The Gap Between West and West:  
Transatlantic Relations in the 21st Century  
Friday, October 1, 2004  
Amsterdam

Organized and sponsored by:
1. *International School for Humanities and Social Sciences, Universiteit van Amsterdam*
2. *Remarque Institute, New York University*
3. *Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken*
4. Friends of the *Universiteit van Amsterdam*, New York  
5. Michiel Vos (initiator)

Welcome and introduction by Dr. Rob Hagendijk,  
Dean of the *International School for Humanities and Social Studies, Universiteit van Amsterdam*

Mr. Hagendijk welcomes all people present and extends a special welcome to:  
- The Ambassador of the United States of America, H.E. Clifford Sobel;  
- The Chairman of the Board of the *Universiteit van Amsterdam*, Mr Sijbolt Noorda;  
- People who came from far away: United States, Italy and Turkey;  
- The speakers of this afternoon:  
  - Bart Tromp, Professor International Relations, *Universiteit van Amsterdam*;  
  - Geoffrey Underhill, Professor International Relations, *Universiteit van Amsterdam*;  
  - Ruth Oldenziel, Senior Lecturer American Studies, *Universiteit van Amsterdam*;  
  - Gideon Yago, Journalist, *MTV Politics and CNN*;  
  - Stephen Szabo, Professor European Studies, *The Bologna Center, Johns Hopkins University*;  
  - Paul Scheffer, Professor Urban Sociology, *Universiteit van Amsterdam*.

Furthermore a welcome is extended to the students from both New York University and the University of Amsterdam who are present. The students of New York University:  
- Michelle Pinto  
- Jessica Wol San Liem  
- Simon Jackson

And from the Universiteit van Amsterdam:  
- Paul van Hooft  
- Jorrit Mulder  
- Douwe Buzeman  
- Thomas Tichar

The Amsterdam students have been selected through an essay competition, specially designed for this debate. All students have been very helpful in writing this report.
Several people are thanked, notably:

- Michiel Vos, who came up with the idea of this series of debates and got the partners together;
- *The Remarque Institute, New York University*;
- *Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken*;
- Friends of the *Universiteit van Amsterdam, New York*;
- Willemina Verkoren and Jiri Hemming both from the ISHSS for their role in the organization of this event.

Finally, the moderator of the afternoon is introduced: Maarten Huygen, Political Commentator, *NRC Handelsblad*.

Hagendijk ends with saying that two things seem to unite America and Europe: terrorism and Iraq and two things seem to divide America and Europe: terrorism and Iraq. This debate should be seen against this background.

**Opening by Dr. Sijbolt Noorda,**
President of the Board of the *Universiteit van Amsterdam*:

Participants should note the importance of today's conference as we work on building a mental bridge between Europe and America. Easy labels and stereotypes as well as anti-Americanism should be suspended as we strive for mental mobility in thinking across the Atlantic. By living in America for a few years – during the early seventies, Noorda experienced firsthand the immense diversity of the country. ("During my stay that simple picture of the United States got terribly fragmented. No general picture appeared to be true.") Europeans should be aware that "American" opinions and realities are fragmented and do not constitute a monolithic whole.

A mental mobility should be produced as whenever we try to make a mental journey across the Atlantic requiring to leave behind the unified opinions and pictures but instead moving in a world closer to the real world where most opinions and realities are much more fragmented and therefore much more interesting than they at first seem to be.

"The Universiteit van Amsterdam and New York University are instrumental in building a mental bridge [across the Atlantic] and I hope there will be heavy traffic."

The Chairman announces the applicability of the Chatham House Rules to the following debate.
Session 1: The Political Economy of Trans-Atlantic Relations.
With introductions by Bart Tromp, Professor International Relations, Universiteit van Amsterdam, and Geoffrey Underhill, Professor International Relations, Universiteit van Amsterdam.

Introductions
Tromp:
Since 1945 good relations between the United States and Europe were based on the common threat of the Soviet Union and the grand strategy of the US to become a hegemonic power. The Soviet Union does no longer exist, nor is the US still the hegemonic power it once was. A rift between the US and the EU has become clear. This recent rift has occurred between elites of both parts of the world but also between cultures and economies; the transatlantic gap is now irreversible. The United States is now unilateral and focused primarily on military power. Moreover, the United States has experienced a loss of legitimacy in European eyes. Its high-tech military is currently proving irrelevant. A fundamental shift in American policy is needed to heal transatlantic relations.

