

The Transatlantic Accordion and the Greek Key

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RÉSUMÉ

La gestion par les Etats-Unis de la crise créée après les événements du 11 Septembre, aussi bien que la décision d'aller en guerre en Iraq a créé une rupture avec des proportions vraisemblablement jamais vues précédemment à l'intérieur de l'alliance transatlantique. Les premiers cinq mois de 2003 ont été marqués par un échange d'une rhétorique amère, avec la Grèce, qui assumait alors la présidence de l'UE, essayant de jouer le rôle de médiateur entre les Etats-Unis, la vieille et la nouvelle Europe. Néanmoins, les fondations de cette alliance transatlantique sont beaucoup plus solides que nous le pensons souvent. Politiquement et économiquement, les Etats-Unis et l'Europe sont interdépendants à un tel degré, qu'un partenaire quelques fois difficile est plus supportable qu'une rupture ouverte. Dans ce processus le rôle de la Grèce aurait dû être clairement défini, encore qu'il devrait respecter les réalités géopolitiques aussi bien dans la Méditerranée qu'au-delà.

ABSTRACT

America's handling of the post-September 11th crisis as well as the decision to go to war on Iraq created a rift of seemingly unprecedented proportions within the transatlantic alliance. The first five months of 2003 were marked by an exchange of bitter rhetoric, with Greece, as holder of the EU presidency, trying to mediate between America, Old Europe and New Europe. Nevertheless, the foundations of this transatlantic partnership are much more solid than we often think. Politically and economically, America and Europe are interdependent to such a degree that a sometimes difficult partnership is much more affordable than an open rift. In this whole process, the role of Greece ought to be clear-cut, yet respecting geopolitical realities both in the Mediterranean and beyond.

Introduction

Fall 2001. The world is shaken by the tragedy of New York and Washington, a tragedy due to a terrorist act of unprecedented magnitude. Hours after the three hijacked planes had crashed into the World Trade Center twin towers and the Pentagon, the French daily *Le Monde* published the front-page headline *On est tous Américains* (We are all Americans). In this spontaneous outburst of emotion, *Le Monde* undoubtedly expressed the

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horror, disdain and sympathy that most of us felt, at least in the West, as we watched in awe the collapse of the towers in front of our very eyes. The post-Cold War age of innocence had come to an abrupt end.

Nothing would ever be the same. International terrorism, previously dismissed by many as another American obsession, had made a dramatic invasion into our daily lives. As Al Qaeda appeared to represent a primitive challenge to Western liberalism, America and Europe understood that they had little choice but to stand united in front of the challenge, and struggle to defeat the enemy. Accordingly, Tony Blair called upon the world's democracies to unite to eradicate this evil; Jacques Chirac expressed the solidarity of his people to America for these "monstrous attacks" and Gerhard Schroeder spoke of an attack on the entire civilized world.¹ Suddenly, the transatlantic relationship, whose value had been questioned after the end of the Cold War, seemed to gain new meaning.

End of 2003. The Al Qaeda leadership is still at large while post-Taliban Afghanistan lies in chaos, with warlords controlling large parts of the land and the Karzai government enjoying little support beyond the walls of Kabul. The US and Britain are facing a major challenge in Iraq, where it was proved that it is much easier overthrowing a hated dictator like Saddam Hussein than restoring peace and order (not to mention building democracy in a land that never really had it). Always timely, Jean-Marie Colombani, editor of *Le Monde* and the man who had chosen the aforementioned headline, now wonders in his recently published book: "Are we all Americans?" (Tous Américains?)²

How did it happen that in less than two years, the transatlantic alliance reached such a nadir of cohesion, with politicians and intellectuals on both sides calling not only for an end to the relationship, but even to start preparing for a confrontation between America and Europe?³ What lies behind the 'freedom fries' instead of French fries in the cafeteria and the "Texas cowboys" caricatures? How is it that such approaches are not only found among their traditional proponents, the European left, but emanate even from conservative governments, as in France? Is the rift permanent or can the differences be overcome, as has been the case in the past as well? And, finally, why should smaller countries, like Greece, care about this dramatic deterioration of the transatlantic relationship?

