The European Union and global governance
A handbook
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Publication details
Michael Smith
Published online on: 17 Dec 2010

How to cite: Michael Smith. 17 Dec 2010, The European Union, the USA and global governance from: The European Union and global governance, A handbook Routledge Accessed on: 13 Dec 2023

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The European Union, the USA and global governance

Michael Smith

It would be difficult to overstate the significance of relations between the European Union (EU) and the USA for the development of international governance broadly defined, and for global governance in particular. As the Editors of this handbook note in their Introduction, the EU can be seen as a kind of laboratory experiment in international, and indeed supranational governance, in which there have been significant transfers of authority to institutions established at the European level. In this process, the USA has frequently been seen as the EU’s most ‘significant other’, a constant presence and influence in the development of the European project. At the same time, relations between the EU and the USA reflect a complex form of ‘transatlantic governance’ (McGuire and Smith 2008: chapter 2; Pollack and Shaffer 2001; Steffenson 2005), which has led some to conclude that in this relationship we can begin to see what the nature of a ‘deep’ form of global governance might be. Finally, the EU and the USA both separately and together are key actors in processes of global governance, forming part of governance processes and at the same time constituting major ‘powers’ in a wide variety of international organizations or other contexts (Smith and Steffenson 2005).

These coexisting and intersecting forms and processes of governance, however, are not only the source of great strength and depth for EU-US relations, but also the source of a number of important debates and questions that go to the heart of discussions about international governance as a whole. What role has the USA played in the development of EU governance systems and processes, and has this role changed over the long history of relations between the European integration project and the USA? How appropriate is it to talk of processes of ‘transatlantic governance’ and to imply that these are truly special, when there are significant differences of perspective and approach between the EU and the USA on some of the key issues of transatlantic relations? How compatible are processes of European, transatlantic and global governance in a complex and rapidly changing global arena?

This essay attempts to investigate these questions and to pose another, perhaps even more fundamental one: how important are EU-US relations to the development of global governance patterns in a period when other centres of power and approaches to governance are increasingly important in the world arena? To put it bluntly, has the rise of the ‘BRIC’ countries (Brazil, Russia, India and the People’s Republic of China) and others such as South Africa begun to pose a challenge to the centrality and dominance of the EU and the USA in global governance
patterns? We shall leave this question until the end of the analysis here, since the bulk of the essay will naturally focus on how EU-US relations have contributed to present patterns of international and global governance. To be specific, the essay proceeds in three stages. First, it examines the ways in which the evolution of EU-US relations has intersected with the evolution of global governance over the past 50 years, drawing particular attention to the three elements outlined above: EU governance, transatlantic governance and global governance. Second, it explores the argument that despite their highly developed and complex interrelations, the EU and the USA embody fundamentally different approaches to international and global governance, and explores the effects this has had on their contribution to governance processes in recent years. Third, the essay focuses on a number of brief case studies, with the aim of showing how the evolution and the internal contradictions of EU-US relations have affected governance processes at the global level. The final part of the essay provides an evaluation of the evidence, and returns to the key questions posed above, especially the issue of the future of EU-US relations in the global governance context.

The EU, the USA and global governance in historical perspective

The relationship between European integration and the USA has a long history. It originated in the period immediately after the Second World War, with the onset of the Cold War and the related need for the stabilization and reconstruction of Western Europe. Despite US ambivalence about entangling itself in the affairs of post-war Europe, between 1945 and 1950 there were laid the foundations of a complex and wide-ranging partnership between the Western European countries and the dominant superpower (Grosser 1980; Ellwood 1992; McGuire and Smith 2008: chapter 1). Although there is often intense historical debate about the extent to which the USA ‘powered’ the development of European integration, there is no doubt that the European project was closely associated with the consolidation of the ‘western alliance’, which was also centred around the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the security domain (Sloan 2005).

