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Transatlantic Relations 2009 European Expectations for the Post-Bush Era

Edited by

Jan Techau & Alexander Skiba

Abstract

The new US administration most likely will reach out to its European partners on many global and bilateral issues. President-elect Barack Obama will most likely demand more substantive and increased contributions from the European allies to a multitude of key projects: from stabilising Afghanistan and waging the war on terror to devising global solutions to the financial crisis and managing the rise of China and engaging India, and from countering Iran to making NATO more flexible for global action. Based on surveys conducted in 15 member states and of the European Union as a whole, this paper explores what the EU and its individual member states expect from the United States in the post-Bush era. Individual case studies outline the concrete issues and fields of action that Europeans seek to address in the transatlantic format.

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TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS 2009

EUROPEAN EXPECTATIONS OF THE POST-BUSH ERA

EPIN WORKING PAPER NO. 20 / NOVEMBER 2008

JAN TECHAU & ALEXANDER SKIBA (EDS) *

Introduction

Will 2009 herald a new beginning for transatlantic relations? Sobered by the experience of an eight-year Bush administration, the European Union and its member states are eager to take a fresh look at their partner across the Atlantic. What potential will they find for a new start in European-American relations? What issues will take centre-stage when, after a record-long US election campaign, policy-makers sit down to deal with matters of substance?

Following a period of much hesitation in the past, both political camps in America now recognise that US national interests are best served by a strong Europe. Likewise, Europe has come to the general conclusion that partnership with Washington is desirable, even if there is some disagreement between EU member states on precisely what this partnership should encompass.

The next US administration will thus not only welcome a strong EU, it will also count and call upon it. Washington will most certainly demand more substantive and increased contributions from its European allies in key international challenges: from Afghanistan and the ‘war on terror’ to managing the rise of China, from countering Iran to making NATO more flexible for global action. As is typical of most transatlantic debates, European demands remain lofty and rather general, whereas Washington will come to the table with a list of concrete expectations and proposals.

Smart management of mutual expectations is therefore a key element: a rekindling of the relationship will not be easily or swiftly achieved.

This publication, compiled from 15 national surveys and one EU survey conducted by member institutions of the European Policy Institutes Network (EPIN), seeks to contribute to the improved management of expectations. It offers a cross-European panoramic view – from big and small, old and new EU member states – of what European nations seek from the United States in 2009 and beyond.

The targeted readership of this study resides on both sides of the Atlantic: for European policy-makers, this paper serves as a record of the differences and commonalities in what EU member states strive to achieve in cooperation with the US and where they see difficulties. In this regard it is the first step towards an amalgamation of European interests vis-à-vis the US. For the American policy community, it provides an overview of the diversity of European perceptions of the US and the region’s hopes for a renewed transatlantic relationship.

* Jan Techau is Head of the Alfred von Oppenheim Center for European Studies at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) in Berlin. Alexander Skiba is a Robert Bosch Stiftung Fellow and a former Program Officer in the Alfred von Oppenheim Center for European Studies at the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin. The editors wish to express their gratitude to all contributors for their efforts, and to EPIN’s head office in Brussels for assistance and encouragement. Please note that the individual contributions in this paper do not represent official government positions nor those of the editors. They exclusively express the views of their respective authors.

Belgium

Sofie Rafrafi, EGMONT Institute, Brussels

Belgium and the US have not always had the same approach towards the implementation of foreign policy, especially during the first Bush administration, when the use of military power seemed to take precedence over the use of diplomatic and multilateral means. This attitude changed during the second term when the US administration was more open to the important role its allies had to play and when it relied more on the use of multilateralism in order to obtain better foreign policy results.

9/11 was clearly the cornerstone of the first US administration's foreign policy and in that respect Belgium showed solidarity in the fight against terrorism. Belgium supported the launch of the first US offensive against the Taliban in Afghanistan and later contributed to ISAF/NATO (including airport protection, involvement in Afghanistan's South-West and an increased support of US air power). Belgium improved its visa and passport system, its airport and air traffic control (including exchange of passenger information data), its banking information systems and its seaport control at Antwerp harbour as a further show of support to the US.

In another security-related policy field, Belgium, like the US, believes lasting international security rests firmly on preventing the rise of new nuclear powers. In that respect, Belgium fully supports the US policy concerning the non-proliferation of WMD and backs the US with regard to Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Finally, both actors share the same objectives with regard to Central Africa and the United Nation's policy in Sudan, particularly in Darfur. Belgium, like the US, supports and recognises the need to establish lasting local and regional stability in Central Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This policy entails the use of even stronger control mechanisms to check how and where development aid is being used and how reconstruction policies are being implemented.

Nevertheless, on occasion, Belgium has different views concerning the means and instruments employed by the United States to reach certain ends, especially in the fight against terrorism, most notably in the cases of Guantanamo (interrogation practices) and Abu Ghraib (violations of fundamental rights). Belgium did not support the US invasion of Iraq because of the disagreements regarding the objectives and reasons for this invasion and the absence of an international consensus. Furthermore, Belgium believes that it is important for the US to recognise the International Criminal Court in order to avoid a perception of impunity in crisis-ridden countries. Also, Belgium believes that the US should ratify the Ottawa Landmine Treaty of which Belgium was the first signatory, and that the US should reconsider its positions on the Kyoto Protocol.

Belgium's priorities for the transatlantic agenda comprise, first and foremost, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. With regard to these conflicts, Belgium supports a foreign policy that balances security and diplomatic concerns and that places especial emphasis on reconstruction. It endorses democratic reforms that take local and regional circumstances into account (i.e. in Ukraine and Georgia). As for the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, Belgium would like to soften the rather unbalanced approach by the United States and Israel and establish a more even-handed approach with the help of the Middle East Quartet. In addition, a key Belgian interest lies in the continuous cooperation regarding the Balkans and a better transatlantic cooperation in terms of environmental policies and climate change. It is also important to reach an agreement on world trade after the WTO's Doha round failure and to set up a more coherent approach in the field of economic and monetary policies.

It goes without saying that Belgium operates and conducts its foreign policy in line with and within the framework of the EU, favouring the EU's global and diplomatic approach. Through its non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council during the 2007/08 period, Belgium has promoted the use of multilateral approaches and methods to resolve pressing policy issues. It will continue to carry these efforts forward within the EU (also during the EU Presidency in 2010) and in other forums such as NATO and the OSCE.

Cyprus

Professor Andreas Theophanous, Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs, Nicosia

Inevitably, the election of a new President and the prospect of a new US administration have global implications. Given the recent record in the international environment (e.g. 9/11; Iraq; the tense US-Iran relations; ethnic conflicts and in particular the recent developments in the Caucasus; socio-economic challenges), the world is paying greater attention to this presidential election than to any previous one. The EU views this election as a milestone in future relations with the US and for a new global vision.

Beyond EU-US relations, Cyprus' bilateral relations with the US are satisfactory, with cooperation in the fields of counter-terrorism, overall law enforcement and increasing trade. The US acknowledged Cyprus' role and humanitarian assistance during the Lebanon crisis in the summer of 2006. But the defining aspect of the relationship is the US position on the Cyprus problem, a position seen in Nicosia as shaped not by the adherence of the US to the principles and values it espouses but by its traditional strategic relations with Turkey.

Beyond that, Cyprus shares the EU's broader considerations. In our globalised world, challenges such as the environment, terrorism, socio-economic instability and ethnic conflict require multilateral and collective approaches. The new US administration should embark on a fresh approach, leaving behind unilateralism. This may be the greatest challenge so far.