The present article seeks to address these questions, hoping to contribute to a better understanding of the current state of American-European relations and Greece's role therein. The ensuing analysis draws evidence from the history of this relationship, the ideological underpinnings of each side's foreign policy, as well as the economic realities that surround the alliance. It is only through such a framework that we can truly appreciate the complexity of this alliance and what is truly at stake in its preservation.

Our thesis is that, while America and Europe have long had markedly different approaches on several matters of foreign and social policy (which only now have become so acute), these can and have been complementary in the past. Despite several crises, what binds the two sides of the Atlantic together, like the two sidepieces of an accordion, are the same fundamental principles upon which this partnership was formalized almost sixty years ago. If we follow the analogy, Greece, like an accordion key, can help bring about more harmony in the alliance, if it coordinates its strategy with those of the other players involved.

The Historical Roots of the Transatlantic Partnership.

The relationship of America with Europe has historically been characterized by an oxymoron. For centuries, the two partners have viewed each other with profound admiration and downright contempt at the same time! Americans have always stood in awe at the grandeur of the European civilization, whose artists and philosophers undeniably shaped their own culture in its infancy, and from which they still seek inspiration. America, despite its amazing progress over the past 200 years, has never forgotten that all those elements which constituted its identity at the time of the Declaration of Independence (liberalism, individualism, entrepreneurship) have their roots in the centuries-old intellectual debates of the Europeans.

Nevertheless, at the time that the thirteen colonies were fighting to secede from the British Empire, these same principles were absent from the Old World. Indeed, America was formed out of a reaction towards the repression, misery, and turbulence that Europe represented in that period. According to the American national myth, the new country was to be a beacon of liberty, "the land of the free," where all peoples would be welcome to practice their faith, live their lives and manage their affairs by themselves, and not through

an often incompetent, belligerent and intolerant monarch. The mission of the US foreign policy, therefore, naturally became the dissemination of these principles of the European enlightenment to the four corners of the world.⁴

Even today, according to Timothy Garton Ash, for Americans the United States represents the future, while Europe represents decadence. At best, the old continent is viewed with benign indifference; at worst with total rejection.⁵ This is why it is possible for Americans to flood Paris all year long, enjoying its museums and architectural wonders, and dismiss France at the same time as the shameful loser of WW II that so ungratefully antagonizes America, its liberator. Or, why the US can invest heavily in the new Brussels headquarters of NATO while downgrading the Belgians as chocolate-makers because of their opposition to the war in Iraq.⁶

For many Europeans, America has indeed been a beacon of liberty over the past two centuries. What better proof can one seek, than the fact that tens of millions of Europeans from all over the continent (Swedes, Latvians, Italians, Greeks, etc.) emigrated to the new country, hoping to pursue their own 'American dream'? During the Cold War, in particular, the Eastern European countries saw in the United States hope and a vision of how their lives could be. America's principles, as described in its constitution, were the European liberal's principles too, after all. Hope and vision is what America still represents for many peoples around the world, albeit probably not in Europe anymore.

On the other hand, there exists a wide spectrum of interpretations of European anti-Americanism, spanning all ideological viewpoints. During the Cold War, the European left saw in America a decadent, unjust society, and an imperialistic, belligerent government, which was rejected for the seemingly more benign social model of the Soviet Union. The Europeans put forth an alternative view of foreign policy, one that placed emphasis on peaceful resolution of conflicts, of exhaustive dialogue and of minimization of the perils of war, which they had so painfully experienced twice during the twentieth century.

According to some, though, the Europeans never came to terms with the fact that they had lost global hegemony to America, especially after the Cold War was over.⁷ When the Red Army's troops were stationed only hours away from the major Western European capitals, America's preponderance within the Western world was indispensable to the balance of power. Back then,

Europe had to acquiesce to an American presence — but many Europeans do not feel so any more. Now, when Europeans speak of US unilateralism in world affairs, it is seen more as an act of jealousy rather than stemming from ideological conviction, since they would act the same if they were in America's place.⁸

Despite these problems, America and Europe managed to forge an alliance of impressive durability and effectiveness during the past century. They fought side by side during most of the major conflicts of the century, and they have followed similar approaches on several issues in international forums, demonstrating a remarkable identity of interests. That is not to say, of course, that there have not been major disagreements, even at the height of the Cold War.⁹ Political realism, however, prevailed always, as the real enemy of the two partners was seen by both to be Moscow, not Washington or Brussels.

