Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. First and foremost it is a very great pleasure and a privilege to be here with you today. May I just thank the Foreign Policy Association, Chairman Gonzalo de Las Heras and President Noel Lateef for extending this invitation. I have been asked to be brief and I will try to keep my word. I will try to convey to you some thoughts in order to kick off a debate on the idea of “Europe in the World: New Security Challenges”.

First of all, what is Europe?

Europe is an unprecedented success story. Europe, within the space of a half of a century, has come from the most ferocious war, where Europeans killed each other over secular hate that seemed impossible to eradicate, to a union in which important elements of national sovereignty are given up for the sake of a more prosperous and effective coexistence. What’s more, this new Europe is now beginning to resemble its old self, at long last embracing virtually all the countries that created it originally. And if Chairman de Las Heras allows me, old Europe is a divided Europe. Old Europe is the Europe of the Communists. Old Europe is Europe of the Berlin Wall. New Europe is the Europe that is now emerging in the European Union--the Europe of the 25, plus two, plus one. But I will come back to that later.

And, if this is Europe, all this has been achieved the incalculable and indispensable help of the United States. Furthermore, we would be making a major error in the interpretation of history if we overlooked the fact that all this came about after Nazism was defeated through military might, and Communism was vanquished by what is ultimately the most decisive of battle fields—that of ideas and perceptions. And you will hear me mention the concept of perceptions quite often today.

What is Europe?

Europe is a construction in law and based in law, which means that if something defines Europe, it’s what lies behind the law that we are creating. And what lies behind the law that we are creating are principles and values, so when some in Europe try to create an identity, a European identity, by being counter part, or counter way, counter something, with a negative identity, this is just wrong. Europe is democracy, the rule of law, the
separation between state and church, and free market economy. This is Europe. And, by
the way, this is also the United States.

Europe today, nevertheless, very often views itself no longer with a sense of relief at
having put behind it the horrors of war and fanaticism, but with a certain confidence that
is sometimes patronizing to the United States. I will come back later to this, but there is a
pervasive feeling in some individuals in Europe that say, “Well, OK, they are strong, but
we have the legitimacy.” Which, once more, is just nonsense, because in the end,
legitimacy is what lies behind all this -- values and principles.

If Europe and America share values and principles, we have to use that to make a better
world. This is our challenge, to make a better world. And a better world is not possible
without close cooperation between Europe and the United States, which is needed now,
probably more than ever before. There is no alternative order to democratic order, and
this cannot be achieved without effort. Security in international relations is never a
stationary concept, but rather something we have to work at constantly to secure a
positive evolution.

What is Europe?

On the geographic level, as I said, Europe is what we have agreed to because we are a
legal construction. And to what have we agreed? We are right now 25 plus two,
Bulgaria and Romania, plus one, Turkey, because we have agreed with Turkey that the
day it fulfills the EU criteria -- democracy, rule of law, human rights, separation between
state and church, and a market economy -- Turkey will become a member of the Union.

But Europe is still something else, because even in this globalized world, geography
counts. And it is not the same thing to have as neighbors Mexico and Canada, as it is to
lie in the middle of the most unstable and volatile region of the world. This is what we
now call the Greater Middle East—this area stretching from Northern Africa to Central
Asia that is our borders. Let’s not forget that the day Turkey is a member of the Union,
we are neighbors to Iraq.

So, by this, the idea I want to convey is that of course America is interested in having a
stable Greater Middle East, but we are even more interested. It is our interest as
Europeans to have a stable Middle East. We need neighbors with which we can share
more than just economy, that we can share the fight against the new threats—what
[Moises] Naim calls the five wars we are losing: terrorism and all the forms of organized
crime from trafficking in drugs to trafficking in persons.

So, if this is Europe, and if we agree that we share theses interests with the United States,
then do we have instruments? Yes, we do. Not just the transatlantic dialogue in itself,
but fora. For instance, NATO, through which, among us we have accumulated the
biggest share of power that has been seen in the history of the world. And this is more so
if we take into account other communities such as Australia or Japan that share with us
the same views. So, if, as I believe is the case, all the powers genuinely want to work to
secure international harmony, why do we have such a deep sense of crisis? Well, I think that from a European point of view, there are at least some ideas upon which we have to reflect.

First of all, the disappearance of the so-called “equilibrium of terror” was accompanied by the disappearance of a phony sense of stability. Stability equaling status quo, which, by the way, we have seen being argued lately: stability equals status quo. This characterized the Cold War. And it does not matter that it was phony because it served to keep the lid on a range of problems that the pressure of such a threat prevented from coming into the open. Let me say now that this is a matter of perception. This idea that stability equals status quo is not true anymore, because we are no longer in the Cold War.

