

FREEDOM & UNION

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Symposium on Balladur's Union of the West

For a Union of the West
by Edouard Balladur
former Prime Minister
of France

Reviews and comments by
Domenec Ruiz Devesa
George Modelski
Ira Straus

Balladur and Sarkozy: the opening for a Union of the West

Edouard Balladur, Prime Minister of France in the early 1990s, has written an important new book, *Pour une Union de l'Occident entre l'Europe et les Etats-Unis*. The Streit Council has arranged, together with the former U.S. Ambassador to France, Howard Leach, for its translation and its forthcoming publication in English by the Hoover Institution Press. It has also arranged for Mr. Balladur to come to America to present his proposal to official Washington.

Balladur has long been close to Nicolas Sarkozy, now President of France. The young Sarkozy had been spokesman for Balladur and rose within Balladur's wing of the Gaullist movement. It was the wing that renounced the old rigid nationalism of the movement and was prepared to lead France into a new relationship with Europe and America.

Sarkozy was elected President within months of the publication of Balladur's book. He immediately set to repairing trans-Atlantic relations. The fruits were considerable, as noted in the previous issue of *Freedom and Union*, where an article appeared under the title, "Sarkozy, Merkel revive Atlanticism".

Merkel, during her brief tenure as EU President, did thorough work and succeeded in bringing about a Transatlantic Market agreement, institutionalized through a Transatlantic Economic Council. Sarkozy, with his flair for the dramatic and his inspiration from Balladur, has now the opportunity to raise the new unity to a higher political level.

The *International Herald Tribune* has written that Balladur's book expresses the "underlying premise" of Sarkozy's policies. This issue of *Freedom and Union* presents a symposium on the book.

IN THIS ISSUE

Balladur and Sarkozy: the opening for a Union of the West 2

Union or Decline of the West? Symposium on Balladur's Union of the West 4

For a Union of the West 5
by Edouard Balladur

Union of the West as a French Initiative 12
by Domenec Ruiz Devesa
with Ira Straus

A Window of Opportunity for a Rebalanced Relationship 20
by George Modelski



Balladur and Sarkozy

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This number of
Freedom & Union
is devoted entirely to a
symposium on the
book of the former
Prime Minister
of France,
Edouard Balladur,
For a Union of the West

FREEDOM & UNION

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About Freedom & Union. Founded in 1946 by veteran New York Times correspondent Clarence Streit, *Freedom & Union* has chronicled the origins and growth of Euro-Atlantic institutions and provided a home for initiatives for them. Its policy is to think, write and act always in terms of all the democratic world, and not of any country in it.

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Union or Decline of the West?

Symposium on Balladur's Union of the West

Balladur writes on the great theme of the rise of new powers and whether the West is in decline. Looking more carefully at the statistics than other recent works, he finds that the objective economic decline, while real, has been greatly exaggerated; what he finds worrisome is its combination with subjective decline and mutual undermining among the Western countries. Thus his conclusion, either Union or Decline.

Where other, journalistic works have simply treated the West as non-existent, and defined America and Europe as completely separate competing powers, Balladur is more precise. The West, he shows, exists, it has an underlying unity, and its degree of unity on the practical level is itself a variable subject to change; the purpose of his book is show people how to act on the variable. He also shows there are serious misperceptions about the economic statistics. Europe and America have, combined, a share of global GDP over 55%; the next largest economic power will not come near to this in the foreseeable future. The issue is not a radical decline but a gradual erosion of Western supremacy.

Having framed the diagnosis accurately, he is able to make a prescription that could have an impact on the problem. The West, he says, can no longer afford to dissipate its strength on inter-necine arguments. It still plays indispensable roles as the core of the world economy and global stability, but only through more consistent unity can it continue to discharge these roles effectively. Consistent unity requires Union.

Balladur fears the misperceptions are themselves creating realities: "The world seems to be slipping away from the Western powers. Their material strength remains unparalleled, but their

moral strength and self-confidence are continuing to weaken." A divergence of perception from reality is always dangerous. As the idea spreads that the West is weak and lacks any real unity, the rising or reemerging powers are overestimating their position for mounting a challenge to the West. Germany did the same a century ago, slid into world wars tempted by the surface Western disunity, and lost in face of underlying Western unity. Balladur sees the current underestimation of the West as tempting countries and media worldwide into a rebellion against the imposition of Western democratic norms, a possible precursor to a more direct challenge. A Union of the West, concludes Balladur, could bring perceptions back into alignment with underlying realities and stabilize the world.

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Balladur's work is, then, both a serious analysis and a call to action. As such it deserves serious discussion. There is bound to be much to be said, pro and con, about both the diagnosis and the prescription. Those who agree would also presumably want to discuss how to proceed to action on it.

In the following pages Balladur presents his thesis in his own words, followed by two reviews and comments on the book. The articles differ on some major points, particularly on the practical aspects of his proposal. It may be helpful to list here some of the issues on which they differ.

* Balladur presents a future equality between Europe and America as a pre-

condition for a Union of the West, but also presents practical steps that can be taken now. Is equality practical, and to what extent is it needed?

* A new U.S.-EU Council is proposed by Balladur for foreign policy unity. Could it make much progress on this goal? Does he underestimate the ongoing work on gradually extending the foreign policy unity of the West through the globalization of NATO functions? This is discussed at greater length in two other articles we will publish later. How to relate a new embryonic structure to the old strong one? Modelski suggests an informal link, using the new Council as a political motor for the older Atlantic structures.

* How much time does the West have for Union? Is there really an overall decline at all, given the West's victory in the Cold War and subsequent expansion eastward? If the urgent decline is subjective, as Balladur argues, then, ask Devesa and Straus, should the time-frame focus on completing the Union in the next generation as Balladur suggests at one point, or on establishing a preliminary form of Union in the present?

* When should a Union of the West be proclaimed, at the start or the finish? Devesa and Straus argue that, if Balladur's Union is interpreted in a generous way and his US-EU Council added together with other steps and existing structures, a serious Union could be proclaimed in this period.

- Editor

For a Union of the West

by Edouard Balladur

Edouard Balladur was Prime Minister of France, 1993-1995, and served as the mentor of the current French President, Nicolas Sarkozy. Balladur was earlier a Minister of Economy and introduced liberalizing reforms to free the market. Throughout his political career, he has been an active member of the Gaullist party, Rally for the Republic; as a leader within the Gaullist movement, he is credited with having drawn the mainstream of French Gaullists back into a pro-European Union stance and into abandoning anti-American attitudes. Sarkozy rose within Balladur's wing of the Gaullist movement and, in Balladur's government, served as his spokesman and his Budget Minister. The two have long enjoyed close personal and professional ties. From 2002-2007 Balladur presided over the National Assembly's foreign affairs committee; today he heads the Commission on Constitutional Reforms.

Do we still have the right to speak of the West? When we do, are we fanning the flames, rekindling the hatreds, unleashing violence among peoples of different cultures and religions? Some would have you think so. Nothing could be further from the truth. Could anything be more important than self-reflection, than knowing what you hold most dear and who you are, so that you can build relationships with others based on realities and the truth and not merely on rehashing prefabricated ideas? To define oneself is not to hate what is different.

For centuries, the West has dominated the world. Today the West is divided and at the same time facing competition. It is proving incapable of organizing itself to face this ordeal, while its power and influence are under attack in every area. History is beginning to be made without the West; perhaps one day it will be made against it. There is only one way to avoid this: Westerners must become aware of the risk and realize that a greater solidarity among them is the only way to ward it off. They would hardly

merit credit for doing so, as their interdependence leaps to the eyes of those who are willing to see things as they are; and they would still have to face up to the consequences, in the policies implemented on both sides of the Atlantic, by strengthening their ties, and joining together for common action in the world.

The world seems to be slipping away from the Western powers. Their material strength remains unparalleled, but their moral strength and self-confidence are continuing to weaken. Immersed in these troubles, Europe and America have yet to understand that, for the most part, the dangers that threaten them are the same. They must present a united front.

It is high time for Europe and America to awaken to all that unites them in their traditions, their cultures, their ideals, to that which draws them together, be it on the economic, moral, political or strategic level. They are the most threatened by the chaos in the world and the emergence of new powers that do

not adhere to the same principles as they do, whose conceptions of life, man, and society are different. A true union between Europe and the United States must be imagined.

Europe and America have strained relations.

There are many differences between them. America's view of its own power is such that it distorts its judgment; the European Union struggles to assert itself, behaving as if it were lacking confidence and plagued by self-doubt. The Alliance, which is intended to unite them, is out of balance, so great is the assurance of the Americans and the resignation of the Europeans.