Underhill:
The European Union and the United States have both become more inward looking thereby creating a new dynamic within the US – European relationship. Their differences are now more deeply rooted than before. Intrinsic, structural differences between Europe and the US have developed. Both should be seen as two as separate entities, tied together in the past more through realist reasoning than idealism.

It should be noted that political economy is not just about economic policy. Political economy and security are not separate; they are linked (security has to be paid for). When the Cold War came to an end reactions on both sides of the Atlantic were different: the United States emerged with a triumphant demeanor and was aiming for good state to state relations. For US policymakers, American sovereignty is their foremost priority, as is American security. The EU, by looking more at the internal collapse of the Soviet Union, a need for strengthening the internal structure of the EU seemed necessary.

The political economies and internal institutional frameworks of the two entities differ considerably and lead to the deep differences in their respective international policies. The European Union is not based on national sovereignty, even if sovereignty remains important at the national level; the EU acts multilaterally. By contrast, the United States has a centralized institutional apparatus and is a much more coherent (and unilateral) actor on the international stage and less focused on multilateralism. The American focus on sovereignty leads to a so called ‘security gap’. America’s protection of its own absolute sovereignty leads to them impinging on other’s sovereignty, which diminishes the security for the world as a whole, as well as the Americans themselves. If the Europeans attain some coherence, they might offer a possible positive alternative model to the American model. This European model would avoid the fallacies of the security gap, of the American search for absolute safety, and tend more towards multilateralism.
The difference in substance of relations between the US and the EU is related to differences in internal political economies and institutional frameworks (domestic processes). Differences in approaches to international problems are rooted in differences in internal economies and internal frameworks. The US is a much more coherent actor on the international stage, due to its historic emphasis on national sovereignty, whereas the EU’s structural future remains unknown.

**Discussion:**

A trade war – a conflict of Boeing versus Airbus – would hardly widen the gap between the West and the West. Trade conflicts have been around forever. They are not the real fuel of international conflict and not the real conflict between the West and the West.

We need to look at what lies behind trade conflicts. The outlook for transatlantic relations is unpredictable. September 11 and Iraq were unpredictable and caused a sudden, unforeseen reversal of transatlantic relations. Relations appeared to be more fragile than thought. Economically, the interest of the US has shifted towards Asia, and specifically China. In the security sphere, the US is now obviously focused on the Middle East.

The United States has to work with the world. Europe, with its unclear identity, is about compromise; but it should think more like a state since it has the force of economic power behind it.

The qualification of both the EU and the US as inward looking when taken from the viewpoint of the war against terrorism can be challenged: the war in Iraq can hardly be described as an act of an inward looking country. With respect to the EU: enlargement is its foreign policy – hardly an inward looking trend.

**Session 2: What Binds Us and What Separates Us? American Culture and European Identity.**

With introductions by: Ruth Oldenziel, Senior Lecturer American Studies, Universiteit van Amsterdam, and Gideon Yago, Journalist, MTV Politics and CNN.

**Introductions:**

**Oldenziel:**

The cultural aspects of the American – European relationship are debated. 20\textsuperscript{th} Century European identity has been shaped by interaction with America. The idea of America has helped European authors to define Europe and America functions as a reference point or as a *projection screen* for Europeans. When Europeans accuse America for their problems they are making America a projection screen for their anxieties.

Historically, in the realm of culture, Europeans have always thought of themselves to be superior and Americans were very much leaning towards Europe. Over the course of time both continents have been appropriating cultural ideas and identities from each other and using and re-inventing them in many different and complex ways. In this way, the existence of European and American cultures can be seen as ongoing processes of
hybridisations. Referring to ‘the other’, as if the two continents were two distinct polarizing cultural blocks makes therefore no sense.

Since World War II, America has dominated the media, and we can speak of its media imperialism – “Mass media devours by nature”. There is a cultural bond between Europe and America that is part of an ongoing conversation. Both European nations and America are nations of individual rights. America might be at the forefront of the capital marketplace and of homogenizing efforts, but the world is part of this too. America is partly defined by what it is not: European. That works the other way around as well.

