

1. Europe and the USA in Historical Perspective, 1776–2009

Upheavals of World history force us into a state of intellectual concentration; force us into the difficult attempt to determine the meaning of a revolutionary present against an uncertain future. Everyone knows that the relationship between the superpower USA and a widening and coalescing Europe is subject to great tensions. Metaphorically speaking, the width of the Atlantic has widened since September 11, 2001. This is due, on the one hand, to the disastrous U.S. foreign policy during President George W. Bush's term in office and the almost free fall of U.S. prestige in the world. On the other hand, it results from Europe's notorious inability to conceive and sustain a unified, forceful, and goal-oriented policy in any part of the world. Although the rhetoric on both sides of the Atlantic has become friendlier since the visible failure of George W. Bush's global policy, it remains the case that, in substance, the arrogance of American power is matched by the arrogance of European impotence.

At present (2009), we are faced with the question of whether these differences are merely the result of communication breakdowns across the Atlantic, (that is, whether these could be remedied by improving communication) or whether these problems have their roots in structural changes in the U.S.-European relationship.

There are, as always when anticipating the future, optimists and pessimists. The pessimists consider these structural differences to be so serious that they predict the actual end of the transatlantic alliance. In that case, America and Europe, which together account for 12% of the world's population, would no longer have a common strategy capable of creating the stability and order needed for a free and free-market world and, by extension, to finance the ever-growing juggernaut that is the "welfare state." Or, to put it another way: As has been the case since the beginning of the 20th century, the fate of Europe continues to hang on transatlantic relations.

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2 Germany and the USA 1871–2021

Being an academic historian, I deal with long-term perspectives by profession, as it were. Thus, I will try to provide a positioning of the current relationship of the U.S. to Europe on a historical basis. This approach stems from my firm conviction that, confronted by the tsunami of information that floods us every day, it is only within the framework of long-term analyses that we can distinguish the important from the unimportant, and the lasting changes from the politics of the day.

Not to worry, I will not start with Adam and Eve, but only in the 18th century. However, I will combine chronology and systematics as I offer four leitmotifs:

- I. The Europeanization of the USA (1776–1914)
- II. The Americanization of Europe (1917–2001)
- III. The Hubris of Power and Transatlantic Alienation (2002–2008)
- IV. Forecast: A Crisis of Disappointed Expectations

I. The Europeanization of the USA (1776–1914)

The founding of the United States in 1776, its westward expansion and rise to world power were, according to my first hypothesis, to a large extent the result of a Europeanization of the USA. Thus, we can perhaps formulate the greatest paradox of the British colonies and the United States from the 17th to the 19th centuries. On the one hand, the U.S. was a creation of Europe, its people, its capital, its ideas and institutions, and especially its politics. On the other hand, the Americans succeeded in becoming independent, in developing their own identity as consciously distinct from Europe, and in driving the old colonial powers of France, England and Spain from the North American continent. The American identity was also born out of anti-Europeanism. Only in this way did Europeans become Americans.

1) A Creation of People from Europe

According to estimates, Anglo-American North America in 1770 was home to 1,660,000 whites of European origin and 450,000 blacks from Africa who had been transported to the New World by European traders and served as society's slaves—assuming, of course, that they survived the passage. From 1820—the year the official census began—to 1910, over 27 million people had immigrated to what was to become

the United States, including over 25 million from Europe. Today, the U.S. has over 300 million inhabitants, but due to the surge in illegal immigration in recent years, no one can determine the exact number.

2) A Creation of European Capital

The investment of European capital on a large scale began in the 1860s, when the opening of the continent by rail required sums of money that could not be raised within the USA itself. In addition, European capital contributed significantly to the formation and growth of American corporations in the 19th century.

The “cattle kingdoms” out in the high plains of the West and the Rocky Mountain states were also built primarily on European and East Coast capital. The independent cowboy who appears from somewhere, gets caught up in a burst of heroic violence, and rides off lonely into the sunset is a profitable myth. In reality, the cowboys hung on the drip of European and East Coast capital, and were usually tightly, almost militarily organized into groups. This was the only way they could drive the huge herds of cattle over great distances to the railroad loading yards that transported the cattle to the slaughterhouses of Chicago and other cities. From there, the meat was also exported to Europe. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, the armies of both sides lived on Wyoming meat. Before 1914, Great Britain was the largest investor of capital, followed by Germany, the Netherlands, and France.

