

NATO and US Interests after 60 Years: Challenges and Opportunities

Presentation by

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Thank you for the generous invitation and the warm welcome you've given my wife Monika and me.

It's a true pleasure to have the opportunity to meet with you on this important occasion, in support of an extraordinary project.

I'm humbled to be in your presence.

I wish my late father and mother could have been with us.

During the Second World War, my dad served in North Africa and Italy as an aircraft mechanic in the Army Air Corps.

By his own description, he was no hero, but he went to war in defense of his country, while my mother worked in support of the war effort here at home.

My parents had one last opportunity to be together in New Jersey before my father was deployed to North Africa.

Family mementos suggest that they went to a football game between the Washington Redskins and the New York Giants.

I was born nine months later, while my dad was overseas.

I suspect all of this had something to do with the fact that I grew up a Giants fan and then transferred my allegiance to the Redskins after moving to Washington!

Nonetheless, as a result, I feel a real and direct tie to the generation that fought World War II.

Members of this "greatest generation," using Tom Brokaw's words, defended not only the United States but also the democratic values on which this Republic is founded and on which so many other nations have come to rely.

As for myself, I have to admit I feel a little out of place standing before you in this monkey suit.

There usually isn't much call for tuxedos in Vermont.

The last outfit like this that I wore was my Air Force "mess dress."

On the other hand, my audiences at the NATO Defense College in Italy, are filled with senior US and allied military officers, which gives me a certain level of comfort in speaking to you tonight.

My task, and my pleasure, is to talk about the foreign and security policy interests of a country – our country – about which I care deeply, and the role of allies in those interests.

You'll hear me talk about some organizations: NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), the European Union, and the United Nations.

But this isn't about organizations.

It's about sovereign states, particularly like-minded states, and how they can work together to maximize their mutual interests.

It isn't always easy; but I'm sure many of you know from personal experience how important allies can be.

ALLIES: You can't live with them. You can't survive without them.

Yes, the United States needs allies – and they need us.

We needed allies in World War II to fight fascist and Japanese aggression.

Countries we liberated, and countries we defeated, became good allies after the war.

We relied on them, and they on us, during the Cold War to help deter Soviet aggression and to block the spread of communism.

Today, we can't deal effectively with the many challenges to our interests unless we enlist willing and capable democracies to join with us politically, economically, and militarily.

The United States is a global power, with global interests.

We have allies and partners around the world.

However, our allies in Europe, members and partners in NATO, form the vital core of America's global support group.

As of late, we've been through a very rough patch in this relationship.

In lectures at the NATO College, I use political cartoons in my Power Point briefings to illustrate some of my points.

At the height of the transatlantic crisis over Iraq one cartoonist showed two NATO team soccer players, one called "Europe," the other "USA," scrapping with each other on the soccer pitch.

The NATO coach, watching the players fight, tells the referee: "They'd be a good team if they spent more time kicking the ball and less time kicking each other."

Before the United States and Europe could develop effective strategies toward terrorism, Islam, Iraq, Iran, Middle East peace, proliferation, relations with Russia and China and other challenges, they clearly had to stop "kicking each other."

An American military official, who has been working inside this relationship in recent years, has reassured me that this process has begun.

According to this official, "At NATO, we and our allies are making steady if uneven progress on all fronts and we just had the most successful Defense Ministers' meeting many can remember."

Nonetheless, many commentators on the recent crisis have identified what they see as a "structural gap" increasingly separating the United States from Europe.

Such persistent differences created the potential for US-European divisions even before 9/11 and the Iraq War dramatically brought them to the surface.

In the 1990s, the European allies enjoyed what was called the post-Cold War "peace dividend."

They were painfully slow to convert their forces from border defenses to force projection capabilities.

As a result, many Americans, including key officials in the first Bush administration, lost confidence in the ability of the European allies to respond effectively to new security challenges.

In the midst of this crisis, the neo-conservative expert Robert Kagan argued famously that Americans and Europeans were on two different planets, writing that "Americans are from Mars, Europeans from Venus."

Kagan maintained that success of the European integration process created a zone of peace and cooperation among countries that had warred for centuries, and that this had given birth to what he called a "non-use of force ideology."

Now, we've known for years that Americans and Europeans have somewhat different attitudes toward the use of force.

