

## Europe: The Realization of a Dream

Across Europe today, people are rightly celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. They have reason to rejoice. The European Union is one of the great accomplishments of history; the half century of peace on the western half of the continent is unprecedented.



U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United States Klaus Scharioth, Ambassador and Head of the European Commission Delegation to the U.S. John Bruton and U.S. Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried applaud European Commission Member Andris Piebalgs' (Latvia) remarks at a reception on March 26 in the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome.

Less well known is that, across the Atlantic, there too is reason to derive satisfaction. We too dreamed of a Europe whole, free and at peace. From the very start, the United States has cheered integration, with deed as well as word.

From the formation of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation and the European Coal and Steel Community to the creation of the euro and expansion into the former Eastern Europe, the United States has supported the noble endeavor of European unity.

We did it because it was in our interest. Successive Congresses and Administrations became convinced that integration would strengthen democracy and promote economic growth in Europe, and that such outcomes would redound to the benefit of the United States.

This is a belief that remains constant today. As President Bush said in his 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural Address, “The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.”

It is important to note that, with regard to Europe, from the start our leaders have reached the conclusion that integration is in our interest. That was because, all along, they have recognized that the United States and Europe share common values and common responsibilities.

It is important because sometimes one hears arguments that a unified Europe must be created as a counterweight to the United States. Such a view confuses our histories of the past two hundred years and is reflexive and shallow as it argues for simply countering the Americans, whatever we do. It mistakes balance of power for putting our combined power behind our shared values. It undersells the many benefits that come from unity. Lastly, it misunderstands U.S. interests: what concerns us is not European strength, but European weakness. America wants – no, American needs – a strong Europe, a strong EU.

This has been so from the beginning. Those who are not aware of the history may be quite surprised by it. Of course, we will differ from time to time on tactics—and we need to listen to each other more. But these differences should not cause us to forget that we agree on values and purposes at a much deeper level.

U.S. support for European integration was such that, not nine months after our troops had ceased fighting in Europe in the Second World War, Senators William Fulbright and Elbert Thomas, and Representative Hale Boggs, introduced in both houses of Congress a resolution that affirmed the U.S. Congress’s strong support for European integration.

The resolution passed both houses with large majorities. It also received the backing of Secretary of State George C. Marshall, who wrote saying he was “deeply sympathetic” with what Congress was doing.

A year later Marshall himself took the initiative and promised in a landmark speech that, if the Europeans enacted a common plan for economic recovery, the U.S. would respond with material aid. Your leaders didn’t tarry, and quickly set up the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, a first step in the process. The U.S. kept its word; its response was the Marshall Plan. Later this year we will celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its creation.

The next great step in the evolution was, in 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community, an initiative of French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman and EU founding father Jean Monnet. President Truman was fulsome in his praise, calling Schuman’s proposal “an act of constructive statesmanship. We welcome it. This demonstration of French leadership in the solution of the problems of Europe is in the great French tradition.” The U.S. Congress authorized direct funding of the ECSC.

From then on, from the important meeting in Messina in 1955, when the common market was first proposed, to the signing of the Rome Treaties we are celebrating this year, creating the European Economic Community, the U.S. has expressed its support and, when it was needed, gave aid.

This support has not abated over the years. On the contrary, the last two milestones, eastward expansion and the creation of the euro, were fully cheered across the Atlantic.

The reason is, it is in our interest. Anything that strengthens allies that share our values of tolerance, democracy and free market economics, as well as our sense of responsibility toward the rest of the world, can only benefit us. The United States and Europe form a single, democratic, transatlantic community, and in today's world, we face grave challenges to our shared democratic values. We can meet these challenges successfully, but to do so, we must do so together. Now, in 2007, we have a more robust and effective US-EU partnership than ever before. This is the reason why today, Americans, too, are celebrating.