed as equal partners and have remained largely in the shadow of American strategic options.

So September 11 does not seem to have had a significant impact on the Bush administration's image of Europe. Rather, the attack appears to confirm the relatively rigid nature of that image over time. We shall now consider the factors that may account for this.

On the Continuity of an Image through the Decades: Sources of Rigidity

Writing in the 1960s, Ole R. Holsti (1967, pp. 39 ff) was one of the first experts on international relations to consider the influence of cognitive structures on the making of foreign policy. His chief contribution was a study of the speeches delivered by Secretary of State Dulles between 1953 and 1959. One of Holsti's main conclusions was that fear of the Soviet enemy, seen as the embodiment of atheism and materialism, conditioned Dulles' image of Europe and his desire to see Europe form a federal union in the near future: Dulles believed that Europe must federate or perish (Dulles, 1981, pp. 155-164). He wanted Europe, as part of the West, to become a magnet for the East: Western Europe's role in breaking down the Iron Curtain would be to attract the East to its values (Dulles, 1948, p. 12).

Security against the Soviet enemy was a permanent dimension of this image: the US remained the sole guarantor of Western security and the possibility of an "independent" European defence was brushed aside. The refusal to contemplate autonomous European security arrangements was in fact a leitmotif in Washington's discourse: the US always preferred integrated security structures. In this respect, the Bush administration's image of Europe rests on a rigid structure which has proven resistant to change despite post-Cold War strategic developments (Smith, 1988, p. 19). American discourse tends to exclude any information that could undermine the vision of Europe as a secondary player that lies at the core of the image.

Image is a dependant variable and the continuity we have described stems from a combination of factors. In our view, three main factors are in play: the United States' self-image and role as the only remaining superpower after the end of the Cold War (the most significant factor), its political and institutional agenda, and the persistence of a perceived opposition between the Old and New Worlds.

Self-Image and Role as Superpower

The image of the Other in political discourse reflects a self-image (Neumann, 1996, pp. 139-174). Indeed, image analysis generally tells us more about the subject than

the object of the image. The American image of Europe is no exception. It is strongly conditioned by the United States' perception of itself as a superpower (Holsti, 1987, pp. 7 ff). Here, neo-realist precepts intersect with cognitive analysis (Walker, 1987, pp. 78 ff). The notion that the US must play a decisive, leading role in Europe stems from its world leadership position coupled with its glowing self-image. Some facets may vary over time but the central core around which the image is constructed remains the "role performance" of a State with a status superior to other actors because it holds the various attributes of power, from military capabilities to ideas and values (i.e. soft power). [This analysis fits in with Alexander Wendt's constructivist approach, which holds that role definitions in interactions among States constitute the essence of international structures, which are based in the first instance on cultural elements. On the importance of culture and role conceptions in international structures see Alexander Wendt (1999, p. 251 ff).]

This US self-definition as the leader of the world has been reaffirmed by the current administration (Rice, 2000b, pp. 45-62), with at least one major consequence (Kagan, 2001, pp. 7-16) : the US is a superpower whose foreign policy remains directed towards keeping secondary States, particularly the European States, dependent (Galtung, 1973, pp. 11-12). This means maintaining the gap in defence technology. Washington's unswerving commitment to the NATO option reflects its desire to maintain the asymmetric relationship. While there are hints of openness to greater European autonomy in defence capabilities, the Bush team's image of Europe remains bounded by a classical – not to say hard-line – approach to European security. It is comparable to some extent to the "hard-line image" defined by Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing (1977, pp. 297-299), a vision focused on the anarchic and threatening nature of international relations. Hence the US pursues a strategic option based on containment, in Europe and elsewhere. This approach is opposed to the European Union's policy of engagement. If both sides maintain their stance, a sharp strategic divergence may well arise between Washington and European capitals (Blinken, 2001a).

