

**Atlantic Partnership/Atlantic Community in John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Speech of 1961**



**Key Dates**

- 1939 In the work *Union Now!* Clarence Streit forwards the concept of an Atlantic Federal Union, promoting democratic unity.
- June 5 1947 European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan) is established, providing monetary aid to rebuild European economies and help prevent the spread of Soviet Communism.
- April 4 1949 Signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. Targeted at maintaining the security of the North Atlantic Area.
- June 18 1954 The Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA) was established, striving to advance the interests of security and democracy in North America and Europe.
- March 25 1957 Signing of the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC.)
- January 1 1961 Atlantic Institute for International Affairs founded, promoting economic, political and cultural relations among NATO allies.
- January 20 1961 In his inaugural speech, John F. Kennedy calls for “a host of cooperative ventures” among the “old allies.”
- Fall 1961 Foundation of the Atlantic Council. In response to fears that the Western alliance was fragmenting, the Council encouraged communication and cooperation between North America and Europe.
- Sep. 1961 The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development founded (OECD)

**Why Atlantic Partnership?**

Geir Lundestad - “To fight Soviet Communism the resources of the United States and Western Europe had to be fitted into an Atlantic framework.”

Jeffrey Giauque - "Shared democratic values, interest in economic development, and need for a strong political and military front against the Soviet bloc held the Atlantic states together and encouraged the development of new means of co-operation."

#### What concerned Kennedy in 1960/1961?

Geir Lundestad - Increasing fears about the EEC keeping American goods out of Europe and apprehension over Europe becoming a "Third Force" which would exclude the United States.

Melvin Small - "Problems had developed within the alliance during the late fifties involving the return to power of Charles de Gaulle in France, the possible participation of Great Britain in the Common Market, the balance of payments, the command and control of nuclear weapons within NATO, and a general feeling of malaise revolving around the feeling that those committed to American-European cooperation who were 'present at the creation' of early Cold War institutions like NATO were fast disappearing from the political scene."

#### How did Kennedy seek to address the "malaise" and reinforce Atlantic partnership and cooperation?

John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address - "To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do--for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder."

Jeffrey Giauque – Through closer consultation with European allies "the administration aimed to reach its goal of US leadership in the political, economic, conventional defense, and nuclear defense arenas by creating an Atlantic Community based on NATO, sweeping tariff reductions, and the Multi-Lateral Force."

#### **Suggestions for Further Reading**

John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy." January 20 1961.  
<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Quotations/Inaugural-Address.aspx>

[Audio Version] John F. Kennedy, "Swearing-in ceremony and Inaugural address, 20 January 1961." <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKWHA-001.aspx>

Costigliola, Frank, "The Pursuit of Atlantic Community: Nuclear Arms, Dollars and Berlin," in Thomas Paterson (Ed.), *Kennedy's Quest for Victory* (1989): 24-57.

Geir, Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Giauque, Jeffrey G., "Offers of Partnership or Bids for Hegemony? The Atlantic Community, 1961-1963." *The International History Review* 22.1 (2000): 86-111.

Sloan, Stanley, *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community: the Transatlantic Bargain Reconsidered*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield: 2003.

Small, Melvin, "The Atlantic Council: The Early Years." 1 June 1998.  
<http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/small.pdf>