Indeed, the Cold War provided the stimulus for the already existing alliance between America and Europe to become deeper and institutionalized. First of all, and thanks to a brilliant political calculation, the United States funded the economic recovery of Western Europe, so that it could withstand pressure from the Soviet Union. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established, which formalized the commitment of the United States to defend Europe in case of Soviet aggression. Finally, America supported the creation of the European Economic Community, which it interpreted as a guarantee for Europe's economic prosperity in the long term.

This evolving interdependence however did not come about without criticism. Many in Europe felt they were surrendering their sovereignty to America since Washington would be able to dictate foreign policy choices to the Europeans, using the stick and carrot of their defense. De Gaulle's France went as far as to create its own nuclear arsenal and even its independent space exploration program exactly to preserve its freedom of action.

Others felt that Europe could find its own, middle approach to Moscow, as did Willy Brandt with his *Östpolitik*. For them, Europe did not have to follow America's anti-Communist crusade in areas like Vietnam or Latin America, which had nothing to do with European interests. On the whole however, the specter of the Soviet Union weighed heavily in Western European calculations, and thus the alliance remained generally intact from 1945 until 1989.

End of the Cold War — New Realities

The 1990's signaled the beginning of a new era both for Europe and the United States. As the Berlin Wall fell, Europe entered a period of radical transformation, a period of introspection to be exact. In what has been called the 11/9 syndrome (N.B. November 9, the date of the wall's collapse) by the Americans, Europe became preoccupied with its reunification, whose ramifications were enormous.¹⁰ A new vision emerged, that of a continent united politically and economically which would be capable of offering peace, prosperity and security to all its citizens, from the Atlantic to the Caspian Sea. That would be the European priority from now on.

Nevertheless, the realization of that Kantian vision on a European scale (to use Kagan's terminology)¹¹ implied a reform of the locomotive of this whole process, the European Economic Community. After completing the common market, the EEC had little choice but to proceed to deepen economic integration and to start building the foundations of a political union, which would eventually encompass Eastern Europe as well. The EEC became the European Union, demonstrating the European's willingness to create a new pole in the international system. At the same time, preparations for the adoption of a common currency would consume most of the energies of the 15 member states for the rest of the decade.

The United States, on the other hand, became the sole superpower, professing the creation of a new world order on the ruins of the communist camp. Liberated from the constraints of the past (i.e. the continuous scrutiny of its actions by Moscow and the constant fear of reprisals), Washington was ready to take the lead in reshaping the world to its own liking, putting forth initiatives such as the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Agreement on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, etc. Now that the 'evil Soviet empire' had been beaten, there was hope that America could sponsor the 'enlargement' of the liberal democratic camp to the whole planet.¹²

While Washington appreciated the EU's efforts to integrate the eastern Europeans, it watched in disdain Brussels's failure to deal with the Yugoslav crisis. Low political leverage, coupled with limited military capabilities rendered the EU an untrustworthy partner for Americans.¹³ The latter felt that the Europeans wanted to be a superpower on the cheap: they would rely on their prestige and economic might to make their presence felt, while

investing their money not on defense but on social policy as they had NATO (i.e. US) available for their protection. That was simply intolerable and unsustainable from a US perspective, and Washington pushed the Europeans (especially after Kosovo) to raise their military budgets and modernize their militaries.

By the end of the 1990s, the disappearance of the Soviet boogeyman had led to the loosening of the transatlantic ties and the two partner's reorientation towards other priorities. Even if there was a lot of talk about the future of the alliance in general and of NATO in particular, though, few seriously contemplated bringing it to an end. Rather, everyone spoke of NATO's transformation, of the need to redefine its objectives and *raison d'être*. Thus, a New Transatlantic Agenda was adopted (1995) for this purpose, while US-EU summits were instituted on a biennial basis. Finally, as the 'third way' of the international Center-Left brought Clinton, Blair, Schroeder and Jospin closer, it seemed that a new relationship was indeed possible.

