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On May 12 of this year the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean will conduct their fourth EU/Latin America Summit in Vienna. The title of the summit—Strengthening the bi-regional Strategic Association—is very appropriate for the time in which there have been many changes in the geopolitical field since the first Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1999. Latin America's economy has been growing modestly but steadily during the past years. Gone are the days when military juntas and generals ruled, in some cases brutally, the country, and with the exception of Cuba all Latin American countries are fledgling democracies. Despite these positive changes, however, the title of the Vienna Summit also suggests that there is a need to “strengthen” the relations between these two blocs. And, there is nothing implying that the perennial problems castigating Latin America for decades had been completely eradicated. On the contrary, it is easy to argue that they had been getting worse. The war on drugs, the increasing gap between poor and rich, the immigration problem and border security with the U.S., and the preservation of the environment are some of the issues confronting most Latin American countries.

As a result, the Americas can not be ignored, neither by Europe nor by the U.S. Multilateral efforts to tackle these problems are vital. After the attacks of September 11 2001, the ongoing war on terror, the global demand for energy and the emerging of the EU as a significant world player, the world has drastically changed. In this context, the benefits Latin America can provide to the transatlantic partnership are many. As the Whitehouse learned in 2003 when trying to rally support for the war in Iraq, this conglomeration of countries must not be taken for granted.

In this new century, what is the current relationship between Europe and Latin America? Does the Western Hemisphere really matter to the Atlantic alliance? Equally important, how much validity are in the arguments that the U.S. has abandoned Latin America in pursuit of other interests? And if it has, must Europe, more precisely the EU, take charge? Can it take charge? On trying to answer these important questions, first, I will discuss more in detail the importance of Latin American countries in this context. Then I will describe the U.S. current power and its relation with these nations, and, third, analyze the growing role the EU is playing in Latin America during the last decades. Finally, after explaining the consequences of these events, I will offer some conclusions.

In short, this paper argues that despite the significant involvement of the U.S. in Latin America since the last two centuries, the U.S. has unwillingly forgotten these countries. Hence, putting at risk Latin American countries' full support to the transatlantic values, interest and ideals. Moreover, as Latin America see itself forgotten by Washington's war on terror, it seems that America is incapable to maintain the old relationship or to effectively promote the desired development and stability by itself in the region. Thus, the EU efforts to get closer to Latin America when there are some positive indications of slow democratic and economic progress are welcome and timely necessary. Yet, more needs to be done to confront old problems that still exist in this region and the new ones emerging.

Throughout the history of the transatlantic alliance, the Americas have enjoyed a significant place with Europe and the U.S. However, it was during the last century that it can be said the Latin countries had become more significant and influential. In a more and more globalized world, there are many economic, cultural and political factors that makes Latin America imperative not only in the transatlantic dialogue but also in the world.

According to latest statistics, Latin American countries comprise about 6% of the entire world population. That is more than the population estimated for the European Union which is about 456 million, and almost double of the U.S.'s which is about 298 million. Equally significantly

is the fact that, excluding these number, there are millions of Latin Americans dispersed mainly in Europe and the U.S. These number indicates, as the 2005 Strategy for a Stronger Partnership between the EU and Latin America by the Commission of the European Communities (hereafter 2005 Commission of the European Communities Report), that the region provides "enormous potential for development and plays a growing role on the international scene". Moreover, the 21 countries that integrate this bloc (including Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Haiti but excluding Puerto Rico, which is territory of the U.S. with commonwealth status), are not only linguistically, culturally and historically similar, but they all confront, to some degree, similar problems. Hence, Latin America is conjoined not only by culture but also by the same problems and challenges. Challenges and problems, I may add, that affect not only Central and South America but also the U.S. and, to some significant extend, Europe (I will expand this point further later). Keeping in mind that Europe has a smaller population than Latin America, and that Latin American countries are culturally and linguistically more homogenous vis-à-vis Europe, one would argue that a process of integration à la European Union could result more easily and produce the same positive result that Europe has produced by its own integration.