But Kagan went on to argue that the United States and Europe were destined to disagree more and more in the future.

Kagan's observations inspired a variety of European responses.

In one reaction, a leading Dutch defense expert, Peter van Ham, said that Kagan is "absolutely right" in judging that "Americans and Europeans no longer share a common 'strategic culture'."

Van Ham wrote: "...for non-Americans, this is gradually becoming a world where the US acts as legislator, policeman, judge and executioner. America sets the rules by its own behaviour, judges others without sticking to these rules itself..."

It is true that such differences have led to different US and European attitudes on when and how to use military force.

I wrote about these differences myself in a book published by the National Defense University Press in the early 1980s.

Nations tend to use the instruments of statecraft available to them.

Moreover, their historical experiences influence the choice of instruments that they develop and fund.

Their experiences in the Second World War led many Europeans to conclude that military conflict is to be avoided at all cost.

On the other hand, many Americans think World War II demonstrated that appeasing dictators only whets their appetite for conquest.

During the Cold War, West European nations learned that putting aside old antagonisms allowed them to build a prosperous, stable community that is today's European Union.

Meanwhile, deterring and defeating the Soviet Union in the Cold War reinforced the American conviction that the demonstrated willingness to use force is necessary to deal with potentially aggressive regimes.

In 2001, the policies and attitudes of the Bush administration and the reactions of many Europeans brought these tendencies vividly to life.

I'll talk later about why and how NATO survived this clash between US and European strategic images.

But first, I want to admit to one bias that you may already have detected.

In addition to being a proud and stubborn Vermonter, I am an un-reconstructed and un-apologetic Atlanticist.

What does that mean?

It means I believe that a healthy, mutually beneficial transatlantic relationship is vitally important to the United States and Europe.

In spite of our recent differences, the United States, Canada and the European democracies still share political systems built on the values of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

The belief in and practice of democracy remains an important part of the foundation for the Euro-Atlantic community.

In addition to shared political values, the United States and members of the European Union have market-based economic systems in which competition drives the market, but is governed by democratically-approved rules and regulations.

European and American market economies are the essential core of the global economic system.

The 27 members of the European Union are the largest US partners in the trade of goods and services.

The members of the European Union have over \$860 billion of direct investment in the United States.

The United States has some \$700 billion invested in European Union states.

The European Union and the United States together account for more than 40 percent of world trade and represent almost 60 percent of the industrialized world's gross domestic product.

Moreover, the Western political, economic, and security system continues to attract new participants.

Former Soviet satellites in Central and Eastern Europe and several former Soviet Republics have worked hard to adopt "western" political and economic systems.

As a consequence, NATO's membership has swollen to 26, with three more states on the doorstep and others perhaps joining in the future.

These countries wanted to align with the United States and to protect themselves against Russian influence, a motivation that has been reinforced by recent developments in Russia's foreign and domestic policies.

They wanted to become members of the European Union, and of NATO, to ensure that they remain part of democratic Europe with strong links to the United States.

In spite of the recent crisis in transatlantic relations, Europe remains our prime source of allies that are willing and able to deploy substantial military forces in zones of conflict far from their borders.

Moreover, NATO, which is the main vehicle for US-European military cooperation, has become an important instrument for international, not just European, peace and security.

Vaclav Havel, the Czech Republic's first president, has said that NATO has moved from being a key player in European security to becoming a "key pillar of international security."

In addition, the European Union and its member states can bring together a rich package of assets for crisis management and avoidance, including diplomatic mediation, peacekeeping forces, police forces, humanitarian aid and development assistance.

In general, international problems are most easily and effectively handled when the United States and its European allies work together.

The political foundations of Euro-Atlantic relations, the economic realities of transatlantic ties, and the security aspects of the Atlantic alliance, all suggest that the US-European relationship remains vitally important to both the United States and Europe.

In six months, next April, the NATO alliance will mark its 60th anniversary with a summit of alliance leaders.

You'll note that I said "mark," not "celebrate."

Yes, President Obama and the other NATO leaders will celebrate the anniversary of this great alliance, but they'll do so cautiously.

They'll celebrate against the backdrop of almost a decade of difficult relations among the allies, both across the Atlantic and within Europe.

They'll celebrate in anticipation of some of the most serious challenges that have faced the United States and its allies in NATO's history.