At times, relations between the US and the EU have not been easy. In this regard, Donald Rumsfeld's statement and distinction between 'old' and 'new' Europe was revealing. A new approach to Euro-Atlantic relations could start with more frequent consultations between the two sides before serious decisions are made. For this process to work, however, it is also necessary that the EU speak with one voice.

For its part, the US should re-assess its approach towards the Middle East, given the region's high potential for increased instability. US policy in this area is widely perceived as not being even-handed. Over time, the subsequent anti-American feelings tend to turn into anti-Western sentiments. The implication is that Europe tends to share the costs of such perceptions. There should be a rethinking of US strategy in the broader region and a constructive and clearly-defined cooperation between the US and the EU.

Another issue of great significance is the inconsistency of positions adopted by great powers such as the United States concerning various ethnic conflicts. For example, the US calls for the respect of the territorial integrity of Georgia while in the case of Kosovo its policy has been exactly the opposite. Russia's policies in relation to Kosovo and the two provinces in Georgia, S. Ossetia and Abkhazia, are contradictory too. Neither is there any consistency in relation to Turkey's policy towards Cyprus and Turkey's own Kurdish minority, nor with respect to the Kurds in the northern part of Iraq.

Obviously, the different powers adopt policies to pursue their own interests and this inevitably leads to tensions. Because these powers, including the US as the sole superpower, are lacking

consistency when putting forward their positions, they lose credibility even if they might be right in certain particular cases.

Thus, a new approach to these issues is needed. The challenges the world is facing need a credible and more effective United Nations. The UN may indeed require restructuring and a redefinition of its role. The US must take an initiative in this direction.

Last but not least, the US must see how its own principles can be re-incorporated into American foreign policy. In an article for the July/August issue of *Foreign Affairs* (“The New American Realism”), Condoleezza Rice declared that American foreign policy seeks to marry national interest with principle, an acknowledgement, at least, of the need to do so. The next President will have a rare opportunity to forge a new beginning for the US in a world that is eager for principled leadership and for collective solutions.

Czech Republic

Vít Střítecký, Institute of International Relations, Prague

The agenda of Czech-American relations has currently been dominated by a single issue that has led to the rise of a number of other relevant topics. For example, during the negotiations over the Czech involvement in the American National Missile Defense (NMD) system (which centred around the location of a US radar base on Czech territory), the problem of US visa policy vis-à-vis the Czech Republic, one of the most pressing issues in mutual relations, was addressed and vehemently pushed forward. This issue was essentially a burden on political relations as it was a sensitive issue for the Czech public. Even more importantly, the Czech-US Missile Defense agreement can stimulate increased cooperation in research and development, which should in turn be directly linked to the evolution of this particular military project.

The current developments have again confirmed that the simplistic view of the ‘New Europe’, developed and promoted by some American analysts and commentators, is, and always has been, untenable. New EU members or, even more specifically, the Visegrad countries, constitute a heterogeneous group with widely differing attitudes towards US policy. The negotiating process over placement of components of the National Missile Defence in the Czech Republic and Poland clearly illustrates this point. Most notably, in contrast to some other ‘New Europeans’, during the Iraq War, the Czech Republic only provided a field hospital and a chemical unit, both under the provision that they would not participate in military operations. Through arduous manoeuvring, Czech diplomacy also managed to avoid stating directly whether or not the country was part of the so-called coalition of the willing.

The most important achievement of Czech diplomacy during the negotiation about NMD was the promotion of the ‘NATOization’ of the third site, which became anchored in NATO’s Bucharest summit declaration of April 2008. This has created an opportunity to deepen the strategic debate about the interconnection between the American system of the third site and NATO’s plan to develop the Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense system (ALTMBD). The co-functioning of both systems should fundamentally enhance the defence capability of Europe against practically all types of ballistic missiles, which have repeatedly been considered relevant threats in various strategic documents. The Czech government arrived at the decision to ‘multilateralise’ the issue and overcome the clearly bilateral format, and the institutionalisation within NATO structures has been a priority.

Despite the fact that the Czech Republic is a small state in terms of strategic influence (although, curiously, within the EU, it can be called a mid-size power), the role and influence of Czech diplomacy vis-à-vis the US administration could very well increase in the future. Although it has been one of the defining features of Czech foreign policy since the beginning of the 1990s, the strong emphasis on human rights seems to be losing some but not all of its

importance, while other priorities remain stable. The reaction of the Czech government to the Georgia crisis in August 2008 suggests that the US presence in the European security setup is still welcome. It serves as a balancer to growing Russian influence and mitigates the position of some European powers, which are often viewed as too pragmatic in relation to Russia.

All Czech strategic documents mention the importance of the transatlantic link. Its reinforcement will be one of the top foreign policy priorities of the Czech EU presidency in the first six months of 2009. Hence the Czech Republic will not stand in the way of a transatlantic strategic partnership. Its foreign policy positions, at the same time, will not be based on the feeling of Czech exceptionalism that so easily translates into a preference for bilateral solutions.

France

Susanne Nies, IFRI, Brussels and Laurent Hamida, Independent Journalist, Paris

At the UN, the speech of French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin on 14 February 2003 made history: France rejected the war in Iraq and opposed President Bush's foreign policy. But France did not only oppose the Iraq venture, it also succeeded in creating a united front to oppose it. This attitude created a considerable feeling of bitterness between the two countries. This tendency had already appeared as early as 2002, contrasting heavily with France's engagement in Afghanistan (ISAF) but also with the opening of its airspace to the US air force during the Iraq war.

A predominantly negative pattern towards Washington characterised the later years of the Chirac presidency even though the two countries continued to cooperate on important issues and do business together. The crisis in Haiti, where France and the US collaborated to remove Haitian president Aristide from power, was the first attempt to 'rebuild the bridge'. The last year of the Chirac government showed a real improvement in the Franco-American relationship. The negative stance of Chirac/Villepin had been criticised internally by prominent members of Chirac's UMP party, especially by interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy and the then French ambassador to the US, David Levitte. Levitte tried to recreate an atmosphere in which diplomacy could resume – today he is an influential foreign policy advisor to President Sarkozy.

The turmoil in Franco-American relations clearly showed in opinion polls, peaking in 2004, and coming to an end in 2007. In the US, anti-French slogans, the so-called French bashing, became more and more prominent and resulted in the equally unpleasant America-bashing in France. Thus a poll by CSA/La Croix in September 2004 revealed that 33% of the French population were 'worried' by Bush's policy, compared to 12% four years before. But in 2007 the situation had changed again, with 48% of the French population considering the US as an important ally.¹

In the beginning of 2009, the international monetary and economic order will dominate the transatlantic agenda: the banking crisis and the credit crunch originating in the US, but which hits the European banking system and businesses, demands a common approach. Some suggest a new 'Bretton Woods', the tightening of the international financial system, increased regulation of investment funds but also the enlargement of international fora such as the G8.

Concerning the foreign policy agenda, the containment of the Afghanistan crisis, France's return to the integrated NATO military structure in this context, but also the Middle East and Iran will naturally be on the agenda. As for Iran, President Sarkozy has now aligned France much more closely with the US than was the case under Jacques Chirac. Nevertheless, numerous French

¹ Poll of May 2007, CSA/French-American Foundation, in which 48% of French citizens considered the US an important partner, with only 15% of the French having a negative perception of Washington.

economic and political players make a plea for the Iran agenda to be expanded beyond the nuclear issue, (as do some analysts and politicians in the US) hoping that the Iran-Lybia Sanctions Act (ILSA) could be dropped by the new US president.

