

**“A New German Government – European and Transatlantic Perspectives”**

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Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we gather this evening, we should appreciate our good fortune in having such a dedicated institution as the European Union Studies Center, and in having Prof. Hugo Kaufmann. I know few other people in New York as devoted to European affairs as he.

In speaking about European and transatlantic perspectives, we have to take into consideration a number of decisive developments in world affairs in recent years.

First, this is a time of enormous global dynamism. Globalism is one of the most often used key words today. We have not yet determined where globalism will take us, but it surely brings new major players into the world arena — China, India and others. Technology transforms the way we do business worldwide. Societies have difficulties coming to terms with rapid change and developments that seem to threaten their cultures. Our foreign policies, too, must adapt to these challenges.

The second development is the emergence of the United States as an unchallenged world power. Hugo Kaufmann told me that I could speak off the record within this circle. So I am daring to do something that a diplomat usually should not do: talk publicly about the foreign policy of his or her host country. I think this is necessary because speaking about perspectives also requires a focus on the U.S. contribution to world affairs.

“Taming American Power – The Global Response to U.S. Primacy” is the title of a book I bought recently. The author is Stephen M. Walt, professor of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. His book contains a couple of interesting thoughts. He says: “Describing the United States as the mightiest state since Rome has become a cliché, but like most clichés, it also captures an essential feature of reality. The United States enjoys a position of power unseen for centuries, and citizens around the world are intensely aware of that fact.”

I am sure we can all agree that the United States occupies a unique position of primacy in modern history. I am not sure if we come to the same conclusions about what follows and

how U.S. policy should answer the challenges that result. From my point of view, a strong America will come from strengthened bonds with other nations, especially those sharing the same interests. The primacy of the U.S. gives it many advantages, yet the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy is questioned in this country.

These prevailing developments in world affairs cannot, of course, be compared with a third new element, the election of a new German government. But trying to focus on these perspectives while taking new developments in Europe into account, let me linger a bit on this aspect. In November 2005, the German parliament, the *Bundestag*, elected Dr. Angela Merkel as the first female chancellor in the history of the Federal Republic.

A new government came into office. New governments normally bring changes. But in Germany we had to form a coalition with the former leading governmental party, the SPD, which had the right to name the same number of ministers, one of them being the minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

This so-called grand coalition was not wanted before the elections. So, what kinds of changes in Germany's domestic and foreign policies can you expect to occur under such conditions?

Some points have to be kept in mind in analyzing this question:

Angela Merkel is the first head of government of a major western state to have grown up under communism and she knows the values of freedom in her own way. For her the word of freedom is not one of pathos, but one etched in the course of her own life.

She has led the CDU since 2000 and sees herself in the tradition of the great German chancellors of the post-war period: Konrad Adenauer, who anchored the new post-war Federal Republic firmly in the West, and Helmut Kohl, who used the trust Germany had won under its Western Allies to put through German unification, thus making possible freedom for all Germans.

The German *Grundgesetz* (constitution) clearly states that the chancellor defines the *Richtlinien* (guidelines) of German policy.

Politics can sometimes be governed by changes in accentuation. Essential is not only what is said, but how it is said. And it is defined by the trust others put in you. Here Chancellor

Merkel has shown in her first moves — her visits to Paris and London, Warsaw and Washington, Moscow and Tel Aviv — that she could reach out to others, even without necessarily accepting other standpoints.

So what kind of European perspectives do we actually face? And how will the new German government affect these perspectives?

Europe is at the heart of German foreign policy just as Germany is at the geographical and economic heart of Europe. From the outset the keyword for understanding German policy within Europe has been “integration.” Bringing European countries closer together has been a common bond of all German governments since Konrad Adenauer. The government of Chancellor Merkel will follow the same path.

The European Union guarantees political stability, security and prosperity in Germany and Europe. During the first half of 2007, Germany will assume the European Union presidency. Due to its history, and its political and economic weight, Germany bears a particular responsibility for preserving and developing the European integration process. We will do everything in our power to make our presidency a success.