Yago:
The cultural ties that exist between the United States and Europe are illuminated, but explained in a different way: not so much in terms of cultural cross-fertilizations, but more from a political and economic perspective. Both continents support democracy, a capitalist market and the defence of intellectual property rights. Because of this, they have many converging interests. This convergence led to the emergence of a global mass-media culture: an assimilating melting pot that takes the best of many cultures and makes these extracted cultural ingredients digestive for different ethnic groups. The US has been the dominant market force in shaping this global culture, and is not likely to loose its hegemony in this sphere into the very far future.

Discussion:
Lifestyles shape national identities. In terms of media packaging, politics is just an extension of lifestyles. Think about how “American” Europe is becoming. CNN in Europe is directed at a European audience. Question the notion of America as a cultural monolith: think about what “America” means, about immigrant groups within America, about groups that used to be on the fringes, for example hip hop musicians, who are now marketed as mainstream. The idea of America is ever expanding because new cultures within America (Latino) are brought within what America is.

‘New Europeans’, those countries which joined the EU in 2004 and which belonged to the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War, have a much more traditional attitude towards the US. Their attitude is based on their geopolitical interest in good ties with the US to balance a possible Russia resurgence. Developments within the US, its religious revival, the political and cultural shift within America towards the South, the European preference for soft power (diplomacy, etc) and multilateralism, the preference for hard power (military, etc) and unilateralism by the US, lead to a need to redefine the Atlantic relationship.

9/11 created the opportunity to re-interest Americans in the world (to get away from the “doorstep issues” that seemed to dominate many young Americans minds).

The Transatlantic Aspect of the EU.
Mr. Clifford Sobel the Ambassador of the United States Ambassador to the Netherlands.
Transatlantic debate is healthy and among friends. In a post-Cold War world, we need multilateralism with teeth. We Europeans and Americans have the same interests but our tactics “differ slightly.” We depend on each other for mutual prosperity and progress. We both want to build stable democracies and strong economies. We have common values and a spirit of innovation for the 21st century. Together we need to determine how to “go up the value ladder.” The relationship between the United States and the European Union is the most important political-economic relationship the world has today.

Session 3: The Political Agenda for American – European relations.
With introductions by Stephen F. Szabo, Professor European Studies, The Bologna Center, Johns Hopkins University, and Paul Scheffer, Professor Urban Sociology, Universiteit van Amsterdam.

Introductions:

Szabo:
The old relationship between the US and Europe is gone because of a change in the strategic relationship. American focus has shifted to regions outside Europe. America is losing its interest in Europe. Europeans no longer fight amongst each other and do no longer drag the Americans into their struggles. The necessity of the strategic relationship is no longer there. One could argue that the strategic glue is gone.

The Bush revolution is a major break with the past. It has been an extreme Administration. What it has done would have been impossible without 9/11. It gave the Administration the possibility
Where do we go from here? What has happened was enabled by 9-11- Bush used vulnerability it expressed. Key issues are: the difference in approach to the world order. European model: a multilateral approach. This is also the general preference of most Americans.

Scheffer:
The title “West against West” is misleading because it underestimates the multi-polarity of Europe. There are EU - tensions between need for internal equilibrium and external presence. Europe faces same threat as US to external borders EU needs homeland security to deal with threats such as Islamic fundamentalism.

The ‘Old Compromise’ doesn’t work anymore. There are urgent reasons to reconsider the relationship between America and Europe.
Three points:
1. In case Europe is going to define itself against the United States, it will make a huge mistake. Europe should not define itself as a rival of the US. Europe cannot do without Washington or without Paris.
2. US should overcome its profound ambivalence towards European integration.
3. Europe cannot see itself only as a guarantee of international law and regard America as the sole provider of hard power.
This Administration (Bush) has asked some pertinent questions about hard and soft threats. In addition to that the EU needs to share in a renegotiation and reinvention of the EU-US relations.

Discussion:
Europeans should step up to the plate when it comes to the handling of international crises. ("The Europeans are going to have to produce") To a certain extent one is defined by one's enemies and America and Europe are the only two stable democratic areas in the world. They would be very lonely in this world if they would emphasize their differences.

A relationship between international law and foreign policy must remain. Consider Guantánamo Bay and the way Hans Blix was overruled. The current American Administration acts with a total disregard of international law. As to the place of the United Nations in the world: the establishment of the UN in 1945 meant a break with Westphalian national self-interest. The UN may be flawed but there it is the only institution that has legitimacy. Abandonment means return to old nation-state chaos.