3) A Creation of European Ideas

The political culture of North Americans, their self-image, their institutions, especially their law and constitutions, the technical-industrial revolution, and the country’s capitalism have also been profoundly shaped by Europe, and above all by Great Britain. This statement holds up irrespective of the Homeric debate regarding how this European heritage was melted down by the American environment, conflicts with indigenous tribes, and its own historical experience to create a “new man,” a “new society,” a “new world.” This famous frontier thesis of the historian Frederick Jackson Turner was, in socio-psychological and identity-political terms, a second declaration of independence from Europe.

Although it would be wrong to think of the USA in the 18th and 19th centuries as an appendage or a province of Europe, from an outside

perspective, for example from an Asian, Middle Eastern, or African point of view, it immediately becomes clear to what extent the USA is part of the North American-European “West.” Ancient role models and the Christian religion, the Protestant work ethic, the Enlightenment and rationalization, the separation of church and state, industrialization and capitalism, the political ideas that define America, such as liberalism and democracy, individualism, constitutionalism and federalism, fundamental rights, and the separation of powers—all this is undoubtedly part of a common Western and Atlantic tradition.

The civil-religious mission of freedom, whose latest incarnation we meet in President George W. Bush, has also been a self-evident part of American identity since the American Revolution, and it is without doubt of European origin. Being a fusion of Christianity and the Enlightenment, of Christianity and a democratic mission, this idea of freedom has produced America’s particular civil religion: a distinctive blend of Christian republicanism and democratic faith. The United States, it has been said, is a nation with the soul of a church. George W. Bush’s spiritual roots are in “Old Europe,” though the particular blend is very American.

4) A Creation of European Politics

The expansion of the nation shaped by Europe did not develop in a vacuum of international power politics, not in a “splendid isolation,” but in a world system dominated by Europe. The U.S.’s path to becoming a great power therefore ran against the interests and against the policies of the three old European colonial powers in the Western Hemisphere. This meant struggling against France, Spain and above all against Great Britain which, since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, was undoubtedly the world’s number one power because it controlled the world’s oceans and at the same time was able to maintain the balance of power in Europe.

In these conflicts with the Europeans, the Americans had a formative experience that has shaped their policy toward the individual European nation states to this day. The experience was a realization that they were always best able to assert their own interests when the Europeans were at odds with one another. The deliberate or fortuitous exploitation of the rivalries among the major European powers for the benefit of the U.S. is therefore a central aspect of its rise to power—even before 1917. As a historian put it, “European distresses spelt American successes.” In the

18th and first half of the 19th centuries, the United States was on the margins of the Eurocentric world system. European nations generally considered wars and conflicts among themselves more important than containing the newly rising power in the Western Hemisphere. If there were historical justice in the world, then the public squares of the United States should be littered with monuments to Louis XVI and Napoleon I. Without the Treaty of Alliance of 1778, the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and the Franco-English global antagonism in the age of Napoleon, the colonists would not have been able to hold their own in the two wars of independence against Great Britain from 1776–1783 and from 1812–1814.

It was not until after the Civil War, and then for the next hundred years (until the invention of intercontinental ballistic missiles) that the U.S. achieved a security situation that even evoked the admiration and envy of Bismarck. They were bordered to the north and to the south by a weak Canada and a weak Mexico, fish in the east and fish in the west.

Bismarck, who ever since 1871 was dominated by the nightmare of coalitions of other powers directed against the new German Empire (*le cauchemar des coalitions*), could therefore say: “Drunks, children, and Americans have a guardian angel.”

What was the result for world-history of this Europeanization of the USA until 1914? In summary, the special weight of the U.S. in world politics and the world economy before the outbreak of World War I can be explained in this way: Beyond the North American continent, which the nation dominated anyway, the U.S. possessed an empire in the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific, plus the Philippines which, in the event of conflict, could not be held. Throughout Latin America, the United States competed mainly with Great Britain, the German Empire, and France for economic influence. In contrast, the Americans maintained military and political distance from the Eurasian double continent before 1914.