What does success mean in the European Union of today? Above all, it means leadership. But leadership in the European Union is complex matter (“*scheues Reh*”). The EU cannot be compared with the NATO of the ‘70s and ‘80s, when the U.S., through its sheer importance in security issues, could, on its own, assure leadership. In the EU of 15 states, Germany and France formed a tandem which, very often, provided the necessary leadership.

In a European Union of 25 or 27 states, two countries will have a difficult task in taking a leading role on their own. The German–Franco “bicycle built for two” is still needed, but it will have to be supplemented by adding other countries, a sort of variable geometry.

For Germany's presidency this will mean taking up a moderating role and taking other states along on the “bike.” At the most recent EU summit, Chancellor Merkel showed that she was willing to take up such a role. And – of equal importance – small European countries will play the same role as the big countries.

Enlargement has been the second-most important word to qualify German European policy, especially in recent years. Germany was the first country to take up the issue of enlargement. Already in 1991, in the *German – Polish Treaty on Good Neighborhood and*

*Friendly Cooperation*, the German government took a positive stance on Poland's wish to enter the European Union.

As former Chancellor Helmut Kohl put it: for us Germans, reuniting Europe was the other side of the medal that brought us German unity. No other EU country has done as much to bridge the former gap between Western and Eastern Europe. Europe has become an – in its history – unprecedented zone of stability. The very perspective of entering the European Union has helped states to transform themselves and modernize. The impact this has had on world affairs cannot be underestimated.

Enlargement of the Union to 25 member states has gone ahead, keeping to the timetable set by the EU institutions. But what are the perspectives today?

We stand by the commitments that have been made. The schedule for Romanian and Bulgarian accession is tied to the fulfillment of clearly defined requirements; accession negotiations have begun with Croatia. We stand by the European perspective for the other states of the Western Balkans, too.

But it goes without saying that the negative results of the referenda in France and the Netherlands have shown that a circumspect enlargement policy is necessary. Admitting new members has to be done in line with the structural capacity of the Union and the willingness of the member states to do so. In this context, the further development of an ambitious and differentiated EU Neighbourhood Policy is gaining in significance.

Germany also has a particular interest in a deepening of mutual relations with Turkey and in binding the country to the European Union. Should Turkey not be able to comply completely and in full with the commitments that membership entails, Turkey must be linked to the European structures as closely as possible and in a way that further develops its privileged relationship with the EU. Today, other countries are favoring new entries, such as Ukraine. But I don't expect major moves until the European Union has done its homework.

The enlarged European Union is a major player in world trade and economy. In this field we are already a global actor – when the EU Commissioner for trade speaks, other countries, the U.S. included, listen. Today the EU has a 20% share of world trade, a quarter of the world's GDP and gives 55% of the world's overseas development assistance. But the EU has to work on its capacity to remain a leading economic power in a globalized world. It has developed a framework program to increase competitiveness and innovation. So far, the so-

called strategy of Lisbon to increase the EU's competitive edge has not been successful. The member states themselves have to take up the challenge. Chancellor Merkel has therefore committed herself to increase German R&D expenses by 3% by 2010.

But, as is generally known, in foreign policy the EU still is far from being a power in its own right. The EU is a developed multilateral body in which the individual states play the essential role. Foreign policy matters and questions related to the armed forces and defense systems are firmly in the hands of the national governments. But it would be a mistake not to see how closely European governments have been working together to coordinate their foreign and defense policies. Almost daily the Political and Security Committee meets to decide on security, defense and foreign affairs matters.

For the German government, the Constitutional Treaty is a further important step in the process of getting Europe's nations and peoples to act in concert. It is a prerequisite to make a Union of 27 states strong and capable of action. And, in my view, only new institutional arrangements as foreseen in the new Treaty are necessary to have more members be accepted into the Union.