Imagine this situation: Europe and the United States are threatened by identical risks. They have common interests far stronger than those that divide them, shared convictions, a single civilization that should bind them as one, a shared vision of man's role, his place in society and the world. Everything should draw them closer together. Yet they continue to cling to quarrels of another time, as if the world had not changed, as if they were still in a position to contend alone for world domination.

Let them finally open their eyes! Whatever they might wish, each is deeply dependent upon the other. Europe has no better possible ally than America. America has no better possible ally than Europe. True, many doubt this on both sides of the Atlantic. But let them consider history, and the dangers both are faced with. Let them reflect before it is too late and before their divisions, cultivated with persistent care, have done irreparable damage.

Europe and America are faced with hostility around the world

With the ongoing shift in energy and wealth, is it any surprise that a mentality of revenge should develop among emerging nations, giving rise to a clash of wills to power? This can be seen in the cultural sphere. The values of the West are being held up as an object for rejection; in all the media a discourse is developed that relativizes the principles of human

rights, casts doubt on the benefits of individualism, and contests the rules of democracy. The cultural backlash has been spreading, not only in the Muslim world, but also throughout Asia and Africa. For those in power in these areas, the struggle for human rights seems more like a tactic of those who contest their authority than a sincere conviction.

The same will to power – or should we call it a self-affirmation, a renaissance? – is apparent in the strategic and military arena. This will to assert one-

self, to count, to be respected, is also taking hold in those countries of the South that are attempting to put the West on the defensive by organizing coalitions against it, so as to marginalize it in

international negotiations. It is in this way that Brazil, India and South Africa, putting themselves forth as the three great developing democracies, recently decided to defend their common interests together on the international stage.

Europe and the United States are no longer the only ones making decisions and taking action. Other powers are emerging, creating new centers of prosperity and new trade flows. The equilibrium of the world is being shaken up; it is changing.

The West is hesitating, because it has still not become fully aware of its profound unity. Is the West ready to form a common front against common threats or will it continue to act in an uncoordinated manner, when it acts at all? Will it finally admit that the shifting of the center of gravity of global power requires it to let go of its reflexive traditional thinking and ready-made ideas?

Defining “the West”. Does it exist? Who is in it?

Does the West have an underlying unity? Many have their doubts. The differences between America and Europe are profound and rooted in history. And yet the West exists, hard as it is to define it.

The transatlantic community constitutes the best definition of the West. It is a material reality, grounded in facts. The economic integration between the two sides of the Atlantic is progressing

“The world seems to be slipping away from the Western powers. Their material strength remains unparalleled, but their moral strength and self-confidence continue to weaken.”

continuously. Europe and America are each other's best clients and largest investors. Trade in goods has been growing at a rate of 10% a year, to the point that people now speak of a "transatlantic economy" embracing fifteen million jobs on the two sides of the ocean. Together, the European Union and the United States still produce more than 55% of world GDP. The North Atlantic will remain the commercial and financial center of the world for a long time to come.

The security of Europe and of America are closely linked, less by the risks left over from the Cold War than by those arising from terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and poorly managed globalization. The threat that weighs on them is largely the same: they are both targets of choice for fundamentalist and terrorist movements that are horrified by their reverence for freedom. This imposes on them a need for common strategic choices, and the reinforcement of an alliance, formed after the World War to fend off the danger of Soviet domination in Europe, that retains its value in an unstable, militarily fragmented and uncertain world.

Europe and America harbor the same collective ideals, their history is largely shared, their principles likewise, and most of the American population is still of European origin. They both believe in democracy, and, while they put it into practice to varying degrees in different areas, they do so far more than the other parts of the world. They are deeply attached to fundamental human rights and individual liberty. They believe in the market economy, in competition, and in progress as the fruit of individual initiative. Above all, they are proud of having invented

the concept of the rights of man, even if they don't always put these rights into practice in an exemplary fashion. This Euro-Atlantic space comprises nearly a billion people, divided among a multitude of nations with an eventful history; and despite ever-present rivalries, they are ultimately devoted to the same spiritual values.

Thus, not only are Europe and the United States bound together by the same fundamental interests, but, in addition, their societies rest on very similar ethical principles and face the same dangers. To unite the West, there is not only a powerful and active transatlantic economy, but also a deep community -- a community of civilization and of the concept of freedom and collective life. What remains to be done is to breathe new life into this western unity, which already is inscribed in history and in facts, and, no matter what some might claim, in our minds and mores. Whatever may be the differences between Europe and America -- and various international occasions provide the theater for them -- the prosperity and peace of the world still depends largely on their cohesion. A political existence must be given to this Euro-American community.

"The North Atlantic will remain the commercial and financial center of the world for a long time to come."



The US and EU have 58% of global GDP, the OECD countries over 75% (World Bank figures, 2006), using actual exchange rates; in PPP conversion rates the numbers are 43% and 55% respectively. Image credit www.worldmapper.org

In a world that is so unified when one considers the material realities, yet so fragmented if one observes the movements of its hearts, the unity between Europe and America must win out over

their differences. This assumes that America will accept that it is neither alone nor all-powerful, and that

Europe will make the efforts needed to exist through something other than its grievances.

It should surprise no one if the peoples of Europe and the United States have doubts about their profound unity; nothing is being done to convince them of it, to create a feeling common to all. There is also the fact that the policies followed by their governments are neither discussed together, nor defined together, nor applied together. Yet the realities are there.

Europeans and Americans should, without renouncing any part of their respective independence of judgment and action, both avoid useless provocation and mistakes that affect them mutually. Europe gains nothing from systematic hostility toward American policy; America gains nothing from neglecting European wishes and interests. Indeed, their quarrels are raising doubts in people's minds about the solidity of the West and its faith in itself.

The path is laid out for them. Europe and America must awaken to the shared civilization that unites them and build common institutions that enable them to act together in a world where they are no longer the exclusive holders of power.

A more effective Europe is necessary for creating a Union of the West.

Will the European Union be capable one day of existing politically and pursuing independent policies, the indispensable condition for establishing more balanced and equal relations with the United States? If not, the West will remain a formula that serves as a front for the maintenance of American predominance. Despite the progress made since the war, this goal is still not in sight. It will only be attained if Europe manages to endow itself with the structure and powers that would enable it to be heard and have real weight. This will be no easy task.

For America to agree and treat the European Union as an equal, the Union must truly exist, it must be better organized and more mobilized, and its members must invest the necessary amount in defense. In sum, Europe must behave more responsibly.

How the Union of the West can be built

Europe and America must work out an ambitious partnership that deals with all of the problems they share, and must create enough solidarity to remedy the state of disarray that endangers the peoples of the West.

A common market, with customs union and currency coordination

Proposals for closer EU-U.S. cooperation, already made at my initiative a few years ago, include: the appointment of a European transatlantic relations coordinator working under the supervision of the European Union president;

and the creation by the European Union and the United States of a permanent joint secretariat, tasked with preparing meetings between ministers or heads of state and meetings of the multilateral institutions they take part in.

These are fine intentions, and they lay the ground for concrete measures, but they are still too timid. Europe and the United States should show greater ambition and conceive of the gradual creation of a large common market, with the institution of a customs union and the adoption of similar fiscal, juridical and competition law regulations. An immense arena, stretching across the Atlantic, would in this way be opened up for the formation of an economic and social community governed, to the extent possible, by the same principles and subject to the same rules.

It is time to seriously commit to putting an end to the disorderly floating of currencies that threatens the prosperity and progress of the world and that eventually will destroy the very idea of economic liberalism. In 1986, I was able to get our partners to sign the Louvre Accords, in which Europe, the United States and Japan pledged to maintain monetary stability through coordination of their economic policies and interventions by the central banks on the foreign exchange market. For a few years the Ac-

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cords yielded satisfactory results, before they were forgotten and monetary speculation resumed with renewed vigor.

We must not lose heart, but take up the task again. Thanks to the felicitous creation of the Euro, the Franc and the Mark no longer fluctuate in relation to one another and commercial transactions within the Union are safe from speculation. Today the ratios that matter are those between the Euro and the Dollar. We cannot suggest the creation of a currency common to Europe and America; considering the global role of the Dollar, it would be too unequal a marriage. On the other hand, a relationship akin to that instituted among European currencies by the European Monetary System could be imagined between the Dol-

lar and the Euro, with the fluctuation margins guided and controlled by the two central banks, the Fed and the European Central Bank, the economic and budgetary policies coordinated, and the monetary policies harmonized. Is this too great an ambition? I am convinced of the opposite: I strongly believe that liberalism is advantageous

only when accompanied by an order, that is, a set of rules that must be respected by all. The world will know neither balance nor lasting prosperity as long as monetary stability is not guaranteed.