The guiding principle here were the Monroe Doctrine of 1823—a mutual, U.S.-European hands-off declaration—and the conviction of the founding fathers that they would trade with the whole world, but under no circumstances enter into entangling alliances that would in any way bind the hands of the U.S. In Asia, the U.S. was committed to open-door principles but unwilling to intervene militarily. In order to be able to do so, according to Nobel Peace Prize winner Theodore Roosevelt, the country needed a fleet as large as England’s and an army as large as Germany’s. The country had neither at the time.

On the other hand, even before World War I, the USA was the world’s leading economic power. In 1913, the country had a 35.8% share

of global industrial production. However, the U.S. had not yet challenged Britain's leading role as the center of world trade; that was to follow later as a result of the First World War.

II. The Americanization of Europe (1917–2001)

First of all, a few remarks on the term “Americanization.” Not only books, but also terms have their fates. The latter enter the public consciousness at a certain time, their intended meaning changes, their use can be regionally limited or, as in the case of the term “Americanization,” globalized. For the rise of the United States as the world's only remaining superpower in the 20th century was accompanied by an equally global perception by the nations, regions, societies, and political systems of the world affected by American example and influence, by American hegemony and domination; namely, in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Australia, and Africa. The “Americanization” of Europe is thus part of the Americanization of the world.

It is therefore not coincidental, but rather in line with the logic of the situation, that the British journalist William T. Stead is credited with the popularization of the term “Americanization.” His book, published in 1901 carried the title: “The Americanization of the World.” In prophetic anticipation of the future, he added the subtitle: “The Trend of the Twentieth Century.” The book was immediately translated into German and French.

Everyone knows that local, regional, and national identities are sharpened by images of friends and enemies. Bavarians do not need a long explanation of this fact. That is why the term “Americanization” and the issues it refers to are at the center of identity debates in all regions of the world. All of Latin America, for example, understands itself in relation to the confrontation with the colossus from the North; large swaths of the Islam world, not only those aligned with Islamic fundamentalism, cannot define themselves without the externalization of evil, without the projection of evil onto the symbol of Western modernity, namely the USA. In many Asian countries, the U.S. is both a role model and a bogeyman. Anyone who follows contemporary attitudes in Europe as documented in public opinion polls and the op-ed pages, especially with regard to the Bush administration, could come to the conclusion that Europe cannot achieve a military, political, and cultural identity without some form of limited discord with the U.S.

Europe must therefore go through the reverse process, as the United States did in the 18th and 19th centuries, when it could not understand itself without a negative image of “Europe.”

Thus, because the term “Americanization” is inextricably woven into the identity debates of regions and peoples affected by the process of Americanization throughout the world, it has come to be a political battle cry for most people. As a result, scholars also struggle to separate the descriptive and explanatory elements of this term from its normative/prescriptive components. Or, to put it another way, in actual history, the term “Americanization” very often carries a pro- or anti-American connotation.

I myself would like to use this term only for its descriptive and explanatory potential, just as I have previously used the term “the Europeanization of America.” Thus, the Americanization of Europe is simply the political, economic, social, and cultural influence that the USA exerted on Europe in the 20th century. Despite all the mutual influences and interdependencies, despite all the circular processes that have always existed in U.S.-European relations, this shift in emphasis is meant to suggest that from the 17th to the 19th century the dominant influence went from the Old to the New World, and in the 20th and 21st centuries from the New to the Old World.

Since one could analyze the entire global history of the 20th century under the leitmotif of Americanization, it goes without saying that I can only make a few remarks on this subject. I will begin with that dimension of the Americanization of Europe that is most strongly associated with this term in the general consciousness today and which has brought generations of anti-American critics onto the scene: namely, the influence of American ideals, cultural goods, and forms of production in general, and of the American entertainment industry and popular culture in particular. It is no coincidence that French intellectuals spoke of a “cultural Chernobyl” on the occasion of the opening of Disneyland Paris. This did not, however, prevent the common people of France, after an initial hesitation, from visiting this amusement park with enthusiasm. In a similar vein, Film producer Wim Wenders proclaimed in a 1976 film: “The Yanks have colonized our unconscious.”