Equally important, the region also has considerable natural resources. It poses many environmental challenges as the South America's Amazon forest (which is widely believed to be the lungs of the earth) and its wide biodiversity attest. In addition, in a time when the demand for oil is drastically increasing and prices for fuel are increasing worldwide, the oil card is getting more power for at least three in countries in Latin America: Venezuela, Mexico and Brazil. For example, just from the 13 countries that produce oil in Latin America, a total of more than 10 millions barrels per day are produced. Three of the top world oil producers, Venezuela and Mexico and Brazil, have about 75.5, 33.3 and 2.0 billion barrels on reserves respectively, and they export more than 4 million barrels per day to the world, placing Venezuela right next to Iran and United Arab Emirates on oil exports. Although they are not even close to the production of oil as some Arab states produce, nor are as influential as they are, Latin American countries cannot be overlooked in this matter. A telling example that Latin American countries can use oil as political weapon is Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez (more will be talk about the Chávez factor later); who so far is the only country who has used oil to promote his "revolution" and stand against the U.S.'s policies in the Americas. Yet that does not means that the other Latin American countries that produce oil cannot use it or that are insignificant. Finally, there are two other factors that make this bloc gain more leverage in the international field and makes it relevant for the transatlantic alliance: its economic potential and its political weight. Needless to say, this bloc of more 500 million offers a potential market for the world (hence the interest of China for this region's natural resources and its strong business ties). For example, while Latin America is not a significant major import-partner for the EU, at least so far, it is indeed for the U.S. Just Mexico alone is the third U.S.'s import-partner with a 10.3 of the total imports received. However, with Asian countries investing heavily in this region, and the growing influence of Brazil, Mexico, and Chile in the world economy, the outlook for Latin America's economy does not seems too bad. For example, ECLAC (the UN's Economic Committee for Latin America), estimated a 4.3% growth for 2005 in Latin America and indicated that it has GDP per capita in the region of 2,800 euros "three times more than China" for its population. Undoubtedly, that Latin America is not an important trade partner for Europe and the U.S. cannot be successfully argued. The potential the Latin American market has is becoming more important with its modest growth modest grow and its resources.

Likewise, the West cannot overlook Latina America and their political card. Namely, the fiasco President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair underwent when trying to get the votes in the UN Security Council is a case in point. While Bush was trying use the bully pulpit, and Blair telephoned possible allies, (Mexico and Chile) who were nonpermanent

members of the Security Council to get votes they totally failed. Presidents Vicente Fox of Mexico and Enrique Lagos of Chile shocked Bush and Blair when they denied any support to the war in Iraq. Indeed, of the ten nonpermanent members elected every two years to serve in the SC, it is almost for certain that there will be at least one Latin American country in the Council. (Currently, Argentina and Peru are seated in the Security Council). Nevertheless, it is not absolute that the Latin American countries sitting in the Security Council will vote together as a bloc in all occasions—there are indeed some divisions among Latin American countries in some instances. Yet as the example above suggests, the U.S. and Europe cannot take Latin America's support for granted.

In sum, it seems evident to suggest that Latin America is growing not just in population but more importantly in influence in this new century. As its market offers a potential for the Europe and the U.S. and its natural resources are becoming more valuable, it is obvious that the Atlantic allies will commit a terrible mistake to underestimate Latin America. Lastly, its political support cannot be ignored, as the poor support for the war in Iraq shows, Hispanic countries' role in world politics can be decisive in some situations.

Much has changed since the U.S. major policies toward Latin America were the 1823 Monroe Doctrine and President Ronald Reagan's hectic military intervention during the 1980s as result of the Cold War. Indeed, a strong argument can be made that U.S. has forgotten Latin America after its entanglement with the war on terror. For example, as Astrid Arrarás has argued, before September 11, 2001, Bush made Latin America one of the priorities for his administration but the policy drastically changed after the attacks. This argument has significant relevance and it should be expanded in more details.

First, Arrarás is not alone, many other thinkers had reasoned that the attacks of 9/11 marked a new era in world politics; They might be right. We all have seen the extensive cover the media has given after 9/11 to the "war on terrorism", the way the US is using its military might abroad, and how all these has impacted the entire planet. Hence, the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which has cost the US dearly, economically, and morally.

One example comes from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). According to the OMB, the deficit for last fiscal year has been tremendously impacted with the expense of the war. While the deficit increased to the gasping amount of \$427 billion, the previous year (2004), it was only \$17 billions less. Although this amount was expected to be diminished to \$390, so far nothing has happened. Clearly, part of this alarming budget deficit has been exacerbated by the war in Iraq. Which is an indication that if the conflict continues, and it is highly likely that it will, for a substantial period of time the US deficit is unlikely to go down. This is significant because deficit means borrowing—creating more debt—for the US in order to sustain its current policies. Even worse, not only is the U.S. global economy in poor health (since 1999 America's pie of the global economy has decreased 7%.), but after the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina in parts of the South-East coast who knows to what degree the economy is going to be affected when America reaches to its pocket to pay for the expensive bill of reconstruction. As Neil Ferguson points out, after periods of surpluses from the 1970s to the 90s, the hefty amounts borrowed from the international community to cope with the challenges America faces, has made the US a "debtor empire". Is Ferguson implying the end of the American empire, or the beginning of the end? The latter seems to be the case, given these numbers one can argue that the US is in financial trouble, and this is a good indication of economic weakness; a stigma "empires" would rather not to have.