A foreign policy and military union

As regards military issues, the emergence of a Union of the West between Europe and the United States would make it possible to rebalance the func-

tioning of the Alliance for a better distribution of responsibilities, since American reticence would no longer be justified. The Alliance would no longer evade the need to update and clarify the strategic concept that underlies it: defining for today's world the defense mission that had once justified its creation, the conditions for it to intervene outside of its traditional geographical area, which is itself expanding, and the rules allowing its members to intervene in one or another region of the world without the consent of their allies while nonetheless using the instruments of the Alliance.

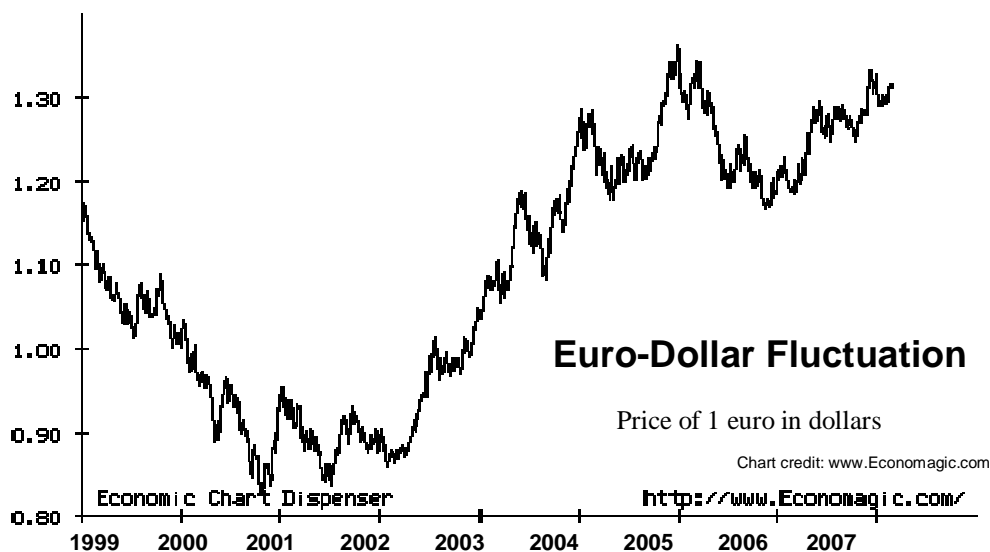
Such adjustments become all the more necessary as the United States and Europe must act in concert - in Africa, for example, to keep the continent from

sinking into poverty, overpopulation, tribal wars and tyrannies; or in the Middle East, where much of the West's prosperity, security and even its fate are at stake. No matter what the issue -- be it energy supplies, the environment, or the fight against terrorism -- the solidarity of

Europe and the United States must be indivisible if they want to make the best use of the assets still at their disposal thanks to their current strength and the political influence they still possess. This would seem undeniable.

The most serious problem faced by Europe and America is the nuclear issue in all its facets. It is critical that these two powers harmonize their thinking and synchronize their policies in this area. Should consideration be given to the establishment

“Europe and the United States should gradually create a large common market, including a customs union, and put an end to the disorderly floating of currencies.”



of binding international rules that would aim to lock in the present situation against nuclear spread, with compliance enforced upon a simple report by the United Nations Security Council that they have been violated? Many states would be hostile to this basic innovation in international law and see it as legitimizing an unfair situation that favors a few, and instituting an international executive authority to consolidate it. Yet, without such a change, we will have more and more difficulty containing nuclear proliferation.

An executive-level political structure

To face up to such serious issues and try to find answers, an organized and improved cooperation between Europeans and Americans is not enough, nor a deepened military Alliance either. Things must be stated clearly and for all to hear. A vaster ambition requires a new organization. We must show ourselves to be bolder and build – these words have a meaning – a true Union of the West traversing the two shores of the ocean.

The Union of the West would have an Executive Council, convening its leaders every three months. Would this Executive Council have as its sole mission to organize the debate, harmonize the positions of its members and -- this would be the new factor -- to do so at regular intervals? Should it be endowed, like the European Council, with true decision-making authority? If so, in what form and with what majority and sanctions? It is too early to answer such questions without running the risk of daydreaming. It would already be enormous progress if a body were to be created on an initially limited basis and were to meet frequently, and if neither the Europeans nor the Americans could decide anything on matters of common interest without having discussed them together beforehand. If this endeavor had positive results, then the Union of the West could go farther. But to be frank, I do not see this as a possibility today.

The goal of organizing a coherent and effective Atlantic community will remain a dream if Europeans and Americans, who have a common interest in

putting an end to their quarrels, do not give themselves the legal instruments to do so by creating a Union of the West. This Union would need sound institutions. That is the task of the next generation.

A revolution that creates a future

The aim proposed is immense. It will be no easy task for each to accept that an era of history has come to an end, and to renounce exercising alone the powers that it can no longer handle effectively, so as to benefit from a strength that will be greater though collective. If the creation of the Union of Europe is presented as an undertaking without precedent, then the Union of the West itself, spanning the Atlantic, will

be worthy of no less praise. It is the grand design of the half-century to come. The time has come to make it a reality. Its achievement will give rise to countless difficulties, the greatest from the western nations

“An improved cooperation is not enough. A vaster ambition requires a new organization. We must show ourselves to be bolder and build a true Union of the West traversing the two shores of the ocean.”

themselves, where past rivalries, conformism and lack of imagination continue to inform their policies. But there is no alternative and nobody has proposed one, other than the *status quo* from which a slow and continuous weakening will result, then decadence, as new powers emerge around the world.

A revolution of mindset is needed, both in Europe and the United States. Each must stop harboring nostalgic and inconsistent ways of thinking.

Americans continue to believe that very little can be accomplished without their leadership, so their leadership is still indispensable. This is true today, but won't be for long. Within twenty years, many are the changes that will occur in the balance of power!

Time is of the essence for both. The United States must convince itself that it will be more successful in maintaining the world's equilibrium if it is more closely connected to a Europe that is at long last organized. It will have to make a break with its habit of deciding things alone, which is explained if

not justified by the role it played in defending liberty throughout the twentieth century. The United States needs to recognize that isolation weakens it too, as the adventure in Iraq shows, and the time has passed for military solutions that no one approves. Asia's rise in power will force it to make compromises. America will be more powerful if it is no longer alone, but strongly linked to others, even at some expense to its freedom of movement. As for the European nations, they must, without forsaking any part of themselves, open their eyes and establish closer links with one another, as this is the only way to speak to the United States on an equal basis. Europeans have to make a two-fold effort: organize a true Union among themselves and forge close ties between this new Union and the United States.

The world truly needs to be taken as it is, in all its diversity and vitality, and the extraordinary will to progress that from now on animates the main part of humanity, too long consigned to the margins of history. In these new times, other civilizations are emerging, but the West continues to exist; it too is a reality, a constituent part of humanity, for a long time the most enlightened and dynamic. To declare that the West exists, to want it to survive in a world where it will represent less wealth and power in relation to others, implies that Europeans and Americans should not dissipate their energies in the many contradictions of the past, or indulge in rivalries that no longer make sense and that, instead of cultivating their mutual resentments, they should focus instead on what they have in common.

The closer association between Europe and the United States would not always lead them to identical policies in all regions of the world, but at the very least they would hold discussions beforehand and better understand one another, perhaps even reach agreement. Europe is not focused exclusively on the Atlantic, but also on Africa and Eastern Europe, and on Russia in particular. The United States is concerned not only with events in Europe, but also with those in Latin America and in the Pacific, an area that is looming ever larger in its fears and apprehen-

sions. This multiplicity of interests does not constitute an obstacle to bringing Europe and America together. Quite to the contrary: each, thanks to the other, would have a more sound view of the state of the world and the most appropriate actions to be undertaken. Many ambiguities would be dissipated, misunderstandings clarified, rivalries avoided.

For the West, organizing itself better would not mean closing itself off with a purely defensive attitude. The West's mission is not to reject the world but, on the contrary, to send it a message of solidarity and cooperation. It is to call upon the international community to awaken to the risks of violence and chaos flowing from terrorism, climate change, nuclear proliferation, and poverty -- risks that threaten all peoples, whatever their religion, culture, race and history -- and to act together to confront them.

For all involved, it would be the kind of revolution that creates a future. Is this too grand an ambition? No other can enable the West to escape the decline that threatens it. Given the new powers that are emerging, only Union will enable the West to assert itself in the century that is now beginning.

Most importantly, the West must set for itself the goal of proposing to the world a message that is above all moral and political, founded on universal endorsement of common values and universal respect for them.

Let us become aware that we are entering a new world! In this world, it is only by combining imagination, generosity and realism that we can safeguard our idea of man and of international society.

This article is excerpted from Edouard Balladur's most recent book, For a Union of the West between Europe and the United States, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, forthcoming 2008. All rights reserved. French edition: Pour une Union occidentale entre l'Europe et les Etats-Unis, Paris, Fayard, 2007. Translation by Jessica Abreu with Ira Straus, with assistance from Tiziana Stella, Ani Gevorkian, and Laura Gerhardt of the Streit Council.

