

‘Europe Was not Left Aside’

Article in regional daily L’Avenir

Q: Howard Gutman, should one expect a lot of changes after this election?

Ambassador Gutman: ‘Not on the international front. We remain committed to the transatlantic relationship and will continue on the rebuilding of our partnership which we began two years ago. We realize that we have problems in common and work together to solve them, especially on stimulating the economy, the transition and security in Afghanistan, security in general, and the global terrorist threat. On the domestic front, most of the agenda was accomplished during the first two years with the health care reform and the reform of banks and of the economy. We must now focus on creating jobs.’

Q: Can the gap between Democrats and Republicans be overcome?

Ambassador Gutman: ‘Being bipartisan is always something difficult but I do not believe in a paralysis of the Government. There will always be resentment, but that is part of a democracy. If you show me a country where everyone agrees, I will show you a country where there is no freedom.’

Q: Will this election have an impact on your job?

Ambassador Gutman: ‘It will not change anything to my job. I work daily on the transatlantic relationship, by learning from Belgians. We work on important dossiers and on the challenges that await us and this in total unity. Nothing divides us.’

Q: Some are saying that Europe was left aside by Obama. Will it still be the case?

Ambassador Gutman: ‘I hope that Europe was not left aside. Like my President, I worked hard on the transatlantic relationship and I hope that it bore fruits. I think that there is a mutual respect but also a mutual willingness to address together the problems that we face. We are working with President Van Rompuy in light of the upcoming U.S.-EU Summit at which I expect a major agreement. I do not see Europe as being left aside. On the contrary, I see a reinforcement of our partnership where we each learn from the other.’