In no other area of the European discourse on America are so many anti-American prejudices running riot, is there so much anti-Americanism from both the left and the right, are so many products of the West defended by European intellectuals and parts of the European bourgeoisie. For the past 200 years there has never been such a fervent

distinction between American civilization and European culture as in the passionate debate about the cultural influence of the United States on Europe. Yet, despite the boisterous criticism, there seems to be no antidote against the “American-style global, mass cultural ecumenism,” against the, as one historian put it, “final banal idiocy of the reversed baseball cap.” The messages conveyed by U.S. popular culture—freedom, independence, expansiveness, consumerism, and sexuality—seem to simultaneously represent and justify larger than life global aspirations.

Also in the field of so-called high culture, the export of American ideas to Europe should not be underestimated. This applies not only to literature and the arts but to science and technology as well. In the global competition among the world’s best universities for the best researchers and students, in the “global brains business,” the United States is far ahead. According to a report in the *Economist*, the world’s top twenty universities include seventeen American, two British and one Japanese university. To be sure, at Heidelberg and Munich progress in catching up is being made.

The First World War was the original sin of Europe and the progenitor of many things. As I will discuss next, it was also the beginning of the economic Americanization of Europe. As a result of World War I, the United States became the strongest economic power on earth, with global trade interests and a global foreign and economic policy. In the twenties, it increased its lead as a producer, becoming the largest exporter and the largest consumer of raw materials. Its share of world production of industrial goods grew to an average of 45% in the years from 1925 to 1929, and U.S. national income, measured in dollars, was as high as that of the next 23 nations combined. New York became the second financial center of the world, next to London, and the world economic system became bicentric, if not America-centric. Perhaps the most consequential factor for world trade and for the U.S.-European relationship was the abrupt change of the U.S. from a debtor nation to a creditor nation.

After the Great Depression, the New Deal and World War II, the Americans, armed with the lessons of history, began to build a liberal world economic system upon which the prosperity of nations and the prosperity of Europe depend to this day. From the U.S. point of view, only a world economic system that was based on liberal principles and that was anchored in institutions could prevent a repetition of Europe’s original evil, namely a relapse into autarky, protectionism, and bilateral barter. Only the complete elimination of the forms and causes of

such policies could make Europe, as a whole, once again a productive factor in a new world economic order. Only the new superpower of the West, which was the only great power that had also become richer during World War II, had the capacity to establish a new world economic system. Consequently, the Americans dominated the Bretton Woods Conference of July 1944, where 1,500 delegates from 44 countries established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the cornerstones of a liberal world economic order. The commitment to multilateralism and open markets became the price that Europeans had to pay for Marshall Plan aid.

Since then, a history of the post-1945 world economy cannot be written without the influence of the United States on Europe, without the global economic interdependence in the Atlantic region, and without the phenomenal increase in trade between the developed industrial nations on both sides of our shared ocean. An important factor in this was the supply of raw materials to Europe, especially oil, that was ensured by American influence in other regions of the world.

This economic Americanization of Europe within the framework of a liberal world economy after World War II led to the greatest growth and prosperity in the entire history of Western Europe. And today, in regard to economic strength, Europe with its 27 member states can compete with the U.S. roughly as an equal. The gross national product on both sides of the Atlantic is an estimated 11 trillion, while over 300 million Americans are slightly less than the 484 million “Europeans” in the new EU. The U.S. and the EU together account for about 40% of world trade. The stock of European direct investment in the U.S. is 900 billion euros, and that of the U.S. in Europe is 700 billion euros, for a total of 1.6 trillion euros (in 2009). Moreover, there is a trend toward the euro becoming a second reserve currency.

It is also due to this level playing field that the strategic, political, and cultural differences between the U.S. and parts of Europe have hardly penetrated the economic sphere since January 2002 and that the regulatory and trade policy conflicts have remained limited. Both sides would have too much to lose in an “economic war” with each other.