Union of the West as a French Initiative

by Doménec Ruiz Devesa
with Ira Straus

Doménec Ruiz Devesa is an Economist at the World Bank. He wrote this article in his personal capacity, not for the Bank, and is solely responsible for the views expressed here. Ira Straus is co-translator of the book of Balladur and former Executive Director of the Association to Unite the Democracies.

Pour une Union occidentale entre l'Europe et les Etats-Unis
Edouard Balladur
Paris, Fayard, 2007
121 pp.

The idea of setting up a Union among the Atlantic nations is not a new one, certainly not for the readers of *Freedom and Union* or to anybody who remembers Clarence Streit's *Union Now*¹, a book that gave rise to a popular Atlanticist movement for the one and only time in history. That movement, in turn, provided inspiration and backing for the Marshall Plan, with its dual progeny, the EU and OECD, and for the formation of NATO. There is today, thanks to this, an institutionalized West already in existence. Why, then, is a book calling today for a *Union of the West*, even if by a former Prime Minister of France, of any interest?

The short answer is that the unity of the West is neither complete nor in a finished form. The steps already taken to unite the West make a genuine Union more feasible but by no means unnecessary. Western unity is moving forward in interesting ways at this time; it could still also move backward.

Western unity is fairly effective in the military sphere and the economic sphere while it is dangerously weak in the foreign policy sphere. The foreign policy unity or disunity is the most important factor. It determines most of the value of the military unity. It also determines whether the economic weight of Europe and America should be measured together on the assumption of their cooperation or against each

other on the assumption that they are mutually competing economic powers.

Timeliness of the book

Balladur's book is a call above all for a foreign policy union of the West, coupled to be sure with the military and economic aspects of unity; in sum, a "new", closer and "true" union. It could not be more relevant at a time of rethinking after the sharp divisions over Iraq, and a time of facing hard problems of foreign policy coordination in a mound of situations around the world, each of them unique yet all of them mortally important in the struggle with Islamist extremism.

The book also comes in a moment of significant internal changes and challenges in the Atlantic world. The European Union faces an ongoing institutional crisis as a consequence of the dichotomy between enlargement and further integration, which has yet to be solved by the Lisbon Treaty. Nevertheless the EU is considerably stronger both in its authority and in its size than it had been before the Eastern European revolutions of 1989; and it wields a euro whose global importance grows with every new fluctuation of the dollar, underscoring the fact that even the economic unity of the West is far from complete. NATO is engaged in a critical fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban, where its credibility as a military alliance is on the line. And the U.S. is in the midst of electing a new president, who will be in need of solid allies to help manage financial imbalances that have reached

near-crisis level and large remaining problems in Afghanistan and Iraq. Meanwhile the West continues to face imminent external threats from local and global terrorist movements, long-term risks of unpredictable scope from the rise of China, new trouble with Russia, and shifts in the global balances.

Why from France?

Equally important with its timeliness is the fact of the book's authorship. Edouard Balladur is of course French. It has been half a century since Atlanticism was last a popular intellectual current in France. President Sarkozy has nevertheless made the rebuilding of the transatlantic relationship a top priority of his government. There is again talk of France rejoining NATO's military structure.

Balladur has been close to Sarkozy for years. Balladur was the leader of the wing of the French Gaullist movement within which the young Sarkozy rose, and not too long ago the roles were reversed: Balladur was Prime Minister and Sarkozy was his spokesman. Balladur's long-standing insistence on a pro-EU and pro-U.S. posture, personally drawing the mainstream of Gaullism out of its former unfriendly attitudes toward both, goes far toward explaining the shift in French policy under Sarkozy. The significance of having a French political figure of this stature publicly advocating a Union between the European Union and the United States should not be underestimated.

A comprehensive diagnosis and prescription

Balladur's book treats its subject concisely but comprehensively. It provides a diagnosis of today's international relations and the trend of the world order, a discussion of what it means for the West, a justification of a renewed Transatlantic relationship, a look at the alternatives, and a partial institutional blueprint for achieving Western union.

Balladur argues that the rising powers, China, India and Russia, pose significant economic and strategic challenges to the Atlantic powers, while threats such as Islamic fundamentalism, poverty in developing countries and global warming are already affecting the West. He foresees a world where the Atlantic countries would be less and less relevant if Europe and the United States do not unite and work together. "History", he warns, "is starting to be made without the West, and one day it could be made

against it" (p. 9). There is a sense of urgency in this call, but the unity of the West is not seen here as confrontational vis-à-vis the Muslim world, or the rising powers in Asia and Latin America, even though that is how it might be viewed by some of its proponents on the Right and opponents on the Left. Balladur believes that acknowledging the distinctive features of the West does not mean accepting or promoting a clash of civilizations. In this regard, the author says that "to defend [the West's] personality and interests does not feed the clash of civilizations (...) to the contrary, this contributes to a new equilibrium in an unstable world" (p. 16).

However, accepting that the world is becoming more complex in the age of globalization and that new sources of political power are emerging *vis-à-vis* the older democratic powers of the Atlantic does not necessarily mean that Europe and the United States should unite. Strategic concerns, while important, are not the only ones in his argument. Balladur also writes about of the exceptionally strong economic ties between the two shores of the Atlantic², and the common history and values that link them.

Europeanism and Atlanticism rejoined

In a way, Balladur is coming back to the Transatlantic tradition of the 1950s and early 1960s, somewhat forgotten in the later decades of the Cold War and more recently in the squabbling over the invasion of Iraq. This Transatlanticism was basically an optimistic movement that, despite concerns over mounting ideological and strategic dangers coupled with mushrooming means of mutual destruction, saw a closely integrated West as one whose democracy and market economy would prove a better and more sustainable system than the Soviet one. Men like William Clayton,

George Ball, Jean Monnet, John Foster Dulles, Theodore Achilles, David K. E. Bruce, and even George Kennan and Dean Acheson were behind one or another version of Transatlantic unity.

Balladur's essay clearly owes to this tradition, and particularly to its Europeanist wing. It does not envision an Atlantic community composed of a number of nations and led by the United States as the major power, as has also been widely advocated and to some extent already exists; nor a Union based on the individual citizens and nation states. To be sure, Balladur does not reject the existing Atlantic institutions or

The unity of the West is neither complete nor in finished form. The steps already taken to unite the West make genuine Union more feasible, not unnecessary.

their enhancement. He approves of the global extension of NATO tasks. He recalls fondly the G-7 currency coordination agreed in 1985-7, in which he had had a hand. But he portrays the relation on this level as fatally limited by its inequality. He writes that a more effective united Europe would deprive Europe of its excuses for its failings and, in a rare instance of over-optimism in his book, that it would clear the way for immediately making all the reforms and adaptations needed in NATO for the new era. Following in the line of the two pillar approach advanced by Monnet and many others, the author advocates a Union consisting of the European Union and the United States as the founding powers.

The trans-Atlantic level of this complex structure was long viewed by Europeanists as a future second step, after the first step was taken by creating a united Europe. The first step turned out far from simple and began stretching from years into decades; the second step began to look like an ideal relegated to a future so distant that it might no longer be relevant when it arrived. Today, however, the existence of a European Union, incomplete though it is, makes the “second step” a present-day task, not just a distant dream. Europeanists on a number of levels, including the highest levels of the EU, have begun once again speaking of trans-Atlantic construction as a matter for the here and now.

This is important because Balladur discusses the inner workings of the European Union in depth, indeed he devotes an entire chapter to it. It reads almost like a separate essay, written on a basis of years of previous work on the subject. It also reads like an excursion through the spiritual odyssey of French Gaullists from a bitterly nationalistic, anti-federalist outlook to an acceptance of the basic reality always put forward by federalists: that the nation state is inadequate for the problems of the present, and the European nation states are inadequate even for a dignified relation with their friend and ally America. This is the reality that Balladur keeps repeating that people have to look in the face. He holds that the EU suffers from fatal limitations in the approaches it has been following and needs reform to allow dramatically greater flexibility and more varied levels of integration, in order for the major powers of Western Europe to be able to proceed on their own to unite their powers in a strong form and thereby create a genuine European Power. This full-scale Europe is in turn, he says, a precondition for creating a Union of the West: “anything less than this, and the Union of the West will not see the light of

day.” (p. 86)

If a reader were to take this last dictum literally, he or she would have to draw a simple conclusion: that the Union of the West will not see the light of day. To be sure, this is contradicted by Balladur’s actual proposals for developing the larger Union, which put forth realistic ways for upgrading trans-Atlantic integration in a matter of months and years. Balladur is realistic about most things; it is necessary to be realistic about yet one more: that even if all his proposals for the EU

were adopted, the EU would not become the equal of the U.S. in military and security matters for decades to come. Nor would it become as he writes a Union as solid and cohesive as the United States; for this is a degree of solidity that it took the U.S. an entire century after its Constitution to achieve. And this means that, for all the reasons Balladur gives elsewhere, it is useless to complain about the inequality between America and its allies, more than half a century after America began pressuring the allies to unite and overcome the inequality. It means that the transatlantic relationship is going to continue to rely heavily on the multilateral structures that exist on the level of NATO and OECD. It means that the bilateral structure Balladur proposes, as an upgrading of U.S.-EU relations, could at this stage of history be only a supplement to the multilateral ones, not a replacement for them.

