

EUI WORKING PAPERS

RSCAS No. 2004/25



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United States

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
Transatlantic Programme Series

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE
ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

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EUI Working Paper **RSCAS** No. 2004/25
BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO DI FIESOLE (FI)

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ISSN 1028-3625

© 2004 Patrick Chamorel

Printed in Italy in November 2004
European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50016 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)
Italy

<http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/publications/>

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

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Abstract

This paper documents and tries to explain the rise of anti-European and Eurosceptical sentiment in the United States since the end of the Cold War. Contrary to anti-Europeanism, which has always permeated American culture and underpinned American exceptionalism, Euroscepticism is more confined to political and business elites and targets the process, main policies and identity of the European Union. Although usually conservative, Anti-Europeans and Eurosceptics do not necessarily overlap: anti-Europeans are Eurosceptical but the reverse is not necessarily true. However, Anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism have become entrenched beliefs among many conservatives.

Europe's positive image since WWII and the wide support for European unification among American elites, have been replaced by competing views: for example, neo-conservatives believe Europe to be in economic, demographic and cultural decline that the EU only precipitates. Others see a unifying Europe as a rising power which will become more a rival than an ally for the US. Since the early 1990s and increasingly until the war in Iraq, conservative commentators have attacked the style and content of European foreign policy, especially with regard to the Middle-East, Europe's weak defence budgets, its lack of resolve against terrorism, its welfare state and highly regulated economy, its left-leaning political culture, its growing anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism. The centralizing, elitist and regulatory aspects of the EU have also been denounced to justify Euroscepticism.

The paper reviews and discusses possible explanations for such trends: a backlash against rising anti-Americanism in Europe? The projection of US domestic politics? The import of British Euroscepticism? The demise of communism and the Soviet Union and the common threat they represented? America's new hegemonic ambitions? The rising influence of American conservatives? Clashes over globalization? A resurgent awareness of deep differences in political and economic cultures, which help cast Europe as the anti-model? The answer lies most likely in a combination of such factors.

Keywords: anti-Europeanism; Euroscepticism; anti-Americanism; transatlantic relations

Introduction

The decade-long deterioration of transatlantic relations that reached a climax in the run-up to the war in Iraq, has fuelled a new wave of anti-Americanism in Europe and Francophobia in the United States.¹ Less noticed have been rising anti-Europeanism² and Euroscepticism in the United States. The former refers to the sceptical or negative attitudes towards European politics, economics and culture that have permeated American history, culture and the general public. A more recent, political and targeted phenomenon, Euroscepticism is the opposition to European integration, the European Union or its key policies; it is more confined to elite and conservative circles than anti-Europeanism. The inroads anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism have made recently in American political debates and policies contrast sharply with the positive attitudes most Americans have held about Western Europe since World War II and with the reality, since the end of the Cold War, of a more peaceful, united, democratic and prosperous Europe than ever before. The spread of Eurosceptical views in the US runs counter to past US efforts to foster European integration and the broad support such policies have enjoyed in American public opinion as well as, traditionally, among political and business elites.

Anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism have distinct sources and manifestations and pursue partially different agendas. However, both have grown in influence in some US policy circles in the mid-1990s and have become part of the mainstream conservative political outlook; their constituencies and intellectual references overlap more than their agendas.

Their arguments also reinforce each other. For anti-Europeans, the European Union is the ultimate incarnation of the kind of political, economic and cultural characteristics they object to about Europe: its political cultures, economics, welfare state, permissive values, multilateral diplomacy and inclinations towards anti-Americanism. Anti-Europeans tend therefore to be Eurosceptical. However, many Eurosceptics are not anti-European. They only understand that resurgent American anti-Europeanism provides a useful backdrop to promote their Eurosceptical agenda. Sometimes unintentionally, Eurosceptics end up altering the image of Europe itself when they project a negative image of the European Union, because European integration and expansion have turned the EU into the main political incarnation of Europe.

We will first document the main sources, manifestations and themes of the recent wave of anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism. This almost anthropological ‘thick description’ focuses on the period that surrounded the 2003 war in Iraq. It reveals the rise of anti-European and Eurosceptical sentiment during the 1990s and into the 2000s, especially among neo-conservatives and Bush administration circles. Even though individual countries continued to be treated differently, depending on their relations with the US, a separate layer of attacks focused on the common characteristics shared by most European countries in foreign policy, economics, society and culture, as well as on European integration.

After Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld drew his now-famous distinction between ‘New’ and ‘Old’ Europe (depending on whether countries supported US policy in Iraq or not) in January 2003, criticism focused on France and Germany, the pillars of ‘Old Europe’ and European integration. The discussions on the United Nations Security Council in the fall of 2002 and winter of 2003 triggered an unprecedented wave of Francophobia. However, with the exception of the immediate run-up to Iraq, when criticism spared the diplomacy of ‘New’ European countries, notably Britain, Spain and Italy, and concentrated on France and Germany, Western Europe as a whole has been a main target of criticism since the mid-1990s.

This is the reason why anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism cannot be reduced to Francophobia, notwithstanding the fact that France is the only European country that has aroused negative sentiment in the US over the years and that these sentiments largely inform anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism. In this view, European culture is often closely associated with French culture, which is considered corrupt, immoral, statist, elitist, effete, anti-Semitic and anti-American. As for the EU, it

is often thought of as a French-dominated project led by a French-inspired bureaucracy poised to centralize power, advance French interests and turn the EU into as a counterweight to the United States.

We will also offer some possible explanations for the rise of anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism: anti-Americanism in Europe; a transformed international environment and US foreign policy since the end of the Cold war and the attacks of September 11, 2001; economic globalization; a rift in transatlantic political cultures; the progress of European integration and the breakdown of a unified US vision of Europe and European integration.

I – Sources, Manifestations and Themes of Anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism

The December 2002 issue of the review published by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a leading Washington conservative think tank, provides a vivid example of anti-European sentiment.³ The titles of articles by influential commentators are revealing enough: ‘The European disease’; ‘German-American requiem’; ‘Continental drift’; ‘Old and in the way’; ‘America won’t listen to Europe’s appeasers’; ‘The real problem is European elites’; ‘Goodbye Europe’; ‘Irritating and irrelevant’; ‘Europe loses its mind’.

This wouldn’t be worth noticing if AEI were a second-tier think tank, but it is widely considered the most influential in this Bush administration. And of course, it is not alone. Euro-bashing has been in fashion in the broader Washington community since George W. Bush’s election and has intensified since 9-11 and in the run-up to the Iraqi war. It has become a favourite theme of influential conservative *New York Times* and *Washington Post* commentators such as William Safire, George Will and Charles Krauthammer. It has made the headlines of key policy publications such as the *National Review*, *The National Interest*, *Commentary* and *The Weekly Standard*. Newspapers such as the *Washington Times*, *The New York Post*, *The New York Sun*, *The Chicago Sun-Times* and Canada’s *National Post* have ridden the wave, along with Fox Television. Many of these publications and outlets are owned by Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black who are known for their strongly conservative and anti-EU views.

Anti-European sentiment is well-entrenched in the higher echelons of the Bush administration, including the White House, the Department of Defense and the traditionally pro-Atlanticist State Department. The same is true of Congress, especially since the republican victory of 1994. The phenomenon has its core among conservatives but extends beyond their ranks into the wider policy community and segments of the public. Anti-Europeanism, Euroscepticism and Francophobia have been encouraged by political elites, including in the White House, and is not simply or even essentially a spontaneous popular expression.

However, anti-Europeanism falls short of being the mirror image of anti-Americanism. The US looms much larger in Europe than Europe in the US. Most Americans are ignorant or indifferent about Europe, whereas anti-Americanism has long played an influential role in European political and intellectual life.⁴ Anti-Europeanism expresses itself in newspaper columns and articles, anti-Americanism in street demonstrations and electoral debates as well. It originates mostly from the right, anti-Americanism from the left. The latter is informed by envy and resentment, the former by distrust and contempt.

The two are linked, however. They feed on each other, in the process exaggerating each other’s influence and contributing to a distorted view of the other side of the Atlantic.⁵ They both can be defined as the projection of a coherent set of negative attitudes on a wide range of American and European attributes and policies. Both target not only what the other side does, but what it is about.