Second, while the economic front is dubious for the US, its foreign policies toward Latin America are not so encouraging either. As Charles A. Kupchan argues, it appears that with the way Washington is handling the 'war on terror' "it does not know where to head, so it certainly does not know how to get there." One of the reasons why US's policy is without direction is because America—that is, the Bush administration—still in the past. The reason: its administration's "ex—Cold Warriors" who are entrapped trying to solve today's problems with the

“challenges of the past, not the present or future”. It can be argued that this type of thinking is a realist mentality hovering in Washington’s officials: a zero-sum game, “one country’s gain is another’s loss”

The reason why President Bush is behaving this way in the war on terror, according to this view, is because his advisers have not realized that the realist’s hat of the Cold-War era should be thrown away, and obtain a new one that will reflect the new challenges presented for the US in the new century. One of the examples of how the Bush administration still thinking in this realist cold-war mentality is in the 2005 National Strategy for Victory in Iraq. This document claims that the “war on terrorism is a defining challenge of [this] generation just as the struggle against communism and fascism” (my emphasis added). This comparison, though, is misleading and ambiguous. Unlike communism, terrorism does not have a clear defined ideology: there has not been a single government explicitly embracing terrorism so it is impossible to target precisely the enemy. Al Qaeda is not the same as the late Soviet Union. Ironically, the same document acknowledges that terrorists are “a ruthless enemy, which is multi-headed, with competing ambitions and differing networks”. The threat from terrorism is not equivalent to the Soviet Union’s threat.

What is the result of these types of policies and how they have help ebb the American hegemony in Latin America? First, Washington has lost ground in the hearts and minds not only of Americans but also of the people of the world. For example, it seems that the American people, by disapproving the job Bush is doing abroad, is getting tired of carrying the burden of global security. Why should only America keep paying the high price of having the large number of casualties in this war? That the American people question its government’s policies is a clear indication that they are not in the same sheet of music with the administration. The situation abroad is equally, perhaps more, chaotic for Bush’s policies. The main core of Washington’s international relations—freedom—“has not find fertile ground in most of the world’s other civilizations”, especially in Latin America.

In fact, there is another major indication that the superiority of the US is evaporating in the international stage: its use of “soft power”. This might be America’s major problem today: although its military supremacy still as strong, it appears that its “soft power” is ebbing. As stated above, as a result Washington’s policy, the US is losing faithful adherence to its case, not only internally, but abroad as well. As the Economist reported lately, “Mr. Bush is beset by woes on all fronts...his job approval rating [is] below 40%”. With this approving rate in very low numbers, who would dare to say that his popularity is better overseas? For example, there is no need to expand on who is more welcomed in Latin America as a hero, Hugo Chávez or President Bush. While Bush encounters waves of riots and protesters demonizing him wherever he or his administration go, Chávez packs football stadiums and is lionized as if he were a superstar. Evidently, it seems that this animosity has never happened in the U.S. “backyard” before.

In view of all these, ultimately, it is apparent that US economic power is declining as result of a war without direction and an enemy that is “multi-headed”; that this war and the recent natural disasters have taken and will take a hit on the economy; and, that America is not as popular as it may wants to be throughout the world because it is loosing its “soft power” as a result of its black and white mentality (you are either “with us or against us”).

On the other hand, there are scholars who had come out to advocate in defense of Washington’s drastic actions after 9/11 and its hegemony in the world. These thinkers view the US as the “Sheriff” of the world (the one with the guns, the authority, and the will to defend the less fortune) who installs order in a chaotic world, evil or rogue states are characterized as the vandals, and the EU as the “saloonkeeper” who just serves the drinks but see no action. The most logical answer to this question of course, as Robert Kagan implies, is that the US act as super-power because it is a super-power and not because its leaders have the mentality of being one. But nothing in Kagan’s arguments address the issue that even if a state is a super

power that does not mean super-powers are for ever. History is against the US in this case; no matter how powerful (militarily) an empire was, it always went down.