Economic integration between the original six member states of the European Economic Community (EEC) was thus surrounded by the broader context of the Cold War, the ‘western alliance’ and confrontation between East and West in Europe. As the Cold War developed, stresses within the ‘western alliance’ became apparent, some of them, at least, closely associated with the development of European economic integration; through the 1960s and 1970s tensions between the dominant USA and the increasingly assertive European Community (EC) were at the centre of their mutual relations (Calleo 1970, 1981; Calleo and Rowland 1973). These, in turn, were linked closely to the broader global development of the Cold War and the beginnings of radical economic change in the world arena, symptomized by the energy crises of the 1970s and by the challenges to monetary and commercial stability that came to characterize the 1980s (Smith 1984). No longer was it clear that US leadership and European ‘followership’ could be taken for granted, and the radical developments that took place during the 1980s in patterns and processes of EC governance focused a large part of these tensions. The USA reacted to the development of the European Single Market Programme with initial alarm and continuing suspicion (Hocking and Smith 1997; Smith and Woolcock 1993), and when the end of the Cold War precipitated further developments in European political and monetary integration through the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the development of the euro, there were still further problems of adjustment for the US Government. We shall see later some of the ways in which these problems of adjustment have been addressed, and how they have affected EU-US and broader global processes, but it is important here to note the often
turbulent evolution of EU-US relations and the ways in which they have been affected by the broader global context.

Vital to this long process of development in EU-US relations has been the related process of development in global governance. The Bretton Woods system of international financial institutions established in the wake of the Second World War was fundamental to the ways in which European integration and EC-US relations evolved. Thus, the achievement of international financial stability and the convertibility of currencies between the Western industrial countries that was finally achieved in the late 1950s was essential to the recovery of Western Europe and thus to the progress of European integration (Diebold 1960; Krause 1968). In like fashion, the reconstruction and liberalization of world trade in the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was fundamental to the expansion of US commercial influence but also key to the establishment of the European Economic Community in the late 1950s—indeed, without Article XXIV of the GATT, which permitted the establishment of customs unions, there is a case for saying that the EEC might never have seen the light of day. As the Bretton Woods institutions came under increasing pressure in the late 1960s and 1970s, this also reflected the strains already referred to in EC-US relations; and in the early 1970s, the strains simply became too great for the system to withstand. As a result, the floating of major currencies and the reform of the global trading system that went alongside it during the 1970s and 1980s saw the EC and the USA playing central roles. Indeed, it can be argued that through the 1970s and 1980s the transatlantic partners and rivals were at the core of the continuing hard-fought liberalization of world trade and payments that lay behind the later emergence of large-scale globalization processes (Tsoukalis 1986; Woolcock and Van der Ven 1985).

It was this intersection—between the development of EC/EU-US relations and the process of global liberalization that powered globalization—that continued to drive forward key institutional and political developments in the world arena during the 1990s. At the EU level, after the broad completion of the Single Market Programme and the establishment of economic and monetary union as a key policy objective, a host of other developments in policy areas such as environmental regulation, food safety, communications and information technology and transport became salient, while the initiation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) gave the EU a stake in what came to be termed ‘security governance’ (M. Smith 1998). At the same time the Bill Clinton Administrations between 1993 and 1999 provided a broad framework of multilateralism for US policies, which was able to accommodate at least some of the major developments in global governance that emerged during the decade after the end of the Cold War. Not only this, but at the transatlantic level there was established during the 1990s an increasingly complex and wide-ranging set of EU-US partnership agreements—the Transatlantic Declaration of 1990, the New Transatlantic Agenda of 1995 with its accompanying Action Plan, and the Transatlantic Economic Partnership first mooted in 1998 (Pollack and Shaffer 2001; Steffenson 2005) and then extended in 2007 with the creation of the Transatlantic Economic Council (Allen and Smith 2008). An unprecedented level of transatlantic economic and regulatory co-operation developed during these years, notwithstanding the persistence of important trade and other disputes (Petersmann and Pollack 2003; Pollack and Shaffer 2001; Peterson 1996; Steffenson 2005; Pollack 2005a). While it was much more difficult and contentious to try to develop transatlantic security co-operation at the EU-US level, there was none the less tangible progress towards transatlantic security consultation not merely through NATO but also between the EU and the USA (Howorth 2007).