This brings me to the political Americanization of Europe in the 20th century, which always rested on two pillars: the American claim to power and the American idea of mission.¹ The great fault line in

1 Cf. Detlef Junker: *Power and Mission. Was Amerika antreibt*, Freiburg: Herder² 2003.

this case also seems to me to be the First World War, when the two great revolutionaries of the 20th century, the communist Lenin and the American president Woodrow Wilson, proclaimed antagonistic models for the *entire* world, i.e., universalist doctrines. Wilson saw himself as an instrument of God. He wanted to make the world safe for democracy, to free Europe from the old game of “balance of power,” and to base world peace on a new “covenant” known as the League of Nations. Since then, Europe has had to deal both, with America’s political power and America’s missionary idea of freedom. Without U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, the victors of World War I would not have adopted the Articles of the League of Nations—the Senate’s refusal to ratify the treaty literally cost Wilson his life. Without U.S. political influence, the victors of World War II would not have set in motion the creation of the United Nations.

Dealing with this missionary idea from the New World was not even easy for the European allies of the USA at the Versailles Conference in 1919, as they would have preferred to foist a purely imposed peace on the defeated nations. Wilson’s toughest opponent, the French Prime Minister Clemenceau, mocked the mission-conscious representative of the New World: “God gave us the ten commandments and we broke them. Wilson gives us the 14 points. We shall see.”

There is much to be said for the American interpretation of the 20th century: from their point of view they saved Europe’s freedom, liberated the Old World from the evils of Wilhelminism, fascism, National Socialism, and communism in World War I, World War II, and the Cold War. They were directly or indirectly involved in the downfall of European colonial empires or expansive empires within Europe. The collapse of the Soviet empire is seen by many strategists as the endpoint of a development in world history that began with the breakup of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, continued with the defeat of the Third Reich and the Italian colonial empire, and ended with the painful dissolution of the colonial empires of Great Britain and France. Within this historical development, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal also parted with the remnants of their empires.

One may therefore venture this thesis: It was only because the classical European countries had been freed from totalitarian systems and trimmed back to their core national boundaries—with much help from the U.S.—that they were able to expand the European Union into Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe; to simultaneously deepen and enlarge the European Union after 1990/91. The eternal struggle of

European nations for influence, status, and prestige is now playing out by peaceful means within the European Union. When we speak of the Americanization of Europe, we should never forget one fundamental fact: The USA was the midwife of Europe.

As for the Germans, it is worth remembering that the United States fought two world wars against Europe's central power, but, unlike Germany's European neighbors, the U.S. always supported (both legally and rhetorically) Germany's right to peaceful unity: at Versailles in 1919, at Potsdam in 1945, and in the Two-plus-Four Treaty of 1990. Moreover, after 1945, the demilitarization and democratization of Germany—the struggle for Faust's soul—were among the central goals of American foreign policy. When the moment of truth came in 1989/90, it was not the Western Europeans but the United States, led by George Bush the Elder, who supported a Germany reunited in freedom and aligned to the West.

III. The Hubris of Power and Transatlantic Alienation (2002–2008)

Since 1945 in Western Europe and 1989/90 in Central and Eastern Europe as well, there has always been and still is a passionate debate about all aspects of this Americanization of Europe. Yet, according to surveys, the USA was seen by the majority of people as an ally and guarantor of freedom during the Cold War. This was due in large part to the fact that throughout this period the U.S. was predominantly experienced as a benevolent hegemon. Within the framework of its leadership role, it tried to take into account the interests of its dependent allies, to level out differences in interests by promoting dialogs that led to pragmatic compromises, and to gain voluntary allegiance in Europe on this basis. It is not without reason that U.S. foreign policy toward Western Europe during the Cold War has been described as “empire by invitation” or “empire by integration.” This pragmatic basis of European-American relations was destroyed during the tenure of George W. Bush, because after September 11, he tried to impose the blueprint of world predominance, rather than world domination itself. Seven years later (as of 2008), that attempt has largely failed. Today, the strategic debate in the U.S. also revolves around the question of whether the hubris of power from the early years of Bush's term in office has led to the U.S. having gambled away its position as the dominant superpower.