Important actors in both countries think that integrating Iran into the world community could also help to stabilise Afghanistan and the Middle East. In 2001, Iran worked very closely with the Americans to remove the Taliban regime from Kabul. There is no solution for Afghanistan without Iran. In Afghanistan, Iran's interests converge with those of NATO and the US. Iran cannot accept a re-instatement of a Taliban-run regime with close relations to Pakistan. Iran almost went to war with Afghanistan in 1997 and is currently losing hundreds of soldiers every year while trying to stop drugs being trafficked into Iran from Afghanistan.

In France some are waiting for a shift in US policy towards Pakistan. The decision by President Sarkozy to send reinforcements to Afghanistan might be perceived as an attempt to influence American strategy in the region, not as an 'alignment' with President Bush. Many in France believe that there is also no solution to Afghanistan without addressing Pakistani support of the Taliban. It is also believed that the only country able to exert any kind of influence on Pakistan is the United States.

Concerning Russia, diverging interests between the US and western EU member states should be anticipated.

As for the financial crisis, President Sarkozy is trying to develop a new framework, which is the EU subgroup of four G8 member states, in order not to fragment European positions and to arrive at a consensus. At the same time, he aims at enlarging the G8, integrating decisive and deciding outsiders into this institutional setting such as Brazil, India, China, Mexico and South Africa.

Concerning other foreign policy issues, the full re-integration of France into NATO, but also the reinforcement of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) are important issues for the Sarkozy administration. Instead of viewing NATO and CFSP separately, France perceives both as complementary, with NATO serving as the major forum for transatlantic debate. France wishes to give the EU a new impetus via a reinforced CFSP. This corresponds with its position on the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Sarkozy's France strongly supports the EU as a political actor. It believes that the extraordinary crisis summit of European G4 members in the beginning of October 2008 was as much a sign of EU unity as was the demonstrative rejection of bilateralism towards Moscow during the Georgia crisis in August and September of 2008. The EU will thus be a major instrument in President Sarkozy's foreign policy, differing strongly from his predecessor and thereby possibly putting France on the track towards postmodern diplomacy. But the troublesome Franco-German relationship casts a shadow over this position and demands urgent improvement.

The most important expectation vis-à-vis the new US administration is its return to multilateralism. The active engagement of France and the EU in the 'arch of crisis' from the Middle East to Afghanistan and also in the Caucasus, as well as a redesign of the international financial system – all these issues will be high on Paris' transatlantic agenda.

Germany

Alexander Skiba and Jan Techau, German Council on Foreign Relations, Berlin

German-American relations were heavily marred by the disagreements over the Iraq invasion during the Bush administration: Washington's decision to launch the war without – from the German perspective – a proper UN mandate and a just cause, mixed with anti-American

undertones during the re-election campaign of Chancellor Schröder in 2002, all proved to be a poisonous pill for the relationship. Iraq, however, was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of transatlantic disputes: US detention policy as exemplified by Guantánamo Bay, the missile defence shield on European soil, a decidedly business-friendly policy on global warming and what was seen as sabotage of the Kyoto protocol, did not bode well for cordial relations. With the advent of the Merkel government and the rediscovery of the benefits of multilateralism in Washington, the tone and substance of affairs improved markedly. The most tangible project in this regard was transatlantic trade policy.

For 2009, Germany seeks a clear departure from the rocky days of the Bush administration. While a solid majority of politicians seemed to favour a win by Democratic candidate Barack Obama, a sizeable group within the conservative parties would have preferred John McCain. Regardless of this, top priorities for improved ties are: ensuring a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis, seeking a new commitment to the post-Kyoto process (including a leading role for and commitment from the US) and advancing transatlantic economic integration.

Iran is a relatively tricky issue for Germany, Tehran's second largest trading partner in the EU. Washington's push for more severe sanctions conflicts with Berlin's interest not to unnecessarily alienate the German business community. However, from the German perspective there are no alternatives to the current two-pronged carrot-and-stick approach. While Berlin clearly expects greater and more direct US involvement in the negotiating effort with Iran, all political factions remain strongly opposed to military 'solutions'.

Climate change is a weighty topic in Germany: Berlin expects the US to deliver on and abide by its Heiligendamm commitments to cut CO₂ emissions as part of a UN process.

Another pet project for Germany is the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), created in April 2007 at the US-EU Summit in Washington. Berlin is set to advance the work of the council in 2009. Expectations are that the council will become less politicised and that the protectionist impulses of the new administration and the US Congress will not spoil these efforts.

The Georgian crisis of August 2008 has moved the question of how to deal with Russia to the forefront of the transatlantic agenda: Germany prefers a much more inclusive approach towards Moscow and expects Washington to act in concert with the EU vis-à-vis Russia. Harsh measures, such as expelling Russia from the G8 or blocking its accession to the WTO are seen as counterproductive and would lead to serious transatlantic squabbles if pursued by the US. Berlin has announced, however, that it will take a fresh look at the traditionally amicable relationship with Moscow in light of the actions in Georgia.

During the course of 2009, Germany itself will be entering a federal election campaign. Although foreign policy rarely features on top of the electorate's concerns, the campaign may well highlight splits on topics such as Germany's military engagement in Afghanistan or the 'proper' means of dealing with Iran or Russia. The next US administration will likely demand greater contributions and fewer restrictions on troops in Afghanistan from their European allies. This is an American expectation that Germany's political elite is ill-equipped to meet: as pacifist passions against combat missions remain dominant in the German public and are politically exploited by the three left-leaning parties, the 'grand coalition' will find little wiggle room to deliver on US and NATO demands. When it comes to 'hard' security policy issues, Germany will remain in a state of political paralysis in 2009.

Hungary

Gergely Romsics, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, Budapest

During the two terms of the Bush administration, Hungary has gone from being an untrustworthy partner to a respectable ally, and back again. First, the conservative Fidesz-government failed to engage itself sufficiently with the cause of the US following 9/11, a symbolic failure aggravated by the somewhat undiplomatic, last-minute decision to equip the Hungarian air force with Swedish, rather than American fighters. Hungary made amends, under the Socialist government, by becoming part of the 'New Europe', and supporting the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan. This sunnier period in the US-Hungarian relationship lasted until the energy row between the West and Russia came to dominate the agenda. Hungary, highly dependent on Russian natural gas, was among the first to support the Russian pipeline initiative, widely perceived as a challenge to the EU's Nabucco project, with serious repercussions despite Hungarian insistence that Budapest was not abandoning the EU initiative either. While this episode seems to be coming to a close, Hungary is still reeling from the experience of having to balance energy vulnerability against dedication to European and transatlantic values and cooperation.

This recent experience quite unambiguously defines the single most important Hungarian expectation towards a new administration in Washington. Based on recent events, it is unlikely that the EU alone could form a united and moderate policy front to engage Russia more intensively. And as long as that does not happen, Hungary will remain at risk, with the events of 2006-2007 waiting to repeat themselves. Hungary can only escape the destructive balancing act of the past years, if an open-minded US-administration undertakes the great task of building a longer term cooperation with the whole of Europe, not so much to strictly follow US preferences but to engage in an open-ended process with only the general direction being clear: locking Russia into various regimes of cooperation, using negative and positive incentives based on the actual situation at any given moment. If such a strategy is to succeed, the US, together with strong European partners, must also take care to minimise the risks involved for small, vulnerable states like Hungary – otherwise there will be nothing to stop Moscow from making use of its divide-and-conquer strategies, known to all from the recent and not so recent past.

If countries like Hungary are re-included in broad coalitions to engage Russia, these small states contribute to the larger effort by virtue of their ceasing to be what many in Moscow believe they will eternally remain: pawns in a game prevented by their vulnerabilities from adopting certain value-based and/or long-term policy directions.