The result of this long evolutionary process can be summarized quite readily at one level. The evolution of EU governance reflected at many stages—and in at least some of its core institutions—important US influences and the broader context of the Cold War and after. At
the same time, there had developed a complex set of partnership arrangements that could be seen as the basis for a new system of ‘transatlantic governance’. Finally, the EC/EU and the USA had over a long period been key components of processes of global governance, reflected especially in the Bretton Woods institutions but also in the ways those institutions adapted to new economic challenges between the 1970s and the 1990s. However, this relatively clear-cut summary becomes markedly less clear when one considers the continuing tensions at all levels between the process of European integration and the pursuit of US leadership, and when one considers the greatly extended role for processes of global governance in the later years of the Cold War and thereafter. The next section of this essay reviews a number of the issues that have become especially apparent during the new millennium, as context for a set of case studies in the following part of the essay.

The EU and the USA: Contending governance models?

The essay so far has outlined the extensive history of EU-US relations and the ways in which these have intersected with issues of international and global governance. During the first decade of the 21st century a number of challenges have arisen to the presumptions of partnership that underlay even the most contentious of the issues arising between the EC and the USA from the 1950s to the 1990s. We need to ask how far the conflicts and disputes of the past few years reflect structural components of the EU-US relationship; how far they are the result of forces lying outside that relationship; and how they might be expected to develop in the next decade. These questions are key to our understanding of governance processes at all three of the levels identified in this essay: European, transatlantic and global.

First, let us explore the EU approach to questions of international and global governance. It has frequently been argued that this reflects in many ways the nature of the EU itself as a complex system of multilevel governance (McGuire and Smith 2008: chapter 2; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998), and the priorities generated by the need to maintain and preserve this system within a changing global arena. It can be argued that the EU manifests the characteristics of a ‘trading state’, with an emphasis on multilateralism, negotiation and the use of ‘civilian power’ in the pursuit of a stable and accommodating world (M. Smith 2004a; see also Rosecrance 1986, 1993). This gives EU policies a distinct flavour: the Union favours the extension of global governance and the achievement of ‘effective multilateralism’, and is thus very often first in the queue when it comes to the establishment, maintenance and extension of international regimes and other mechanisms of global governance (Elgström and Smith 2008; Ortega 2007). In almost all cases, the Union privileges the pursuit of ‘problem-solving’ negotiations, the generation of new international rules and conventions, and the use of ‘soft power’ in pursuit of enhanced global governance. In turn, as Martin Ortega (2007) and others have argued, the EU fulfils a dual role in global governance processes: on the one hand it is a model through its achievement of a complex and ‘deep’ system of governance at the European level, while on the other it is a key actor in the development of global governance institutions and processes because of its ‘weight’ in areas such as international trade, the management of the global environment and (increasingly) the achievement of security in a wide range of non-military areas. The EU’s White Paper on Governance, published in 2001, made this aspect of the EU’s relationship to global governance crystal clear:

The objectives of peace, growth, employment and social justice pursued within the Union must also be promoted outside for them to be effectively attained at both European and global level. This responds to citizens’ expectations for a powerful Union on a world stage.
Successful international action reinforces European identity and the importance of shared values within the union.

*(European Commission 2001a, cited in Ortega 2007: 92)*

This extract makes abundantly clear the link between the EU’s pursuit of global governance and the internal development of the Union. This is not simply a matter of material interest, though; the pursuit of effective global governance with the Union at its core reflects fundamental normative commitments of the Union and its member states, and the pursuit of an effective EU identity within the broader world arena. So the pursuit of and participation in global governance is a form of ‘self-realization’ for the Union which adds to its international legitimacy and to the internal attachment of European citizens. This normative and affective dimension is a key element of the EU’s international role, and means that the pursuit of global governance can be seen as built in to the Union’s international role more generally. It also means that participation in global governance can feed back beneficially into the European integration process, strengthening it and providing a form of ‘cement’ derived from international activity and ‘presence’.

This does not mean that the EU’s participation in global governance is purely altruistic, and this is where some important contradictions arise. Although the EU and its agents such as the European Commission sometimes present the Union as a participant in global governance ‘for its own sake’, there do arise occasions when the Union needs to act much more like a conventional ‘power’ in the process. In trade policy, for example, it is by no means clear that the EU operates ‘multilateralism for multilateralism’s sake’ in a consistent fashion; the stakes are high enough, and the internal pressures strong enough, for the Union to be at best a reluctant multilateralist and at worst a blatant unilateralist (Meunier and Nicolaïdis 2005). So the reality is that the EU’s professed deep commitment to global governance and multilateralism needs to be qualified with reference to ‘events’ and material interests.