Anti-Europeanism as Surrogate for ‘Democrats’ and ‘Realpolitik’

The themes and arguments of the anti-Europeans reflect the political and ideological goals of the various strains of conservatism: neo-conservatives—more than Realists—in foreign policy, libertarians, sovereignists, anti-multiculturalists and social-conservatives among others. Europe becomes a surrogate of the Democrats, the State Department and North-Eastern liberal elites in the domestic political battles

against multilateralism, multiculturalism or the welfare state. For the neo-conservatives, attacking Europe is another way of attacking the realist approach in international affairs that they despise: their association of ‘Realpolitik’ with Europe is underscored by the fact that the best-known representative of realist foreign policy, Henry Kissinger, is a European émigré. There is also a leftist version of anti-Europeanism—which targets a Eurocentric view of history and knowledge as well as European statism and aversion to multiculturalism—but it has been irrelevant to the recent wave of anti-Europeanism.

Expressing one’s anti-European sentiment can also be another way of building up and displaying one’s American identity and patriotism. In that sense, anti-Europeanism is hardly new: it has always been part of American exceptionalism which defined itself in contrast to European history, politics and society. As historian C. Vann Woodward wrote: ‘the United States from the beginning defined itself morally in terms of anti-Europeanism: the land of the future versus the Europe of the bankrupt past. America was a country of innocence, virtue, happiness and liberty as against a Europe of vice, ignorance, misery and tyranny.’⁶ There have always been clusters of American society opposed to European elitism and sophistication and American involvement in conflict-ridden Europe. Eisenhower himself criticized the Scandinavian welfare state and France’s immorality as a result of secularism. The other source of anti-European sentiment has sprung from the history of transatlantic relations, especially crises such as Suez, Gaullism, Vietnam, the Middle-East, *Ostpolitik*, the Soviet pipeline and Pershing II episodes.

However, the current wave of anti-European sentiment innovates in several respects. Past transatlantic crises revolved mostly around a handful of issues related to communism and colonialism, détente and nuclear proliferation.⁷ Today, policy disagreements range from Iraq, Israel, NATO, the UN to GMOs, anti-trust and the death penalty.⁸ Tensions concerned only a handful of countries at a time, with France the most consistent source of contention.⁹ As a result, long before the recent Iraqi crisis, France had been the only European country arousing hostile sentiment among political elites.¹⁰

By contrast, over the last few years, attacks have been directed at Western Europe as a whole. These attacks transcend the otherwise positive or negative treatments of individual countries like Britain, France and Germany. Anti-Europeanism is fuelled partly by Francophobia—itself enhanced by the discharge on France of occasional resentment towards other European countries—but is far from being confined to France. There are several reasons why Europe itself has become a target. First, as the EU adds more members and integrates further, a growing number of contentious issues are under EU jurisdiction, not just trade and anti-trust. For Eurosceptics, European integration itself is to blame for the proliferation of conflicts. Second, beyond specific policies, the criticism targets what Europeans share in common and defines their identity, notably a social market economy, the welfare state and multilateralism. Third, Europe-wide public opinion is fairly homogeneous on key transatlantic issues, for example opposition to Bush’s unilateralism, war in Iraq, Sharon’s policies, GMOs and missile defence, and defence of the Kyoto protocol on climate change. No wonder it is the target of American conservatives!

What is Wrong with Europe?

What precisely are the main themes and arguments against Europe? They span not just foreign policy but economics, society and culture as well.

Anti-European sentiment has hardened with each international crisis since the end of the Cold War. The Balkan crisis planted the seeds of discord by revealing Western Europe’s military weakness as well as resurgent anti-Americanism. European efforts to lift economic sanctions against Iraq deeply irritated US conservatives. This was followed by Europe’s knee-jerk reaction against the election, personality and policies of George W. Bush, especially missile defence and Kyoto. This reminded conservatives of the way Europeans greeted Reagan’s election twenty years earlier. Attacks intensified after 9-11 against European *schadenfreude*, criticism of US militaristic approaches to fighting terrorism and the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. Polls showed that European criticism concentrated more on Sharon than Arafat and Palestinian suicide bombers and that the US was considered a greater threat to global security than Saddam.

For anti-European critics, Europeans live in the kind of dream world—described by Robert Kagan in his 2002 *Policy Review* article¹¹—which prevents them from facing the reality of global threats or responding to them. Instead of joining the fight with the US, Europeans prefer to criticize on the sidelines or even side with Saddam and Arafat. Their population, and some of their governments, are not just ungrateful to the country which saved them from Nazism and communism and now needs their support: they are betraying America. Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger wrote: ‘Most of Europe treats Yassir Arafat with the same naiveté that once marked Europe’s attitude towards Ho Chi Minh and the Vietcong.’¹²

European multilateralism is another target. The Europeans would have prevented the US from ratifying protocols on global warming and the ban of landmines as well as the treaty on the International Criminal Court by refusing to take into consideration the special status of the US as the sole superpower. They would rather exploit the positive image associated with these agreements and project a European identity forged around the notion of moral superiority over the self-serving US.