In the past, small Central European states have been 'played' by US diplomacy as well. The prestige of bilateral meetings, the promise of privileges has proven too tempting, as demonstrated in the case of the recent visa regime negotiations. Small and new member states have to learn, therefore, that they should engage not only Russia, but also their close ally, the United States through the powerful preference-pooling institution that the EU represents. If all these lessons are learned, and if the new US administration is willing to tackle the Russian question together with the EU and in a constructive manner, the most painful period in Hungarian foreign policy for some time could eventually become what it should be: a memory of the past.

Latvia

Ilze Sedliņa, Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS, Riga

Latvia-US relations during the Bush administration have been very positive and intense, confirmed by the fact that President Bush visited Riga twice (one of the occasions was the 2006 NATO Riga Summit). The intensity of Latvia-US relations during the Bush era can be partly

explained by Latvia's main foreign policy goals – EU and NATO integration – where cooperation with the US played an important role. However, it is expected that these relations may become less intense in the years to come for two reasons. Firstly, Latvia's EU and NATO memberships are likely to lead to a phase of normality in Latvia-US relations and secondly, there may be a weakening of intensity due to the change of Latvian presidents. Former President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga was foreign policy-oriented and explicitly focused on strengthening ties with the US. But the current President Valdis Zatlers is more interested in domestic policy. This will not, however, change the fundament of Latvia's foreign policy that sees the US as Latvia's main strategic partner. Due to this and Latvia's relatively recent EU membership (since 2004), the cooperation between Latvia and the US has so far been based more on bilateral ties than using EU-US relations as a framework.

The only two issues on which Latvia took a contradictory position to that of the US was on the International Criminal Court (to which the US was generally hostile) and on the Kyoto Protocol, where Latvia sided with the EU. This trend is likely to continue, with Latvia using both the bilateral and the EU-US cooperation framework to work on transatlantic issues.

Key issues on the transatlantic agenda for Latvia will continue to be – (i) security and cooperation with Europe's eastern neighbours (priority countries for Latvia are Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), (ii) energy and (iii) economic cooperation.

To look at security and cooperation first: It is hard to imagine a security issue on which Latvia would not support the US, including US policy in Iraq and Afghanistan. Latvia does not put the support for the US in question because Washington is considered as the only security guarantee for the country. In practical terms, security has also been the field where Latvia's and US cooperation has been the closest. As this is linked to Latvia's NATO membership, it is unlikely to change in the future. It is expected that the US will ask for – and Latvia is likely to agree to – more contributions from allies to the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

Latvia's interest in strengthening US policy towards Europe's eastern neighbours has become a topical security issue with the Russian invasion of Georgia. Latvia strongly condemns Russia's aggression and believes that the US, NATO as well as the EU – as the key actors in transatlantic stability – should play a leading role in securing the freedom and security of countries neighbouring the EU. Latvia also stresses the need to offer Membership Action Plans to Georgia and Ukraine as a preparation for NATO membership. Latvia believes that strengthening ties between NATO and the Caucasus countries will guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of sovereign states, more stability in the region and will prevent the escalation of new conflicts between Russia and its neighbouring countries.

Secondly, dependence on Russia's energy resources is one of the main concerns in Latvia. Latvia is keen to reduce this dependence and sees the US as a serious partner in search for the possibilities to diversify energy supply and to develop alternative energy sources.

Lastly, Latvia will continue to work on intensifying economic relations with the US aimed at attracting more investments to increase the competitiveness of its market (due to its advantageous geographical location) in order to secure economic development.

Lithuania

Julijus Grubliauskas, IIRPS, Vilnius University

The balance of power in international relations has shifted substantially during the era of President George W. Bush, with the US losing its hegemonic position and the unipolar world order in decline. America will remain a great power in the near future however, but its status as

superpower is under the sword of Damocles. The constantly rising economic might of China, Russia's resurgent imperial ambitions and the growing international instability (due to the 'unfreezing' of conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, the manipulation of international law and the sharpening tensions in the Middle East) are only the most frequently-mentioned threats to 'American world order'.

The key to the global hegemonic power of the US was always the ability to construct reliable alliances with friendly countries and to play the right cards against the unfriendly ones. This key is almost broken now; the alliances aren't so reliable anymore due to the incredibly low image of the US amongst its allies. The right cards are running short as American economic might falls into decline.

One good example of the decline of the American world order is the recent conflict in Georgia. This conflict demonstrated that the US is currently not capable of protecting its geopolitical interests in the Caucasus region. Despite some harsh statements towards Russia, the US did not manage to ensure peaceful conflict resolution or the protection of the territorial integrity of its strongest ally in the Caucasus region. Energy transport routes across Georgia, which are strategically important to the US (as well as to the EU), have become unreliable.

The decline of American power in international relations is a challenge for Europe and the EU has to find the right strategy to react to it. The post-Bush era comes with a new global disorder, which is disadvantageous both to the US and the EU. There is still a popular view in Europe that the decline of American global power would be an advantage for the EU; opening up possibilities for Europe to use the emerging power vacuums in the post-unipolar world to become one of the main (if not the only) powers in the international system. Such an interpretation could be a huge mistake for Europe. Due to its great political disunity (e.g. with respect to energy policy) the EU would not be able to cope with a Russia or China on the rise or other global challenges.

The EU therefore needs a strong United States, and the main expectation of the new US administration is to find new ideas for America to overcome forthcoming challenges.

There were two very important and powerful ideas coming from the two main candidates to the office of the new US president: one idea (B. Obama's) is to propose a major change to the American economy, hoping to strengthen the US as an economic superpower. Another idea (J. McCain's) proposes a new US approach to international relations, actively reacting to Russia's imperial ambitions and multipolar world formation, rather than accepting it.

Europe should not have to choose which of these two ideas it finds more advantageous; the EU needs both of them. Therefore, there could be two main European expectations vis-à-vis the next president: first, the revival of the US economy; second, the strengthening of US global power as well as the regaining of the 'moral' image of a country with good intentions. The EU currently perceives the US more as a competitor than as an ally. In the 'new global disorder' there is no place for such competition.

Lithuania's expectations of the new US administration are no different from the above-mentioned European expectations. However, due to a particular geopolitical situation, Lithuania has some very individual concrete hopes and wishes.

First, Lithuania will have to confront some harsh economic security problems, due to the probable closure of the Ignalina power plant and the increasingly aggressive Russian economic pressure towards the Baltic States. Therefore, Lithuania's expectations are directed towards the efforts of the incoming US administration to ensure energy security for the Baltic countries. These efforts would include the support for the planned liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and nuclear power plant construction in Lithuania.

Second, Lithuania is facing the threat of becoming one of the targets of Russia's growing imperial ambitions. Russian military intervention in Georgia was a clear example of such a threat. Lithuania hopes that the new US administration will have a realistic attitude towards Russia and clear intentions to act whenever the unequivocal threat of foreign aggression emerges in one of NATO's members.

Third, in the new global disorder the division between 'old' and 'new' EU members is mainly a result of different attitudes towards the role of the US in Europe and US foreign policy in general, is extremely disadvantageous both to Lithuania and the EU. Therefore, Lithuania is placing great hopes in the next US administration to restore the image of the US in European countries, especially Western ones, and to strengthen the transatlantic alliance.