The recent period of transatlantic relations has been one of the most conflicted since NATO was formed in 1949.

This, however, is not a new experience in relations between a dominant state and its allies, as a senior European diplomat occasionally reminds students at the NATO College.

Some 2500 years ago, Thucydides, an Athenian general, writing about the Peloponnesian War, made insightful observations about what moves people to fight each other, why people seize power, and how others try to prevent that.

He also pointed out very dramatically how, in the course of a 30-year civil war, peace was prevented by ambitions and greed of individuals.

Thucydides is now regarded as one of the first true historians.

In retrospect, his writing also suggested that there is not much new under the sun.

Let me share with you a passage from his analysis.

“In the beginning, the alliance.... held regular meetings and allies decided by consensus. But after the Persian Wars, the alliance lost its cohesion. Allies did not pay their dues, nor did they deliver ships to the common effort; some refused military service. The Athenians in their hegemony were not so popular anymore, and they did not consider their allies equal to themselves. That was the fault of the allies themselves, because of their reluctance to serve. So it happened that the Athenians expanded their fleet and the allies became more and more ineffective and unprepared for war.”

My European friend suggests that before you interpret this in today's context simply as a critique of the European allies, one should recall that Thucydides, looking toward the future of Athens, wrote: “Nobody is so strong that he can be sure that he will always remain the strongest.”

The question that we as Americans need to answer is whether or not we'll be stronger facing the future with or without allies.

I think the answer is obvious.

The question for allied leaders next April will be how they can ensure that the transatlantic alliance will continue to be a useful arrangement to protect and promote the interests of both America and Europe.

Before I turn to that question, I want to say a few words about why and how the alliance survived the crisis in transatlantic relations during George Bush's presidency.

Perhaps it's too soon for a true historical evaluation, but, because I consider myself a policy analyst, I feel free, and even obliged, to suggest some possible explanations.

Here are some possible reasons why, in the end, the United States and its European allies decided that they should stop kicking each other.

First, in spite of differences over Iraq and international relations generally, the United States and its European allies still share an impressive collection of values and interests.

Second, European governments simply had no alternative to remaining in alliance with the United States, and NATO was still the most important symbol and operational aspect of that relationship.

Third, European governments and populations remained split concerning the future construction of Europe.

This suggested that the arguments being made for the European Union to become a "balancer" of US power could not be sustained by reality, at least not in the near term.

But the view that European integration can and should be compatible with transatlantic cooperation gained the upper hand.

Fourth, "new" European democracies in Eastern and Central Europe were strongly committed to NATO's continuation.

This is so because their historical and geographic proximity to Russian power and influence convinced them that NATO provided an essential link to US power that was not provided by membership in the European Union.

Fifth, European governments decided that, in spite of how difficult the relationship with the United States had become, there were no acceptable alternative power centers with which Europe could align.

Sixth, the financial and economic fortunes of the United States and Europe had become so mutually interdependent that a break in transatlantic relations could put all vital European and American interests at risk.

This consideration is clearly demonstrated by the current financial and economic crisis.

And finally, during its second term of office, the Bush administration decided the United States needed allies and attempted to repair relations with the Europeans.

This created space in which the alliance could muddle through to the advent of the next American administration.

Now, let's look ahead toward NATO's 60th anniversary celebration next April, to be hosted jointly by France and Germany on their common border.

On the one hand, conditions for the celebration look good.

A new administration in the United States guarantees a fresh start in transatlantic relations and the opportunity for a US-European "honeymoon."

Our European friends and allies are looking forward to moving beyond the contentious atmosphere of recent years.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has already begun working to improve US-French relations.

He's prepared to normalize France's position in the alliance, reversing President de Gaulle's decision over four decades ago to pull French forces out of NATO's integrated command structure.

NATO's Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, has argued that NATO should now prepare a new strategic concept to replace the one agreed in Washington in 1999.

He suggests the allies should perhaps even draft a new "Atlantic Charter" re-affirming the importance of the transatlantic relationship.

However, the challenges to transatlantic relations have only mounted in recent weeks.

It really IS hard to drain the swamp when you are up to your rear end in alligators!!

Today's alligators include the financial and economic crisis that affects US power and leadership, and has implications for friends and foes alike around the globe.

We have a stand-off in Afghanistan, where a ranking British general recently said we cannot "win," and where American experts say we risk the real possibility of losing.