From 9/11 to Iraq

The election of George W. Bush, though, and especially the events of September 11th, ended this momentum. Even before his (problematic) election, the Europeans appeared to reject Bush, who seemed abrasive, inexperienced in world affairs, and more interested in signing trade pacts with the rest of the Americas than assuming the burden of world leadership, as his father and Bill Clinton had done. If the anti-globalization movement had grown during the Clinton era, it surely reached its apex with the new president, quickly caricatured as the puppet of oil magnets and the military-industrial complex.

The dramatic change came with September 11 as the symbols of America's economic and military might, Manhattan and the Pentagon, the two pillars of its global hegemony, were attacked. Note that they were attacked not by intercontinental ballistic missiles, nor by a hostile power, as had been feared. Instead they were attacked by a few terrorists who had used their ingenuity against America more than any other weapon. For the first time in years, the US population realized that it was not immune to the pain all over the planet as seen happening on the television evening news. For the first time,

Americans were frightened as they realized, in the words of their President, that the oceans could no longer protect them from their enemies.¹⁴ This constant fear, along with the need for revenge, developed into the 9/11 syndrome, which has ruled over US policymaking ever since.

The impact of this syndrome was tremendous not only on the American psyche, however, but also on the Europeans. For, while the Old Continent was quick to demonstrate its solidarity with Washington and even took the unprecedented step to activate the solidarity clause, or Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, America showed little interest in enlisting that support. The US was seeking a drastic, military solution to eliminate this danger to its citizens once and for all. However, it knew that Europe simply did not have the capacity to follow. The EU, on the other hand, was more skeptical toward an anti-terrorist crusade, arguing that terrorism was such a complex socio-economic phenomenon that simply could not be dealt with only militarily. Rather, diplomacy had to come into play.

Thus, the 9/11 and 11/9 syndromes clashed, so to speak, and progressively created an enormous rift across the Atlantic. If that was not so apparent during the Afghanistan war, where the memory of the World Trade Center (WTC) tower's collapse was still fresh and there was unanimity over the need to topple the Taliban regime, it certainly became evident in the case of Iraq. Americans accused the Europeans of hypocrisy and of living in their own Kantian bubble, for not being able to understand the immense threats of our Hobbesian world. A world in which Iraq's alleged Weapons of Massive Destruction (WMD) posed a threat not only for Washington or Israel, but also for the rest of the world.

The Europeans resurrected the Texas cowboys caricatures to accuse America of a Far West mentality, seeking bin Laden 'dead or alive'. They spoke of a new imperialist vision and of Bush having fallen prey to the appetites of neoconservative revisionists at the Pentagon and the White House.¹⁵ These neoconservatives sought to divide the anti-war front by speaking of a 'New' and an 'Old' Europe. As the US and Britain proceeded with their plans in the face of UN opposition, it seemed obvious that these same circles in Washington were ready to go as far as to undermine the Security Council, and practically eliminate the ultimate constraint for America's plans (as if the UN had been an obstacle to US or USSR unilateralism before).¹⁶

Despite this immense crisis, however, the alliance did not break down. The European Union was shaken by disagreements but stood united, after all. NATO is still there, and there is already some underground discussion about its possible future role in Iraq. The US-EU summit in June 2003 started what is definitely going to be a long process of healing in the relationship. Of course, the United Nations, which was so vilified by friends and foes alike for its stance on the war, returned to the epicentre of the debate in September 2003 and again in January 2004, in the hope of finding some common ground for resolving such crises in the future.

Political Commonalities

How did it happen, then, that the transatlantic relationship held strong? What are the realities that the leadership in America and Europe cannot afford to overlook, despite the massive popular support (at least in April 2003) for a transatlantic divorce? According to our analysis, there are both political and economic aspects of the relationship that are extremely important, and which render a difficult coexistence much more desirable and sustainable, than a search for new alliances around the world.

First of all, and despite the risk of sounding redundant, it is necessary to remember that the principle of democracy and individual freedom lies at the heart of the relationship. Even in the case of Iraq, no one really disagreed that Saddam Hussein was an oppressor and that Iraqis, Kurds and others would be much better off under a truly tolerant, democratic regime. The disagreement has been over the means to achieve the goal of promoting democracy, which is indeed a very important matter. But there had been similar disagreements in the past as to whether the Vietnam War was necessary, even if it aimed to 'contain' communism? And wasn't the war on Kosovo also 'illegal'; i.e., unauthorized by the UN Security Council but still supported by the NATO countries — including France — because they approved the overall objective?