Poland

Jacek Kucharczyk, *Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw*

The defining event of the Polish transatlantic relations during the Bush era was the war in Iraq, and the unconditional support, both political and military, given to this war by the left-wing government of Leszek Miller. Although the Polish presence in Iraq had broad political support from left and right, it has been deeply unpopular with the majority of the public. During the election campaign in the autumn of 2007, the leader of the victorious Civic Platform party, Donald Tusk, promised to complete the gradual withdrawal of Polish troops from Iraq.

The second most important issue in Polish-American relations was the decision regarding the placement of the US anti-missile shield in Poland. The negotiations, initiated by the Kaczynski government in 2006, were concluded in August 2008 by the Tusk government. In exchange for hosting the shield, the Bush administration promised to beef up Poland's obsolete air defence system as well as to give Poland additional security guarantees. Since the signing of the agreement in the wake of the Russian invasion of Georgia, public opinion in Poland, long hostile to the project, made a U-turn and the outcome of the negotiations has been supported by a clear majority of Poles.

Following the 2007 elections, Poland has had a conservative-liberal government led by Donald Tusk cohabiting with a conservative-nationalist president, Lech Kaczynski. In the Polish constitutional system, the power lies mostly with the Prime Minister's office, nonetheless the President has special prerogatives in the field of foreign policy. Polish foreign policy has therefore been marked by a rivalry between the centres of power, which makes it difficult to define a clear foreign policy agenda for the coming years.

The Russian invasion of Georgia and the subsequent partition of this country put security issues back on top of Poland's transatlantic agenda. Poland would like to see both the EU and the US taking steps to safeguard Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They should also press Russia to agree to replace its 'peacekeeping' troops by a more neutral international force.

Transatlantic cooperation will be needed to solve other 'frozen conflicts', which allow Russia to interfere in the affairs of its neighbours and former Soviet republics: Moldova (Transnistria) and Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) as well as potential conflicts such as Crimea in Ukraine.

Both the president and the government seem to share the critical view of Russia's foreign policy and the need to contain it. The differences concern the means that can be applied to this purpose and particularly the language of the debate on Russia, with the government being more softly-spoken and oriented towards international cooperation in this area. This position notwithstanding, Poland will expect the new US administration to be 'tough on Russia' and to drop the 'strategic partnership' attitude that characterised parts of the Bush presidency.

Poland will expect the next US administration to press the issue of the inclusion of Georgia and Ukraine in the preparations for NATO membership by offering them MAPs (Membership Action Plans). Poland would like to see the US taking steps towards revitalising NATO as a multilateral foreign policy instrument, putting emphasis on its traditional functions as security provider to its members. At the same time, Poland will continue to contribute to NATO's mission in Afghanistan.

The outcome of the anti-missile shield negotiations is broadly seen as a success (with both the government and the president vying to take credit for it). It is therefore expected that the new administration will carry out the provisions of the agreement promptly. This concerns not only the placement of the single battery of the Patriot missiles (as is stipulated in the agreement) but the subsequent sale of additional missiles and other high-tech military equipment to Poland.

Poland would welcome a new administration's efforts to restore the image of the US abroad and to engage in re-energised democracy promotion activities, especially on the post-Soviet area. It is likely to endorse the idea of a 'Community of Democracies' as proposed by the main presidential candidates. Poland is likely to expect that this project will build upon the Council of the Community of Democracies, which was established in the wake of the Warsaw declaration of June 2000.

The continuing requirement for Polish citizens to obtain a visa before travelling to the US still causes popular resentment towards the US administration. Any progress in this field would help to improve the public perceptions of Polish-American relations.

Poland's perception of the transatlantic agenda has largely been shaped by the recent events in Georgia. The progress in the Middle East (Iran, Iraq and Palestine) is viewed as significant in so far as progress in this area would allow the US and the EU to devote more attention to the resurgent Russia. Other issues, such as climate change, which are a priority for Poland's EU partners, are seen as less urgent. This does not mean that Poland will oppose the EU transatlantic agenda in these and other policy areas. On the contrary, Poland is likely to support such policies as long as they do not contradict Polish foreign policy objectives.

Romania

Gilda Truica, European Institute of Romania, Bucharest

President Bush's two terms in office have coincided with the accomplishment of important goals in Romania's Euro-Atlantic agenda, as well as of Romania's strategic partnership with the US. Romania has supported the American-led coalition against global terrorism, contributing troops to military operations both in Iraq and Afghanistan. This contributed to the US support of Romania's 2004 accession to NATO and, later on, to the designation of Bucharest as host of the NATO summit held in April 2008. Also during this period, agreement was reached on the terms of the stationing of American troops on Romanian soil, the 'Access Agreement', in force since 2006.

Against the backdrop of a generally pro-American orientation of Romania's foreign policy there was a single episode on which Bucharest did not align itself to the position of the US (and to a majority of EU member states, for that matter), namely the self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo, which Romania declined to recognise, citing the non-observance of basic principles of international law as the reason. This, incidentally, allowed Bucharest to publicly criticise the very recent recognition by Russia of the two break-away Georgian regions without risk of applying double standards.

Given that the Romanian security architecture rests on a strategic triangle made up, on the one hand, of the pre-eminence of the bilateral relation with the US, and the relationship with NATO

and the EU on the other hand, Romania encourages a continuation of the American engagement and presence in its immediate neighbourhood.

Romania would like to see the consolidation of security and stability in the Black Sea region high on the list of transatlantic issues. The recent escalation of the conflict between Russia and Georgia seems to confer additional weight to this priority. Both before and after Romania's accession to the EU, Bucharest officials signalled the need for the Euro-Atlantic allies to acknowledge the strategic importance of this area for Euro-Atlantic security. To this end, Romania supported the launching of the "Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership" initiative as a framework for active and open dialogue between institutions and civil society within the Black Sea region, as well as with European and Euro-Atlantic partners.

Concerning the NATO dimension of the transatlantic alliance, Romania continues to show interest for the organisation's reform and enlargement. Furthermore, Romania has confirmed that it will continue to respect the commitments made relative to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Western Balkans, including the component of post-conflict reconstruction.

A specific objective of Romania is to secure the elimination of the visa requirement for its nationals travelling to the US, through its inclusion, alongside the other Eastern European countries, in the US visa waiver programme. The main formal obstacle in this respect is the very high rejection rate of visa applications made by Romanian citizens: 37%, the highest among all EU member countries still subject to the visa requirement. This aspect is important mainly due to its negative impact on public opinion, as it feeds frustration and may be perceived as a non-reciprocation of the constant support shown by Romania towards American international initiatives, in particular in military terms.

Before its EU accession, Romania strived to consolidate the bilateral framework of negotiations in order to further its interests relative to the US, and was sometimes criticised by several EU countries for what was seen as excessive deference to American interests (in particular, in connection with the 2002 bilateral agreement granting immunity to US nationals on Romanian soil from ICC-issued arrest warrants). More recently, however, Romania seems to favour the inclusion of its specific interests related to the US on the bilateral EU-US agenda, possibly counting on an enhanced leverage. Thus, with respect to the visa issue, Romania has finally opted for this latter channel of negotiation. Also, no new episodes where Romania could be seen as 'breaking' European solidarity vis-à-vis the US have taken place, as witnessed by the fact that the above-mentioned immunity agreement has not been ratified, precisely because of its incompatibility with the EU stance on this matter.

Slovakia

Ivo Samson, Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava

The countries of Central Europe (meaning, in this context, the four Visegrad countries) no longer represent any unified 'New Europe' view on the US administration, and this evidently holds true also for the US presidential elections. It is almost impossible to put the security and foreign policies of the four countries into a stable theoretical model defined by terms such as 'atlanticism' or 'European autonomism'. Maybe the only common denominator in the policies of these countries is the overwhelming interest in the foreign and security policy agenda of the next administration in Washington, while the US domestic policy dimension has been traditionally neglected, as in the rest of Europe.