Why should some powers monopolize nuclear power? Why unify your enemies as 'terrorists' and try to take them all on? How will more military power help Europe if the US cannot pacify Fallujah, and can only win the kind of wars no-one will fight them in? How does the attack on civil liberties help stop terrorist attacks? It is argued that Europe doesn't need for high tech military forces we rather need the police forces because it is those which are needed by the conflict.

Europe should get united and it should back up our political power with military power. This is different from stabilization. Europe has need for high tech military forces. Europe should create forces similar to those of the Americans in order to defend European interests.

Europe is better at winning the peace by using soft power. In that regard America can learn something from Europe. Should the modern threats be seen as state to state threats (American viewpoint) or rather internal as in the European view as "problems of internal decomposition?"

America can be viewed as a traumatized giant – or at least the "Bush crew" can be seen as a traumatized giant. Never turn your back on a traumatized giant. Recognition is very important. Bush divides the world in good and wrong and Europe should not turn its back on its traumatized brother.

Europeans should spend their energy counterbalancing the American power. This does not mean that they should be balancing the power on strategic or military level.

Finally it is stated that Bush was the best thing that ever happened to European in moving forward its security. Therefore the best thing that could happen to strengthen this project is Bush II.
Unilateralism: is not an American illness – but look at the European history and you will find several unilateral examples: look at Le Gaulle and more recently the Spanish decision to unilaterally withdraw from Iraq.

West European governments should understand the balance between interdependence and security. Economic interdependence should not be in the way of the importance of defending your borders. Europe is also about sovereignty but counterbalance to that is the urgency to defend your borders. Forgetting about defending your borders lead to a populist backlash against Europe. There is a balance individual privacy and public order is one of the core questions of public law.

Preemption: the problem with terrorism is preemption: how are you going to prevent terrorism? How do you prevent that the idea of preemption is used in unjustified manner. But the question of how should we prevent is on the table.

Madrid (2004) showed that Europe was – apart from the humanitarian answer – politically disunited in its answer.

More than preemption preeminence could be seen as a problem: America will come back to a more balanced approach: America can’t do it all alone. Balanced criticism form Europe is trusted on this: for example criticism on Guantánamo Bay.

Finally, the Solana paper makes clear that Europe is restructuring its forces, and is talking about niche contribution. In that respect Robert Kagan is overdoing it.

END
The Gap between West and West: Transatlantic Relations in the 21st Century

Friday, October 1, 2004 International School for Humanities and Social Sciences (ISHSS), University of Amsterdam

Introduction by Dr. Sijbolt Noorda, President of the Board of the University of Amsterdam

Dr. Noorda made the point that Europeans tend to view the US as a unitary actor and Europe as (hopelessly) divided. Living in America during the early seventies, Noorda experienced firsthand the immense diversity of the country: "During my stay that simple picture of the United States got terribly fragmented. No general picture appeared to be true." Europeans should be aware that "American" opinions and realities do not constitute a monolithic whole.

1. First Panel: The political economy of transatlantic relations

The first panel discussed two factors which made the relationship between the US and Europe successful during the Cold War: the military threat of the Soviet Union and the hegemonic nature of American power. The recent deterioration of this relationship is due to two factors: the ideological nature of the George W. Bush administration and the fall of the Soviet Union (and the common threat it represented).

The current rift between the EU and the US exists between their elites, cultures and their economies. The US is no longer a hegemonic power, since it has lost a great deal of goodwill, a reason why its unilateralism is based on military capabilities alone. On the other hand, differences between Europe and the US can also be seen as intrinsic and structural. Both have become inward-looking: the US towards its own affairs in a global context and the EU towards the deeper integration of new member states. Their differences are now more deeply rooted than ever before. Some assume the existence of one idealistic Western entity; others see two separate entities, tied together. Political economy is not just about economic policy. We should be aware that political economy and security are not separate; they are linked. (security has to be paid for).

The end of the Cold War was interpreted differently by the EU and the US: while the US triumphed ("the feeling of we won") and focused on retaining good state relations with what was left of the Soviet Union. The EU focused on the internal collapse within the Soviet Union and saw a need for strengthening its own internal structure. Different international outlooks reflect a different internal build. The EU - not based on national sovereignty - has a multilateral approach.