This is not to deny the importance of European integration for Atlantic unity, or for its further development. The above-mentioned policymakers argued decades ago that the West in general and the United States in particular require a strong, unified Europe. For this very reason, presidents Truman and Eisenhower supported the creation of the European Communities, and encouraged European integration to go farther than it actually did, particularly in the military field. In this regard, Balladur, who has valiantly fought against the habit of unfairness to America in French discourse, is for one moment himself unfair to the U.S., perhaps confusing the policy towards Europe of the eleven previous administrations with that of portions of the present Bush Administration in its first term. He accuses the U.S. of “always” favoring a widening and dilution of the EU not a deepening of it. Actually the U.S. has almost always supported deepening of the EC and EU. It was the U.S. that pressed in the 1950s for a European Defense Community; it was the French Gaullists who, along with the Communists, led

The significance of having a French figure of this stature advocating a Union of the EU and the U.S. should not be underestimated.

the fight that defeated its ratification. Today Balladur, the Wise Man of the Gaullists, favors a larger role for military spending and planning in Europe precisely in order to make the European Union a more credible partner for the United States. At the same time, in the tradition of George Kennan or currently David P. Calleo³, Balladur sees a critical role for Europe in helping America craft a course that stays clear of both isolationism and imperialism. Mistakes like the invasion of Iraq prove to Balladur that the United States need a strong ally and the ability to listen to its friends.

Interestingly enough, Senator John McCain, the Republican nominee for President said, in the op-ed pages of the *Financial Times* on March 18, 2008, that “our great [American] power does not mean we can do whatever we want whenever we want, nor should we assume we have all the wisdom and knowledge necessary to succeed”. This is in sharp contrast with the policies of the Bush Administration in its first term. He also welcomes “European leadership to make the world a better and safer place. We look forward to France’s full reintegration into NATO. And we strongly support the EU’s efforts to build an effective European Security and Defence Policy”.⁴

Balladur’s argument here is two-fold. First, a genuine and effective Atlantic community has to be rooted in a strong European Union as well as a strong U.S; an ally must be strong in order to be trusted and listened to.

Second, there is no contradiction between a strong NATO and a European strongly united in the European Security and Defense Policy, or at least need be no

contradiction unless it is artificially created by one opposing the other. In a larger sense, there is no inherent opposition between Europeanism and Atlanticism, and moreover, the first is instrumental for the second.⁵

It is also important that he sees France as likely to play a key role both internally in Europe and *vis-à-vis* the United States in the path to Atlantic unity. In this regard, Sarkozy’s policies are a sign that Atlanticism is coming back into the political mainstream in Europe, and this is welcome development.

A clear path to Economic Union

Balladur’s work has two other very important aspects. First, he pays careful of attention to international economic and financial cooperation, a sphere where he has particular personal competence. Second, he devotes a full chapter to the institutional aspects of a Union of the West.

Balladur’s analysis of financial and monetary issues has been fortunate in its timing. Since the summer of 2007 the West has been living in a serious financial turmoil. The bursting of the housing bubble, the subprime mortgages default, the stock markets losses, the devaluation of the U.S. dollar to unprecedented levels, rising oil prices, and the global food shortages are problems on a scale that remind us of past crises. We can recall how the past crises were deepened among other things by lack forceful international economic cooperation, particularly within the Atlantic world. The 1973 crisis comes readily to mind, with its combination of rising food and energy prices and the devaluation of the dollar.⁶

Balladur pays special attention to the problem of exchange rates. He says “it is time to put an end to the unrestricted floating of currencies that threatens the world’s prosperity and that in due course will destroy even economic liberalism itself” (p. 89). The divergence of European and American monetary policies has contributed to a fluctuation of the dollar vis-à-vis

the euro on a scale that should be of great concern.⁷ Balladur is advocating a harmonization of monetary policies and coordinated intervention in the currency markets in order to bring the US dollar-euro fluctuations within defined ranges. This will certainly help. The author calls also for better regulation of financial markets to discourage speculation and the quest for short-term profits.

It is worth reiterating here that Balladur is an economic liberal, which means, in American language, a conservative, and in his capacity as economics minister in the 1980s, was responsible for important pro-market reforms in France. He joined at the time with James A. Baker III in building agreements on currency and monetary cooperation between America and its G-7 partners -- the then-famous Plaza and Louvre accords -- which he views as a model for what should be done today between the dollar and the euro. However, he wants it to be done on a more permanent basis, with institutional foundations to prevent

its being forgotten, as happened in the late 1980s. The recently-created Transatlantic Economic Council could provide some of the institutional support he advocates; beyond this he advocates a broader political U.S.-EU Council, building on the present U.S.-EU summits.

The tougher problem: Political Union

Had Balladur only called for a renewed spirit of trans-Atlantic partnership in the aftermath of the squabbling over Iraq, his essay would not be very different from the timely papers published by experts in transatlantic relations such as Dana H. Allin, Daniel S. Hamilton, Erik Jones⁸ or David P. Calleo. The value added resides not only in who he is, but in the institutional aspects of the proposals Balladur puts forward, and in the very name “Union of the West” that he is ready to put his name to. This is what connects Balladur with the profound Atlanticist vision of Clarence Streit.

Many of the Euro-Atlanticists of the 1950s and 1960s cited earlier were vague about the institutional aspects of an Atlantic Union. Some of them put it off to a distant future after European unity was completed, although in practice they almost all contributed to building the Atlantic structures alongside the European ones. In the case of NATO, it was formed before there were any significant European structures. Jean Monnet himself got his start on international integration by building supply structures for the Atlantic alliance during World War I; yet ideologically he was a Europeanist who wrote at times that European Union must happen first. Conversely, William Clayton wrote at times that Atlantic Union must take precedence, yet it was he who was most responsible for the Marshall Plan with its requirement that the European countries begin moving toward economic union, and who personally delivered the demarche to European governments that they must set up a permanent organization for economic collaboration, not just a temporary committee for using the Marshall Plan funds. Europeanism and Atlanticism grew up as common projects, they were mutually reinforcing on the ground, the same political leaders were building them, and some of the same people were staffing them. As long as both were moving forward, there was very little jealousy between them in practice: it was a single equation of Euro-Atlanticism, no matter what some of the theorists of each side of the equation said about how it

must have priority over the other.

The theoretical divisiveness got a new lease on life in the 1960s, however, when De Gaulle obstructed progress on both European and Atlantic levels, and at the same time introduced an element of anti-Atlantic spirit into the European level. Actual Atlantic construction faded out of the language of most Europeanists; the discussion of an “Atlantic partnership of equals” degenerated into talk only of the need for equality, not of any structured partnership.

Today one can see this situation once again changing back. Europeanists are once again taking a constructive approach, or perhaps one should say constructivist approach, to Atlantic structures. The complementarity of the two levels is being emphasized rather than their competition or contradiction. Actual progress is again taking

place on both levels. Institutional construction is being advocated for the Atlantic level. One can see it in the very person of Balladur, at one and the same time the leading Europeanist and the leading At-

It is necessary to be realistic: Even if all his proposals for the EU were adopted, the EU would not become the equal of the US for decades to come. The transatlantic relationship will continue to rely heavily on NATO and OECD; the EU-US structure Balladur proposes would at this stage be a supplement.

lanticist among the Gaullists.

Balladur goes into some detail on the question of the institutions needed for the Union of the West; he devotes his penultimate chapter (chapter VII) to this. To be sure, he acknowledges great obstacles to building adequate institutions. He raises several critical questions about the main institution he proposes, questions that he chooses not to answer lest his answers prove premature and “chimerical” (p. 102). Nevertheless he emphasizes several times that the Union of the West will need institutions with real weight. It will be a construction no less grand, he says, and deserving no less praise, than of the European Union itself, which has involved truly heavy lifting on the part of statesmen to achieve its transfers of building blocks of power from national to joint structures.