Interestingly enough, one can observe a wide consensus in Slovakia between the official government position and prevailing public opinion vis-à-vis the USA. For more than two years

now, both have been notably critical of US foreign policy and the United States as a whole. In opinion polls conducted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, only 16% of the population regarded the role of the US in the world as positive. Generally, the European trend in interpreting anti-Americanism as ‘anti-Bushism’ and excusing the sentiments against the US by pointing at the aggressive policies of the Bush administration has become a matter of societal consensus. There is palpable evidence for widespread political support (i.e. in the public, the government and even some parts of the right-wing opposition) for the Democratic Party (i.e. Senator Barack Obama) in the 2008 presidential elections.

Ever since the founding of the Slovak Republic in 1993, the country’s foreign policy has oscillated between extremes instead of following a stable and long-term strategy. This stands in marked contrast to Slovakia’s Czech, Polish and Hungarian neighbours. After initial and serious problems with the Clinton administration, Slovakia ceased to be a de-facto Russian security policy ally and turned to the most articulated pro-US ‘atlanticist’ nation after 1998. In its effort to join NATO, Slovakia supported the US invasion of Iraq. Transatlantic security was an often-quoted term both in official declarations and in the mass media. The crucial security and foreign policy documents of the Slovak Republic (like the Security Strategy of 2005) classify the United States as the most important security and foreign policy ally of the country. After the change of government in 2006, however, the rhetoric of the Social Democratic government became, once more, very critical of US foreign policy: Slovakia withdrew its military contingent from Iraq, took a pro-Serbian position towards Kosovo (as this paper goes to print, Slovakia remains one of seven EU countries not recognising Kosovo’s independence). In the South Ossetian war in August 2008, the Slovak government, represented by the Prime Minister, blamed the Georgian government for provoking the conflict and defended the Russian official version of events.

Despite the government-population consensus in the relationship to the Bush administration, Slovakia’s government does not speak with one voice: there are sometimes strong differences between the positions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Headquarters of the government (PM Office), whereby the PM Office seems to represent the official Slovak position decisively.

Owing to the re-orientation of Slovak foreign policy from ‘atlanticism’ to a more or less outspoken orientation to Russian interests, the outcome of the 2008 US presidential elections will necessarily have a crucial impact on the international (and intra-EU) position of Slovakia. The victory of the Democratic candidate (being against the US engagement in Iraq and promising an ‘improvement’ of relations with European allies) represents a clear priority of the present official elites of Slovakia.

Slovenia

Sabina Kajnič and Milan Brglez, Centre for International Relations, Ljubljana

In the fall of 2004, a centre-right government took over from the previous centre(-left) coalition, which had governed Slovenia almost uninterruptedly since its independence in 1991. The Janša government, led by the Slovenian Democratic Party, was ideologically closer to the Bush administration than the previous governments. This was proven by Slovenia’s ongoing tacit support for American Iraq policy (Slovenia contributed two police instructors in NATO-led civil missions that moved from Jordan to Iraq at the beginning of 2005, Prime Minister Janša also visited Iraq in 2006), as well as by the general conduct of Slovenia’s 2005 OSCE Chairmanship and by its 2008 EU Presidency.

The latter is demonstrated by a dispatch from the Slovenian Embassy in Washington in which the “US administration’s wishes” regarding certain policies, especially on Kosovo, were clearly uttered. Difficulties in bilateral relations followed the leaking of this communiqué in the Slovenian (and Serbian) press, which resulted in a prolonged appointment procedure of the new US Ambassador to Slovenia, who arrived only shortly prior to the EU-US summit held in Slovenia in June 2008.

Two major events, the 2005 OSCE Chairmanship and the 2008 EU Presidency, however, put Slovenia between the diverging positions of Russia and the US. This became evident primarily through the role of the OSCE and its reform, and more generally regarding the issues of sovereignty and self-determination, especially in the post-Soviet area and on the question of Kosovo’s independence.

With Slovenia’s 2008 EU Presidency and the general elections of 21 September 2008 (bringing to power a new centre-left government), foreign policy, beyond the ever-pressing Slovenian neighbourhood issues, especially with Croatia, slipped into the background. The outgoing government was rather pleased with the successful EU presidency. Generally, Slovenian political parties have not worked out distinctive foreign policy attitudes, with all of them stating the importance of good relations with the US. There seem to be no immediately pressing issues. Matters of principle, however, like the Guantanamo prisoner camp, have been addressed (only) by Slovenian President, Danilo Türk, on the occasion of the EU-US summit held in Slovenia in June 2008. It is telling that in the bilateral meeting accompanying the EU-US summit, the promotion of economic relations predominated. The future of the Western Balkans, primarily Slovenian views on Serbia and Macedonia, also featured prominently on the agenda. Slovenia has worked hard in recent years to raise the Western Balkan issue within the EU and strongly supports a greater role for the EU in this area. After the above-mentioned communiqué fiasco, it is not surprising that the Kosovo issue was not specifically singled out in the bilateral talks.

In principle, Slovenia supports multilateralism and strong and friendly relations between the EU and the US. This puts the country in a position of showing support for policies that will enhance cooperation and that are in line with global/UN policies. Slovenia will pay closer attention to the future of the Western Balkans and will try to continue to play the role of mediator in the region. It will most probably also support closer relations between Turkey and the EU.

When choosing between a bilateral and an EU-based approach to the US, Slovenia takes a pragmatic route. Promotion of direct economic relations and certain bilateral issues (e.g. particular issues such as Jewish property rights dating back to the pre-World War II period) are handled at the bilateral level. Global issues such as energy, climate and the world economy, including EU-US trade and economic relations are preferably dealt with at the EU level. Regarding global security and politico-security issues, there is a clear preference to discuss these within the NATO framework, though Slovenia has been a steady supporter of a stronger European Security and Defence Policy (provided it does not duplicate NATO structures and is based on the equality of all members).

Spain

Alicia Sorroza and David García Cantalapiedra, Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid

The relationship between Spain and the US during the Bush years has been subject to some transformation between 2001 and the present day. Between 2001 and 2004, relations were extremely good, thanks to the unconditional support of the Aznar government to the US-led global war on terror. However, the Spanish government’s support for the Iraq invasion was a controversial issue during the 2004 Spanish general elections. The withdrawal of Spanish troops

from Iraq was a priority in the Socialist party electoral programme and following the victory of this party, the immediate recall of troops and Prime Minister Zapatero's declarations against US policy in the region led to a lasting freeze of relations at the highest level of government.

Nevertheless, Spain and the United States have maintained good relations in defence, counter-terrorism, police and judicial cooperation and within NATO. In the economic realm, the situation is very fluid: Spain reached a peak in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the US (eight billion euro), and Spanish companies acquired US assets worth 22 billion euro (making Spain the fourth biggest investor after Canada, the UK and the Netherlands). At the same time Spain received 8 billion euro last year, 2% of US FDI. Moreover, it should be stressed that the United States is fast becoming the country with the largest number of Spanish speakers.

Concerning other issues such as climate change, the new international law and the role of international organisations, despite ongoing cooperation, there have also been differences between Spain, the European Union and the United States. Spain took notice of comments by both US presidential candidates, indicating that the US will reinvigorate multilateral approaches to international challenges.