But, is Washington really losing Latin America? Does not Latin America still depend heavily from U.S. economic relations? The answer to the latter question is yes, the answer to the first is maybe. According to Peter Hakim, "relations between Latin America and the U.S. today are in their lowest point since the end of the Cold War". For instance, an incident that clearly points out that this is happening is perhaps the Organization of American States (OAS). For the first time in history, the Secretary General of the OAS is not an American but a Chilean. Also, during a 2005 meeting of the OAS General Assembly, the U.S. efforts to "put a spotlight on Chávez's democratic failings" were strongly refused by Latin American diplomats. Moreover, Hakim cites that out of the 34 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, only seven supported the war. As he explains this unprecedented phenomenon, six of them were negotiating the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and the other, Colombia, receives more than \$600 million a year in US aid.

However much one can argue the contrary, two things become apparent after considering the facts above: 1) the war on terror has weakened the U.S. and as a result it seems incapable, at least for now, to concentrate its political capital in Latin America; 2) Even if the U.S. is capable to engage Latin America, the strong opposition to the war in Iraq by many Latin American countries has left a feeling that Washington does not care about this region (As a result of these factors are impacting Latin American countries, for example, in the war on drugs, but more will be said about it below). Thus, the U.S.'s policies toward Latin America are at best ambivalent. That Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was sent to "repair" ties with the Caribbean in a meeting with 14 Caribbean nation members of CARICOM on March 21 attests that Latin America feels overlooked.

As the title of the coming EU-Latin American Summit suggests, Europe is looking for "strong partnership" with Latin America in the 21st century. Although the ties of Latin America with Europe can be backed as far as the European colonial periods, as Jean B. Grugel argues, "Latin America's international relations were stunted by the U.S. fear of extra-hemispheric intervention for most of the 20th century and especially during the Cold War—hence, the Monroe Doctrine. As a result, F. Garcia Calderón wrote more than 70 years ago, "...at the end of the nineteenth century Spanish America was either unknown or despised in Europe." However much has changed since then. There are at least three linked factors that have contributed to the EU growing involvement and interests in Latin America: the emerging of "multipolar" world, the ambition of the EU to become a super power, and the desire of the EU to strengthen multilateralism and the values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

First, in one of Samuel P. Huntington's famous articles, he concludes that "in the 21st century, the major power will inevitably compete, clash, and coalesce with each other in various permutations and combinations." This idea is totally relevant within the context of the transatlantic dialogue. If Huntington is right, and so far it appears that he might be, the U.S. and Europe will see themselves acting in a world where there will be many actors, not just two as during the Cold War years. For example, that Washington is cautious with its relations with China, and that India, Brazil and EU are now getting more leverage in the international dialogue is not a mystery. There are other thinkers, however, who do not believe in the emerging of a multipolar world. For example, John Van Oudenaren states that as a result of many changing factors in the world:

A vastly greater role for the EU in representing Europe externally and a decline of all institutions not linked to the EU, the virtual disappearance of European voices in the international community that do not speak on behalf of or at least in reference to a common EU position, and the discrediting of special bilateral relationships all point to an increasing "bipolarization" of the transatlantic order.

Perhaps the new century will not have as many superpowers, as Huntington tries to argue, He

is not far off the truth though. As Oudenaren points out, this new century has the potential to be dominated not just but the US and Russia anymore but by Europe's emerging powers as well. And this, needless to say, has some consequences for Latin America and the rest of the international community.

Second, not only the Western hemisphere is receiving more attention on behalf of the EU because a multipolar world is emerging but also because of a more individual reason—the EU wants to be a superpower playing a bigger role in global politics. It needs to be clarified, however, that it is not in the sense of a “military power”, as several authors had argued, but as a “civilian power” Yet, can Brussels be a match against Washington in these terms? If it can, will it ever surpass America and become a super power and as a result embrace the U.S. forgotten Latin America?

Some intellectuals say no. For instance, Niall Ferguson has concluded that “the US has nothing to fear from either the widening or the deepening of the European Union”. Ferguson believes that the combination of the economic/military power of the US and the inching grow of the EU's economy are indications that the EU will never pass America in these terms. He cites, for example, that Europe has an ageing population threatening the future of Europe, and that its economy real growth rate is a little behind's the US. Similarly, many arguments had been made that the EU is depending on US's military power to keep its place in the world citing Kosovo's tragedy as example. In other words, these authors claim that, based on the Serbian conflict, the EU was not capable to solve this problem happening just in front of its nose, and that the US had to march in with its military power to save the world from another genocide.

