

TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION BEGINS AT HOME

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Peter Trubowitz, Chair of the Dahrendorf Working Group
'Europe and North America'

Can the United States and Europe continue to work together to preserve the liberal world order? Will the forces of illiberalism that are afoot in Eurasia, the Middle East, and elsewhere strengthen or weaken the West's resolve? Today, there is reason to think that the political room for transatlantic leadership is narrowing. This is not only because the world is becoming more multipolar or because Americans and Europeans hold different values. Rising nationalism, widening inequality, declining trust, and indeed, rising illiberalism on both sides of the Atlantic are also making it harder for U.S. and European leaders to find common ground.

Much of our work in the Dahrendorf Working Group 'Europe and North America' has focused on the state of transatlantic relations: past, present, and future. While working group members do not subscribe to a single view about the challenges facing the West, or how its leaders might best respond to them, there is broad agreement that 'business as usual' will no longer suffice. The lines between international and domestic politics have blurred. Policies and programs that once inspired broad public confidence are now under attack, domestically, in the core Western countries.

International developments as well as domestic forces have weakened the political foundations of Western leadership. Internationally, the absence of a Soviet-style threat has made transatlantic partnership seem less urgent and relevant to Americans. Today, Americans are much more worried about government and the economy than they are about foreign threats. European publics face more pressing security concerns. Yet there is little agreement in Europe over which security challenge should take precedence: those from the East or those from the South.

In the absence of a common vision of the security challenge facing the West much depends on finding common ground on other issues. For the two decades that followed the end of the Cold War, the globalization project functioned as something of a substitute. However, globalization's success depends greatly on its ability to generate tangible benefits for Main Street as well as Wall Street. Today, growing numbers of Americans and increasingly, Europeans are expressing frustration with globalization. The current backlash against free trade in the US and Europe is clear evidence of this. So is mounting opposition to immigration.

One consequence is that it has become riskier for political leaders to invest political capital in policies aimed at promoting economic openness. This is especially evident in the United States, where candidates in this year's presidential contest have taken aim a free trade, immigration, and outsourcing. Some of this can be dismissed as election year posturing. But the rhetoric in the 2016 presidential campaign does raise deeper questions about what kind of foreign policy we might expect the next US president to pursue, and what that might mean for U.S. engagement in Europe and other regions.

There are reasons for thinking that the United States will continue to uphold essential commitments, no matter which party wins the White House in November. Many Americans believe that the U.S. shares collective interests with other nations and that it profits, materially and otherwise, from working with others on security, trade, climate, and so on. Yet it seems equally clear that support for

internationalism has weakened and that the next president, Democrat or Republican, will be under pressure to scale back international commitments and avoid taking on new ones.

Many now worry about the potential downside risks of a smaller American geopolitical footprint. Even so, current trends *inside* the United States which point in the direction of retrenchment show little sign of abating. The trend began before Barack Obama took office, and it is likely to continue after he leaves next January. While we do not think that the erosion of the U.S. commitment to internationalism has reached a critical 'tipping point', it seems clear that any American president who wants to invest political capital in strengthening the transatlantic relationship in 2017 will face higher domestic political hurdles than his or her predecessors did.

Developments in the United States also raise difficult questions and trade-offs for European policy-makers. Many of the same domestic forces pressuring America today to lighten its international load (e.g., wage stagnation, rising inequality, and political polarization) are manifest in Europe, too. If America's next president looks for ways to reduce the costs of international engagement, how will a Europe suffering from economic and social distress respond? Can we expect European leaders to do more to provide for the region's security and if so, how? This panel at the **2016 Dahrendorf Symposium** will look more closely at these and other questions by examining the 2016 U.S. presidential election and its implications for Europe.

THE 2016 U.S. ELECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPE

Chair & Moderator

Peter Trubowitz, Professor of International Relations and Director of US Centre, LSE, London; Chair of the Dahrendorf Working Group 'Europe and North America'

Panelists:

Rosemary Foot, Emeritus Fellow St Antony's College and Senior Research Fellow in International Relations, University of Oxford

Lloyd Gruber, Lecturer in Political Economy of Development, LSE, London

Mareike Kleine, Associate Professor of EU & International Politics, LSE, London

James Morrison, Assistant Professor of International Relations, LSE, London

Jeremy Shapiro, Research Director, European Council on Foreign Relations