Very often, a sharp contrast is drawn between the EU’s commitment to multilateralism, negotiation and ‘civilian power’, and the USA’s practices of unilateralism, coercion and the deployment of ‘hard power’, especially in the military domain (M. Smith 2004a; Pollack in Petersmann and Pollack 2003). This contrast has important implications for the study of EU-US relations in the context of global governance. To put it crudely, American policy-makers are likely to put the pursuit of global governance ‘for its own sake’ in a subordinate position on their list of global priorities. For them, the key is material interest, shaped by perceptions of the USA’s predominant position in the global arena. These interests and perceptions are often seen as reflecting an ‘American exceptionalism’, which is a consistent thread running through US foreign policy since at least the late 19th century (Deudney and Meiser 2008). The USA is seen as a power unlike any other, not only because of its exceptional material power, but also because of its embodiment of a certain form of government—liberal democracy. In a way, of course, this can be seen as matching the form of ‘European exceptionalism’ embodied in some of the EU assumptions outlined above, but it leads in markedly different directions when it comes to the conduct of practical policy (M. Smith 2009).

Such an orientation gives the USA a particular position on matters of global governance. To put it simply, international co-operation, seen by the EU and generally its member states as a matter of necessity (both for the sake of the EU and for the broader global good) is seen by US policy-makers as a matter of choice. The use of global governance processes and institutions is conditioned by considerations of US ‘grand strategy’, and occupies a largely instrumental position within the conduct of US international policies. While different US administrations will vary in the vehemence with which they state this position, the central tendency is towards the
instrumentalization if not the marginalization of those institutions that the EU often sees as central to its international presence and identity. As a result, the USA can exercise its raw power in relation to institutions of global governance not only by using them as instruments of active policy, but also by ignoring them and exercising its power of defection (Foot, MacFarlane and Mastanduno 2003; Barnett and Duvall 2005; Keohane 2003).

This is not to argue that US administrations are against the governance of international transactions per se. However, it is important to note that when Americans talk about the governance of international affairs, they often see the USA as the ‘governor’. A very clear statement of this position can be found in the work of Michael Mandelbaum (2005), who argues forcefully that the USA is effectively ‘the world’s government’, providing essential public services for the global community through its provision of leadership and its deployment of material power. Crucially, Mandelbaum argues also that the EU is in no position to challenge the USA in this domain, and that it suffers from disabling internal limitations that effectively preclude it from ever posing such a challenge:

The most consequential problem [emerging from what he describes] in European-American relations is not the failure of the United States to consult with European governments but rather the failure of those governments to muster the resources to make major contributions to global governance. Their failure means that when the United States acts unilaterally, it does so as much by default as by design. The Europeans endeavour to produce good behaviour on the part of potentially dangerous countries by the force of their example, not by force of arms. They see their global mission as embodying civilisation but not defending it.

(Mandelbaum 2005: xx–xxi)

This quotation is significant not only for the obvious attack on the collective action capacity of the EU, but also for its interpretation of ‘global governance’, which is ultimately defined in terms of security and the countering of key threats from ‘dangerous countries’ (for further discussion see Foot, MacFarlane and Mastanduno 2003: introduction and conclusion). As such, it accurately reflects two of the key assumptions that lie at the centre of US policies on global governance issues: first, they are about vital national interests defined in terms of power, threat and security; second, they demand ‘real’ power, and not the kind of abstractions such as ‘civilian power’ or ‘normative power’ that have been seen as central to the EU’s pursuit of global governance. Put simply, the idea that the EU is a ‘model’ or an effective participant in global governance would be met with considerable scepticism by Americans (and others) holding this more ‘power-centred’ or ‘realist’ position on global governance more generally.