The Impact of the Agenda on Strategic Perceptions

According to Robert Jervis (1976), an image results from a variety of factors, one of which is the political agenda. Leaders interpret the information they receive according to their concerns and priorities: "People perceive incoming information in terms of problems they are dealing with and what is on their minds when the information is received" (Jervis, 1976, p. 215). The image disseminated by government officials is influenced by this agenda, which in the case of the US is conditioned by an institutional quirk: the very short time-span between the Presidential elections and the mid-term Congressional elections. This system makes it unlikely that Americans will develop a revolutionary conception of European security; instead, they stick to an immediate and short-term representation of the issues. Their short-term vision determines their priorities – rebuilding the Balkans, ensuring the security of the Baltic States, and managing Russia

– whereas the Europeans think in terms of the process of regional integration (Walker, 2001, p. 40). In short, the divergent concerns of the Americans and the Europeans reflect different time horizons: the Americans are fixated on short-term goals while the Europeans keep pondering their progress towards political union since the end of the Second World War. The former seek to solve specific problems by traditional means, while the latter are engaged in an unprecedented endeavour to reshape relations between national entities, political structures and external relations. Thus, strategic logic is tied to political constraints and time horizons.

Transatlantic Divide and Sense of Identity

A third factor explains the rigidity of the American image of Europe: it is the persistence through the decades of a gap between the two continents' perceptions of each other. Since the fight for independence, Americans have sought to differentiate themselves from Europe. While they have built on the European heritage, they have always been wary of meshing their identity with that of the Old World (Boorstin, 1969, pp. 19-39; Strout, 1963a; Strout, 1963b). This distinction is particularly sharp in defence matters. Holding to an image of Europe as a secondary international player makes it possible to assign certain specific roles to the European Union, as conflict resolution in the Balkans illustrates. The Europeans were given responsibility for humanitarian and economic assistance, while the Americans took charge of military operations (Ramel, 1999, p. 90).

Thus, the United States continues to define itself through a certain differentiation from European societies and their leaders. Its sense of identity assumes an American "exception," based on a semi-latent critique of European collective forms of organization. American exceptionalism is one of the advantages the US cultivates in order to ground its global supremacy. The increasingly triumphant liberal ideology which the US champions is seen as the sole wellspring of political destiny (Wacquant, 2001, p. 86). The transatlantic divide therefore serves an identity differentiation function which keeps European States and the European Union at the second rank, by means of diplomatic pressure and one-sided negotiations.

Conclusion: the Return of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza?

The Bush administration's image of Europe is deeply ambivalent but also quite rigid, despite strategic developments and September 11. The US is prepared to accept a beefed-up European defence, but strictly within traditional alliances and, above all, on the basis of the continuation of NATO (Wallace, 2001, p. 17). Thus, the mental map of European security is organized entirely around the Cold War-era alliance (Walker, 2001, p. 466). The Bush administration's image of Europe consists basically of a broad Europe,

extending virtually to the Caucasus and the Middle East; a fuzzy Europe, which will not develop overly integrated structures that could overshadow classical institutions such as NATO; and finally a Europe confined to a secondary role in relation to American might, which alone is capable of adequate and effective military action.

John S. Duffield (2001, pp. 93-115) discusses transatlantic relations through the lens of three schools of thought: realism, liberalism and transformational (or constructivist) analysis. From the realist point of view, the disappearance of a common enemy should erode the need for NATO (balance of power theory) or the need for the US to ensure the survival of the transatlantic alliance (hegemonic stability theory). The liberal approach focuses on the intensification of institutional cooperation within the Atlantic framework. While adjustments might be made, they would not place in question the existence of NATO in particular (Keohane and Martin, 1995, pp. 39-51). This school looks to the peaceful reputation of democracies as the structuring principle of transatlantic relations: democracies do not wage war against each other and have a moral and ideological obligation to come to agreement on strategic issues. Transformational analysis concludes that the trend is for European structures such as the European Union to gain greater autonomy through various strategic practices that promote the expression of cultural distinctness (Duffield, 2001, pp. 100-101).

Which of these models comes closest to empirical reality when it comes to the Bush administration's image of Europe? Our analysis does not confirm any one of the above paradigms; rather, it points towards a combination of the processes identified by the realist and liberal schools. [Since international relations are resistant to scientific "laws," any model is difficult to verify empirically. On this epistemological question see Hoffmann (1977, p. 52) and Goldmann (1996, p. 402). John S. Duffield (2001, pp. 107-108) himself acknowledges the epistemological point when he observes that these three approaches cannot exhaust the reality of transatlantic relations.]