Europeans have also been accused of using multilateralism as an excuse for inaction, as in the case of Iraq.¹³ They don’t challenge the use of international organizations as instruments of anti-American and anti-Israeli propaganda. They elected Libya rather than the US to the UN Human Rights Commission. Columnist George Will wrote: ‘The UN overweening vanity is made possible by the acquiescence of the European nations. They are eager to disguise decadence as a moral gesture, that of sloughing off sovereignty, and with it responsibility.’¹⁴

There are two more fundamental criticisms, however. First, the EU model of shared sovereignty not only undermines European national identities, but is being exported to the whole international community, challenging US influence and sovereignty.¹⁵ Second, European multilateralism is aimed at containing US power, a major goal of European diplomacy. US power is precisely what most American conservatives seek to maximize.

Europe’s Weakness

European military weakness inspires as much contempt as its multilateralism—the weapon of the weak, according to Kagan. Europe is not tough enough against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction because it is keen to protect its political and commercial interests and is blackmailed by its large Muslim communities. European duplicity and greed contrasts with the principled and unambiguous American fight for freedom. John Bolton, now under-Secretary of State for Arms Control, wrote in 1996 when he was vice-president of the American Enterprise Institute: ‘Europeans have never lost faith in appeasement as a way of life.’¹⁶

In this view, Europe refuses to spend more on defence to share the burden with the US because it doesn’t perceive the same level of threat, enjoys a free ride on US protection and would rather spend on welfare. The growing military gap with the US has made Europe irrelevant and NATO non-operational.

Besides foreign policy, European society and culture have also been the objects of attacks, especially from neo-conservatives and social-conservatives. The main theme has been resurgent anti-Semitism in Europe. This diagnosis is based on a growing number of anti-Semitic incidents, especially in France, and the electoral success of far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen’s in the first round of the French presidential election in the spring of 2002. The late German politician, Jurgen Mollemann, had also made anti-Semitic comments during last September’s electoral campaign. Neo-conservatives and others concluded that Europe had reverted to its old demons. Publisher Mortimer Zuckermann wrote in *US News and World Report*: ‘Europe is sick again [...] Somehow anti-Semitism in Europe has outdone every other ideology and prejudice in its power and durability. Fascism came and went; communism came and went; anti-Semitism came and stayed. And now, it’s been revitalized.’¹⁷ A second conclusion is that the rise of anti-Semitism helps explain Europe’s pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli positions.

Europe has also been portrayed as a breeding ground for Middle-Eastern terrorists because many 9-11 hijackers came from big European cities such as Hamburg. The common explanation by neo-conservatives has been that, unlike the US, Europe has failed to assimilate its Muslim immigrants and their resentment has sometimes turned them into angry terrorists. They point to the compounding factors of lax law and order policies and an overly generous welfare state. Cultural critic Mark Steyn wrote: 'If you're putting in a ten hour [...] shift, you're too wiped out to wipe America out. But in the fetid public housing of London, Paris, Frankfurt and Rotterdam, the government pays you to sit around the flat all day plotting world domination.'¹⁸

A broader target of criticism has been European leftist elites keen on denouncing American unbridled capitalism, high crime levels and the death penalty.¹⁹ American conservatives have been fighting back democrats and liberals at home; they are now taking their fight across the Atlantic. For example, they point out that crime has been on the rise in Europe, a trend opposite to the one in the US, and that official opposition to the death penalty does not reflect the majority of European public opinion.