The second idea that is another perception is that after September 11th when everything was put upside down, the entire world was a live witness to the emergence of a new form of threat. Imagine what might have happened if such an attack was carried out not with conventional weapons, but with weapons of mass destruction?

The third idea, and equally important, is the fear, the intellectual lethargy that sets in when awakening from a comfortable slumber, the reluctance to make decisions or to accept reality, all of which are logical during times of change. And then we were joined by a very dangerous ally, that being an attitude in certain quarters of thought that I will refer to later.

Why does it seem so difficult to close ranks against such clearly peripatetic enemy? Why, once more, why?

At least part of this explanation lies in the fact that supposedly well meaning sectors of certain parts of the left in Europe have chosen to forsake a rational analysis of the situation in favor of the opportunity to increase their levels of irresponsibility. Although they can no longer use the utopian formulations of Marxism in their domestic politics -- if you ask for nationalization of banks in Europe nowadays you don’t get one vote -- they still need to preserve this idea of alleged progressives, and international politics seems to come at no cost. It’s a ride for free in international politics. Hence, political parties and options in Europe with aspirations of government play at supporting the antiglobalization demonstrators, which wreak havoc in cities where dialogue is trying to take place.

Similarly, they walk behind placards bearing embarrassing slogans or simply seek to weaken the Western Alliance at the time when it is needed, perhaps more than ever. I insist that we are engaged in a battle of perception, because terrorism can only be defeated in the minds of a potential terrorist recruit. Hence the need to project an ideologically united front in defending values we consider to be non-negotiable. If we are to eliminate this scourge of the early 21st century, if we give the impression to those societies in the process of transformation that we are unsure of our beliefs, or that we lack the resolve in defending them, we will be contributing greatly to the weakening of the very sectors that we want to help.
We are engaged, therefore, in the operation to transform power into auctoritas. This is a concept that comprises two key elements: moral right and the resolve to defend that right. Only the combination of the two can inspire in the interlocutors the respect in which authority is grounded. Which is why those same European countries that would argue that the United States has the military might, but Europe has the authority, overlook among other things the fact that the capacity to transform moral rules into law must be backed by credibility in enforcing this said law. This is the credible possibility that force may be used to defend the legal order one purports to uphold. So, in the end, law is law if you are able to use a credible threat of the use of force.

The task ahead is enormous, and it’s just futile to waste time discussing the possibility that we might tackle them separately, or in the context of Europe - U.S. rivalry. Joint action is needed, not just to combat anti-Western fantasies or on this terrorism, on this idea of the privatization of war, as Naim puts it, but also in combating all the other scourges of the international crime. That is why if we really take an objective look at the transatlantic relationship, we discover that the recent crisis in transatlantic relations, the root of it, is that we are faced much more with the problem of mistaken perceptions than the clash of real interests.

All European countries stand to gain so much from an effective transatlantic relationship. And so much damage is caused by strains in these ties that only a loss of perspective can explain why urgent joint action is being put off. Moreover, the current wavering is even more inexplicable, bearing in mind that we already have at our disposal, as I said, an extraordinary tool, which is NATO. In this reflection on NATO, let me point out that the real threat that we Europeans felt during the 1990s was the possibility of an American withdrawal from NATO, that the idea of American isolationism was real. We have to bear in mind that the decoupling between Europe and America was the main priority of the former Soviet Union. So, if we have the instrument, which is NATO, and if America has gained once more an interest in NATO, this is the tool we have to use.

As of then, the United States gave up all notions of thinking that it could afford to ignore problems that were far removed geographically, because globalization was suddenly seen to be much more than an appropriate term. The new characteristic of the current situation, as I mentioned earlier, is that we are fighting essentially a battle of perceptions. I stress this word because I do not think we are fully aware of its meaning and application.

In this battle of perception, propaganda, in the most etymological sense, is essential. If we hope to eliminate the hate some seek to target unreasonably at the West, we need to address this key aspect. By propaganda I’m referring to all ways of putting across our message of peace, progress, and resolve, and determination in confronting the enemy, something that was very much in evidence during World War II. Remember Casablanca. We don’t have a Casablanca against terrorism. And this is a need. The role played by the powerful machine of American popular culture pulled out the stops to equip the Allied cause with ideological weapons.
This is a challenge that we have to face. But we can think, for instance, that we have to do something against the vitriolic capacity of teaching imparted in certain mosques or madrassas. And now we look at this phenomenon as if we were unable to change the situation, or as if they were a phenomenon of nature, and they are not. And we have to react to them, and we have to try to convey this message to friendly regimes that could help us in this fight.