During the first speech on Spanish foreign policy objectives for the government's second term, Prime Minister Zapatero outlined his expectations vis-à-vis a new US approach to efficient multilateralism, especially with respect to the fight against climate change, and concerning the new international law. Zapatero also explained that the Spanish government will be working towards the creation of an international commission designed to foster the universal abolition of the death penalty. This is to be achieved through specific measures: a universal moratorium in the execution of the death penalty until 2015, and a definitive agreement that no country will apply the death penalty to minors or to those with mental disabilities. Spain looks forward to an active contribution to these efforts by the United States. Furthermore, peace-building needs new tools in order to deal with new conflicts and their causes. In this context, Spain believes that the 'Alliance of Civilizations', proposed to the UN by Prime Minister Zapatero in 2005, could be a relevant instrument to defeat violence.

The Spanish government is currently trying to reinvigorate and improve relations with the US. Taking into account that Spain will hold the European Union presidency during the first semester of 2010, transatlantic relations have been defined by PM Zapatero as "a priority task" for the Spanish EU presidency. In this vein, the government is now defining a new agenda for relations with the incoming US administration.

The US-Spanish relationship is asymmetrical. The Spanish government aspires to rebalance the relationship as it believes that the benefits produced at the politico-military level are insufficient. The Spanish government prefers a multilateral approach, especially through the European Union.

However, at the bilateral level, Spain has clear goals for the next four years: first, to consolidate US FDI in Spain; to review the US-Spain Defence Agreement with regard to the use of Spanish bases by US forces and the role of US intelligence services on Spanish soil; to strengthen cooperation in the fields of education, research and development, and to reinforce the coordination toward Latin-America. The Spanish government prefers to use the framework of the European Union to face international challenges such as the Iranian nuclear programme, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the Lebanon situation, and the crisis in the Caucasus. Regarding regional powers such as the BRICs, the EU and the US should cooperate to facilitate their integration into the international system and their commitment to international organisations and law. Other important issues, such as UN reform, Kyoto plus, the fight against poverty, etc. will also be part of the US-EU agenda.

Sweden

Anna Södersten, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, Stockholm

Swedish-American relations during the Bush era were largely good and there was a strong consensus on many issues. However, the Iraq war did strain the relationship to some degree. The Swedish position was that the invasion constituted a clear breach of international law. Public opinion in Sweden was also strongly against the war. Other areas of disagreement were the American detention policy at Guantánamo Bay, the refusal of the United States to sign the Kyoto Protocol and the death penalty.

During the second Bush administration, multilateral approaches received greater attention. In Sweden, this was viewed as a very welcome change. Following the Swedish 2006 election, efforts were made to further reinforce transatlantic dialogue. The frequent visits by Swedish government members to Washington as well as the new Swedish Embassy building in the US capital can be seen as steps towards a renewed relationship.

Cooperation in climate and energy issues occupies an increasingly prominent place in Swedish politics. During the Swedish presidency in 2009, the fight against climate change will be one of the major issues. Therefore, the US commitment to these issues will be of great importance for the forthcoming transatlantic relationship. There are expectations that the US will take a more constructive position to the United Nations Framework Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The transatlantic economic and trade cooperation was reinforced during the German EU presidency in 2007. This is largely due to the establishment of the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), which is of great importance to Sweden. Even if Swedish-American trade has decreased over the last couple of years, the US is still a very important trade partner for Sweden.

The crisis in Georgia prompted the question of how to respond to Russian foreign policy. The Swedish critique of Russia was very outspoken and the Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt remarked that the route currently taken by Russia leads to confrontation with the international community in general. According to the Swedish position, it is important to continue the dialogue with Russia, although the content of such a dialogue may change in the future. The US is expected to act in concert with the EU regarding this issue.

The development of the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be another important issue in 2009. Sweden is encouraging a two-part solution with an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. This presupposes that freedom of movement and access is significantly improved in the West Bank and Gaza. A peace agreement requires considerable effort from the US and Europe. Sweden may well have a significant role in a future Palestinian state building process and is already one of the largest bilateral donors to Gaza and the West Bank.

Furthermore, Sweden is expecting the next US administration to put more effort into encouraging the reconciliation and reconstruction process in Iraq. More efforts to assist and protect the more than 4 million Iraqi refugees are also anticipated. To put matters into perspective, the small town Sodertälje in Sweden has received more refugees from Iraq than the US and Canada together. Sweden is therefore expecting and encouraging the US to take a greater responsibility for Iraqi refugees.

Finally, foreign policy has so far played a less prominent role in the American election campaign and it is therefore difficult to establish what course the next administration will take on many issues. The expectations that the next administration will take an even more multilateral approach are high but should not be exaggerated.

The United Kingdom

Tomas Valasek, Centre for European Reform, London

The US-UK agenda under the Bush presidency has been dominated by the Iraq war, climate change discussions, and – more recently – the global financial crisis. Washington and London cooperated on Iraq, although not without significant disagreements over the conduct of the operations. The UK government also paid a high domestic political price for its active support of the US in Iraq. Climate change has proved a divisive issue. London's attempts to secure US support for a global emissions control system failed; and it is far from certain that the US will sign up to a post-Kyoto framework. As for the global financial crisis, Gordon Brown has sought to pin the blame for the travails of British banks on events in the US – a curious stance, given the huge levels of leverage in the UK economy.

Looking forward to 2009, the key issues on the UK-US agenda will be, in approximate order of importance:

- to arrest the financial crisis, devise a better post-crisis regulatory framework, and cushion the fall-out on economic growth;
- to find a more effective strategy for the Afghanistan operation;
- to secure binding cuts to carbon emissions; and
- to end British military involvement in Iraq.

The UK will seek to minimise the fall-out of the crisis on the UK economy and on British companies. This could be a contentious issue in the financial sector, where administrators may have to haggle over the division of assets of now-defunct institutions. Although both the UK and the US could face domestic backlashes against their financial sectors, they are still likely to argue against an excessive clampdown in what is expected to be a controversial debate on the post-crisis regulatory framework. The UK can also be expected to support further moves to liberalise transatlantic trade.

Afghanistan will loom large on the UK-US agenda – the cost of these operations is putting the UK defence establishment under severe stress, and the mission appears to be in considerable trouble. Both capitals could push for an increase in the number of troops (similar to the 'surge' in Iraq). But being close to fully deployed themselves, London and Washington will likely join forces with Ottawa and The Hague (other significant contributors to the Afghanistan operation) in pushing other European allies to deploy yet more troops for the maligned mission.

Even though the financial crisis has eclipsed, for now, environmental issues, the need to secure US participation in a global emission-control agreement will remain high on the UK agenda. The general feeling in London is that the Copenhagen conference will come too soon for the new US administration to agree to binding cuts – but London will want to seek a face-saving solution for Washington, which would not isolate the US should it not be ready to sign up in Copenhagen, but which would still hold out the prospect of the new administration agreeing binding cuts later on.

Iraq is an issue of decreasing importance for Anglo-American relations. The UK contingent is down to 3,000 troops from its wartime peak of 20,000, and the UK administration would like to leave as soon as possible. Following the Iraq government-imposed 2011 deadline for US troop withdrawal, Washington is now looking at pulling out its troops within the next two years. The two capitals will work together to minimise the impact of withdrawals on the security situation in Iraq, and to leave behind equipment, knowledge as well as a training mechanism for the Iraqi army.

In general, London prefers to deal with Washington bilaterally rather than through the EU but the strategy does vary from issue to issue. Clearly, Iraq is a bilateral subject in which the EU plays no role. Similarly, Afghanistan is primarily a NATO issue notwithstanding EU financial help and a small police contingent.

The financial crisis and its aftermath will require strong EU involvement but here the member-states are likely to be divided, with London advocating a light regulatory approach while France, Germany and others may well push for closer oversight of financial institutions. The EU will find it difficult to speak with one voice and hence have a unified position vis-à-vis the US.