In the economic realm, a growing number of trade disputes allow critics to point to European protectionism (the Common Agricultural Policy for example), anti-modernism (in the case of Genetically-Modified Organisms) or challenges to US fiscal sovereignty (the Foreign Sales Corporation). The European Commission's decision to block the GE-Honeywell merger was evidence of European protectionism, flawed anti-trust philosophy and challenge to US sovereignty. More generally, poor European economic performance, especially compared with the US, is more proof that the European economic model doesn't work: it is anti-growth, anti-jobs, anti-innovation, over-taxed, over-regulated, with an inefficient and wasteful welfare state.²⁰

American Euroscepticism

Such a comprehensive attack against Europe could hardly spare European integration and the European Union. Euroscepticism²¹ had made inroads among conservatives before the recent wave of Euro-bashing. American Euroscepticism is far from the transposition of British Euroscepticism to the extent that every country develops a specific version of Euroscepticism, which does not travel well. However, the progress of American Euroscepticism is partly the result of British Thatcherites trying to enlist US support for their fight against the EU.²² Their argument is that the US had to help 'save' Britain, its best ally and the most market-oriented economy in Europe, from the claws of the EU, itself an anti-American project hostile to US interests.²³

Even though many American Eurosceptics are not anti-European, their arguments and the campaigns against 'Fortress Europe',²⁴ the Euro²⁵ and the fledgling European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) contributed to painting a more negative image of continental Europe and making Euroscepticism a core component of anti-Europeanism. Many US observers have interpreted the slow and reluctant enlargement of the EU to the former communist countries of Eastern Europe as evidence of a lack of democratic idealism, and vis-à-vis Turkey, as plain religious bigotry. The recent opposition of France and Germany, the traditional engines of European integration, to war in Iraq, has confirmed the views of those who have traditionally seen the European construction as a French-inspired anti-American project, where the French-German couple imposes its views on the other member-states.

The main argument against the EU is its alleged ambition to emerge as a power base independent from the US, with its own defence and foreign policy. Its identity is being forged in contrast with the US and anti-Americanism has become the core of its foreign policy, whose goal is to contain and rival US power. This thinking is widespread within the Bush administration.

The other arguments are common to American and European Eurosceptics. (Despite the diversity of Euroscepticisms in Europe, they share some characteristics.) The EU is anti-democratic, elitist and overly bureaucratic.²⁶ Since the Delors presidency, it has turned into a socialist, anti-market project bound

to regulate every activity.²⁷ As a result, it has rallied the support of social-democratic parties. In addition, the EU's sheer institutional complexity, incoherence and lack of *finalité* makes it an unwieldy partner for the US.

II – Possible Explanations of Anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism in the United States

What are the possible explanations for this wave of anti-Europeanism?

A Backlash against Anti-Americanism

Anti-Americanism is the main justification given by the critics of Europe.²⁸ However, it doesn't explain attacks against aspects of European identity such as the welfare state. Moreover, anti-Americanism being a long-running phenomenon, the main question is whether it has grown significantly over the last few years, whether Americans have become less tolerant of it, or both? While George W. Bush and his policies have provoked strong European opposition, the core ideological component of anti-Americanism has softened over the years with less than 10% of polled Europeans revealing anti-American attitudes. Anti-Bushism seems to account for much of the rise of anti-Americanism.

The core supporters of the President are naturally highly sensitive to these attacks and are likely to confuse anti-Bushism for anti-Americanism out of patriotism and because it is an easy and effective way to discredit the Europeans. In addition, European critics remind conservatives of the 'blame America first' attitude for which they have chastised the liberals. The notion of a Europe as a counterweight to US influence is considered inherently anti-American. The vision of some European leftists that Bush's unilateralism and use of force has turned the US into a rogue state contradicts the conservatives' belief that, thanks to the string of US economic and military successes since the key victory in the Cold War, the US is going through one of its finest hours. In addition, the wounds of 9-11 and the feeling of being at war and vulnerable have made Americans less tolerant of criticism, from domestic or foreign sources. Didn't president Bush declare: 'Those who are not with us are with the terrorists.'²⁹

The End of the Cold War, 9-11 and the Strategic Divide

A second series of factors at the root of anti-Europeanism has to do with the transformed international environment since the end of the Cold War. US support for European integration owed a great deal to the Soviet threat.³⁰ The end of the Cold War means that the US and Europe don't depend as much on each other for their security. This is in part because the American mission has finally been accomplished: Europe is more free, more united, more peaceful and more prosperous than ever before. The end of such strategic dependence and the advent of globalization have encouraged the proliferation of economic disputes previously repressed. Likewise, the strategic cost of cultural feuds, whether on anti-Semitism or the death penalty, has plummeted.