The US image of Europe is strongly informed by the liberal model, but it is modified by the aggressive American claim to a hegemonic stabilizing role which is grounded in a more realist view of US-Europe relations. The White House relies heavily on NATO-type structures to strengthen transatlantic cooperation, confirming the liberal approach (Duffield, 2001, pp. 110-111). Within this framework, however, Europe is not an equal partner but more a zone of influence that the US seeks to preserve; the US wants to keep Europe from becoming a full-fledged rival.

The American administrations of the past dozen years or so have been keenly aware that Europe has become a formidable economic competitor. One of the goals of US foreign policy has been to block any extension of this competition to the defence sphere and hence the emergence of a European rival. [This would create a Lockian system, to use Alexander Wendt's (1999, pp. 279-285) terms. The US is therefore trying to delay or entirely prevent the appearance of such a rivalry-based system, which would substantially undermine its own pre-eminent role.]

In November 1999 John Bolton, former Assistant Secretary of State in the Bush administration, told Congress that "the aim to align the foreign and defense policies of the EU's members into one shared and uniform policy is at times motivated either by a desire to distance themselves from US influence, or in some cases, by openly anti-American intentions" (Walker, 2001, p. 42). The last comment demonstrates one of David Campbell's (1992) central arguments: that all foreign policy is based on the identification of a threat or an enemy. To be sure, European construction and the strengthening of European institutions is creating not an enemy but a potential rival to American influence in Europe and perhaps beyond. This image of the rival largely conditions US views of security on the other side of the Atlantic. [This situation departs from the "ally" ideal type, as defined by Richard K. Herrmann, for though the US does indeed have an opportunity for institutionalized cooperation, it defines itself as superior, militarily and culturally, to the Europeans. On ideal types, see Hermann and Fischerkeller (1995, p. 430).]

Finally, the Bush administration's image of Europe is consistent with what might be called the "yes, but" model: *yes* to the strengthening of European defence capabilities *but* only as part of the consolidation of NATO and, most importantly, under permanent American oversight. Thus, Europeanization is acceptable only if it puts US interests first (Rice, 2000b, p. 54). Jolyon Howorth (2000, p. 69) aptly sums up this vision; in effect, the Bush administration is telling the Europeans "Go ahead with the CESDP, which is in the interest of all, but since we have limited confidence in your ability to achieve your objectives, we must define specific orientations and conditions to keep you from failing or making things worse." [Howorth is paraphrasing P. Gordon's (2000, pp. 12-17) argument.]

Martin Walker (2001, p. 53) compares the US and Europe to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. He suggests that if the European Union develops its institutional framework and builds up a truly effective defence, it could, like Sancho Panza, eventually take its distance from the hero, in this case the US, and claim its own story. For now, the White House continues to view Europe as Sancho Panza to the American Don Quixote. So this image of Europe reveals American self-representations: keeping Europe confined within NATO and resisting European autonomy means the US defines itself as the guarantor of European security and stability.

One question remains: how long will this image survive and what external or internal factors might alter it? The malleability of the image depends on interactions among the actors involved and their strategic practices. The close economic and commercial interdependence between the two sides of the Atlantic, the process of homogenization, and the acceptance of a shared destiny in the face of terrorism could accelerate the development of a new strategic culture embracing the US and the European States, and promote the emergence of a new system of roles in which the European Union enjoys greater autonomy. The image will remain rigid and will continue to reproduce itself as long as the United States' self-image is driven by its desire to remain a

superpower (i.e. a hegemonic actor disseminating its own vision of security and of the world). If the Bush administration were to renounce this conception of the international order, it would risk losing some of its own power as the helmsman of the last remaining superpower. [On the close relationship between major powers and the idea of order, see Raymond Aron (1953, p. 91).] Despite the events of September 11, 2001, which struck at the heart of US economic and military might and showed the vulnerability of American power, Washington's self-image as a hegemonic player seems to be remarkably resilient.

Notes

1.   A certain internal plurality exists within the administration. Tensions are evident between, on the one hand, Secretary of State Colin Powell, who supports moderated diplomatic options, which are also backed in most cases by National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and on the other hand Defence Secretary D. Rumsfeld, who tends to analyze the world in terms of historic and emerging threats and seems to enjoy the support of Vice President Dick Cheney.   But while differences may arise on specific points, the general image of Europe seems to be generally shared.   On the difference between the leading elite's image and a particular decision-maker's image, see Steve Smith (1988, p. 27).

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