Climate change is the issue where the UK is most likely to use the EU's good offices for a dialogue with Washington. The EU collectively supports binding emissions cuts, and as such offers an effective platform for leaning on the US to do the same.

The European Union

Piotr Maciej Kaczyński and Sebastian Kurpas, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels

During the Bush presidency (2001-2009), EU-US relations went through different phases. The first period was marked by stressing the unity between Europeans and Americans after the 9/11 attacks. This unity ended with a second phase marked by the US intervention in Iraq, when the Bush administration deliberately used divisions among European governments (including the famous notion of 'old Europe' versus 'new Europe') to build 'coalitions of the willing'. Due to the deep divisions among its member states, the EU as such did not play a significant role in this issue, although public opinion in almost all (EU-15) member states has proved highly critical of the Bush administration.

The Iraq crisis coincided with the EU big-bang enlargement of 2004 and negotiations on EU treaty reform. Neither was affected negatively by the divisions over Iraq. Interestingly, the disunity over Iraq did not keep the EU from agreeing on its own Security Strategy ("A Secure Europe in a Better World"), which contrasted significantly with the strong military focus of the Bush administration's approach to security. The document – presented in December 2003 by Javier Solana and subsequently approved by the European Council – stressed the notion of "effective multilateralism" and underlined a comprehensive approach towards terrorist threats building on "a mixture of intelligence, police, judicial, military and other means". Unlike the US administration, it promoted "preventive engagement" rather than a (military) "pre-emption". The document did however also call for "a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and when necessary, robust intervention" and very much insisted on the importance of EU-US cooperation, calling the transatlantic relationship "irreplaceable." However, this relationship should ideally be based on both partners being at eye-level ("an effective and balanced partnership with the USA"), since when acting together, both could be "a formidable force for good in the world".

The period of the Iraq war was also marked by other important EU-US disagreements on the multilateral vs. unilateral approach, most notably on the recognition of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Kyoto Protocol. The third phase of EU-US relations under the Bush presidency can be described as a period of technical/bureaucratic rapprochement of the two partners, particularly on economic and trade issues. In the context of the WTO, like the Doha negotiations, Europeans and Americans often presented similar positions vis-à-vis those of the developing nations. There were also several bilateral agreements liberalising air transport and facilitating EU-US trade, including a 'Framework Agreement' on transatlantic economic integration. This agreement created the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) as a political

body to oversee and accelerate government-to-government cooperation with the aim of advancing economic integration between the EU and the US.

The most important and most pressing issues that the EU actors would like to tackle are:

- (1) The climate change debate and the Bali-Poznan-Copenhagen negotiations;
- (2) Energy security (which in the US is discussed under the term “energy independence”), especially in light of deteriorating EU-Russian relations;
- (3) Stability in the post-Soviet area, which would include a trilateral (EU, US and Russian) constructive approach in addressing the frozen conflicts (Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh), the Georgian questions (final status of Abkhazia, South Ossetia) and other potential problems (such as Crimea);
- (4) The situation in the wider Middle East, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan and nuclear proliferation, especially in the case of Iran;
- (5) The recent financial crisis, which constitutes a major challenge to the global economic relations.

EU member states expect the US primarily to not be divisive towards EU member states and to take the EU seriously as a partner and ally. It is hoped that the new administration will be much more positive about multilateralism in general and cooperation with the EU specifically. A different attitude in Washington would help to overcome existing differences on solutions in Iraq and Afghanistan or the approach to international law and the ICC. There are also disagreements on trade issues, which need further discussion. There are hopes among EU decision-makers that – despite the difficult economic situation in the US – the next administration will also remain committed to free trade.

Transatlantic relations receive an impetus from bilateral EU-US summits and numerous day-to-day contacts and negotiations in various policy fields. During the EU-US summit on 30 April 2007, Commission President Barroso, German Chancellor Merkel and US President Bush signed the “Framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration between the United States of America and the European Union”. Key elements of this framework were the adoption of a work programme of cooperation and the establishment of the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) to oversee, guide and accelerate the implementation of this work programme. This new instrument should be used accordingly.

Conclusion and interpretation of findings

This report offers a brief survey of expectations held by Europeans vis-à-vis the next US administration. It is based on assessments by think tank analysts from 15 member states of the European Union and one assessment by analysts from Brussels, the capital of the EU.

Although some notable variations in expectations exist among Europeans, the bottom line of this survey is a strong European desire for a re-instated, credible leadership role of the United States in international affairs. Two concerns lie at the heart of this desire: first, that the United States’ image abroad has suffered substantially over the past eight years, and that regardless of policy differences, Europeans believe this to be a highly unfortunate development. Second, almost all contributions in this paper more or less directly ask for a more multi-lateral American approach to international politics. If Europeans were not interested in US leadership, they simply would not be asking for a more cooperative US. For the incoming US President, this fact presents a great opportunity, regardless of the tremendous risks attached to the heightened expectations. Europeans do not ask for agreement on all issues (which they find hard to reach amongst themselves), but they overwhelmingly believe that they will be substantially worse off

if the US fails to convert its strength into credible leadership. This is very much in accord with recent findings of the annual Transatlantic Trends opinion poll conducted by the German Marshall Fund.²

Not surprisingly, the recurring issues in most (but not all) national contributions were climate change, energy, international law (especially the International Criminal Court) and world trade. At least in terms of climate change, however, Europeans might be in for a disappointing discovery when they find that neither the new president nor the next US Congress has any more appetite for signing up to any kind of agreement that leaves the big emerging economies out of the equation. Moreover, participation in the ICC will most certainly be met with equally strong, if not stronger reluctance.

More importantly, however, is the topical issue of Russia. Security policy is clearly back on the European agenda. Here an important divide amongst Europeans becomes overtly apparent. Many Eastern European countries, especially since the Georgian crisis in the summer of 2008, perceive Russia as a real, even imminent threat to their own security. This is not shared by most Western EU member states. To enhance their own security, East Europeans rely mostly on the United States directly, with the EU (and also NATO) playing a clearly secondary (if not lesser) role. In many East European EU member states, this leads to split loyalties as their governments find themselves in a situation where they are forced to choose between pan-European loyalty and strong bilateral ties with the US. This divide will, for the foreseeable future, remain a potent pre-determined breaking point in inner-European workings, much along the lines of the often-quoted and much-detested 'Old Europe vs. New Europe' construct.

Even though, for reasons of deadline, most contributions were not able to include the recent upheaval in international financial markets and the subsequent fears of a global recession, 'socio-economic' concerns appear frequently in these pages. Clearly, there are no illusions in Europe over a possible de-coupling of the European and the American economies. As expectations of strong economic leadership vis-à-vis the United States were already high before the financial crisis, this policy field maybe offers the best immediate opportunity for Europe and the US to work together. With their combined economies, in global terms, becoming relatively weaker, cooperation seems to be an imperative in any event, if the West is to retain its lifestyle and influence.

To sum up, European expectations vis-à-vis the next US President and his administration are high. This is an important finding, because psychologically expectations are the very basis for a constructive relationship. Whether justified or not, in the past few years, expectations of transatlantic relations have been at an all-time low. This has changed, with policy implications inevitably following from it. Even considering the risks of almost unavoidable disappointment, this changed atmosphere constitutes a crucial opportunity that should – and must – be seized by the political and economic leaders of Europe and the United States.

² *Transatlantic Trends, Key Findings 2008*, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington, D.C., 2008. The complete set of findings can be downloaded at www.gmfus.org.