It can be argued, of course, that 'freedom' and 'democracy' are such flexible notions evoked to justify any sort of outrageous action on the part of the United States. That may be so, and perhaps the war in Iraq is a case in point, where very few people were convinced that Washington's primary concern was the establishment of a democratic polity in Baghdad. The emphasis,

therefore, should be placed in refocusing on the right objectives, rather than Europe abandoning America (and America abandoning Europe). For there is no better ally available for the promotion of the objectives of liberty and freedom for either party, while there are politicians on both sides who are honestly committed to their pursuit.¹⁷

Another fundamental commonality is the assessment of new threats emerging in the twenty-first century. America has long complained that Europe is absorbed by its unification and post-Cold War transformation in general. However, the shock of September 11th and the toughening of the US stance on security issues, have contributed in shifting the European's attention to threats that are indeed global in nature, such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the famous paper presented by Javier Solana in June 2003, drafted to outline an EU strategy on such matters, was very close (suspiciously close for some) to similar American texts.

The protection of energy routes emanating from the Caspian Sea/Middle East region (a deeply political issue) is also of mutual concern, since these routes literally provide the fuel for Western prosperity. Naturally there is competition involved which leads to the following questions: Will it be Total, Fina, Elf or Texaco that will get the huge contracts in Iraq? Which pipeline will bring the Caspian oil more quickly and more cheaply back to Europe and the US? The answers are important because the need for energy is immense, and the transatlantic partners are well aware that given the shaky geopolitical conditions in the Middle East, they can only gain by coordinating efforts to secure their access to it.

A final major commonality is the orientation of the two partners towards the liberalization of trade on a global scale. We call this a political commonality since its implications are at least as sociopolitical as they are economic. In fact, US/EU views are strikingly similar regarding the 'qualified' liberalization of trade, one that seeks access to third world markets, but leaves their own protectionist measures, e.g., subsidies, untouched; their social cohesion, intact. And despite the occasional transatlantic trade wars over bananas or steel, which constitute only 1% of the transatlantic economy, America and Europe are most often found in the same camp, opposing the rest of the world. Their long-term prosperity, however, and hence, that of the rest of the world, lies with the liberalization

of trade which, as we will see in the next section, has created strong linkages between the two economies.

Economic Interdependence

Even if many would be quick to reject the political/strategic justification for the preservation of the transatlantic alliance, few can ignore its economic implications for both America and Europe. They are simply enormous. A transatlantic divorce could have catastrophic results not only for both partners, but also for the rest of the world, given a potential subsequent worldwide recession. It is useful, therefore, to examine the economics of the relationship, which are often overlooked or seem too obvious, without many in the alliance being truly able to grasp their significance.

The size of the transatlantic economy is more than \$2.5 trillion, which is by far the largest 'regional' market in the world. Twelve million jobs in Europe and America are tied to this market, with several other millions of dependents enjoying its fruits. Indeed, these twelve million workers enjoy high wages, high labor and environmental standards, and open, largely, non-discriminatory access to each other's markets. The social implications of the transatlantic economy, therefore, are obvious at a time of growing concern, both in Europe and the United States, about employment rates.¹⁸

Skeptics often point to the fact that as globalization progresses, new promising markets are created in places such as Asia and Latin America. These are markets that can provide an alternative to transatlantic trade, should the latter prove to be counterproductive. There is no doubt that these markets are potentially important, but the recent crises of the 1990s demonstrated the instability of their economies, which dissuade investors from allocating capitals there. Data shows, for example, that American investment in the Netherlands was twice what it was in Mexico in recent years, and 10 times what it was in China! This unbelievable statistic demonstrates how the distance of economic potential from economic reality can affect the psychology of an investor.

