

intensification of European-American relations. Baker declared that as the EC moves toward its goal of a common internal market, embarks on institutional reform and assumes increasing responsibility in certain foreign policy areas, the US's trans-Atlantic relationship with the Community would have to evolve as well.²² For this purpose, Secretary Baker proposed at Berlin that the US and the European Community should strive to achieve "a significantly strengthened set of institutional and consultative links...whether in treaty or some other form".

The importance of Secretary Baker's speech should not be underestimated since it reflects the evolution of the US-Western Europe relationship - from that of patron-client in the immediate post-war years to that of equal partners in the 1990s.²³ The EC and its Member States as well as the US government took up Baker's initiative in a joint declaration on 15 December 1989. Closer contacts were then agreed upon during a meeting between President Bush and the President of the EC Council of Ministers, Irish Prime Minister Haughey, in February 1990;²⁴ Bush and President Mitterrand also discussed the possibility of a trans-Atlantic alliance during a meeting at Key Largo later that spring.

It must be emphasized, however, that the Bush/Haughey announcement and the other discussions with the Member States concerning the possibility of a trans-Atlantic alliance were related to European political cooperation - an EC Presidency matter, and were thus on a separate track from the US-Community Ministerial meetings. This is an important distinction because although the Bush administration — which had distinguished itself from previous administrations by trying to broaden bilateral relations away from a fixation on trade irritants — sought consciously to develop new opportunities to insert the US in the EC political process before decisions were taken, it pointedly backed away from Commerce Secretary Mosbacher's ill-received remarks about the US wanting a 13th seat at the EC table.²⁵ (The US's reluctance to pursue a trans-Atlantic trade agreement in favour of a political declaration instead is, as we shall discuss, interesting in the light of Canadian examinations of a trans-Atlantic trade treaty.)

The stage of development reached by the EC-US Ministerial meetings in 1989 also bears some exploration because it shows the incremental formalization of EC-US relations. These meetings were chaired by the President of the Commission of the European Communities and the US Secretary of State, and included a number of US Cabinet officers (USTR, Commerce, and Agriculture Secretaries) and several European Commissioners (always External Relations, often Agriculture, Industry, Internal Market). They had been annual events for some time, and were usually tied logistically to NATO ministerial meetings in Brussels. As EC-US discussions