



The state of the transatlantic partnership is not good – arguably the worst ever. Indeed, this partnership is now at risk – arguably more than ever before.

Admittedly, there have been many other moments of high tensions, whether transatlantic or intra-European. But these past tensions had a specificity that is currently lacking: they were single issue-specific but also specific to a personality or a country or a moment.

It is different this time. The crisis is complete, within and between most, if not all, members of the partnership – the United States and the states of the European Union, the EU and the US, the US and NATO, and NATO and the EU.

Everywhere, there is strategic confusion, little moral clarity, and political incoherence.

Such a condition has been building up for a while, though gaining momentum of late.

For too long and everywhere, there has been too much politics and not enough policy out of the national capitals but too much policy and not enough efficiency out of the institutions; too much ambition and not enough conviction from the top down but also too much resentment and not enough time from the bottom up.

Hence the new TPN Declaration: in a moment of global mutation, this is a moment of urgency which calls for complementary action on a new transatlantic agenda of compatible goals and shared interests.

Action does not preclude reflection, however: action without reflection is agitation. And our reflection this evening begins with three questions, to which there is a simple two-word answer that provides a flashlight for action.

First, does the Trump presidency have a future? To which the two word answer is nobody knows. Giving a yes-or-no answer at this time would be to either underestimate the incumbent president or overestimate his democratic opposition.

Second, does the EU have a future? To which the simple answer is, What else? The confusion since the June 2016 vote on Brexit serve as a reminder that however difficult it is to become and remain a member of the EU the alternative may well be worse.

And third, does NATO have a future? To which the two-word answer is, Who else? In a world in mutation, the transatlantic partnership remains vital for extending into the 21st century the global order we built during the latter half of the twentieth.

How we define and implement our common agenda and related priorities will greatly depend on our understanding of and approach to these questions.

Thus, on the way to the November 2020 presidential election in the United States, the EU countries will need to calibrate and balance their reactions – don't provoke but don't indulge. Whether as one through the Union, or as many through the national capitals, talk, talk, talk – with all available constituencies and on the full range of economic, security, political, and environmental issues – but don't sign anything, at least not yet.

And in so doing, be sure to talk European, whatever the national accent.

Across the Atlantic especially, this is emerging like a Truman moment, meaning the sort of visionary test that framed the 1948 election; for Europe, equally sensitive to the outcome of the 2020 election, this echoes a Sarajevo moment – meaning a moment when any crisis threatens to escalate into an unwanted global conflict.

With Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East, with Russia and everywhere in Europe, with China and anywhere in Asia – when dealing with trade, refugees, climate change, debt, commodities, cyber, and much more – speaking European means an ability to keep up, a will to stand up, and capabilities to step up. More specifically, it demands from Europe as a Union to keep up with its partner across the Atlantic, while standing up when necessary and stepping up as needed.

While much of the world, but also many Americans too, question what is to be expected out of America, many also wonder what is to be expected out of Europe, including many Europeans. For e all have come a long way since the first European parliamentary elections 40 years ago – since 1979, when the EU, then a Community at nine, was stagnating, and NATO, then an alliance at 15, was fading, and when Jimmy Carter's America, then confused, was struggling while Brezhnev's Russia, then ascending, was expanding. We now know what happened next.

And it is on this note I want to end: this is not a time for a time out.

There is more to America than Trump and less to Trump than America; just as there is more to the EU than Brexit and less to Brexit than the EU. In the 2020s, only an ever closer and gradually stronger Europe standing in the context of an ever more cohesive and balanced transatlantic partnership will make things happen similarly well with a new transatlantic agenda – comprehensive, responsive, and actionable – that aims at a world order worthy of what was achieved over the past seven decades.

Along the way, TPN and its members will be there to provide the reflection and the ideas that might help facilitate your choices and your actions.