What these views leave out, however, is that this shameful incident for Europe has only helped the EU to become stronger. For instance, Mark Leonard has reasoned that after this “debacle” Europe has agreed, by signing the European Security Strategy in December 2003, to a new strategy. This new strategy will have Europe ready to employ its power differently and more effectively. Hence, something meaningful that came out of the catharsis Europe experienced during the Balkan conflict is that the EU learned that it must have a clear strategy to tackle the new challenges of the 21st century. Perhaps Bosnia was a failure for the EU, namely the massacre occurred in Srebrenica, but can we judge the EU's success and future with just one single incident or event? Perhaps Europe is in a learning process and by learning from its failures or mistakes it will become more effective to achieve its goals. Moreover, this was more than a learning experience for Brussels. It is also, as Leonard states, an incident responsible for creating a “new way to make war” for Europe. Unlike the U.S., the EU does not need to have the same military capability to obtain the same results; here it is worth quoting Leonard's description of the “new method of war” for Europe:

...the European strategic doctrine is very different from America's. Military force is about building peace, not projecting power. Force may be necessary to defend Europe's values, but it will never be the heart of European foreign policy. Soldiers are deployed not to control other countries, but remove the circumstances that lead to war in the first place. European military action is above all about changing the fabric of a war-torn society. It is, in fact, about the spread of peace.

Thus, this suggests that Brussels will be able to achieve what Washington has not been able by a more peaceful method. To put it differently, the statement above indicates that preventing conflicts will be the major tactic Europe will use to stop possible deathly clashes. Instead of giving the military dosage as medicine to cure the illness, the EU will employ military troops as tonic to prevent the illness, not cure it. Although there is no way to determine if this method will be an economic burden, at least Leonard does not mention it, that does not mean that it is not a good alternative to the Washington's war mentality.

The differences between the European way and the US way to solve conflicts seem very clear.

America “justify [its] action to remove a ‘threat’ at all cost before it has the chance” to take effect, whereas the EU employs a “long-term involvement” not just militarily (as peacekeeping force) but also “pre-emptive economic and legal intervention”. This is indeed a new beast, or at least a beast that fights differently. Unlike America, Europe seems to be learning from its bloody past, and the “soft power” the US had, has now been equalized or surpassed by the EU. It is not a surprise that those European countries that are not in the union yet are hoping to be part of it one day. Neither it is not a surprise both that the European model is gaining ground around other nations that are not Europeans (including the Americas), nor is that it causing a spill over effect.

Third, there is another reason why the EU is getting closer, and it will get even close, to Latin America—multilateralism, the cherished principles of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy by the EU. For example, the 2005 Commission of the European Communities Report cites that “[b]y launching the bioregional strategic partnership [with Latin America] the two regions have committed themselves firmly on the path to multilateralism (Kyoto Protocol, International Criminal Court, combating the death penalty, etc)” While some Latin American countries had some problems accepting this principles, eventually when seeing the economic benefits of the partnership with Europe they end up accepting them.

From all these reasons, it can be argued that Latin American people will change the “American dream” for the European reality. In other words, while Hispanic are starting to see that achieving the American dream is harder and harder as result of Washington’s policies, Europe may start to seem as an alternative for a European dream. This is not saying, however, that every state in the world will be part of the European Union or that the EU will become a superstate in Hispanic America dictating what to do. Not only that will be naïve but also a mistake. Instead, this is saying that nations will try to follow the European social, economic model and embrace its ideals. Instead of interfering in Latin America’s sovereignty with guns, as Europe did centuries ago, the new Europe will use the power of institutions and international law to promote its faith in multilateralism. That Europe in the past has been just the “chorus” in the back of the stage and America the protagonist with the bloody sword in his hand does not mean that that is how it is always going to be. The possibilities of this two world players changing roles seem very high. Perhaps that is why Europe has been able to increase its “soft power”, people has been able to sympathize with the “chorus” that is in the back, than with the center stage protagonist who is imprudent and does not hesitate to use his sword to make its way. If Europe gets the protagonist role, will it also becomes disliked in the Americas?

That is unlikely because the EU does not use the sword but, as stated above, the law.

What are the consequences of Washington’s oblivion vis-à-vis Latin America? To what degree these circumstances affect the Atlantic allies? Should Europe pay more attention to the Americas? The consequences are far more than economic ones. Over all, it can be said that by Atlantic partners overlooking Latin countries they creating significant strategic problems, after the ones mentioned above, that are worth to mention.

Consequences for the U.S.

