

## **FEATURED EVENT**

### **THE US AGENDA IN THE BALKANS AND THE BLACK SEA**

**LECTURE by Bruce Jackson, President of the Project on Transitional Democracies-**

*Athens, 3 June 2005*

Mr. Jackson opened his lecture on “**The US Agenda in the Balkans and the Black Sea**” by referring to the fundamental change that occurred in the Bush administration from the first to the second term. Bush’s first term was marked by the war in Iraq. In his second term, wanting to be remembered for something other than being a war President, Mr. Bush shifted his policies to, what is called, domestic compassionate constructivism and compassionate internationalism. He now values multilateral institutions and is keen in collaborating on many issues with the European Union. It is interesting to note that most people who were nominated in his Cabinet for the second term are ‘Europeanists’ (Jackson’s term), such as Condoleezza Rice and Paul Wolfowitz.

The Bush of the second term, with his visionary statements seems more like a son of Ronald Reagan than of George Bush Senior. These visionary statements are becoming effective policies. A characteristic example is Belarus’ and Ukraine’s successful democratization processes.

The European Union, however, is in a different position from that of the new outward-looking America. The Europe of 1968, a dynamic and active force in global politics seems to have transformed itself into an inward-looking E.U., which is overwhelmed by unemployment and stagnating economies. Despite their different dynamics during Bush’s second term, America and the E.U. have formed a close relationship. The only potential collision core between the two sides of the Atlantic is the debate concerning the future status of the E.U. Two models are in question: the creation of a course Europe versus a wider Europe.

America is in favor of the development of a wider Europe. With the creation of a wider E.U. the massive transformation that occurred in Europe in 1989 will at last be completed. Moscow and the West will reconcile only when the West comes geographically close to Moscow. That is why one of America’s main arguments is for Europe to open up more to the countries of the former communist block. That is one of the reasons why in a period of four months Bush visited three times that rejoin, going to countries, such as Georgia, that until recently used to be unknown to Americans.

Another reason why the US wants the E.U. to follow the model of a wider Europe is for it to cease being dependant on Middle Eastern oil. By opening-up its boundaries to the Caspian and Black Sea states, it will open up to their oil supplies too. However, the US wants the EU to tackle the issue of democratization in the Middle East, defining it as the whole Islamic world. The US does not have a single Middle-Eastern policy, there are about seven different ones and the administration is far from presenting a strategy to its citizens and building a national consensus. Thus, it needs the help of a wider Europe, which will include part of the Middle East, meaning Turkey.

Mr. Jackson concluded his lecture by summing-up the three main projects on which the US and the EU ought to collaborate: Firstly, the creation of permanent Balkan peace; secondly, the stabilization and integration of the Baltic; thirdly EU’s spread to the East (Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus). The fundamental reasoning that lies behind these projects and the support for the wider Europe model is the administration’s belief that democratic changes in Europe will positively affect and influence similar transformations in other areas of the world. A democratic change in Belarus, for example, may trigger a change in Bangladesh.