(The Chatham House Rule applied to the debate in Amsterdam - not to the one in New York, which is reflected in the first part of this report that does not attribute any comment to anybody). Chatham House Rule: When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.)
to international relations. For the US, the focus remains on state-based sovereignty. While the US is not against multilateralism per se, it does not focus on multilateralism as the Europeans do. Differences in approaches to international problems are rooted in differences in internal economies and internal frameworks. The US is a much more coherent actor on the international stage, due to its historic emphasis on national sovereignty, whereas the EU's structural future remains unknown.

The Europeans currently lack the coherence to present a unified political vision. The US has the coherence and military and economic weight to promote a social and economical model. However, the American focus on sovereignty leads to the 'security gap'. America's protection of its own absolute sovereignty leads them to impinging on other's sovereignty, which diminishes the security for the world as a whole, as well as the Americans themselves.

If the Europeans attain some coherence, they might offer a possible positive alternative model to the American model. This European model would avoid the fallacies of the security gap, of the American search for absolute safety, and tends more towards multilateralism.

Talking about the future, the panel felt that in spite of unpredictable events - such as September 11th and the invasion of Iraq - some trends are clear: from the point of view of the US, Europe is now a regional power in the post Cold War period. Economically, the interest of the US has shifted towards Asia, specifically China. In the security sphere, the focus of the US is now obviously on the Middle East and no longer on a Cold War divided Europe.

The second panel emphasized the long history of the US and Europe's critiques of each other. America and Europe each served as signifiers for the other. In the 20th century European identity has been shaped by the idea of America which functions as a projection screen. When Europeans accuse America for their problems they are making America a projection screen for their anxieties. Within the realm of culture, there is a sense that America dominates the world and there is a strong sense of West against West; this view is part of a process of myth-making and culture-making. Europeans reject America, its mass culture, consumerism, and capitalism and see them as the embodiment of imperialism.

Historically, in the realm of culture, Europeans have always thought of themselves to be superior and Americans were very much leaning towards Europe.

Over the course of time, both continents have been appropriating cultural ideas and identities from each other and using and re-inventing them in many different and complex ways. In this way, the existence of European and American cultures can be seen as an ongoing process of hybridization. Referring to 'the other', as if the two continents were two distinct polarizing cultural blocks makes therefore no sense.

Cultural ties between the United States and Europe can not only be explained in terms of cultural cross-fertilizations, but also from a political and economic perspective. Both continents support democracy, a capitalist market and the defence of intellectual property rights. Because of this, Europe and the US have many joined interests, which led the emergence of a global mass-media culture: an assimilating melting pot that takes from many cultures and makes these extracted cultural ingredients digestive for different ethnic groups. The American media are able to incorporate other cultures and use them to sell products. The US has been the dominant market sphere.

Since World War II, America has dominated the media, and we can speak of its "media imperialism." "Mass media devours by nature". There is a cultural bond between Europe and America that is part of an ongoing conversation. Both European nations and America are nations of individual rights. America might be at the forefront of the capital marketplace and it might be at the front of homogenizing efforts, but the world is part of this too.

Increasingly we see a culture of mass media globalization. Cultural ties exist between the United States and Europe. They can be explained not so much in terms of cultural cross-fertilizations, but more from a political and economic perspective. Both continents support democracy, a capitalist market and the defence of intellectual property rights. Because of this, Europe and the US have many joined interests, which led the emergence of a global mass-media culture: an assimilating melting pot that takes from many cultures and makes these extracted cultural ingredients digestive for different ethnic groups. The American media are able to incorporate other cultures and use them to sell products. The US has been the dominant market force in shaping this global culture, and is not likely to lose its hegemony in this sphere.

In terms of media packaging, politics is just an extension of lifestyles. Lifestyles shape national identities. We should think about how "American" Europe is becoming. CNN in Europe is directed at a European audience. We need to question
the notion of America as a cultural monolith; and think about what “America” means, about immigrant groups within America, about groups that used to be on the fringes, for example hip hop musicians, who are now marketed as mainstream.

Although there is a global mass-media culture dominated by the United States, we should not forget that this phenomenon is only one of the many ways in which people define their cultural identities. Different identities can coexist and create new hybrids at the same time.

There is a need to redefine EU-US relations while acknowledging the lost centrality for Europe in the eyes of the US. 9/11 created the opportunity to re-interest Americans in the world around them, which makes dialogue more possible. However, the US will define the terms of the dialogue.

