

# **Remarks on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the First European Commission Presence in Washington and the Historic Enlargement of the European Union**

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**The Benjamin Franklin Room**  
**The United States Department of State**

**6 May 2004**

Mr. Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends and colleagues, let me first of all thank Secretary Powell for his remarks and Undersecretary Larson for hosting today's celebration. It is a substantial honor that we greatly appreciate, and it is entirely in keeping with the long tradition of American support for European integration which Secretary Powell has just so eloquently confirmed. I will do my best to carry my share of the rhetorical load, even though I know it is a daunting task to follow the Secretary. I am reassured, however, by the fact that we have such a meeting of minds in underlining both what the transatlantic partnership has achieved and the promise it holds for the future.

I also fully agree with the Secretary that Benjamin Franklin is a source of a lot of good advice, which he offered not only to Americans but also to Europeans. As usual he was well ahead of his time – in this case by two centuries – when following the Philadelphia Convention he suggested to a European friend that, “Europe form a Federal Union of all its different states and kingdoms.” So it is indeed fitting to meet today in this magnificent room bearing his name.

As the Secretary noted, we celebrate the happy coincidence of several closely linked events. First, this year's “Schuman Day” marks the 54th Anniversary of the Schuman Declaration which launched the European Coal and Steel Community as a first step on the long road of European integration. Second, with our American friends and our new EU colleagues we celebrated the enlargement to a Europe whole and free for which May 9, 1950 and the historic reconciliation between France and Germany broke the ground. And third, it is 50 years ago that Jean Monnet established an information office in Washington that has grown in time to today's fully-fledged diplomatic mission.

As we recognize these milestones in the European project, we also honor the transatlantic partnership. None of the events we commemorate today could have been achieved without the active support of the United States. From the beginning, generations of great secretaries from George Marshall, Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles to Madeleine Albright and Secretary Powell guided that support. There is therefore no better place to celebrate the unification of Europe with its transatlantic dimension than the US Department of State.

In August 1952, the United States was the first country to recognize the European Coal and Steel Community, when then-Secretary of State Dean Acheson sent a diplomatic dispatch on behalf of President Truman to Jean Monnet, in his very first day on the job as president of the Community's High Authority, the forerunner to the European Commission. Acheson's telegram included the following statement:

“It is the intention of the United States to give the Coal and Steel Community the strong support that its importance to the political and economic unification of Europe warrants...The six-nation Coal and Steel Community represents the first major step toward the unification of Europe.”

One year later, the United States was the first country to establish a fully-fledged embassy to the Community. In designating David Bruce as the first Ambassador, Secretary Dulles and President

Eisenhower made clear the importance they attached to this assignment. Bruce had previously served as US Ambassador to France and would subsequently act as Ambassador to West Germany and to the United Kingdom – a kind of diplomatic trifecta. My colleague Rock Schnabel was able to celebrate the 50th anniversary celebration of that event last year in Brussels.

The almost daily correspondence between David Bruce and Washington shows that his political commentary and policy guidance were followed with active interest. Bruce did not only help to secure support for getting the ECSC up and running. His telegrams showed deep understanding and strong support for the next steps under negotiation: a European Defense Community and a European Political Community, two projects which *hélas* proved premature at the time. Both projects had unreserved US support. Their failure was the biggest single backlash in the integration process.

To counter Washington's disappointment was the ultimate reason for Jean Monnet to establish the Community's first external presence in this capital 50 years ago. His confidence in Americans was such that the first Community "envoy" to the United States was George Ball, an American lawyer and partner in a prestigious Washington law firm. The intimate friendship between Ball and Monnet was one of those rare blessings of history. Ball quickly established an information office occupying two rooms near his own office on 15th Street, Northwest, with an annual budget of \$41,000.