Meanwhile, Russia's actions in Georgia have raised profound questions about Moscow's future role in Europe and in the world.

The financial crisis goes well beyond the scope of this lecture, and well beyond my own expertise, but let me mention one clear link to our strategic posture.

The steps required to deal with this financial and economic crisis will severely constrain the ability of the United States to borrow more money to finance current commitments in Iraq and elsewhere.

We have to make choices, and establish priorities.

Even if Senator McCain had been elected President, he would have been forced to find a way out of Iraq in order to bring the US financial house back in order and to avoid defeat in Afghanistan.

So, before the alliance can even celebrate surviving its latest near-death experience, it faces a new question: can it survive its difficult mission in Afghanistan?

NATO took on leadership of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force in 2003.

At the same time, the United States continued its own separate but parallel Operation Enduring Freedom trying to track down al Qaeda and Taliban forces.

NATO's mission in Afghanistan was to ensure that this "failed state" has a chance to become a relatively stable country in which a representative government is able to defend itself and provide for the needs of its people.

The United States and its allies hoped to ensure that Afghanistan would no longer serve as a launching pad for international terrorism, or as a major source for the illicit international drug trade.

This is not an easy task, by any stretch of the imagination, and it is one that likely will require many years of sustained effort.

According to press reports, the US intelligence community is drafting an estimate that suggests Afghanistan is approaching a critical turning point.

The government of Afghanistan, according to this and other reports, has little credibility with the people, in part because of "rampant corruption."

The Taliban are getting stronger and more capable of increased attacks on NATO and US forces.

General David McKiernan, the commander of NATO and US forces in Afghanistan, has recently observed that things are bad, and getting worse.

He, along with other high-ranking military officers, has maintained that any gains made in fighting Taliban and al Qaeda forces cannot be solidified with the number of US and NATO troops deployed there.

Neither the United States nor its allies have put sufficient forces or resources into Afghanistan to achieve their stated goals.

Some 50% of Afghanistan's economy comes from the poppy growing culture in support of the international heroin trade.

Substantial proceeds from this trade help finance the Taliban.

Moreover, there appears to be no consensus in NATO or even in the US government about how to save the situation.

Failure in Afghanistan has been described as a possible death knell for NATO.

This might be so, but more than NATO's future is at risk in the mountains of the Hindu Kush.

Many things hang in the Afghan balance.

American international leadership and military effectiveness are in question.

The reputations of the United Nations and of the European Union are at stake.

The ability of the international system to deal with failed states, terrorism, and the illicit drug trade is at risk.

Failure in Afghanistan, therefore, is not an option, even if today it looks like a looming possibility.

Against this discouraging backdrop, you might ask, what are my recommendations and expectations for the future of transatlantic relations?

In the near-term future, I believe US-European relations could go in a number of different directions.

For ease of discussion, let's divide those possibilities into three broad categories:

--the alliance could fall victim to a new and contentious debate about how to share international security burdens;

--the allies could simply continue to muddle through;

--or, they could choose to try to build a new and stronger foundation for their alliance.

First, a new burden-sharing debate could easily break out across the Atlantic.

I worked on burden-sharing questions for the Congress for two decades, and so I know full well what a burden-sharing debate looks like. It can get ugly.

But it's a natural consequence of cooperation among democracies.

Leaders in democracies feel a responsibility to buy the best security for their countries at the lowest cost.

This leads almost automatically to a burden-sharing debate among allied democratic nations.

President Barack Obama will strengthen the US presence in Afghanistan, but he will also want the Europeans to do much more.

Given the fact that most European allies believe they are at the limits of their resources with current commitments, this situation could easily deteriorate into a transatlantic blame game.

“Who lost Afghanistan?” could be the question in a few years.

And the question “who destroyed NATO?” could be close on its heels.

The second possible future is one of muddling through.

You know, in my experience, professional diplomats always prefer “muddling through.”

They tend to be suspicious of, and skeptical about, new ways of doing things.

But that’s just my opinion, with apologies to any diplomats in the audience.

In any case, this option would look a lot like the past four years, with a new cast of characters on both sides of the Atlantic disagreeing about strategy but keeping the relationship civil, and keeping operations in Afghanistan from failing completely.