From this discussion, it might seem that the EU and the USA occupy not only different positions but also different worlds when it comes to issues of global governance (M. Smith 2004a; Lindberg 2005; Kagan 2003). On the EU side there is a commitment to multilateralism and governance that emerges from the very essence of the Union, reinforced by material and strategic interests. On the other side there is a commitment to national priorities and the exercise of national power that threatens to reduce global governance to the margins of international discourse and action. The clearest possible manifestation of these tendencies seems to have been the period of the George W. Bush Administrations in the USA, during which it appeared at times that entirely different visions of world order and global governance were being pursued on the two sides of the Atlantic, and during which both the strengths and the limitations of the EU’s approach to global governance issues were sharply exposed (Lindberg 2005; M. Smith 2004a). Three points need to be made about this stark contrast, though. First, the Bush Administrations were not the first to have displayed their scepticism both of global governance
and of the EU’s role in it, and they will not be the last. Second, although the contrast seems both stark and fundamental, we have already noted that on the one hand, the EU can practise the politics of unilateralism and on the other, there will be significant variations in the extent to which US policy-makers allow national priorities to crowd out considerations of global welfare (Pollack 2003; Kaldor 2004). Finally, it must also be noted that despite differences in style and policy practices, the EU and the USA are locked in a situation of ‘competitive interdependence’ where the actions of one often condition and shape the actions of the other (Sbragia 2009). One way of illustrating these variations and fluctuations is to look at a selection of policy areas, to show the nature of EU and US approaches and to evaluate them in light of our earlier arguments about the coexistence of European governance, transatlantic governance and global governance.

Exploring policy issues

In this part of the chapter, we look briefly at a range of international governance issues, in order to demonstrate some of the nuances that arise in EU-US relations when they are put to the practical test. In pursuing these cases, two dimensions of analysis are important: first, the multi-level nature of EU and US entanglement in issues of international and global governance, and second, the apparently stark contrast between the fundamental EU and US approaches to matters of international and global governance outlined in the preceding section. The cases will be presented in outline form and then an overall evaluation will be presented.

Case 1: The governance of global trade: This is perhaps the site of the longest-standing EU-US entanglement, reflecting the fact that negotiations within the GATT and then the World Trade Organization (WTO) between the two entities have taken place since the late 1950s, if not before. The series of global trade negotiations that began in the 1960s with the Kennedy Round and continued in the shape of the Doha Development Round has seen perpetual confrontation between the EC/EU and the USA, especially over issues such as agriculture (Meunier 2005; Petersmann and Pollack 2003). As the agenda of the global negotiations has broadened to include not only trade in goods but also trade in services and other areas such as intellectual property rights, it has become progressively more difficult to draw a sharp distinction between EU and US positions, and indeed there has been increasing evidence of a recognition of common interests between the EU and the USA in areas where they are challenged by ‘emerging economies’. Both the EU and the USA have had to face the demands of countries such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa, and have made joint efforts to resist or adapt to them. There are clear differences between EU and US positions on the ways in which the WTO should operate—the EU is much more enthusiastic about rules-based processes, the USA more inclined to favour litigation-based processes—but increasingly there has been a process of mutual learning within the WTO context. This has been supported by the development of ‘early warning’ and dispute-management processes at the transatlantic level, in which the New Transatlantic Agenda and then the Transatlantic Economic Partnership have played a central role (Petersmann and Pollack 2003; Pollack and Shaffer 2001; Steffenson 2005). In some areas it has been further enhanced by the development of ‘domestic’ processes that draw on the lessons of the European integration processes or the changing functions of the US Government; some of these areas, such as competition policy or standards-setting are not classical ‘trade policy’, but are core to the broadening area of ‘commercial policy’ in which traditional trade issues are increasingly embedded (Damro 2006a, 2006b).