Let us recall with all due brevity this blueprint for world predominance that seems, once again, to have become a part of history. The mission-minded president, a born-again Christian who drew on the Christian Right and his country's fourth revival movement, believed deeply in his historic mission to bring freedom to the world in general, and the Middle East in particular. He said this countless times himself and thus it seems clear that George W. Bush was and is an ideologue and a man of conviction.

Bush was convinced that only the USA could really lead the world since, from his perspective, it had finally become unipolar and America-centric in both intellectual and military-strategic terms. The Pentagon divided the world into five command areas. The U.S. has 860 bases of various sizes around the globe, and its military strength grows daily. With its destructive power, the U.S. forces can pulverize any point on earth in 15 minutes. Since there is no world army under the command of the UN, and NATO has become almost irrelevant, according to Bush, only the US could stabilize the world in a pro-American and pro-Western sense in the event of a conflict. Put another way, U.S. forces are de facto the world's army. The U.S. would thus have to seek out allies as needed, depending on the definition of its own interests. NATO's offer of cooperation after September 11 was coolly rejected.

These allies were expected—and this is where the problems soon began—almost as a matter of course to share the American's perceptions of danger and the enemy; only then were they considered friends. This sole remaining hyperpower strictly refused to limit its national sovereignty through international treaties. Gulliver could not be bound by the shackles of the many dwarfs. The UN was and is a single nuisance for the conservative Republicans and they did much to discredit the world organization and its Secretary General, Kofi Annan. The global vision offered to the world by Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt had become a nuisance for George W. Bush—at the latest when Secretary of State Powell had to present a series of, as we now know, false statements before the UN General Assembly to justify the Iraq war.

What was the goal of this global military power? It was exactly what the so-called neoconservatives had envisioned in their publications and memoranda in the 1990s: the establishment of an unrivaled Pax Americana for the 21st century. This group wanted to establish, not American world domination but, to be more precise, a world primacy that would allow the U.S. to determine the structures of the world in

a pro-American sense for an indefinite future. This also applied to the structures of Europe.

In essence, this attempt at world predominance, a grandiose Pax Americana, hoped that the end of the Cold War would bring about what neither the First nor the Second World War had succeeded in doing: spreading the American model of democracy and free-market capitalism as far as possible throughout the world, and thus globalizing liberty and property. This would mean, to quote Francis Fukuyama, that “the end of history had come.” Fukuyama did not mean, of course, that history would suddenly stand still, but he did mean that there could be no alternative to the American model in the future, since all alternative visions had run their course.

Thus, under President George W. Bush, the American missionary idea of freedom had embedded within it the blueprint of world supremacy based on tough power politics—a future in which, if necessary, the U.S. would, without regard to international law, act alone as well as “preventively and preemptively.”

In the context and in the wake of European criticism of this American unilateralism, there has been increasing attention given to the structural differences between the U.S. and Europe. These interpret the communication breakdowns across the Atlantic less as a consequence of world politics than as a consequence of different social and political systems and values. Therefore, with ideal-typical brevity, I would like to analyze three particular differences between the Old and the New World at present:

1. The Market Gap
2. The War Gap
3. The God Gap

The Market Gap: Here I refer in particular to research findings by my Heidelberg political science colleague Manfred G. Schmidt, who has drawn attention—despite all their similarities—to profound differences between the political systems. According to Schmidt, there is a strategic difference, particularly with regard to a fundamental question that deeply concerns all Western states on both sides of the Atlantic: What should be done by the state and what should be done by the market? This division of labor between the market and the state can be seen particularly well in the federal spending ratio, i.e., the share of all public spending in relation to gross domestic product. Although

this ratio has risen considerably in all Western countries during the course of industrialization and democratization since the end of the 19th century, a considerable difference between the old and new worlds remains to this day. Still deeply rooted in American culture is the conviction “that government is best which governs least.” To this day, there are Americans who fear higher taxes more than the Devil himself. In 2005, the federal spending ratio was 36.4% in the U.S., 46.7% in Germany, and 56.6% in Sweden. According to Manfred Schmidt, the big differences were not in the social-investment area, but in social policy. The social benefit ratio in the U.S. is only 50–60% of the social benefit ratios of the leading European welfare states. In addition, the U.S. spends much more money on military and armaments.