As a consequence, it is safer to seek returns in the solid European markets than to gamble in areas where profits may be greater, but where neither the political environment nor the rules of the game are such that can guarantee

fair-play. America's asset base in the UK alone, for example, is roughly equivalent to the combined overseas affiliate asset base of Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East! This represents an enormous concentration of capital on EU soil, capital which of course guarantees returns to its American owners. For US companies rely on Europe for over half their total annual foreign profits because indeed, and it is only the transatlantic market that can afford the cutting-edge products of the transatlantic industry.

That is not to say, however, that the Europeans have not benefited from the dynamism of the American economy. At this moment, there is more European investment in Texas than all American investment in Japan. The manufacturing workforce of US affiliates in Germany is double the number of manufacturing workers employed by US foreign affiliates in China. And European companies account for a significant percent of all US portfolio inflows.¹⁹

The transatlantic economy is therefore a key factor for the economic development of the planet. When it is booming, the rest of the world enjoys the fruits of growth as well; when it falls into recession, other economies also struggle.²⁰ A transatlantic divorce would therefore affect the whole planet, as most economies are tied in some way to the US and EU ones through trade and their use of the dollar and the euro. Proponents of the divorce ought to think twice, then, before sacrificing so many jobs and investment for the sake of often short-sighted political calculations.

This very economic interdependence, however, has been deemed by many as a double-edged sword. According to that view, the political implications of the integration of the transatlantic economy are negative, since it permits America to preserve its economic preponderance, despite its enormous external debt. In other words, the proponents of this view feel that had it not been for Europe, the clay feet of the American giants would have cracked long ago. And if the EU wants to effectively influence American policy or even achieve a level of global influence that is greater than Washington's, it only needs to withdraw that support, and draw the carpet under the New World's feet by not offering cheap money for financing US debts.²¹

In our view, this approach is only half true. Once more, we need to keep in mind that while America borrows European capital and is, thus, able to sustain its debts, it is at the same time the locomotive of the global economy.

For better or for worse, at this conjecture, the US economy has a unique dynamism which no single economy can match. Given the structure of the international economic system, therefore, a move to undermine the American economy, would be a move against one's own economy. Not only because of the number of jobs and the amount of investment involved, but because it would doom other economies as well for quite some time. An alternative to the American locomotive is nowhere to be seen.

Some may say that it is exactly for these reasons that the transatlantic economic ties are effectively strangling the Europeans. In other words, exactly because they create the sense that American preponderance is inevitable, they should be severed. Otherwise, change in the international system will never come, or will come too slowly. We do not share that assessment. In our view, the answer to the imbalance of the transatlantic partnership is not an effort to undermine one of the poles, but to strengthen the other. The answer is that Europe today becomes more dynamic, more competitive, and more able to stand on its own feet and thus more able to demand a role in global affairs than before.

Where Does Greece Fit In?

Greece has been the very interesting case of a country caught in the midst of all these world-shaking events. "Purported hotbed of European anti-Americanism"²² and an often difficult EU partner, Greece would seem to belong in neither of the two camps to an outside observer. Greek-American relations have never completely overcome the trauma of 1967-74, and reached a nadir in the 1980's when Andreas Papandreou held the premiership in Athens.²³ At the same time, it took about twenty years (and billions of Euros in aid) for the Greeks to realize the benefits of EU membership and acclimate to European political standards.

The optimal choice in a crisis like the one over Iraq for an ambivalent country like Greece, then, ought to be to seek a delicate balance in order to avoid its entanglement in the conflict. And indeed, many argued that this is exactly what happened during the period of the war! As Greece was holding the EU presidency during this tumultuous time, its duty was to synthesize the diverse opinions of the Union's membership and lead the transatlantic dialogue with the United States. In other words, observers said, the Greek

government was plainly lucky, as it never really had to express openly its opinion on the war in international forums as its EU counterparts did. As a result, Athens avoided a confrontation with its adamantly anti-war population, its divided EU partners, and Washington.

This is only one part of the story however, and probably the superficial one. For Greece and its foreign policy have changed substantially over the past decade, as has the perception of the country by its partners abroad. Even if popular attitudes towards the West remain volatile, the Greeks have tended to elect governments with moderate foreign policies that seek to integrate Greece in the international system and not to distinguish it for the sake of doing so. This electoral attitude has permitted Athens to skillfully maneuver between its interests and its obligations toward the different organizations in which it is a member, striving to minimize negative reactions to its initiatives and maximize the gains.