The third possible future is the most difficult to envision and produce, but also, in my opinion, the most important to seek.

Over the last few years I have written and spoken about the need to build a new foundation for transatlantic relations.

The approach is premised on the need for a combination of policy convergence, improved performance, and updated transatlantic institutions.

The United States and its European allies must develop as much policy convergence as possible on the difficult issues that have tended to divide them, but on which they need close cooperation to ensure future security.

It may be too much of a stretch to aim for a “common strategy,” but it is not unrealistic to imagine the Obama administration trying to develop common transatlantic approaches to such issues as how to:

-- Mitigate the causes of international terrorism,

- Discourage proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,
- Develop a sensible approach to missile defense deployments,
- Draft common principles to guide future relations with Russia,
- Deal with the consequences of the war in Iraq,
- Promote a dialogue and strategic understanding with Iran, and
- Intensify cooperation to promote a Middle East peace accord.

We and our allies need to produce in practice the resources and actions that are required to deal with the most demanding of security challenges.

First and foremost, we need to put together an effective combination of security and development programs in Afghanistan to build a foundation for a more peaceful and less threatening future in that troubled land.

To deal with this and other challenges, the United States and its allies also need to build a strategic working relationship between the European Union and NATO, instead of allowing competition between the two organizations to continue to handicap practical cooperation.

Finally, the members of NATO and the European Union should enhance the posture of the Atlantic Community by creating new multilateral mechanisms that respond to the increasingly diverse nature of international security.

In the United States, the idea of bringing new forms of cooperation to bear on international security problems has emerged from a number of sources.

These sources are as diverse as Senator John McCain's concept of a "League of Democracies" and the Princeton University's Project on National Security's proposal for a "Concert of Democracies," which reflects the thinking of many in President-elect Obama's camp.

Since the mid-1990s, I have suggested that the Atlantic Community states could and should be the core of any such convergence among democratic states.

Why should we try to create new ways of cooperating?

The basic rationale is that the future of transatlantic relations depends on much that goes beyond NATO's mandate.

NATO remains necessary, but not sufficient.

From a practical perspective, the transatlantic community needs additional tools to promote cooperation on the non-military, or “soft power,” aspects of security.

If we had already created such a framework when terrorists struck the United States on 9/11, representatives of NATO and European Union countries could have met immediately to coordinate the policies, financial tools, diplomatic responses and other non-military security tools, while NATO was helping organize a military response.

However, the most immediate challenge to allies on both sides of the Atlantic is to rebuild a constructive dialogue to replace the destructive interactions that have characterized handling of the Iraq issue.

Joe Maddon, the manager of the American League champion Tampa Bay Rays, likes to remind his players that “attitude is a decision.”

Even though his Rays eliminated my Red Sox, I still think it’s a good saying.

Attitudes are choices in politics and international relations as well in sports.

I earlier suggested that, in the first years of the Bush administration, the attitude in Washington was that the United States didn’t really need allies, that NATO was no longer useful, and that in future conflicts, including Afghanistan, “the mission would determine the coalition.”

Some Europeans responded with their own “bad attitude.”

They argued that excessive US power and influence combined with a unilateralist and anti-alliance attitude in Washington would force the European Union to play a new form of balance of power politics to offset US hegemony.

The lesson the United States must take away from this period is that we will have to “speak more softly.”

Everyone knows that that we already carry the “biggest stick.”

Future US administrations will have to be more constructive and creative in the use of international institutions and multilateral cooperation.

For their part, Europeans will have to bring more resources and capabilities to the transatlantic security table.

The US–European relationship needs a better balance in terms of both authority and capability.

However, it’s not up to the United States to “give” Europe more authority.

European nations and the European Union will realize greater influence in Washington, and internationally, based on their willingness and ability to contribute to solutions of international security problems.

And, as Secretary of Defense Bob Gates has recently suggested, we need, and should value, non-military contributions to these security challenges as much as we need military assistance.

Given the current disparities between US and European military capabilities, some have suggested dividing responsibilities in the alliance.

In my opinion, any formal division of responsibilities that would reserve hard power tasks for the United States, and non-military “soft power” jobs for Europeans, would be a disaster for US–European relations.

It does make sense for individual nations, or groups of nations, to take on specific tasks within the overall framework of transatlantic cooperation.