This is due, on the one hand, to the interaction of the political actors and the political institutions of the USA. On the other hand, it is due to the original American vision that everyone is solely responsible for his or her own happiness, i.e., to competitive individualism, which demands courage from each individual and a willingness to take risks. A free man, today also a free woman, on his own land with a gun in the closet: that is the age-old American dream that still has cultural power, especially in the conservative camp. That is why almost all Americans regard all the varieties of European socialism, especially communism, as nothing but theories for pauperization and their proponents as having the souls of slaves. Germany’s two social democratic parties, the CDU and the SPD, also the social democratic CSU, are far to the left of the American dream and the American “mainstream.”

The War Gap: A colleague of mine at Stanford University, the historian of Europe, James J. Sheehan, recently wrote a widely acclaimed book entitled, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe*. Sheehan revisited a leitmotif with which another American, Robert Kagan, made headlines a few years ago: that warlike America was from Mars, while peaceable Europe was from Venus. The leitmotif of both books is the demilitarization of European, and especially German, society. Sheehan reminds us that 27,000 French soldiers died in one day on August 22, 1914; 20,000 British soldiers on July 1, 1916; and hundreds of thousands of French and German soldiers died within a few weeks in the fighting at Verdun. Today, the Europeans have great difficulty in raising a few thousand soldiers for a mission in Afghanistan. There are American generals who secretly wish that Germany could provide a division in Afghanistan with the fighting

strength and readiness to die like that of the Wehrmacht in the Third Reich. Then the specter of the Taliban would quickly fade. Thus, with regard to a central question that has accompanied us throughout our known history, namely the legitimacy and necessity of wars, the answer lies not in communication breakdowns across the Atlantic, but in a structural difference between the old and new worlds.

The God Gap: This brings me to my final gap, the God gap across the Atlantic. In the seven years of George W. Bush's tenure, published opinion in Europe has become increasingly concerned with religion in the U.S., especially with the Christian right, the Christian Zionists, the so-called fundamentalists, and the evangelical movements that are engaged in extensive missionary activity, especially in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, but also already in Europe. This should remind us that the U.S. has been an extraordinarily religious country from the very beginning, as two European imports have had an extraordinary influence on the country: namely, Christianity and the Enlightenment. Its path to modernity has not led to a strong secularization of society, as it has in many European countries. According to recent surveys, 90 % of Americans believe in a God. More than 70%, or over 200 million, pray at least once a week. Almost half, i.e., 150 million, go to a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple at least once a month. God, or more empirically, Americans' conceptions of God, have continued to shape their society in two capacities since the founding of the Union:

- On the one hand, God as an integral part of the “civil religion” that unites almost all Americans. This is a national religion from which they draw a considerable part of their identity and dynamism, but especially their missionary idea of freedom. This civil religion is at the center of the American trinity of God, country, and freedom.
- On the other hand, God, or, to be more empirically precise, the various conceptions of God, as the center of more than a thousand religious denominations. Since 1791, these communities have been able to develop under the protection of the First Amendment of the Constitution, under the legal protection of the separation of church and state, and under the freedom to exercise one's religion.

This separation of church and state also means that religious communities and the free exercise of religion are market phenomena to a far greater extent in the USA than in Europe. In matters of religion, there is not only a God gap across the Atlantic, but also a market gap across the Atlantic. In the churches, but also in the media, religious communities and charismatic preachers compete for followers and solvent customers. Thus, in addition to “pay-tv,” there is “pray-tv.” Overall, America is so religiously influenced that it is possible to imagine a woman or a person of color as a presidential candidate, but certainly not an atheist. In this respect, there are probably great similarities with Bavaria.

This brings me to the end, to my last point, to an attempt at a prognosis. This last argument is already shorter, due to the fact that historians are basically backward-looking prophets; that is to say, only after the fact are they wiser. None the less, they should make powerful, public use of this.