While the Constitutional Treaty has not been abandoned, it is on ice for the moment. The situation is the following: 14 states have accepted the Treaty by referenda or approval of parliament. In two countries the referenda were negative. The situation is difficult as all countries have to accept the Treaty. Various possibilities of proceeding are being discussed. The German government, as Chancellor Merkel put it clearly in her inaugural address to the *Bundestag*, favors keeping the Constitutional Treaty as it is. The European Union is about democracy, but it is also about leadership. The governments have shown the way in the past in building the most stable situation we ever had in Europe and they will have to stand up to their populations and convince them of the right path.

The Constitutional Treaty is important also for bringing the European Union a step ahead in political terms. The EU would, for the first time, have a representative responsible for all fields of EU foreign affairs, merging the High Representative of the CFSP with the post of the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs. To assist this future Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, a European Foreign Affairs Ministry, the European External Action Service will be created, to be composed of officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and of the Commission and staff seconded from national diplomatic services.

Finally, the European Union's financial perspective merits a short analysis: In an event mostly overlooked by the media in the U.S., at the end of last year, the 25 states of the EU decided on the budget of the Union for 2006 – 2013. This agreement, which had failed half a year earlier, was important because it showed that the 25 member states can grapple – successfully – with highly controversial issues.

I want to emphasize this because it explains why Chancellor Angela Merkel was so highly praised in the media for having brokered this long-term financial agreement. In the end, the compromise reached was fair and valuable: And that clearly demonstrates the integrating power of the European idea – even now, with 25 member states.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Let me broaden the perspective from a European to a transatlantic one. The recent visit of Chancellor Merkel to Washington was proof that European integration and the Atlantic partnership are not at odds; rather, they are the two most important pillars of our foreign policy.

There can be no doubt about how much we have in common. In a world characterized by unprecedented challenges, our countries find themselves facing same threats from the same basis of experience, or lack thereof. But in addition to sharing common fears, we also draw from the same reserve of common values.

Our transatlantic partnership is built on common values, which are, to a large extent, based on our Judeo-Christian heritage and on the values of the Enlightenment. They were born in places like Königsberg and Paris and London and cherished by the founding fathers of the United States. The partnership is also based on political and economic ties, on cultural affinity and on a shared history. If we look back in time once again, we see that the Cold War ended because, during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, freedom triumphed in Europe and in other parts of the world.

Today we face the threat of terrorism, of the erosion of state structures, of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of unreliable regimes, of genocides – to mention just a few key dangers.

The question now is how do we - and I am asking this as the representative of my country, Germany - respond to these new challenges? And will we manage to address them jointly and successfully?

For us in Germany, the processes of European integration on the one hand and the transatlantic partnership on the other hand are the pillars of our foreign and security policies. German foreign policy will endeavor to help bring about positions coordinated between the European and transatlantic partners. United Germany is prepared to take on responsibility, indeed greater responsibility, beyond NATO's boundaries, in the cause of safeguarding freedom, democracy, stability and peace in the world.

But, at the same time, it is our firm conviction that global challenges can only be addressed globally and jointly. In our world, unilateralism is not viable. Collective actions are what we need. And for this we have to work on common perspectives.

Thus, let me now address the German role in some key hotspots that might be of interest to you. What can you expect German foreign policy to be in the future? How does the new German government affect European and transatlantic perspectives? What kinds of risks and opportunities will we face together?

Extending German peacekeeping operations to be active in many areas of the world has been a revolutionary political challenge. Moreover, following unification, the German population was not open to "foreign adventures." An important poll among young people at the time showed that young Germans would have Germany become a sort of giant Switzerland: neutral, non-engaged, likeable. Our armed forces were not ready to cope with operations on the Hindukush.

But today we have accepted that the challenges we now face differ from those of the Cold War period. We play our role in Afghanistan, with 2,500 soldiers in the ISAF mission. We play our part in Kosovo as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with around 3,500 soldiers. We are present on the Horn of Africa, in Sudan and in the southern Caucasus, to name only a few major regions. Now Germany is participating in the mission in Rafah, which is a totally new experience, as this is a commitment to a wholly new region. In short, we are making our contributions in many respects, helping many people.