In fact, the special capabilities that European allies have for managing stabilization and reconstruction activities could be usefully combined with the potent US ability for war-fighting to develop a full spectrum of pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict coalition activities.

This would not be easy, but French President Sarkozy’s decision to take a more positive attitude toward transatlantic cooperation makes this goal more attainable.

Such closer cooperation would substantially strengthen the ability of the United States and Europe to deal with future security challenges.

On the other hand, a formal transatlantic division of responsibilities would create even bigger gaps between the United States and Europe concerning how best to respond to international threats and risks.

Such a dividing approach would only encourage US tendencies toward the unilateral use of military force, as well as European tendencies to believe that all problems can be solved without military force backing up diplomacy.

In a world of divided Euro-Atlantic responsibilities, the response to every future security challenge would have to overcome growing differences in perceptions of the problem.

The bottom line is that there should be a practical division of tasks among the transatlantic partners, but not a formal division of responsibilities across the Atlantic.

Now, I want to thank you for being an attentive and patient audience.

I would enjoy hearing your questions and comments.

I don't learn anything from listening to myself.

But I always learn from my audiences.

I understand, however, that we won't have time for a question and answer period, and so I'll ask, and attempt to answer, at least one question that you might have asked.

The question is: "So, Stan, you've said a lot about how we got where we are, now tell us where you think we are going."

Well, not long ago I participated in a conference in Norway sponsored by the Nobel Institute – the people who give out the Nobel Peace Prize.

My assignment was to draft a concluding US perspective for the book that would be produced by the conference papers.

I carefully avoided predicting the future, taking the advice of Yogi Berra and many other wise individuals who have said, in one way or another, that "making predictions is difficult, particularly when they are about the future."

However, the Institute's director, who is also an expert on transatlantic relations, wasn't going to let me get away with that.

He asked that I produce my best guesses about the directions the transatlantic relationship would take for the next period of history.

What I wrote for the conference book will serve as my answer to the question I just asked myself, and as a conclusion for my remarks this evening.

First, I said that, for the foreseeable future, the United States would likely remain the most important global power.

However, other countries and groupings of countries will nonetheless gain in relative power and influence, including the European Union.

The European Union, for its part, will not be transformed into a United States of Europe, but it also will not fall apart at the seams.

It will continue to evolve toward a "United Europe of States," but it will be challenged by the question of how to include additional states, such as Turkey, in the integration process, without bringing that process to a grinding halt.

Here in the United States, we'll continue to struggle with temptations to act on our own, and some Europeans will be tempted to counter such American instincts with their own unilateral behavior.

However, learning from the lessons of recent years, both will try to keep their differences under control.

Neither the United States nor the European nations will be able to identify more effective, compatible, or reliable partners among other global players.

In fact, additional global economic, political and strategic players, including Russian and China, will increase pressure on the United States and Europe to develop compatible strategic perspectives.

The requirement for enhanced US-European cooperation will highlight the deficiencies of existing transatlantic institutions.

NATO will remain the institution that manages US-European military cooperation, and it will remain a symbol of US-European shared strategic interests.

However, policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic will search for ways to broaden and intensify cooperation.

The transatlantic relationship will occupy a special and critically important place in the foreign and security policies of the United States and the European democracies.

The United States will continue to need its European friends and allies to help deal with a wide range of global issues, and we will benefit from the material support that they can supply as well as the political legitimacy that the United States needs.

The European states, individually and collectively, will find their interests best served by continued cooperation with the United States.

This is so, in part, because they'll continue to share important core values and interests with the United States.

In addition, cooperation with the United States will enhance Europe's international influence and provide channels through which Europeans can exert influence on a country whose actions so directly affect their interests.

At the end of the day, the quality of the transatlantic relationship will depend on the choices made by leaders on both sides of the Atlantic.

Recent years have demonstrated how bad choices can drive the relationship into crisis.

Attitudes are decisions. Attitudes are choices.

Lessons should be learned from this period and applied constructively in the coming period of history.

This is the task ahead for the nations of the Euro-Atlantic community.

Whether you voted for John McCain or Barack Obama, now is the time for all of us to pull together to deal with the immense challenges we face.

As for allies, they may be difficult to live with, but the interests of the United States suggest that we can't live without them.

Thank you so much for your attention.

I look forward to enjoying the rest of the evening with you.