3. Third Panel. The political agenda for American – European relations

The third panel discussed the change in the strategic relationship between the US and Europe. There is not only a cultural clash between the US and Europe but also a clash of strategic cultures. The old relationship is gone because the strategic relationship between the two has changed.

This is due to a shift in American interests. America is losing its interest in Europe. Europeans no longer fight amongst each other and no longer drag the Americans into their struggles. The necessity of the strategic relationship is no longer there. The strategic glue is gone. And as personalities do make some difference, the Bush administration defines a very clear shift in the direction of American foreign policy. The question is whether this period is a precursor of even more serious changes or simply a 'bad dream'.

September 11th exposed America's vulnerability. The attacks allowed a specific domestic American group - the neo-conservatives - which already had a very clear agenda - to take its political vision and implement it into actual policy. It is unclear whether the American neo-conservative version of world order will be attractive to anyone else. According to some, Bush's vision (if we are tough enough the Europeans will follow) has no international legitimacy. Afghanistan, Iraq, and the continuation of the Israeli - Palestine conflict can all be seen as failings of this new vision and none of them will disappear anytime soon.

The title “West against West” is misleading because it underestimates the multi-polarity in Europe. There are EU tensions between need for internal equilibrium and external presence. It is hard to see Europe as a source for a coherent foreign policy in the near future. The situation of American hegemony (unipolarity) will not last. There is a need to renegotiate a 'transatlantic bargain', especially when we look at the instability in the world. The threats are there for everybody to see. They bind the US and Europe together.

Europe faces the same threats as the US to external borders. The EU needs a European version of what Americans call homeland security and has to make a choice between individual privacy and public order. There are urgent reasons to reconsider the relationship between America and Europe. The 'Old Compromise' doesn't work anymore. The old institutions are not fit as an answer to today's problems.

Three points are central:
1. If Europe is going to define itself against the United States, it will make a huge mistake. Europe should not look at the small difference with the US but rather look at big threats to the West. It should overcome its internal differences because Europe cannot do without Washington but it cannot do without Paris - meaning: its particular Gaullism - either.
2. The US should overcome its profound ambivalence towards European integration. A politically unified Europe would be difficult for the US, but it will be in its interest because a divided Europe would be detrimental to the US.
3. Europe cannot see itself only as a guarantee of international law and regard America as the sole provider of hard power. The Bush administration has asked questions about failed states which nobody dared to ask before. Why did no one dare to ask those questions before? More generally the Bush has asked some pertinent questions about hard and soft threats.

The emphasis on military solutions by the Bush administration, the stressing of the monolithic nature of the Islamic fundamentalist threat and the willingness of the administration to trade off civil liberties against protection from this threat of terrorism, have been unhelpful in achieving greater global stability. As a threat to the West, Islamic fundamentalism is the new Communism. The US and Europe are strongly interdependent, and they must confront the threat of Islamic fundamentalism together.
Furthermore the UN needs reform. Its involvement in interventions and the rebuilding of failed states enhances the legitimacy of such actions.

Europeans need to improve the technological edge of their military power to play a serious role in guaranteeing security. At present the Europeans have the edge on the Americans insofar as the 'soft power' side of solving conflicts is concerned, such as: diplomacy, multilateralism, development cooperation, conflict prevention and peace building.

In the end, four more years of Bush may not be so detrimental to the state of international relations in the long-term. It might push the Europeans towards articulating a strong foreign policy vision of their own which could serve as an alternative to the US within the Western agenda and balance the power of the US.

The current troubles in the relationship between the US and Europe are seen as temporary by most of the participants of the debate, and not as structural. This pattern continues in the second debate.

H.E. Mr. Clifford Sobel, American Ambassador to the Netherlands

Ambassador Sobel underlined ‘what divides us makes headlines, what unites us makes progress’. The EU and US share a vision for peace and security in the world, but don’t always agree on how to get there. NATO, UN, EU are solid foundations. We need multilateralism with teeth. According to Sobel, institutions need to change with the times. We collectively desire "stable democracies, protection of human rights and a strong economy." The US and the Netherlands share high volumes of trade and investment (the Netherlands is the 3rd largest recipient of FD investment.)

The Ambassador suggested that together we should determine how to "go up the value ladder." "The relationship between the United States and the European Union is the most important political-economic relationship the world has today".