Despite his caution about details, Balladur has plenty of specifics. He envisions a truly unified Atlantic market, along lines similar to the European Common Market. This requires the abolition of all trade barriers between the U.S. and the E.U., a customs union or setting up of a common external tariff, the monetary arrangements discussed earlier, and the adoption of common rules in competition, tax and labor laws (p. 89). This is a huge task. The last portion of it has already been assigned to the aforementioned Transatlantic Economic Council, created

in the spring of 2007. Balladur builds on the program agreed to at that time but goes well beyond it.

In addition to supporting the project of an internal Transatlantic market and giving it a more comprehensive form, Balladur calls for the creation of the position of Coordinator of Transatlantic affairs within the Presidency of the European Council, and of a permanent secretariat to follow-up on Atlantic economic integration (p. 87 and 88).

An Executive Council of a Union of the West

Finally, and most important of all in his own view, Balladur calls for the creation of an Executive Council of the Union of the West composed by the President of the United States and the E.U. leaders that would meet at the summit level every three months to make possible the principle of mutual and permanent consultation on all foreign policy matters, and will be fully staffed (p. 101). This builds on the existing U.S.-EU summits, upgrading them in terms of frequency and in terms of staffing for preparation and follow-through in the interim periods, and, what may well be of equal importance, giving them a name and identity bearing an intention of becoming a genuine Union.

Balladur admits that it is hard to specify any real powers the new Council could have from the start. He raises questions about whether its authority should go beyond mere consultation. He mentions upgraded forms of consultation that have been discussed over the years for the EU Council, such as putting time limits on it to reach a decision, but leaves such questions to the future. He also consigns to the future to figure out what kind of voting the Council could have, with what weights and requirements for decision.

In this regard he fails to face up to the fact that it is not a problem of timing but of structure: there is no possible formula for voting between only two entities, either there is consensus or there is no decision. The matter is different if third parties such as Canada or Japan or Turkey or Russia are brought into the room alongside the U.S. and EU; or if there is a joint Parliament of the U.S. and EU in which the division might more often fall along lines of the various political parties than the oceanic geographical line separating the two continents. Should the two entities, America and Europe, refrain from any action until a consensus has been

reached in the Council? Balladur at one point edges toward giving in to this thought, but on most occasions argues in the opposite manner: that America's power is to be respected not condemned, power must sometimes act, the West must act, Europe must be something better than a mere heckler of America or think it can merely veto American actions, and America cannot be expected to defer to Europe if heckling or the veto is all Europe has to offer. This leaves him with, for now, a purely consultative Council. The only obligation he can specify would be to consult before acting. He says that even this would be great progress, but it seems a weak point: in NATO's North Atlantic Council there is already constant consultation on the broad range of foreign policy issues. Usually the consultations come well in advance of separate national actions, and if any common action is requested, even if merely for marginal supplement to a national action, the consultation tends to be long, sometimes inordinately long. To be sure, on the occasions when an action is in the end taken separately by the U.S., the parties dissatisfied with the action usually say the consultations should have continued longer; but this is only to underline the point that a purely consultative arrangement tends to leave a fair measure of dissatisfaction.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to dismiss Balladur's Council as just a duplication of what already exists. His Council would provide a consultation in a different, potentially more intimate context than NATO's: a context of a special relation of the U.S. with one other entity, the EU, rather than around a large table of more than two dozen separate nations, and could engage the Chief Executives with greater frequency. It would deal with specific U.S.-EU programs such as the Transatlantic Market as well as general foreign policy questions. As such, it does bring value added and has some potential for further development.

Europeanists are once again taking an active approach to the Atlantic, proposing institutional construction for the Atlantic level. The complementarity of the two levels is being emphasized. One can see it in the very person of Balladur, both the leading Europeanist and the leading Atlanticist among the Gaullists.

Can Balladur's Union be formed in this generation?

If Balladur's Council proposal is compared with Streit's original design, it is evident that it not only lacks initial powers, but there is also no trace of common judicial or parliamentary bodies. Balladur does not even mention the Congress-European Parliament meetings, or the NATO Parliamentary Assembly that has existed since the 1950s. However, additional bodies are not ruled out by Balladur.

The author nevertheless believes that the Executive Council would set the seed of a relationship that is at

once equal and serious, and if it worked well, Western leaders would learn from the experience and become disposed to add deeper institutional arrangements: "If this succeeds, the Union of the West could go even farther. But frankly, I do not see this happening right now... This will be the task of the next generation".

This is a fair enough conclusion, at least for his proposed Executive Council. There is little interest extant in creating genuine joint powers for such a new trans-Atlantic body. Balladur's book presumably exists for the sake of spurring this interest, at least among persons involved in government who feel a sense of responsibility for such things. Until the interest evolves, responsible officials will not want to take initiatives that look doomed to fail.

But the conclusion also has an element of despair, given Balladur's premise: that we have twenty years to prepare for great shifts in global power, and that Union of the West is indispensable to prevent destabilization of the world even in the interim.

It would also be fair to point out that the despair may be undue if Atlantic structures are viewed more broadly. The existing transatlantic structures, from NATO to OECD and various lesser institutions, already have more than merely consultative functions. Their functions could be realistically upgraded in the present period in ways that involve more genuine authority than Balladur finds it prudent to propose for a new U.S.-EU Council.

This suggests that it would be well for Balladur's Council and his bilateral U.S.-EU economic steps to be supplemented by the steps that can be taken in the existing multilateral Atlantic institutions. These institutions already have many other major steps already under the belt, so to speak.

Adding these several institutions and various steps together would be to the benefit of Balladur's proposal; indeed, it is the only way to arrive at any Union of the West that could be proclaimed a Union at all in this era. The Union would necessarily be two-level: the embryonic EU-U.S. bilateral level and the well-developed NATO-OECD multilateral level.

Balladur's hope would presumably be that the bilateral level, with its image of equality, would evolve and accrue greater importance with time, perhaps even some day swallow up the multilateral level or merge with it.

For now, what would be needed is a preliminary connection between the bilateral and multilateral levels of institutions, to make it easier to conceive of them both as parts of the same Union. Dr. George Modelski has suggested that the bilateral U.S.-EU Council could act informally as an engine, when the two parties are agreed, for the wider Atlantic multilateral institutions, much as France and Germany acted for several decades as an informal bilateral motor for the development of the EC. It

is a realistic suggestion. The EU is already fully present at G-8 meetings. Balladur's goal of gaining a presence for it at the NATO Council is not yet realistic, as he acknowledges would make sense only when the EU has genuine common military authority and capability, but it could one day come to pass and enable the U.S.-EU Council to play a role of driving engine for NATO as well.

Counting all the existing West-West institutions, and acknowledging all of Balladur's criticisms of their gaps

and defects, there is in fact enough integration in the West, that, if supplemented by the proposals he makes, the Whole can be considered a Union, one that can exist in this era. Not a completed Union; but far more than just a consultative Council that one would have to merely hope would grow into something noticeable decades down the road.

Which West to include in the Union

Lastly, there are a few inconsistencies in Balladur's essay. He defines the West as North America, including Canada, and Europe. However, his discussion and proposed Union of the West goes around the United States and the European Union, excluding not only Canada but also European countries that are not members of the E.U. Similarly, equating the West with the geographical Atlantic world might be somewhat problematic, since countries like Australia and New Zealand certainly are Western countries, and indeed Atlantic countries in a historical and cultural sense. That is why they were included in the original proposals for trans-Atlantic Union in the early 1900s. In a significant sense, Japan is also Western. These holes in the logical ground, or perhaps we should say geographical ground, could be repaired by the correctives we suggested for other reasons a paragraph above:

Is Union urgent, yet the task of the next generation? That sounds plausible but despairing. The despair is undue if Atlantic structures are viewed more broadly. Existing structures, NATO and OECD, already have major functions and authority. It would help Balladur's US-EU Council to be supplemented by steps taken in these older structures. Adding all these institutions and steps together would benefit Balladur's proposal: It is the only way to arrive at any Union of the West that could be proclaimed a Union at all in this era.

by viewing the Union of the West as multi-level, consisting not just of a new U.S.-EU Council but also of the existing trans-Atlantic institutions, some of them purely Atlantic, others extending westward across the Pacific as well, still others extending eastward across Eurasia.

A deeper, perhaps longer term issue is that the Latin American democracies are also in substantial part Western in their cultural roots and history; and that westernization has become a worldwide phenomenon, giving all countries, no matter how non-Western their origins, an element of Western overlay. A related question is the relation of the structures of Atlantic unity or Union to the Community of Democracies that brings together a hundred or more democracies in a loose world coalition, and proposals for additional similar coalitions.

Balladur's geographical-cultural definition of the West has this truth: The North Atlantic is the core of the Western world, and also the core of westernization in the wider world. The problem is to reinforce the core without exaggerating the lines of distinction, which could undermine its attractive power on others and foster conflict. Nor would one want to narrow the core in a self-defeating way that divides the West from some of its own countries, or consigns semi-Western countries to develop a separate international identity.