Anti-Europeanism is less a cause than a consequence of the growing strategic divide that has developed across the Atlantic. As the sole superpower, the US has embraced a vision of American primacy hardly compatible with a politically rising European Union. In the meantime, the US has global responsibilities, Europe regional ones. Since 9-11, the US has been more weary of threats and, given its unsurpassed military might, more inclined to resort to force. The new US foreign policy doctrines that have sprung from an increasing power asymmetry, the Bush administration's unilateralist instincts and the greater awareness of threats, only underscore the transatlantic strategic divide.

Different Economic Systems and Approaches to Globalization

Globalization has revealed cultural and regulatory differences based on the distinct roles played by the state, markets, the law and religion on both sides of the Atlantic. The disappearance of the Soviet Union has underscored the contrasts between the American and continental European forms of capitalism. The

European social market model has become the alternative form of capitalism, admired by many American liberals but widely considered as the anti-model in the US, especially among conservatives. The latter see the EU as a shield against globalization rather than a partner of the US in the liberalization of the world economy, as well as the main base for anti-globalists such as José Bové. Opposition to globalization is largely confused with anti-Americanism by the European left and the American right alike.

Transatlantic Cultural Divide...

Another popular theory that applies to both anti-Europeanism and anti-Americanism is the cultural divide. Neo-conservatives like to draw a contrast between macho Americans and sissy Europeans, Mars versus Venus in Kagan's terminology. The image of pretentious wine-sipping lefty European intellectuals tortured by existential doubt gives them a case of Euro-allergy. They see themselves as mercurial and guided by the moral certitude they admire in their heroes, Reagan, Thatcher and Churchill, as opposed to Europeans prone to moral compromise and military surrender. It is safe to say that Bush the Texan has never shown affinity for Europe and its culture, unlike Clinton, the American version of a European social-democrat. Clinton strived to deflect and minimize transatlantic tensions whereas Bush brings them out and accentuates them.

Since 1994, the Congress has acquired a more conservative, populist, southern and western profile. Atlanticists in Congress are nearly all gone. The fastest growing regions and demographic groups in the US are moving away from traditional European connections.³¹ On top of that, as many Americans were rejecting the dominance of the North-Eastern political elites, they also rid themselves of their cultural inferiority complex towards Europe.

Reagan rehabilitated traditional American values in small government, self-reliance, individual responsibility, religion, optimism, patriotism, anti-elitism, markets, risk-taking, law and order, use of military force, protection of national sovereignty and the acceptance of social inequality. In the meantime, Europeans still espouse the goals of social equality, the welfare state, resistance to change, elimination of the death penalty and pacifism in Germany. These differences are not all new but they were overlooked during the Cold War by the myth of a unified West. Reagan also resuscitated a sense of American exceptionalism very present among conservatives today. William Kristol, the editor of the *Weekly Standard*, wrote: 'America is nationalist, religious and martial. Europe is post-nationalist, post-Christian and pacifist.'³² And author David Rothkopf: 'Americans should not deny the fact that of all the nations in the history of the world, theirs is the most just, the most tolerant, the most willing to constantly reassess and improve itself, and the best model for the future.'³³

However, on most issues of foreign policy—with the notable exception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict where attitudes are far apart—Americans share the same inclination as Europeans for multilateral approaches, even if they are protective of US sovereignty. They support European integration and want Europe to play a bigger role in the world. In this regard, the neo-conservatives and Eurosceptics are more disconnected from the US public than European elites are, notwithstanding the death penalty.

...or Cultural Diversity within America and Europe?

In fact, the political and cultural rift might not be across the Atlantic as much as within America's and Europe's borders. In the United States, a divide has been documented between the cosmopolitan, multilateralist, socially liberal coasts and the more culturally conservative, 'America First' hinterland.³⁴ Recent elections have shown that such cultural opposition has a partisan dimension: the main voting predictors and cleavages are religious practice and attitudes towards abortion, homosexuality and gun control. Public opinion polls show that Republicans are less inclined to accommodate the Europeans and trade US sovereignty for multilateralism. If anything, Europe's political culture is even more heterogeneous than America's. This is especially true with regard to attitudes towards the US, European integration, capitalism, globalization, national traditions of foreign

policy and national sovereignty. For different reasons, Britain and the former communist countries of Eastern Europe share more positive attitudes towards the US and NATO than most of the other European nations of Western Europe. The most pro-American Europeans are reluctant to subscribe to the idea of a transatlantic cultural divide. Like most Eurosceptics, they would rather underscore the cultural divisions within Europe, especially different national attitudes towards the US.

