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How Can the Transatlantic Partnership Face the Challenges of the 21st Century?

In Austin, Texas there is an antique store with a fifteen foot tall Eiffel Tower replica at its entrance. At the beginning stages of the Iraq war and highly vocal French opposition to it, the replica was removed from the premises for fear of vandalism. This is troubling in many ways, but the most of all is that differing views of national interest could even allow the possibility of such animosity between longtime allies and friends. If anything, the United States and Europe should do all in their power to strengthen ties based upon their shared values and experiences to collectively face the global challenges of tomorrow.

It is true that the U.S. and European nations may vary in viewpoint with regards to many international situations. The Iraq war is merely one example of a difference of opinion between several states. However, the diversity of political approach to various situations is something that the transatlantic nations have and must overcome in the future for the sake of global prosperity. Our history is far too intertwined for us to ever get bogged down in disputing each other. While it is true that the United States stepped in and liberated France in the 1940s, we can never forget that our own independence can be traced to the support of France in the late 1700s.

Clearly the United States and Europe share a similar view of the world and how it should function. When the world needed to rebuild in the aftermath of WWII, it was the transatlantic relationship that provided the global leadership to move forward. When communism was staring over the iron curtain, the transatlantic relationship and NATO could not have been more important in standing up for freedom. When the United States was attacked like never before on September 11, 2001, we had “no truer friend” than our eternal partner, Great Britain, leading the rest of the world in condolence and resolve. The world is constantly changing, and so are the threats to peace and prosperity within it, but one feature remains the same throughout all challenges - the world needs consistent transatlantic leadership.

Three primary challenges are facing the entire world today and becoming ever more consequential for the future: *terrorism*, *energy security*, and *poverty*. Every nation on the globe is affected in some form or fashion by each of these concerns and every individual should recognize the importance in addressing them sooner rather than later and together rather than separately.

The threat and cost of terrorism has been in existence long before the turn of the millennium, and it has affected all ends of the earth with severe devastation. Yet, it has become an increasingly real and present danger more than ever before. From New York to Madrid, London, Paris, Egypt, Russia, Jordan and countless other locales, terrorism is sending shockwaves through civil society. It is a pervasive, tactical ideology that supercedes any one creed, nationality or background. To stop bad ideology, the world needs to fight for a better one. Authentic freedom and respect for human life are just the kinds of ideas that translate to an alternative to the worthlessness of terrorism. The transatlantic partnership is best suited to address this global threat head on by remaining firm in its stand and acting in collaborative consistency. This approach has already been shown in the consensus reached by the United States and European Union that their monies will not support the Hamas-led Palestinian authority until it renounces terrorism. In a world of battling ideas, there can be no justification or condoning of terror regardless of what offices may be held by those involved with terrorist groups. By sending a clear message that terrorism does not grant a seat at the table of legitimacy, the U.S. and Europe are striking down the notion that terrorism and democracy can coexist.

The fact that energy on the whole is becoming a more and more precious commodity is no new news to anyone. As China’s economy is booming, so is its thirst for oil, natural gas and a host of other

resources. With an ever rising demand and the existing supply projected by many to begin declining in the next decade, something must be done to avert a devastating global recession and crisis that could result from everyone's growing energy needs. The challenge of securing energy is not only about economics, but ecology as well. Once again, policy consistency from transatlantic partners can lead the world to energy solutions that allow for both access to energy and the development of renewable resources. If major technical and research collaborations to make available more renewable forms of energy took place across the Atlantic, this could send the signal to the rest of the world that the west is serious about renewable energy, and everyone else should be too. Regardless of whether projects take place in the public or private sector, any feasibly shareable technologies should be disclosed between the U.S. and Europe to allow for more rapid advancement towards renewable energy. In working together and providing leadership, the U.S. and Europe can not only develop new technologies, but ensure that their policies keep currently available energy open and accessible.

It is often said that a society will be judged by how it treats the least of its citizens. Although poverty can be felt by many in the most prosperous of nations, it is a way of life (more so a way of death) for the people of the developing world. According to the United Nations, there are well over one billion people that still live on less than \$1 per day. Poverty is killing people every day in parts of Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and especially in Africa. The transatlantic community has led the charge in the effort to reduce this poverty, but it can certainly do more, or at least do some things differently. First the U.S. and Europe need to be the leaders in reaching the Millennium Development Goals agreed upon by all UN member states. How can this be done more effectively? This means promoting legitimate development; standards can be set for how and in what cases development aid promotes and furthers the goal of development and what types and forms of aid hamper it. For example, the industrialized nations need to limit aid to autocracies and corrupt governments and appropriately give aid to nations with adequate absorptive capacity. There needs to be disciplined leadership that promotes the idea that more money is simply not the solution, but rather money used in the right way will lead to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Aside from foreign aid alone, the second major policy area that Europe and the United States could use to affect poverty reduction is agricultural subsidies. If the transatlantic nations could make the domestically difficult move towards reducing and eliminating agricultural subsidies, millions in the developing world could bring their agricultural products to market allowing them to sustain themselves without the assistance of development aid. Yet with the existence of generous U.S. and European subsidies, the goods from impoverished nations simply cannot compete in the marketplace. The world watches the actions taken by the transatlantic nations. Good precedents set by our nations could set good precedents for the entire world to follow. In this way, the transatlantic partnership can be used to lead the globe in helping to improve the lives of the world's most needy.

For the most part, the solutions of the future rely on the relationships of the past. The transatlantic nations joined together to face history's most difficult challenges in the last century and will need to do so again to secure a bright tomorrow for the next. When democratic peoples stand together, there is little doubt as to what great trials can be overcome. Although there might be a diversity of opinions in the details, the common ground between the United States and Europe is vast and wide. The world needs leadership above anything else, and there is no alliance better poised to give it to the world than the transatlantic partnership.