A Sarkozy Opening for Union?

These questions notwithstanding, Balladur has made an important intellectual contribution that is likely to have a policy impact. It brings together the best traditions of Atlanticism and Europeanism. It lays out a perspective

of Union that is well grounded historically and empirically, and is practical and realistic in its means. And it is connected intimately to the Europeanist and Atlanticist policies of the current President of the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, which have been of critical importance for the renewal of Euro-Atlantic integration in the last year and may lead to further major steps in the year or years to come.

As John Vinocur observed in *The International Herald Tribune*, Sarkozy likes to play for big stakes, and Atlantic Union should be a stake to his liking. Sarkozy was willing to invest a huge personal diplomatic effort into creating a Mediterranean Union, even if it is largely just for the sake of giving Turkey an alternative to membership in the EU, as he knew this in turn was, for most of the citizens of the EU, a precondition for accepting further steps toward EU federation. He is already working to bring France back into the NATO military structure.

Who is to say that he would not be willing also to invest some effort into upgrading the U.S.-EU summits into a formal Council, supplementing the Transatlantic Market program with the dimensions of currency coordination and a customs union, combining France-in-NATO with other upgrades and adaptation in NATO, OECD, and G-8, and wrapping it all together under the name of a Union of the West?

NOTES.

1. Clarence K. Streit, *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic*, Harper Brothers, New York and London, 1939. After the end of the Cold War, ideas of Atlantic unity were revived by some authors as well. See in particular Charles A. Kupchan, "Reviving the West", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1996, and various writings by John Ikenberry. The rushing of the former Eastern bloc countries into the Euro-Atlantic institutions was taken as a confirmation of Streit's perspective.
2. It has become commonplace to state that the U.S. and E.U. are the most important trade and investment partners of one another. For more on the transatlantic economy, see the annual reports published by the SAIS Center for Transat-

lantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C.

3. See, for a discussion of Europe's role as a friendly balance to the U.S., David P. Calleo, "Unipolar Illusions", *Survival*, Vol. 49, No. 3, Fall 2007.
4. John McCain, "America must be a good role model", *Financial Times*, March 18 2008.
5. See Domenec Ruiz Devesa, *Atlanticism or Europeanism*, MA Thesis, The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, May 2005, for a discussion on the intellectual and political connections between these two currents.
6. Some economists think back to the 1929 depression, see Paul Krugman, "Partying Like It's 1929", *The New York Times*, March 21 2008. For

other interesting analyses of the current crisis see Nouriel Roubini, "The Coming Financial Pandemic", *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2008, and *The Economist*, "Briefing: Wall Street Crisis", March 22nd-28th, 2008.

7. I may refer the reader also to my earlier article in these pages, "From Atlantic Market to Atlantic Polity?", *Freedom and Union*, Vol. II, No. 2, Fall 2007.

8. For a good example see "The Transatlantic Relationship", *International Affairs*, Volume 80, Number 4, July 2004.

Window of Opportunity for a rebalanced transatlantic partnership

By George Modelski

George Modelski, Professor of Political Science Emeritus at the University of Washington, is author of important works on long cycles in world politics, leadership in international systems, and globalization as an evolutionary process.

Two recent documents should draw the attention of all students and practitioners of transatlantic relations and global security. Edouard Balladur's proposal for a 'Union of the West' [1] offers a masterly analysis of the contemporary situation, and a succinct but well-aimed list of solutions for reinvigorating a partnership that has tended to fray as it came to be taken for granted. A report by five high-ranking NATO commanders from Europe and the United States [2] reflects parallel preoccupations, albeit on a more practical level but issues similarly strong calls for "renewing the transatlantic relationship".

This is not the space for a full-scale review of a pair of substantial documents. [3] But it is worth pointing out that the authors of both of them arrive at a broadly similar diagnosis of to-day's conditions: the world is changing fast and it has moved into a new phase – in a way that threatens to affect adversely, and in equal measure, the interests of both Europe and the United States. Balladur, a former French Prime Minister, fears that recent ideological developments are setting in motion not just a "marginalization" but even the "rejection" of the West, and he points also to the rise of China and India, and the return of Russia [4]. The generals write of the "climate of uncertainty" in global politics, and set as the goal of "grand strategy" for the West the "restoring of "certainty" without which "there will be nothing". 'Certainty' would be the product of a "zone of common security and common action from Finland to Alaska" created by an improved use of existing institutions such as NATO, and the EU.

In relation to these important arguments I should

like to offer just a couple of comments. The first maintains that change is timely, and possible, and the second raises the question of revitalizing the transatlantic partnership, as evidenced by those proposals. "Rebalancing" is not the only way to strengthen that relationship, and there are others; but it is the main thrust of this argument that, over the long span of decades that lie ahead, the development of a condition of equality between the United States and Europe is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition of its long-run viability.

The timeframe

Concerning timing: it is evident that the window of opportunity for renewing US-Europe relations is one whose opening is in the present, both for tactical and for strategic reasons. The conditions that favor initiatives for this include, besides gathering storm clouds all round, the new EU Treaty that, if ratified, will mean a new President, targeted for 2009, with a tenure of 2 1/2 years, renewable, and a High Representative (foreign minister), two posts that could strengthen the EU's capacity for action. A new US Presidency in 2009 might offer other opportunities. But a significant change in the situation might already have occurred, namely the election of a new French President, Nicolas Sarkozy (to whom Balladur is close) who is making ready for France's reentry into NATO's integrated military framework, hence a possible change for the strategic context in the long term.

Balladur reminds us that 'to-day, American leadership might be thought to be indispensable', but that 'soon', it might no longer be so: "in less

than twenty years, in fact, what changes [there will occur] in relative power!” [4]. Twenty years might sound like a long time, but not for the global political process.

For global politics is not a static system; it is subject to change that can be measured in generational terms (of some 25-30 years) [5]. The processes of change that started in the 1970’s, and that undid (and de-legitimized) the 1943-5 World War II settlements that divided Europe, also weakened the position of the superpowers, and started the search for new agendas for global politics. Prominent items on these agendas included democratization, concern over nuclear weapons and their wide proliferation, and such global problems as climate change and energy security. By 2000, and with developments in Asia, and the drain put on America’s resources and standing by the Iraq-Afghanistan wars, global politics was moving towards de-concentration, and entering upon the phase of coalition-building. (The latter term is understood here broadly as strengthening existing alliances, building new coalitions, and forging new types of cooperation including the democratic community.) What does this mean? It means that, in the course of global politics, opportunities have now opened up for the revitalizing, and strengthening of coalitions that will, in the next phase, contend for a renewal of global leadership around reprogrammed agendas. The phase of Coalition-building (approximately 2000-2026) has less than two decades to run. Within an emerging democratic community, that is the optimum timeframe for the management of a readjustment of the transatlantic partnership. That also serves as the basis for the timeframe for consolidating the historically recent advances of democracy, that is suggested by the analysis in “Problems of Democratization” not long ago in these pages. [6]

A rebalanced partnership?

Let us note that a condition that Balladur prefers for the success of his proposed, ‘more perfect’, union is the emergence of a condition of balance (as of equals) between the United States and Europe. Clearly, no single European state can hope to equal the United States’ global stature. But there was a time when French leaders thought they might be-

come the leaders of Europe that would be one of the great powers in a multipolar world, in an image favored i.a. by former President Jacques Chirac. That strategy has failed. Balladur discards this notion and urges Europe to stand together with the United States in facing an uncertain world, to avoid a decline that menaces all of the West.

Why balance? Because balance increases the range of choices and opportunities and, in the long run, and in changing world conditions, is more likely to prove adaptable, and sturdy enough to weather crises. Balance refers to the distribution of power within a system; unbalanced structures, such as single party systems, autocracy, imperial constructs, or power monopolies, lead to undesirable and/or unfair outcomes that undermine stability. Balance is a structural requirement of democratic institutions.

From an earlier condition of inequality, some conditions of balance are now largely in place. The European Union has a population larger (500m) than the US (300m), also a larger GDP, a greater share of world trade, a space program, and the world’s biggest development assistance budget. Indeed in economic matters the EU now stands strong, and a condition of equality now prevails i.a. in trade talks and in anti-trust matters. On this foundation

Balladur proposes to build a transatlantic common market.

The problems arise chiefly in politico-military matters. Europe commands serious military potential, and in the UK, and

France, experience of global operations, and elements of nuclear deterrence, but a total of defense expenditures only about one-half that of the United States. It lacks a coherent military doctrine, lags in technological sophistication, and its strategic posture is weak.[7] In consequence, NATO has ‘traditionally’ been dominated by the United States, and recent years of ‘unilateralism’ have only compounded the problem.