Another set of explanations can be found in the political and ideological factors influencing anti-Europeanism. The recent Iraqi crisis has shown that the ideological colours of European governments is of little or no importance in the eyes of American conservatives compared with their support or opposition to US foreign policy. Among those who have supported war in Iraq are Labourite Tony Blair, several Social-Democratic leaders of Eastern Europe, conservatives Berlusconi and Aznar in Italy and Spain. On the opposite side were conservative Chirac and Social-Democrat Schroeder.

A Growing Rift in Political Cultures

However, more fundamentally, American and European political ideologies are growing further apart. The neo-conservative ascent, thinking and influence in foreign and social policy has no equivalent in Europe. The neo-conservatives have few ideological brethren in Europe, despite the very close ties between the Republican party and the British conservative party. Conversely, the left and the far-left are much stronger in Europe than in the US. Paradoxically, the end of Soviet communism has fuelled a renewed criticism of the US and globalization from the European left, because it no longer needs to defend communism or propose alternatives to capitalism. At the same time, anti-communism is no longer a countervailing force to anti-Americanism. A weakened US left and a disoriented democratic party since 9-11 have made the globally influential European left a target of choice for the neo-conservatives and their international priorities.

A Reassessment of American Visions of Europe and the European Union

Finally, renewed anti-Europeanism and Eurosceptical sentiment has been fuelled by increasingly negative visions of Europe and the European Union among political elites. Since 1945, American political elites have, with some ambivalence, supported European unification as being in the interest of Europe and the U.S. The vision was one of growing strategic and socio-economic convergence with the US to forge a homogeneous West under US leadership.³⁵ Europe could catch up with the US economically but would not, the Gaullist challenge notwithstanding, defy American strategic leadership and seek to become an independent base of power.

This vision has been questioned since the end of the Cold War as a result of the emergence of different strategic outlooks, the proliferation of policy disagreements, progress in European integration and diverging political cultures.

Is the European Union a Rising Power...

Only a minority of American observers share the view—which is prevalent in Europe—of a united Europe as an ascending force in global politics, which will ultimately rival the US.³⁶ Such views are sometimes exploited by Eurosceptics.³⁷ They predict that diverging interests will necessarily lead to heightened transatlantic tensions. US political circles are not very receptive to this view because they tend to see an enlarged European Union as less cohesive and more divided, especially with regard to relations with the US, its legitimacy undermined by a growing democratic deficit, unable to reform its economy and to stem demographic decline.

...or the Symbol of Europe's Decline?

The negative view of the conservatives and neo-conservatives conflict sharply with that of an ascending Europe. Paleo-conservatives such as Pat Buchanan point to European dechristianization, excessive immigrants and falling fertility rates. Like immigration, European integration undermines national identities. The prescription is isolationism: if Europeans don't feel the need to defend themselves, why should the US do the job for them? But what is new is that anti-Europeanism is no longer associated with isolationism. On the contrary, its recent resurgence has taken place in the context of triumphant US internationalism. Future anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism are unlikely, however, to depend on a sustained internationalist US foreign policy.

With isolationist paleo-conservatives increasingly marginalized among conservatives, the recent rise of anti-European sentiment owes much more to the ascent of the neo-conservatives. They too believe Europe to be anti-American, socialist and in full demographic, economic and cultural decline. But instead of lamenting immigration, they would like to see more of it as well as easier assimilation into European society. They are more concerned by European anti-Semitism than dechristianization, by anti-Americanism and by policies towards rogue states and terrorism. The neo-conservatives were able to make a connection between 9-11 and Europe's failed foreign policy and political culture.

The Neo-Conservative Vision

The new, revamped form of anti-Europeanism is no longer paired up with isolationism and its roots in the hinterland. On the contrary, it is spearheaded by internationalist intellectuals from the North-East who are familiar with Europe. Paradoxically, their internationalism is not multilateralist but sovereigntist, unilateralist and Eurosceptical, geared towards American primacy and the marginalization of Europe. It is different from the cultural strain of anti-Europeanism, which is populist, anti-intellectual, anti-elitist and anti-secular.