Case 2: Environmental governance: Those looking for the EU’s major successes in the promotion of international governance often look no further than the area of environmental regulation. Here, the coincidence of developments within the European integration process with a set of
key multilateral environmental initiatives in the early 1990s set the scene for a great increase in the EU’s environmental activism. The creation of a broad environmental competence in the Maastricht Treaty of 1991 was at the core of this development, although there had been growing environmental concern at the European level over the preceding decade. At the same time the framing effects of the Rio Summit (1992) and a series of successor conventions, particularly in the area of climate change, created an international stage on which the EU could develop a growing presence (Bodansky 2003; Vogler and Bretherton 2006). Meanwhile, the USA had experienced a fluctuating and uneven level of commitment to multilateral or global processes of governance in this area of policy, reflecting the pressures exerted by domestic interest groups such as the automobile industry. Things came to a head at the Kyoto Conference of 1997, where an initial US willingness to adhere to the resulting Kyoto Protocol was replaced by a failure to ratify it under the Clinton Administration, and then by outright opposition under the Bush Administration after 2001 (Eckersley 2008). This was a particular problem for implementation of the Protocol, since it depended on ratification by countries representing a majority of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions (and the USA was, and still is, the biggest emitter, followed by China, which also failed to ratify the Protocol). In this context, the EU took it upon itself not only to proceed with implementation on its own account, but also to pursue a campaign aimed at obtaining ratification in the required number of countries (Bodansky 2003; Allen and Smith 2005). Eventually, this resulted in the crucial ratification, that of Russia, being obtained and the Protocol entering into force. Later negotiations about a possible successor Protocol managed to obtain the grudging acquiescence of the USA under George W. Bush, and again the role of the EU seems to have been significant in persuading the USA to re-enter the process. The Barack Obama Administration elected in 2008 showed a much stronger commitment to the global process, but also showed at an early stage that it considered China to be at least as important as the EU in establishing new agreements. At the transatlantic level, an Environmental Dialogue arose from the New Transatlantic Agenda of 1995, but this does not appear to have been influential on any consistent basis in determining the ‘high politics’ of climate change negotiations (Steffenson 2005).

**Case 3: Energy governance:** The picture presented by this third case is rather different. On trade and commercial policy, the EU and the USA operate on relatively equal terms and have learned certain lessons of co-operation. On environmental issues, the EU seems to have been able to take an effective lead, although the USA remains crucial to the process. When it comes to energy—and especially energy security—the mechanisms of global governance in general are far less well-developed, and there is still an atmosphere of ‘every country for itself’ in relation to crises of supply or price, further complicated by the presence of major multinational oil companies, some state-owned and some private. This is not to say that energy security is unimportant to the EU and the USA: in fact, since 2000 there has been constant attention by both to the issue in the light of major increases in price and accompanying concerns about the politics of supply. The EU has spent a lot of time and effort on trying to stabilize its energy supplies, with particular reference to relations with Russia and countries in the former USSR, and has produced successive programmes for the promotion of energy security, including those of late 2008 and 2009. At the same time the USA has become increasingly concerned about security of supply from the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, which for them is linked closely with other security preoccupations. The result of these two sets of pressures and priorities has been a classic confrontation between the EU approach, based on negotiation and the conclusion of supposedly binding supply agreements, and the US approach, based at least partly on the use of coercion and, if necessary, force. While it is misleading to argue that the only motivation for US intervention in Iraq during 2003 was security of oil supplies, this was clearly a significant aspect of
US policy-making. Another example is provided by the crises surrounding supply of gas from Russia via Ukraine to EU member states, which came to a peak in 2007 and 2009; here, the solution was sought, primarily by the EU, in terms of monitoring arrangements and the search for binding supply and transit undertakings. At the same time, there were accusations from Moscow that the USA had intervened to bolster the Ukrainian position and in pursuit of a kind of ‘containment’ policy. Calls for a Transatlantic Energy Security Dialogue from the EU were met with silence from the USA.