The failure of European states to cope with the crisis in the former Yugoslavia was a wake-up call. It showed how important it was that European countries increase their means to take the fate of their continent into their own hands. Today I think we Europeans can be satisfied that we are finally playing the leading role in helping maintain peace and security on our own continent. Of course, we still do this with the support of our American partners, but we are increasingly convinced that this is our task. If you look at the Balkans, in particular, you can

see how vital the European perspective, that is, the prospect of EU membership, is in allowing us to decrease our military presence there.

I consider Afghanistan an interesting example of how we can attempt to build up stable political structures out of the threat of terrorism. I believe that the conferences in Bonn and Berlin, which were extended with the recent Afghanistan Conference in London, demonstrate that we consider the continuation of the political process to be as important as the military operations in this region. Many will use the example of Afghanistan to decide whether we are able to take effective action. I do not intend to sweep the problems under the carpet, but the joint action in Afghanistan is an example of how areas of crisis can be coped with on a cooperative basis.

The results of the parliamentary elections in the Palestinian Territories and the victory of Hamas is an outcome we have to respect. Nevertheless, they give us cause for concern. I therefore wish to emphasize that Israel's right to exist must be recognized. It must be clear that violence is not an acceptable form of political expression. The Palestinian Authority must recognize the steps taken so far in the peace process. I believe that the European Union and others have made this clear.

In Iraq, we are supporting the creation of democratic and economically viable structures. We will continue to train soldiers and police officers in close cooperation with the new Iraqi government. We intend to assist the Iraqi authorities in building up the justice system, in establishing a free press, in training university tutors and engineers and especially in developing vocational training. We are providing considerable financial support for Iraq by canceling debts to the tune of 4.5 billion euros. I believe that this, too, is essential if the democratization process there is to continue.

We must, of course, pay close attention to the developments in Iran. We must prevent the production of Iranian nuclear weapons. Iran's nuclear program prompts the concern that its goal is not the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

I also want to add that Germany has to respond to the totally unacceptable provocations of the Iranian president. A president who questions Israel's right to exist, a president who denies the Holocaust, cannot expect Germany to show any tolerance at all on this issue.

Considering all of these hotspots and the challenges we face, we have to reinvigorate the transatlantic political and strategic dialogue. In our, German, eyes, NATO should be the prime place for political debate among allies and for coordinating military actions. Mutual trust between the U.S. and a Europe that sees itself as a partner, not as a counterweight, is

essential for maintaining close relations. European and Atlantic security cannot be separated; we all face the same global challenges. I think it would be fair to say that NATO and the EU are the most successful value-based and security alliances in recent history. As the European Security Strategy states, "Acting together, the European Union and the United States can be a formidable force for good in the world."

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am aware that a speaker's duty is to finish speaking before the audience finishes listening. So let me conclude:

The new German government will use its means within the European Union to bring European integration ahead, as previous German governments have in the past.

The enlarged EU has created a zone of stability in Europe that is unique. The European perspective remains an important instrument for the transformation and reform of countries outside the Union. At the same time, the Union has to proceed with its institutional reforms to be able to take in more member countries.

Germany believes in the transatlantic partnership. We know our strengths and our limitations. As a country of 80 million inhabitants, we need partners in Europe and beyond to overcome the challenges of globalization.

We build on joint actions and close cooperation with the United States as partners. In my view, the United States needs the Europeans just as the Europeans need the United States. Within the global community, with China and India emerging as new regional powers, the United States and the European Union form two important pillars, with their largely overlapping interests and visions of the world we want to live in.

The U.S. may justly be called the mightiest state since Rome, yet we must remember that the threat of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and failed states will remain our greatest common challenges. It is my conviction that we can only master the challenges of the 21st century together.

Thank you very much.