First, Washington should be worried that its hegemony in this region is ebbing. On one hand, by losing such a valuable allied, the U.S. is just digging more in the hole in which already is. First, its credibility is put into question. Hence, we have the lack of support for the war in Iraq and the growing anti-Americanism in many countries of Latin America. But more importantly, by not being active involved in trying to solve Latin America’s problems Washington is undermining its own efforts on the war on terror elsewhere. For instance, as Arrarás has argued, the Triple Border Area (the region where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay border each other) has a large Arab population that could become a hotspot for terrorism. Incidentally, the author explains that the U.S. State Department has reported this area as “a hotbed of illegal activity, including arms and drugs trafficking, smuggling, document and currency fraud, money laundering, and distribution of pirated goods”. With the problems America has with il-

legal immigration, and securing its borders one wonders why Congress has not acted to solve these issues in more pragmatic ways than producing extreme laws condemning immigration. In sum, U.S.'s 1,951 mile southern border with Mexico is not just the border between the Mexico and Washington. I would argue that is also the border between America and more than 500 million Latin Americans.

Second, it can be contended that the "war on drugs" has been put aside for the "war on terror". This has also dramatic implications, not only for Colombia and those nations who are castigated heavily with drug production and trafficking, but for the entire Western Hemisphere as well. As M. Chumakova concludes "It will take years to remove instability and pacify the country [Colombia] with an active help from the world community... Within the next few years Colombia will remain a dangerous hotspot... that drives up the temperature and increase destabilization risks in the Andean Zone". The problem is that that "active help from the world community" is not currently active in the Americas. Hence, the war on drugs, unfortunately, seems to be here to stay for a long time. The problem, it seems, is that Washington is confusing these two wars and is, as a consequence, wrongly tackling both as the same. As Arrarás states, "Since 9/11, the cornerstone of the U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America became the 'war on terror'... the Bush administration has redefined terrorism as a catch-all concept..."

Although not as dramatically, the cost of ignoring the Americas by the EU can also produce serious negative effects. Namely, the tie that so far are uniting Latin America and EU, besides the economic ones, can suffer setbacks. For instance, as the EU is the largest foreign investor in Latin America and the largest donor of aid, it is also the promoter of democratic values, the respect for international and the upholding of human rights. As stated above, the support for the U.S. in Latin America and the lack of credibility of this nation has (after the torture scandals in AbuGraib and Guantánamo) seriously been deteriorated. It is logically to conclude, therefore, that the Brussels is in better shape to represent these ideals than the Washington. More alarming for the EU, and for the rest for the Atlantic allies, however, is that democracy seems to be losing ground in Latin America. According to the 2005 Commission of the European Communities Report, democracy is in an "uncertain" state. It states that the number of Latin Americans who would be willing to "sacrifice democratic government in exchange for genuine economic and social progress is in excess of 50%. The table below (pg. 20) seems to corroborate that statement. Democracy is getting less popular. This, of course, is something of much concern for the West, how can the EU, and specially, the U.S promote democracy somewhere else when Latin America seems to prefer it less?

There is a third factor that is recently emerging in Latin America that is a concern for this region but that it should be for the Atlantic community as well—the rise of populism in Latin America since President Chávez came to power. "The upheaval", reports the New York Times, "has come as Latin America have grown frustrated with Washington-back economic prescription like unfettered trade and privatization" Moreover, the article reports that this new populist movement is seen from far south as Argentina, with the emerging of Nestor Kirchner out of an economic crisis in 2001, "to as far north as Costa Rica, where the Social Christian Party has been left in disarray by corruption scandals that enveloped two party's former presidents". That Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Ignácio Lula da Silva from Brazil and now possible Ullanta Humala, the leading presidential candidate in Peru, are emerging as an alternative, in some cases opposition to Bush's failing policies, in the region is not just causality. In fact, it seems that as the Latin America "has seen the rebirth of nationalist and socialist political movements... that were long thought to have dispatched by the cold war death squads."

More alarming yet is the fact that there are many important presidential elections scheduled for this year in many of Latin America's countries. Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, to be specific. And, in some of these countries—such as Mexico with

the center-leftist Manuel López Obrador and Nicaragua with Sandinistas party—populism seems to have the advantage. As the *Nation* concludes, “the Bush Administration now promises to wage a battle for the ‘future of Latin America’ but with few options left—except, of course the military—it is unclear if it will have any more success in what used to be U.S.’s backyard that it is having now in the Middle East”.

There many reasons, as we have seen above, to be skeptical about Latin America’s future and its role in the world vis-à-vis the Transatlantic partnership in this new century. On the one hand, the little progress Latin America has achieved during the last years of the 20th century is at perils with new populist movements in this region. Moreover, the fact that many countries in the Americas do not trust its northern neighbor as “protector” and mentor of democracy complicates the matter. In additions, the Washington entanglements with Iraq and the war on terror have had serious reactions in Latin America. But not everything is lost. Latin America can still offer hope for the West if they act deceivably and vigorously.