With the help of another American, Leonard Tennyson, Ball supervised the drafting of an information strategy for the Community in the United States. One summary paragraph deserves a full reading:

"To the great mass of Americans the Community remains little known and little understood. Among more informed circles earlier assumptions that it was a cartel, was dirigiste, or was merely another impotent international organization, are gradually being corrected. Some influential Americans are coming to recognize it as a pioneer achievement in European federalism, as a strong force for freedom and progress in the Western world. However, as the symbol of progress towards unification, the Community has suffered in American opinion by what have appeared to Americans as delays and reverses in the unifying process. The full appreciation of the Community as the symbol of unification must await some further major step."

When Ball later became an Undersecretary of State in the Kennedy Administration, he was instrumental in advising the young president on the new Europe. Ball's influence is most evident in Kennedy's famous speech on the fourth of July, 1962, in Philadelphia's Independence Hall when he called for a "Declaration of Interdependence" and a true partnership of equals between America and Europe.

I trust we can all agree that the ensuing 40 years have brought a number of major steps in the development of Europe, including the completion of the single market, the launch of the euro, and the successive 6 enlargements to today's EU 25. Next month a draft European constitutional treaty will most likely be agreed upon under the able guidance of the Irish Presidency. Each of these accomplishments, together with the emerging EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and the new Security Strategy, have made the Union a more relevant partner to the US.

Those developments at the EU level went hand in hand with consolidating the notion of a transatlantic partnership. Together, Europe and America won the Cold War, based on the attractiveness of the West European model and American strength and resolve.

And, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the opening of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Soviet Union we successfully met the challenge of a democratic Europe whole and free. We together delivered on the November 9, 1989 agenda while also adjusting our transatlantic priorities to a new geopolitical environment. In 1990, the European Community and the United States agreed

on a Transatlantic Declaration. This document established the groundwork for the New Transatlantic Agenda, agreed in 1995, providing the mechanisms to address bilateral, regional and global issues, establishing closer ties between our legislatures and between the various stakeholders in our societies.

Admittedly, the transatlantic partnership has recently experienced a period of considerable turbulence. Yet, any differences we might have are so obviously outweighed by what unites us.

However asymmetric the transatlantic partnership may still appear for some time, it is our common resolve and the complementarity of our tool boxes which make both the United States and the European Union stronger when they do act together – and less effective when they do not.

Looking ahead, let us take inspiration from the achievements of the Monnets and the Achesons, those “present at the creation,” as much as from the wisdom of Secretary Powell’s famous thirteen rules. The first rule, to be applied when we disagree, is, “It ain’t as bad as you think. It will look better in the morning.” The final rule, crucial as we plan for the future, is, “Optimism is a force multiplier.”

I am optimistic that the upcoming EU-US summit meeting in Ireland will highlight the impressively broad range of our common agenda in so many important areas, such as homeland security and the fight against international terrorism. It might also set the stage for a more profound reassessment of our transatlantic agenda in the course of 2005 on which a next Administration in Washington and the incoming Commission in Brussels will wish to put their mark.

I could personally think of several ambitious projects in this regard. These could include giving our economic partnership a strong fresh impetus and an effort to reconcile our respective security strategies. Certainly this will benefit our work together in such critical areas as the Middle East. Just as important as the substance of our future agenda will be maintaining the spirit of cooperation and the trust in a relationship that has so successfully shaped history during the past half century.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me close with a bold prediction: those who will gather in this room to commemorate Benjamin Franklin’s 300th birthday in January 2006 might have in their midst a European Union envoy who, under the constitutional treaty, will serve one EU foreign minister and assume the combined responsibilities I today share with my Irish colleague, acting on behalf of the EU Council Presidency. I would like to take the opportunity to thank very warmly Ambassador Fahey for the excellent cooperation during the present historic 6 months.

I also wish to thank my staff from the Delegation for their dedicated work – they will see a new chapter in the history of this Delegation begin in a not so distant future – as well as Dan Hamilton and the Washington EU Center for their efforts today and throughout the year. Finally, I thank all my European and American colleagues and friends for joining us today.

Let us share a toast on the next 50 years of EU/US partnership.