



Conference European Foreign Policy ASSESSING EU'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

Jeremy Shapiro, Senior Fellow and Director of Research, The Brookings Institution: *After the Storm: Forecasting the future of US-European Relations after 2008*

Abstract

During the Bush Administration, the US and Europe endured the worst transatlantic crisis in 50 years. The crisis has past, but much of the damage remains. Indeed, rather than addressing the reasons for the crisis, the US and Europe resolved it by agreeing to disagree on many of the most important issues of the day. Bush's profound unpopularity in Europe means that most European leaders are unwilling to take the political risks necessary to improve transatlantic relations. The 2008 U.S. election represents an opportunity to finally achieve meaningful transatlantic cooperation on such difficult issues as Iraq, climate change, and the role of the European Union in defense and foreign policy. Clearly such cooperation is the only way forward in transatlantic relations, but it also contains serious risks. US-European differences will not disappear under any conceivable administration. More to the point, changes in U.S. positions will be accompanied by an expectation of greater European support for US efforts in, for example, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq. It is far from clear that Europe is ready to meet such expectations.