Now that the OAS is out of the hands of U.S., although this could be argued, it could be a good time for America to work together with this regional institution to solve some of the problems that are emerging. This would give the impression that America is really committed to the success of the OAS despite the fact that it no longer has the Secretariat.

It is obvious that the OAS is optimistic and willing to work closer wit the EU to bring the region out its troubles. For example, in an interview by the BBC Worldwide Monitor on April 5, 2006, OAS’s Secretary General Insulza clearly stated that they are hoping “strengthen co-operation... and progress in other fields such as trade, drug trafficking, and migration” with the EU. By the US supporting these negotiations, it will give the impression in the Americas that Washington is seriously committed to bring solutions in the region.

Furthermore, I believe integration is key for the development of Latin America. As mentioned in the beginning, the Americas are share many cultural similarities that make it easies to integrate them together. In fact, integration is already in progress and is giving encouraging results. This is specially true in the case of Latin America Integration Association (comprising 12 countries, the Andean Community of Nations, and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), who had promoted the ideals that EU is upholding as well as trade. As the 2005 Commission of the European Communities Reports states: “Latin America is in the lead position...in the integration path...bearing in mind that regional integration facilitates economic growth and investment...the Vienna Summit will provide an opportunity to take stock of the situation”

In addition, Brussels should avoid the mistake Washington has done—isolating and chastising the new emerging left. It did not see too well for the U.S.’s defense of democracy when Chávez was temporally toppled by a coup and Washington openly and immediately supported it. After the Chávez factor, the worse thing the West can do is disengage the new leaders and push them closer Chávez. Therefore, more dialogue and engagement should be a priority in this time of rapid political change in the Americas. As Jorge G. Castañeda concludes: “under no circumstance should anyone accept the division of the hemisphere into two camps...because under such split, the Americas themselves always lose out” In other words, the Atlantic allies should make sure that this left-leaned movement in Latin America should be engaged rather that be chastised or ignored. Europe should keep in mind that so far the U.S. does not seems to be concerned about the populism emerging, hence it the time for it to do something.

Thus far, it seems that it is in the right tract. The Commission of the European Communities Reports gives three recommendations to negotiate in the 2006 summit that are worth mentioning in this paper: 1) Promoting greater social cohesion for the benefit of all the region. 2) Strengthening democratic governance and creating Euro-Latin America parliamentary assembly, and 3) strengthening security, particularly in the fight against drugs, on a basis of shared responsibility.

These ideas seem to be a good place to start. The rhetoric is fine but definitely more practical solutions could be more effective. I am of the opinion that in this case, the U.S. should at least give full support to this process of integration and engagement since by helping the EU bringing stability in Latin America is helping itself. Also it would be a good idea to create a monitoring panel after the EU-Latin America summits are done to keep in check what progress has been made after the talks. If stability and prosperity is desired by the Atlantic partnership, then more involvement and attention to the Latin America is imperative by Washington and Brussels.

Lastly, there are indeed many thinkers who express some pessimism for the involvement of the EU in the Americas. For example, Christian Freres, has said that "it does not appears that this bi-regional encounter will be an occasion for a clear leap ahead in relations", and the "so-called strategic partnership will more likely still be as far as it is today". There will not be a "clear leap ahead", perhaps, but it will be a good opportunity for the international community, more specially, the Atlantic allies, to start thinking about doing something and keep the ideas flowing. Since the U.S. seems unable to successfully take the challenge Latin America faces in this new century, it is up to the EU to save this priceless ally. It must be done, for Latin America, for the U.S. but especially for Europe. Borrowing from Freres words, "If the EU fails there, it is unlikely to succeed anywhere else".

Endnotes:

1. For thorough analysis about Latin America's emerging economies and political reforms see the Economist, "Survey of Latin America: Under Construction", Nov. 13, 1993.
2. In this paper I used the term Western Hemisphere interchangeably with the term Latin America, it refers to the all Latin American countries and the Caribbean. However, in this paper the term excludes Canada and the U.S. See Department of State online www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/
3. Garcia, Calderon F. Latin America, Europe and the United States. Foreign Affairs; Jan. 1929, Vol. 7 p. 183
4. From the CIA World Fact Book(2006), online: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/fields/2119.html
Online available at europe.eu.int/comm/external_relations/la/doc/com05_636_en.pdf
5. Many analysts include the entire Caribbean region as part of Latin America or just the 34 countries member of the OAS. But, for the purpose of this paper I only include the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, and as part of Latin America because, historically, culturally and politically they have been more close to the Hemisphere than other countries in the Caribbean.
6. For a detail report about Latin America's challenges see The Millennium Development Goals: a Latin American and Caribbean Perspective. By ECLAC, United Nations Publication, ISBN: 92-1-121558-7, Santiago, Chile (2005).
7. European Commission (April 2002), Informe Estratégico Regional Sobre América Latina, p. 5.
8. See note 3.
9. For example, according to Peter Nunnenkamp, in Possible Effect of EU Widening on Latin America, European Journal of Development Research, Jan 2000, vol. 12 Issue 1, p. 127, since 1997 Latin American export to the EU has steady and has not surpassed the \$60 billion.
10. See note 3.
11. See note 5
12. NYT, Feb. 26, 2003, Bush Goes Global To Lobby for Votes on UN Measure; Section A, Column 6, p. 1
13. NYT, Feb. 26, 2003, Bush Goes Global To Lobby for Votes on UN Measure; Section A, Column 6, p. 1

14. Argentina's term will end this year and Peru's in 2007.
15. See Arraras.
16. See for example Greenwood, p. 301
17. Online, Available:
18. Ibid.
19. The Economist, Sep. 24th, 2005; A Survey of the World Economy, p. 23
20. p. 279
21. P. 17
22. Ibid. p. 26
23. Baldwin, p. 11
24. p. 4, Online, available:
www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq/iraq_national_strategy_20051130.pdf
25. Ibid. p. 10
26. Kupchan, p. 29
27. Ibid. p. 50
28. According to Joseph Nye the definition of "soft power" can be as follow: "A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries want to follow it, admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness...it co-opts people rather than coerces them."¹ (See Nye p. 8) (Other scholars have defined the same concept above as "influence"; which practically means "that other nations want to be like you (See for example, Moynihan, Daniel P. Presenting the American Case. American Scholar; Autumn 75, Vol. 44, Issue 4, p564-584.5).
29. Et tu, Brute?: The Waning of the Imperial Presidency, Oct. 22nd 2005, p. 36
30. The New York Times, Protesters Riot as Bush Attends 34-Nation Talks; Nov. 5, 2005, Section A, Column 6, p. 1
31. See Kagan, p. 36
32. Ibid. p. 11
33. See Is Washington Losing Latin America? Foreign Affairs. February 2006, Online:
www.foreignaffairs.org/20060101faessay85105/peter-hakim/is-washington-losing-latin-america.html
34. Indeed, even the strongly endorsed candidate by Bush, El Salvador's ex-president Francisco Flores was strongly opposed by the OAS members and the Chilean Politian Jose Miguel Insulza was elected on May 2, 2005.
35. Hakim, see note 32
36. Ibid.
37. New York Times, March 22, 2006, Rice Moves to Repair Ties with Alliance in Caribbean.
38. Garcia, p. 184
39. Huntington, p. 49
40. See for example, Christian Freres, p. 63, and Mark Leonard.
41. Ibid. p. 240
42. Kagan, p. 47
43. Ibid. p. 50
44. Leonard, p. 63
45. Ibid., p. 63
46. Nye, p. 31
47. Leonard, p. 139
48. See, see for example, Sanahuma in Trade, Politics, and Democratization: the 1997 Agreement between the European Union and Mexico. Sanahuma explains that while Mexico did not wanted to accept a "democratic clause" imposed by the EU in order reach trade negotiations, Mexico eventually accepted the clause in 1996. According to Sanahuma, "For the EU

it was important the new association with Mexico be based explicitly on democratic principles, respect for the rule of law, and human rights”.

49. That is, as the American opportunities are getting more difficult to achieve for Latinos, the European dream might become more plausible.

50. Leonard, p. 41

51. The Economist, Charlemagne: Europe's Cassandra Complex, p. 54, Oct 29-Nov 4 2005.

52. See Chumakova, p. 108

53. 2005 Commission of the European communities Report, p. 11.

54. The New York Times, Latin America's Populist Shift, by Juan Forero, April 20, 2

55. Latin America's New Consensus, The Nation; May 1, 2006 issue, online available www.thenation.com/doc/20060501/grandin

56. From the interview test of Jose Miguel Insulza by Alexandra Foederl Schmid on April 5, 200, BBC Monitoring Latin America

57. See Castañeda.

58. See EU-Latin America: Doubts Arise over May Summit, by Ramesh Jaura, Inter Press Service Agency. April 18, 2006. Online www.ipsnews.net/print.asp

59. See Freres, p. 93

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