Case 4: Governing global security: Each of the issues outlined thus far has a link to global security—often a very explicit one. However, they are generally separable in terms of global governance from what has come to be called ‘security governance’. This is taken to encompass a complex array of security agreements and institutional arrangements that are aimed at generating a more secure world, either on a regional basis or on a more general global basis. Here we have very clear statements by both the EU and the USA about how they consider regional or global security might be enhanced: on the one hand, we have the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003 (revised in 2008–09), and on the other hand we have successive US National Security Strategies (NSS), especially those of 2002 and 2006 produced by the Bush Administrations (Dannreuther and Peterson 2006; Mahnke, Rees and Thompson 2004). The ESS focuses overwhelmingly on the need for an orderly world, and proposes that this should be promoted through the use of international law and organizations, with the EU playing a key role in regional (and broader) conflict prevention and crisis management. The central theme running through this document (and through subsequent institutional and policy developments within the EU) is that of ‘effective multilateralism’, which implies an enhancement of the credibility and impact of multilateral institutions, with the EU playing a prominent role (Asmus 2006). In contrast, the NSS of 2002, which was revised but not supplanted by that of 2006, places the key emphasis on national power and its mobilization; the world is described in terms of key threats emanating from ‘rogue states’ or other comparable sources, and the means to counter this is essentially through the deployment of national power, including where appropriate military power (Howorth 2006). Indeed, there is within the NSS of 2002 a doctrine not just of prevention but also of pre-emption—getting one’s retaliation in first, so to speak. There is here a very marked contrast to the world as seen from Brussels: that world is one of increasing security governance through multilateral bodies, whereas from Washington the view is one of state power, with multilateral institutions assuming a very minor role if they do not support the US position. It would be wrong, though, to pretend that this is the whole of the story. The EU, especially, has not only adopted a broader view of security governance than that espoused by the USA, but it has also taken a far broader view of security itself, with an emphasis on human security and on what has come to be called ‘comprehensive security’. Not coincidentally this also reconfigures the notion of security to one in which the strengths of the EU (economic, social, legal) can be more effectively deployed, and for some underlines the EU’s comparative advantage in the area of security governance. This advantage, it can be argued, is especially evident in Europe itself, where the EU for a variety of reasons has the structural power and presence needed to further regional security governance (Webber 2007); but even here, the coexistence and interaction of the EU and NATO as instruments of regional security governance has been an important feature of recent developments (Hyde-Price 2007; Kirchner and Sperling 2008). It can be argued that the EU and the USA are both part of a ‘liberal security community’ in which differences about security governance more generally, while not eliminated, are at least moderated (for a range of views see Forsberg and Herd 2006; Risse 2002).

It would be possible, of course, to extend the range of cases here in many ways—we have not, for example, mentioned issues of human rights or of development co-operation, where
there are again important areas of contrast and interaction between the EU and the US positions—but this small selection gives an impression at least of the range that might be considered. It remains to assess the implications of these cases and to relate them to the more general argument put forward in this essay.

**Evaluation and conclusions**

This essay has argued that both the EU and the USA play central roles in the evolution and practice of global governance. It has gone beyond that general statement to note that the EU and the USA in fact form part of a complex multilevel system, in which European governance, transatlantic governance and global governance are all implicated, and in which the linkages between the three levels are both consequential and difficult to manage. Further, the essay has explored the contrasting EU and US approaches to international governance issues, arguing that while there are clear basic differences of style and assumptions, there are also areas of convergence and shared practice. Beyond this, the essay has outlined a number of cases in which these divergent and convergent approaches can be discerned, and in which the three levels (European, transatlantic and global) can be seen to intersect and interact. These cases show that even in the area of security governance, it is no longer possible to ignore the presence of the EU, and that US policy-makers have had to adapt to this shift in the relationship between the two entities.

Saying this, though, begs the question that was posed at the beginning of the essay and which is one of the key questions for the next period in EU-US relations. If we assume that long experience of interaction, and a process of mutual learning, has produced at least some elements of stability in EU-US relations as applied to international and global governance, how might this be affected by the major structural shifts taking place in the global arena? The emergence (or in some cases, re-emergence) of the ‘BRIC’ countries, and of others such as South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia (all members of the ‘G20’ group that was seen as central to the management of the global financial crisis in late 2008 and early 2009) has created the possibility at least that transatlantic relations are no longer the fulcrum for global governance; that, increasingly, different models of both national and international governance will contend within the global arena. There have certainly been strong indications of this (for example) in the WTO and in global environmental governance. Whereas until recently it could be argued that many aspects of global governance were bilateral (EU-US) within a multilateral structure, now it might be the case that we are moving into a multipolar system within the same multilateral structure and assumptions (Grevi and de Vasconcelos 2008). The implications for European, transatlantic and global governance might well be profound.