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Brookings Leadership Forum
The Right Honourable Jack Straw, British Foreign
Secretary

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It's a great honor for me to speak to you here today at the Brookings Institution, and as always a tremendous pleasure to visit the capital of my country's closest and most enduring ally.

But for us the relationship with the United States is not just a matter of foreign policy. Over a million jobs in each of our countries depends on the investments in the other. We remain the biggest external investors in each other's economies.

So from fashion to food, ^{from} finance to film, people in both countries are affected daily by what happens on the other side of the Atlantic. But I know that my Foreign Minister colleagues from France, from Germany, from Italy ^{and} from Spain can speak of similarly close ties between their people and this great and dynamic country.

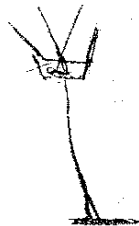
As Europeans we watch, wear, eat, drink or otherwise consume American culture every day. We on the eastern side of the Atlantic have instinctively shared the feelings of pain and ~~of~~ trauma ~~of~~ the violent events of the 11th of September and its aftermath.

Today I want to set out my thinking on the consequences of that evil act on the 11th of September for the relationship between the European Union and the United States, and to explore with you the ways in which I believe we must adapt to a world changed forever by that assault on everything we believe in.

There are a few points I want to make about the principles on which I believe trans-Atlantic foreign and security policies have to be based in this changing world.

The first and the most fundamental of them is that the great alliance between the democracies of America and Europe is more vital than ever it has been. We have friends and allies all around the world, but for more than half a century Europe and America have stood together as a rock of stability, ~~of~~ order, and ~~of~~ freedom and we must never forget that together we did defeat fascism, and then defeated communism.

These were, however, rather dangerous but also rather straightforward threats to our freedom. The threat we now face is more insidious because the enemy is not so visible. The enemy now is not so much a commander marshalling tanks and planes and ships but a terrorist getting unnoticed onto a passenger aircraft. Our



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defense against this enemy requires eternal vigilance over the values which we share.

These values are, I believe, easy to take for granted. We travel where we wish, we trade where we want. We go about our daily lives securely as we please. But these great freedoms did not just happen. They exist because we put in place the physical security and the systems and values which make a free world possible. The trans-Atlantic alliance is an essential relationship on which our freedoms are built.

We may differ from time to time about our priorities, but we do not differ on the values we share and the freedom which we defend together. We may differ on specifics, but we do so as friends. I believe it's important now to recognize this and we shouldn't set ourselves a standard by which we have to agree on everything. As free-thinking democracies we cannot and should not do that. But we do agree on what really matters and we ought to be therefore more relaxed on those issues about which we differ.

Of course some of the things on which we differ are important. Some are obvious and specific and I'll come ~~to~~ to those in a moment. But I suggest that overlaying all of this is a fundamental difference in the mutual perception of each other.

For example, when some in Europe complain about American isolationism or exceptionalism or whatever, they tend to assume that the United States is easily comparable to a single European nation state, but it is not.

You all here know what we sometimes forget, that the United States is half a continent. The population is about equal to that of the five largest European Union member states. It's GDP greater still. Americans correctly and rightly consider that it is those Americans who created the world's largest and greatest democracy. But Europeans tend to see the United States through a different prism. They see a United States born out of Europe, born from those with the courage, imagination, the iconoclasm to break away from the straightjackets not just of poverty but of institutional and political constraints in Europe to form what has long represented in an almost idolized form the best of European values and institutions.

So for all these reasons -- of size, of power, of origin, but above all about what might have been and what could be examples to those in Europe, the United States is a source of more absorbing fascination to Europeans than ever an individual European country could be to the United States.