According to the neo-conservatives, the European Union is a desperate attempt to avoid decline, but its effect is to precipitate it. It is a gigantic bureaucratic and regulatory construction, undemocratic, un-governable and politically divided. Reflecting the influence of leftist intellectuals and politicians, the growth of the welfare state has undermined individual freedom.

In foreign policy, Europe has lost its moral compass by supporting foreign dictators and criticizing Israel. It doesn't have the will or capacity to defend itself against foreign threats, disqualified itself as a serious power and a US ally. The US should not listen to its advice because it has almost always been wrong, for example on détente and Iraq. Foreign affairs expert Walter Russell Mead wrote: 'Americans just don't trust Europe's political judgment. Appeasement is its second nature. Europeans have never met a leader, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Quaddafi, Khomeni, Saddam, they didn't think could be softened up by concessions'.³⁸

The neo-conservatives' recommendation is to marginalize, divide, dilute and weaken Europe while cultivating pro-American friends in Britain and Eastern Europe as potential partners in 'coalitions of the willing'. The US should avoid dealing with the EU, NATO and the UN. It should discredit the Franco-German alliance, create a wedge between France and Germany and isolate France internationally.

American Eurosceptics

Neo-conservatives are Eurosceptical but the two do not overlap because not all Eurosceptics are anti-European. These Eurosceptics actually do not share the anti-Europeans' extreme pessimism regarding European society, on topics such as anti-Semitism. They reject Kagan's strategic and cultural divide, emphasizing instead Europe's diversity of perspectives and the greater affinity of Britain and Eastern Europe with the US than with the rest of Europe.³⁹ They believe the EU to be anti-market, anti-democratic, anti-American and anti-sovereignty. Like the neo-conservatives, they want to dilute and

divide Europe but they fear that the adhesion of pro-American nations to the EU might soften an otherwise rising Euroscepticism. The Bush administration's debt to Tony Blair for supporting US policy in Iraq prevents the US from taking overtly Eurosceptical initiatives. This could change the next time a conservative government in London coincides with a republican administration in Washington.

The Eurosceptics' recommendation is the opposite from the neo-conservatives'. Their vision is that of an Atlantic Europe under US leadership and the resuscitation of the West weakened by the disappearance of the common enemy. Weakening the EU and salvaging Britain require renewed US engagement in Europe, which neither the US nor Europe are inclined to pursue. Such an attempt would include NATO preventing the emergence of an autonomous European defence and the establishment of a transatlantic free trade Area diluting the European trading bloc.⁴⁰ Publisher Conrad Black has tried to rally US support for British membership into NAFTA and the same forces are promoting the idea of an 'Anglosphere'⁴¹ bringing together Britain, the US, Australia and possibly others in a new, loose alliance in case of failure to sustain the West.

Pitting Pro-US vs. Pro-EU Constituencies in Europe

American Eurosceptics and their European allies have been trying to drive a wedge between pro-American and pro-EU constituencies in Europe. Such a strategy is likely to fail in continental Europe where the most pro-EU constituencies have traditionally been the most Atlanticist (and Eurosceptical ones the most anti-American as well). Such efforts, just like American unilateralism, could prove counterproductive by strengthening the desire to build a more independent Europe.

Libertarians do not hold as strong or unified a vision of Europe as either the neo-conservatives or the Eurosceptics. They split on the Euro, Britain's role in the EU and the merits of enlargement. But they view continental Europe as statist, highly regulated, protectionist and they oppose fiscal harmonization and the Social Charter. Most are isolationists to the extent they oppose an interventionist foreign policy, so they advocate US military withdrawal from Europe and an independent European defence.⁴² Business circles tend to be for the Euro and for NATO.

Is anti-Europeanism likely to last? Its intensity is likely to fluctuate with international crises, European support for US policy and directions taken by European integration. The extreme form it has taken recently will probably not outlive crises but those could multiply in the future. In more appeased times, anti-Europeanism should establish itself more as a low-key equivalent of anti-Americanism and complicate transatlantic relations. Euroscepticism has crossed the Atlantic and turned the US into a more active and ambivalent player in the debate on the future of the EU. Already, President Bush has signalled that Europe was no longer a priority of US foreign policy, that European integration and unity are not necessarily in the interest of the US and that he is keen on dividing the EU and limiting its diplomatic influence. Unfortunately, these trends contradict the reality of close political, economic and cultural ties between Europe and the United States and their necessary continuation into the future.

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Notes

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