

'Old' Europe reuniting East with West

Level 2 | Intermediate

1 Pre-reading: Key Vocabulary

Match the words with their meanings

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. a summit | a. to disagree with a plan or a policy |
| 2. hawks and doves | b. people in favour of military methods and people against them |
| 3. enlargement | c. an occasion on which everyone can vote to make a decision of a specific subject |
| 4. pro-American | d. an important action that is intended to solve a problem |
| 5. to oppose | e. a meeting between the leaders of different countries |
| 6. a referendum | f. the process of making something larger |
| 7. a treaty | g. in favour of the Americans |
| 8. an initiative | h. an official written agreement between two or more countries |

2 Pre-reading: Who's Who?

Match the names with the titles:

George Bush	Jacques Chirac	Donald Rumsfeld
Romano Prodi	Adrian Nastase	Bronislaw Geremek

1. The Prime Minister of Romania
2. The President of France
3. The former Polish foreign minister
4. The President of the United States
5. The US defence secretary
6. The president of the European Commission

Now read the text and check your answers:

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Europe's relations with the United States have been one of the victims of the Iraq crisis so far. But a war with Iraq could also have an effect on Europe's biggest project so far – the reunification of Western and Eastern Europe. This was what Jacques Chirac, the French president, seemed to suggest last week, when he criticised the east European countries for publicly supporting George Bush's policy on Iraq. At the end of the emergency Brussels summit on Iraq, Chirac said their behaviour was "infantile" and "dangerous". Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the other EU candidates had "missed a good opportunity to keep quiet", he said. "When you are in the family, after all, you have more rights than when you are asking to join, and knocking on the door." Romania and Bulgaria were told they had been particularly incautious since they were still applying to join the EU.

Chirac's criticism came at the end of a long day of arguing over the summit declaration, which managed to offer something for both hawks and doves in a divided union. It was not simply an expression of anger by a tired 70-year-old anxious to get back to the Elysee Palace for a good night's sleep, but a carefully calculated warning. France has never been enthusiastic about the EU's

eastern enlargement, which it sees as a British plan to change the character of the European Union that France helped to found. It will be harder for French farmers when Polish farmers are in the EU. French has been replaced by English as the main language of the European Union. And, worst of all, the post-communist governments in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, the Baltics, Slovenia and Slovakia are mostly pro-American.

Last month Chirac was furious when Donald Rumsfeld, the US defence secretary, criticised France and Germany as "old Europe" in contrast to the friendlier easterners of "new Europe". The pro-American open letter of the "gang of eight" - five current EU members and three of the new candidates - seemed to confirm the point. So did the month-long argument inside Nato, when France, Germany and Belgium opposed Nato plans to defend Turkey in case of attack by Iraq.

France is not alone in its criticism of the Eastern European countries. Germany has complained too that it is wrong of the candidates to accept money from Brussels and then give their support to Washington. Romano Prodi, the president of the European Commission, said he was "very, very disappointed" by the position of the future member states. Chirac even suggested that the question of enlargement might be put

to a referendum in France.

The final deal for enlargement was done at the Copenhagen summit last December; the treaty for the 10 newcomers will be signed in Athens in April and referendums will be held in the coming months. They are scheduled to join on May 1, 2004.

The responses from the Eastern European countries were careful. Bronislaw Geremek, the former Polish foreign minister, pointed out that France and Germany had not consulted the other current EU member states when they launched an initiative to prevent military action against Iraq. He also pointed out that this was before the letter expressing support for Bush.

Some people recognised that this was not really an attack on the Eastern European countries. "Every time I have an argument with my wife I shout at my sons," explained Romania's prime minister, Adrian Nastase. By which he meant that France's problem was with the US and Britain, but it was far easier to criticise the easterners.

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3 Comprehension Check

Choose the best answer for each question

1. The support of Eastern European countries for the American policy on Iraq
 - a. could have a positive effect on the reunification of Western and Eastern Europe
 - b. could have a negative effect on the reunification of Western and Eastern Europe
 - c. is not important

2. The French believe that the enlargement of the European Union
 - a. is a British plan to change the character of the European Union
 - b. is an attempt to introduce English as the main language of the Union
 - c. is anti-American.

3. Why was Jacques Chirac furious?
 - a. Because Donald Rumsfeld criticised France.
 - b. Because Donald Rumsfeld criticised Germany.
 - c. Because Donald Rumsfeld criticised France and Germany.

4. The letter expressing support for Bush
 - a. came after the Franco-German initiative to prevent military action against Iraq
 - b. came before the initiative to prevent military action against Iraq
 - c. came at the same time as the initiative to prevent war against Iraq

5. According to the Romanian prime minister, France criticised the Eastern Europeans
 - a. because France was angry with them
 - b. because France was angry with the USA and the UK
 - c. because France was angry with the European Union

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4 Collocations: Prepositions

Fill the gaps using an appropriate preposition. Then check your answers in the text.

1. A war with Iraq might have an effect _____ European reunification.
2. The Eastern European countries were criticised _____ supporting President Bush.
3. France has never been enthusiastic _____ the enlargement of the European Union.
4. NATO has plans to defend Turkey in case _____ attack.
5. France and Germany launched an initiative to prevent military action _____ Iraq.
6. "Every time I have an argument with my wife, I shout _____ my sons".
7. There were a lot of arguments _____ the summit's declaration.
8. French has been replaced _____ English as the main language of the EU.

5 Vocabulary: Word Building

Complete the table

	VERB	NOUN
1.	behave	_____
2.	declare	_____
3.	warn	_____
4.	enlarge	_____
5.	replace	_____
6.	argue	_____
7.	criticise	_____
8.	complain	_____
9.	explain	_____
10.	recognise	_____

6 Discussion

Do you think it is in the best interests of the Eastern European countries to support the US or to support France?
What benefits will the Eastern European countries get from joining the EU?