I’m aware that my proposals might sound provocative and even disturbing, but this is solely because our societies are still a long way from realizing fully the potential risk of doing nothing. Indeed, some of our governments in Europe and part of the political class in our countries appear to seek comfort in the hope that the problem can somehow be avoided. It cannot. And let us just hope that it doesn’t take a massive and unexpected bombshell to extract us from this impasse before we have managed to neutralize the danger we are facing.

Allow me to conclude by saying a few words on Iraq. Iraq is fundamental to all of these current challenges. Iraq is a test of the capacity of the international community to lay the foundation for an international coexistence grounded on respect for universal human rights. The alternative is not an alternative. If we demonstrate an inability to coordinate our actions in Iraq, we will encourage all enemies of what we conceded to be noble and necessary for peace and prosperity. Iraq should be a model, not just for the viability of democracy in the Islamic world, which, with all this entails, and without which all hopes of stability are an illusion, but also of cooperation among allies who are fully aware of the present historic times, and have proven to be equal to the demands made on them.

Thank you.

[End Speech]

[Questions]

Q1: After the Fascist Regime of Franco, Spain is a democracy, and has a royal family. Is a constitutional monarchy able to provide balance between different factions? Has the Royal Family played a “hero” role?

AP: Well, as a Spaniard I would say that one of the luckiest things that has happened to us in the twentieth century is to have the king we have, and to have the Royal Family we have. They have played a key role in transforming Spain from an isolated, backward country into a vibrant society, a vibrant business community, and an intellectual community, leading through auctoritas, not through protestis, because the royal family in Spain has no protestis at all. The king has no protestis at all. No real power. This lies with government. But by having this symbolic leading and mediation role, they have been instrumental in bringing Spain this long way from, as I say, from where we were in ‘75 to where we are now.
Spain is, I would say, a very curious example. I think it’s the only example of a great power, of a great empire that at a certain moment in history, vanishes. There is a blackout as far as Spain is concerned for nearly 300 years. And then we come back in a way that has been our own. It’s a kind of a spectator that gets into a theater. The show goes on, but we have tiptoed, and we are now sitting in the front row. And, of course we sometimes feel a bit awkward because we have to get used to it.

Let me tell you, for instance, that Spain joined 35 international fora in the last 25 years, which gives you an idea of how isolated we were. But we joined the European Union late, we joined the European Union in 1986, but since 1986, we have been at the front row of all the major moves in the Union -- for instance, citizenship, the creation in this space of liberty, security, and justice, and the fight against terrorism. I think that Prime Minister Aznar is one of world leaders that first realized that terrorism was not anymore a matter of police, a matter for national states, but that terrorism had become one of the main issues in international politics. And we launched the inclusion of terrorism in the Treaty of the Union as one of the areas for cooperation, and it cost us a lot to have it in the Amsterdam Treaty in 1998, and then, we were working on the two cornerstones of this fight against terrorism in Europe.

We played the role. We know very well where we are. We know what our GDP is, we know our population and we know that we have differences with others, but we also know that in this twenty-first century we have some assets that are truly ours. For instance, transatlantic, long-standing relationships, as Spain has always had with Latin America. But more and more, there is in a natural way a need to reinforce the North Atlantic link. Because the only cultural frontier that is moving nowadays in the world is the frontier of the Hispanics that is going north within the United States. So for us Spaniards, in a century that is essentially a century of communications, where culture means so much, it’s just natural that we join this movement, and in a way, we integrate this movement, over the scope of our traditional Atlantic relationship, not just to Latin America but all of the Americas.

Q2: Congratulations on your remarkable candidness. If I were from France or Germany, I’d be fidgeting in my seat. How does Spain fit in when France and Germany want to tell the rest of the world to sit down?

AP: Well, first of all, let me be very clear. France and Germany are instrumental in the European integration process. They really are crucial. But they are not all of Europe. Europe is all of us. Nobody, nobody can hijack the label “Europe”. Not even the most important member of the European Union. And concerning the positions of the European Union members vis-à-vis the Iraq crisis, there were many more that shared positions with Poland, Spain and the Czech Republic, with Italy, with Denmark, with the Netherlands, and so on and so forth. All the new members were along the same line. So, there is a kind of nostalgia of the Europe of the founders, of the “Europe of the Six”, but Europe is no longer the “Europe of the Six”.

Europe is the Europe of the 25 plus two, plus Turkey, and this is the name of the game.
[End Transcript]

Rapporteur: Ellen Emr