IV. Forecast: A Crisis of Disappointed Expectations

Unfortunately, as far as the immediate future after this year’s presidential election is concerned, I am not a bearer of good news. Therefore, I would like to remind you of the old diplomatic tradition which holds that bearers of bad news should neither be beheaded nor hanged. Thus, I hope to come away alive after delivering my forecast.

Put simply, I foresee a crisis of disappointed expectations in U.S.-European relations. Europeans hope that a new U.S. administration, preferably under a Democrat, will once again be a benevolent hegemon that takes a multilateral approach; relies more on diplomacy, compromise, and the problem-solving capacity of international organizations; consults Europeans before making decisions; and does *not* continually present Europeans with a *fait accompli*, while expecting them to follow unquestioningly.

For its part, even under a democratic administration, the U.S. will expect Europe to negotiate less and act more; to take more responsibility in the world; to invest much more money in the military; to admit Turkey to the EU; and, above all, to take higher risks when trying to solve problems. Moreover, from the U.S. perspective, the Europeans are currently not a power that can decisively shape world politics, i.e., they are not a major global player. And indeed, Europe is not currently capable of formulating a common foreign and security policy,

let alone sustaining it. But precisely that capability would be the first prerequisite for even being heard in Washington—even in a situation in which the Americans are aware that they need allies. Otherwise, Henry Kissinger’s old bon mot will continue to apply: “Who do I call if I want to speak to Europe?”

The Americans, at least in internal deliberations, will continue to accuse the Europeans of having become freeloaders in world history, doing too little for the strategic security of the Western world, and for securing open sea lanes and raw materials, especially oil. Therefore, as in the 1970s, there could be another debate about a fair distribution of burdens to maintain a world that is as stable, as free, and as based on free-market principles and free trade as possible. Above all, the Americans will expect the Europeans to send well-trained and well-equipped soldiers that are actually prepared to fight and die in war zones around the world. Precisely this issue is currently being harshly debated in the context of the NATO mission in Afghanistan. In particular, the Americans will take the Germans at their word. If your national interests, they will say, need to be defended in the Hindu Kush rather than in Hindelang, the German population, the German parliament—we have a parliamentary army, after all—and the German political class will have to bid farewell to their illusions. This makes the war gap I have described a dangerous minefield for NATO and the transatlantic alliance to navigate.

One of the standard European arguments, namely, the claim that the widening and deepening European community can serve as a model of peace for the whole world, does not count for much in Washington given the realities of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the increasingly fierce struggle for raw materials. Left to their own devices, the Europeans would not even be able to deal with the problems in the Balkans, let alone a new Russian imperialism.

So what is the significance of my forecast? It means that the U.S.-European relationship will be stuck in a deeply ambivalent situation for the foreseeable future. Americans and Europeans dislike each other in many ways, but for strategic reasons they cannot let go of each other either. Moreover, they share Western values because, as I explained in the first section, America’s values are an import from Europe. Moreover, Europe cannot guarantee the foundations of its security and welfare on its own.

In closing, I will take the liberty to present some considerations that are not normally permissible for an academic historian, because

in them the probable and the desirable are mixed. For example, I would claim that the unilaterally designed Pax Americana is about to fail due to issues related to foreign and domestic policy, for the Bush administration has overreached itself. In principle, this could present the opportunity for improved U.S.-European cooperation. But that would require two conditions: that the U.S. treat the Europeans as equals, at least rhetorically, and not fear a strong Europe; and that Europe would actually develop and followed through on the broad outlines of a common foreign and security policy. In other words, the Americans must abandon the arrogance of power, and the Europeans the arrogance of impotence. For if the two democratic regions of prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic were to divide further, I believe that hardly any of the world's problems would be solvable. This is precisely why, from my perspective, the institutions of society on both sides of the Atlantic must maintain a realistic and informed dialogue. This is the only way to prevent anti-Europeanism from taking root in the souls of Americans, and anti-Americanism from taking root in the souls of Europeans. Were that to be successful, it could achieve what many transatlanticists dream of: cooperation that truly rests on two pillars, one European and one American.