This was also the case in Iraq. In general, Greece was against the US case for a war against Iraq and sided discretely with 'Old Europe' on the subject. At the same time, though, given that the war appeared inevitable by February 2003, it also honored its alliance obligations, and supported the transportation of NATO Patriot Missiles on the Turkish border, an initiative that was eventually killed by Belgium. Athens also refrained from moving towards what proved to be an impulsive initiative; i.e., the creation of an independent European military force, envisaged by Germany, France, Belgium and Luxemburg, even if it was generally open to such ideas.

The Greek government was criticized not only for not taking a clear cut position against the war, but also for permitting the use of the pivotal Souda Bay naval base for the operations in Iraq. Greece certainly was not the most vocal opponent of the war (at least at the governmental level); nevertheless, even Germany and France supported the war effort, by permitting the use of their air space and offering other sorts of facilities to the Americans, despite their public declarations. In our view (and given the somewhat double-faced approach of Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and Moscow), Athens made a wise choice as it avoided a heads-on confrontation, which certainly would not have prevented the war and would have inflamed Greece's opponents in Washington.

What can Greece's role be in the future? The Iraq crisis gave Athens a golden opportunity to demonstrate its mediator skills, and most assessment on its works was very positive. Nevertheless, we are by no means arguing that somehow Greece could perpetually serve as a bridge between Europe and America. That role was possible only once (due to the EU presidency) and there are other countries that are much more qualified to do so (such as the United Kingdom). In addition, Greek anti-Americanism (justified or not) is a factor that will always play into the equation, undermining Greece's image in Washington.

At this point, however, Greece is emerging as a leading member of the bloc of middle to small-sized EU countries and can thus help shape the direction of future debates. Indeed, during the Rome summit in December 2003, Silvio Berlusconi approached Greece (along with Britain and a couple of other countries) and asked its leader to mediate a solution to the impasse in the adoption of the European constitutional convention. This was a remarkable testimony to the prestige that the country and its leadership enjoy in the EU, not only from "Old Europe" members, but also from the Atlanticist ones. At the same time, Greece has been recently ranked thirteenth among a group of twenty-one rich nations for its aid contributions to developing nations (higher even than the US and Japan) for the quality of support it has provided in the past.²⁴ This is an immense achievement that provides tangible evidence of the country's elevated prestige.

Finally, Greek economic progress (undoubtedly problematic and still insufficient) is undeniable, and has earned it respect among its fellow Europeans as well as the Balkan countries which are enjoying the fruits of Greek aid. As these latter countries lie on the fault line of the 'Old' and 'New' Europe, the issue of dual loyalty (EU or US?) is bound to emerge in the future. Athens, which is more responsive to the sensibilities of the Balkan peoples, can take the initiative within the EU and within NATO so that their economic progress and their security are guaranteed. In other words, it can help so that a choice between America and Europe does not have to be made in this sensitive region. Later, if Athens succeeds in such a mission, it will have offered the transatlantic alliance and, of course, the Balkan Peninsula an immense service.

Conclusion, or the Greek Key

This analysis aimed to provide an overview of the transatlantic relations, explaining their roots, the causes of frictions and the necessity of rapprochement. Without overlooking the difficulties, the justified suspicion on both sides, as well as the not-so-noble interests that have come to the fore, the article shows that there exist fundamental commonalities binding America and Europe. In the words of a prominent observer, “in a pluralistic society [like the transatlantic community of democracies] value clashes are more or less a built-in phenomenon” and therefore add to, rather than complicate, the quality of its political choices.²⁵ Both politics and economics, require Washington and Brussels to reconsider their strategies and take each other’s sensibilities into account. For the stakes of a permanent rift are immense and can have a lasting impact on the livelihood of both Americans and Europeans.

In other words, the transatlantic relationship shares several of the qualities of that all-time classic of popular instruments, the accordion. The US and Europe represent the two poles of the same alliance, similar to the two parts of the accordion. Just like the latter, the two partners are both equally important, in their own way, for the alliance to have meaning and harmony. Just like in the accordion, the two poles of the alliance may at times come very close, but they will always preserve their distinct character. They may also distance themselves from each other – but never too much, as it is the existence of the ‘other’ that gives meaning to their own talent, their own power. This constant movement is, after all, essential if music is to be produced...