NATO has, of course been for the past half-century notable for being steered by the United States, and in its inner councils, by a US-UK alignment, the “special relationship”, one of the effects of World War II. But can it become more balanced in the next one-two decades? Robert Kaplan, for

The window of opportunity for renewing US-Europe relations is now. The global phase of Coalition-building has less than two decades to run.

one, seems to reject this possibility outright, arguing that “NATO cannot be an alliance of equals”. But he then injects a longer-term consideration: “that does not mean that it won’t play a significant role in our grand strategy: to create a web of global arrangements and liberal institutions that will allow America to gradually retreat from its costly and risky position of overbearing domination.” [8] In other words, what Kaplan still sees to-day is inequality but he also admits that, given new world conditions, such a structure is both costly and risky. As David Calleo points out, “As a military superpower with a taste for global management, the United States particularly requires foreign as well as domestic balancing” [9] Domestic balancing requires a ‘division of powers’. ‘Foreign balancing’ means balancing with Europe.

Both reports show awareness of this problem, though the generals’ is less explicit on this issue. In the institutional realm, Balladur proposes the creation an Executive Council composed of the Presidents of the United States and the European Union, backed by a permanent secretariat, to meet quarterly (as does the European Council), and to harmonize policies via consultations on all pending problems. Such an arrangement would clearly signal a partnership of equals, provided all important questions, especially those of global security, were on the table. Annual Presidential summits have, of course, been the practice in US-EU relations since 1990 –but with modest results. Perhaps a higher frequency of meeting, combined with new occupants of key positions, and a new doctrine, might make a difference.

The generals propose a more complex arrangement for the long term, one that would join together the US-EU, and the NATO processes, via the formation of a US-EU-NATO “steering directorate at the highest political level”, to coordinate response to crises, to agree who should take the lead, and to ensure mutual support. It might also help to introduce long-term problems such as climate change into the practical arena. That arrangement would tie the EU directly in with NATO as such, and not just via individual members. By bringing in the EU into the nexus of linkages, a broader basis for more balanced cooperation might emerge. The insertion of NATO

into an US-EU relationship would strengthen US influence but make a transition more viable. If successful it would serve as platform for other ventures.

Both the Balladur and the generals’ suggestions on EU status might be described as having a large “symbolic” element, generating favorable imagery but lacking in real substance that can be found in their concrete proposals. We would maintain that it is unwise to minimize the role of symbols for they help to shape reality. That is why even an initially symbolic change might help to push developments

into a more balanced direction. Additionally, US support for greater equality would also be crucial. For some might argue that a Europe of nation-states might be easier to influence in a sense favorable to US interests than a Europe that speaks with one

voice on politico-strategic matters. (A classic case was Secretary Rumsfeld’s appeal, on the eve of the Iraq war, to the “New Europe”; it divided NATO, and yielded scant support). But others might respond that policies of ‘divide and rule’ are alien to the American ideas of equality and fairness. A divided Europe might moreover be exposed to the same treatment from other directions, i.a. from Russia on matters of energy supplies. Such arguments point Europe further in a federalist direction.

A new strategic bargain?

That “no nation and no institution is capable of dealing with current and future problems on its own” – is a truism that tended to be forgotten in the heady days after the collapse of the Soviet Union; and the generals take it as the premise of their argument. In fact, the practice of earlier world powers including Britain, or the Dutch Republic, and earlier, Portugal, has been to maintain strong bilateral cooperative arrangements. The United States too, through much of the 20th century, was on close terms with Britain, in a relationship that gradually shifted over time from near parity towards greater disparity.

So the notion of close coordination at the global level is not really foreign to the practice of global

From an earlier inequality, conditions of US-EU balance are now largely in place. Can NATO become more balanced in the next decades? Balladur proposes creation a US-EU Executive Council. This would clearly signal a partnership of equals.

leadership, and has at various times been conducted as between equals. In current practice it means, in the first place, discontinuing the recent emphasis on unilateralism, and in the second place, jointly taking stock of, and responding to, common problems, avoiding opportunities for springing surprises, and above all “parler d’égal à égal avec L’Union”: “the United States cannot pretend to decide alone on behalf of all” [10]. In diplomatic practice, it also means a new strategic bargain, in which France returns to NATO, and the United States drops its objections to European defense initiatives.

Balladur is well aware that partnership is always two-sided, and calls for comparable contributions from both sides. He urges Europe to make the necessary efforts to be independent, and in particular in the military area, and independence is a precondition of equality and union. He sees the French nuclear force as the core of independent European security because “la force anglaise n’a pas l’autonomie suffisante” on account of its relation to the United States. [11]. Here is an area that obviously calls for much clarification and more discussion. But neither Balladur nor the former NATO commanders envisage a world without nuclear arms – a position that is now urged by other former high government officials, both in the United States and Europe. If the EU is to be independent, equal, and to have a grand strategy in a Union of the West it needs to be prepared for greater, riskier, and more

costly, efforts in response to the dangers that loom over the horizon.

A “union of the West” is not an end-in-itself. It would serve as an operating, or active, nucleus of an emerging democratic community that is potentially world-wide, and that early in the 21st century already holds a majority position in the world at large. In that respect it might be likened to the role Virginia and Massachusetts played in the formative decades of the United States, and that France and Germany played, after 1950, in launching programs aimed at European unity. In close but loosely structured cooperation those latter two countries served as a “motor” of community-formation and institution-building. [12]

A balanced and effective transatlantic partnership, a TransAtlantic Union, is likely to become the nucleus of an open, wider, democratic community. Other countries, from all parts of the world, are likely to choose to be more closely associated with it. Such a balanced nucleus is also an indispensable condition of its future stability because a wider community must be balanced if it is to endure. The most recent policy position of the United States is to bring the transatlantic relationship into the 21st century because “we need a stronger European Union, we need a stronger NATO and... we need a stronger, more seamless relationship between them”: [13] We might add: and a relationship that is rebalanced.

NOTES

1. Edouard Balladur, *Pour une Union occidentale entre Europe et les États-Unis*, Paris: Fayard 2007, 120 pp.
2. “Toward a grand strategy for an uncertain world: Renewing the transatlantic partnership” (2007), 150 pp, A report by General Klaus Nauman (Germany), Field Marshal Inge (UK), General John Shalikashvili (USA), Admiral Jack Lanxade (France), and General Henk van den Breemen (Netherlands), (with the advice i.a. of Gen. Brent Snowcroft). Text available on www.csis.org/media/isis/events/080110_grand_strategy.pdf.
3. Balladur’s book is reviewed by Domenec Ruiz Devesa elsewhere in these pages.
4. “...sans leadership américaine ...on ne peut réussir grandchose; il est donc indispensable. C’est vrai aujourd’hui, mais bientôt ne le sera plus. Avant vingt ans, en effet, quels changements dans les rapports de puissance!” Balladur, p.107.
5. See “Evolution of global politics” on <http://faculty.washington.edu/modelski/evoglopopol>.

faculty.washington.edu/modelski/evoglopopol.

6. George Modelski “Problems of Democratization” *Freedom and Union*, Spring 2007.
7. Note in particular the 1999 launch of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) that is focused on humanitarian and crisis management tasks. The European Rapid Reaction Force (conceived as up to a dozen ‘battle groups’ of some 1,500 troops) was declared partially operational in 2004; its Nordic battle group, led by Sweden, was ready in January 2008. Currently the EU is running or planning 12 ESDP operations, mostly small police or rule-of-law missions (including Kosovo), also searching for a connection to the US as in Volker Heise “The ESDP and the Transatlantic Relationship, *Stiftung Wissenschaft Politik Resarch Paper* November 2007.
8. Robert D. Kaplan, “Equal alliance, unequal roles” *New York Times*, Op-Ed.page, March 27, 2008:
9. David P. Calleo “The unipolar illusion” *Survival* Autumn 2007, 73-78.
- 10.. Balladur, pp.76,10.
11. . Balladur, p.97; by the Quebec Agree-

- ment of August 19, 1943, the United States and the United Kingdom agreed “never to use” the nuclear weapon “against each other” and “never to use it against a third party without each other’s consent”. (There was also provision for a Canadian role.) While amended since, this agreement has been at the basis of US-UK nuclear cooperation, and remains in force. Might not some such arrangement be extended, in the first place to France?
12. More recently, the EU-3 (Britain, France, Germany) became prominent in the Iranian nuclear crisis. The EU-3 is also sometimes referred to as the ‘directorate’. After the 2004 Enlargement, Nicolas Sarkozy called on the G-6 (the Interior Ministers of Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Spain, Poland) to lead the Union following the dilution of the Franco-German “motor”.
13. Victoria Nuland, then US Ambassador to NATO, speaking in Paris, and in London, February 22,25, 2008. In this vein she also declared that Europe, the United States, NATO, and “the democratic world” need “a stronger, more capable European defense capacity”.



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