At this time in history, America and Europe almost tore the transatlantic accordion apart as a result of their discord over Iraq. At some point in the Spring of 2003, it seemed that we had reached a point of no return. Now however, the realities of postwar reconstruction make it necessary to reactivate the partnership and slowly bring the partners close again for the sake of normalization in the Middle East. Once more, therefore, the two parts of the accordion are coming close to bring about some tangible results. And it falls upon the different keys, including the Greek key, to ensure that the renewed collaboration will be more harmonious than ever before.

NOTES

1. Statements by leaders from all over the world can be found on the web archive on 9/11, *September11news.com* (www.september11news.com/InternationalReaction.htm).
2. Jean-Marie Colombani, “*Tous Américains?*” *Le Monde* après 11 septembre 2001 (Paris: Fayard, 2002. *Note: This book has been translated into Greek.*
3. The anti-European view is most eloquently articulated, among others, in Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003). See also Richard Pearle and David Frum, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003).
4. For a better understanding of the ideological basis for the mentality of a ‘missionary America’, refer to the anthology *Home of the Brave*, edited by Erik Bruun and Robin Getzen (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996). For a critique, see Norman Birnbaum, “Aux racines du nationalisme américain,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 2002.
5. Timothy Garton Ash, “Anti-Europeanism in America,” *The New York Review of Books*, February 13, 2003.
6. US State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher, September 2, 2003.
7. Jean Francois Revel, *L’obsession anti-américaine* (Paris: Plon, 2002).
8. Colin Powell, “A Strategy of Partnerships,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol.83, no.1, January/February 2004.
9. For example, one can think of the disagreements over the Vietnam War or the opposition of Henry Kissinger to Willy Brandt’s Östpolitik.
10. The 9/11 and 11/9 syndrome’s concept is used widely in US literature on the topic, including, for example Colin Powell’s aforementioned article as well as Daniel Hamilton’s “The 21st Century Requires a Global US-European Partnership,” *European Affairs*, vol.4, no.2, Spring 2003.
11. See Note 3.
12. That was the doctrine of Anthony Lake, National Security Advisor during the first Clinton administration. See his speech “From Containment to Enlargement,” given at the School of Advanced International Studies - Johns Hopkins University, September 21, 1993, (www.fas.org/news/usa/1993/usa-930921.htm).

13. Dogmar Skrpec, "The European and American Reactions to Kosovo: The Policy Divide Revisited in the Iraq War," *SAIS Review*, vol.23, Summer/Fall 2003.
14. Speech to Congress, September 20, 2001.
15. See, for example, Michael Klare, "Les vrais desseins de M. George Bush," *Le Monde diplomatique*, November 2002. The so-called neoconservative hawks include such prominent figures as Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Pearle, Dick Cheney and John Hulsman.
16. Pearle and Frum, pp.249-250 and 271-272.
17. Colin Powell affirmed that principle in his article in *Foreign Affairs* (note 8).
18. Most of the data included in this section can be found in the excellent analysis of Joseph Quinlan, "*Drifting Apart or Growing Together? The Primacy of the Transatlantic Economy*," (Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS-Johns Hopkins University, 2003).
19. *Ibid.*
20. Testimony of Dan Hamilton, Director of the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS - Johns Hopkins University, to the Committee on International Relations of the US House of Representatives, June 11, 2003.
21. An excellent analysis of this topic can be found in Kostas Vergopoulos, *Globalization: The Great Illusion* (Athens: Livanis Press, 1999), in Greek.
22. Brady Kiesling, "Open Letter to US Secretary of State Colin Powell," *The New York Times*, February 27, 2003.
23. Fouad Ajami, "The Falseness of Anti-Americanism," *Foreign Policy*, no.148, September/October 2003.
24. *Foreign Policy*, no.146, May/June 2003.
25. Dieter Dettke, "U.S. - European Differences are Many, but Manageable," *European Affairs*, vol.4, no.3, Summer/Fall 2003.