# *Transatlantic Relations Since the Iraq War*

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President Kepple, members of the faculty, students and friends, it is always great to be back at Juniata. And it's a pleasure for me to talk to you today about German-American and transatlantic relations since the Iraq War. When I visited Juniata last time, in February 2002, we were all still under the effects of 9/11. Europe and the U.S. seemed to have moved closer again after rifts over Kyoto, the International Criminal Court, and other issues which had dominated the first six months of the presidency of George W. Bush. It was a great time to come, because diplomats have the tendency to see glasses half full rather than half empty. From today's perspective, after the serious rift over Iraq, that period following 9/11 seems to have been the exception to the rule, but I don't agree. Let me explain.

There are again good reasons to be optimistic about German-U.S. and transatlantic relations. For Germany, the Atlantic Alliance has always been, and always will be, the crucial security life line. Thanks to the United States and its leadership after World War II, the Alliance brought protection without demanding submission, and today NATO is still alive and kicking, with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact long gone. Common values as much as a common threat have kept the transatlantic alliance together in the past,

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despite political differences and economic conflicts, and we had quite a few of them. As a result, Germany is now united and Europe is whole and free. This great and historically unique achievement is also the sound foundation for a European-American partnership in the future, despite the serious rift over the war in Iraq.

As far as my country is concerned, the transatlantic relationship is not heading for separation. Clearly, we have to address a number of differences beyond the Iraq issue, but they are manageable. We have had some difficult periods in the past but the long-term prospects for transatlantic relations are not bad at all.

My impression is that Europe and the United States have conflicting notions about world order. Europe has reached a post-national stage in its history and is quite willing to pool its potential and live with rules that chip away at individual national sovereignty. But Europe is not an empire. And I should add, Europe will never be an empire. It is, in fact, still far from common power, let alone power projection. The conservative American analyst Robert Kagan, whose book on power and weakness has had the same effect in Europe as Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* and Fukuyama's *End of History*, is right to point out the differences between European and American thinking about world order, in particular the European preference for persuasion rather than coercion. His concept of power and weakness, however, can also be misleading, because it suggests the two are mutually exclusive, which is not necessarily true. A closer look at European and American power shows that Europe is not all about weakness and America is not all about strength. Even though the U.S. is by far the strongest military power ever and its overwhelming dominance has been compared to the Roman Empire, it is still no less vulnerable economically than Europe or any other economic power. The difference between military power and economic power is that the former can be controlled nationally. Economic power, on the other hand, is beyond national control. Economic power is dependent on markets and is therefore much more amorphous and less tangible than military might. In terms of economic power, Europe is in the same league as the United States.

Yes, the United States can go it alone; Iraq is proof of that, but American economic objectives are much more difficult to achieve unilaterally. This is not only true of pure economic issues. As a

result of globalization, problems such as environmental degradation, illicit drugs, trafficking in humans, and organized crime need international cooperation in order to achieve progress towards a solution. However, there is also a considerable values gap between Europeans and Americans. Yet it is important not to dramatize the differences that exist on many issues such as religion, patriotism, and family values. For example, both sides of the Atlantic differ on important political issues, such as social welfare and the environment. In nearly all these cases, however, the differences are more of degree than of principle. This is true even of the death penalty. The number of people in Europe and the United States who favor or reject the death penalty are more or less in the same range. Our legal systems are different. But there is no clash of civilizations within the Atlantic Alliance, as some have wrongly claimed. In a pluralistic society, value clashes are a normal phenomenon.

There is also a long list of areas where we agree on fundamental common values such as democracy, freedom, tolerance, human rights, pluralism, and equality of men and women. It is obvious that our differences stem from a common foundation and should therefore be manageable, even if our interests and values sometimes collide.

From my country's perspective, opposition to the war in Iraq reflected a legitimate but limited disagreement with the United States. It was a policy issue and did not affect German-American friendship. There are lots of reasons why Germany is so reluctant to use military force, the strongest reason being, of course, our history of warfare and militarization, and ultimately German responsibility for World War II and the Holocaust. The postwar generation in Germany thinks that any kind of war is a catastrophe. In the U.S., the term "war" is used more frequently, metaphorically, for example, in "the war on drugs," "the war on poverty," or "the war on crime." In German, we would translate this not as "Krieg," but as "Kampf," as "struggle."

During the 1990s, Germany came a long way from its focus on civilian power to a more active policy of engagement, which was and is more in line with our country's economic and political weight in Europe. Our chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, and my boss, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, both have pacifist pasts and went to great lengths to prepare a very reluctant German public for the

use of force in Kosovo and, after 9/11, in Afghanistan. My country ultimately supported this cause, because in both cases fundamental values were at stake – humanitarian values in Kosovo and existential values in Afghanistan in the fight against international terrorism. Presently, 8,000 German troops are participating in various peace-keeping missions in many different regions around the world. During the war in Iraq, Germany lived up to all its commitments and obligations as a member of the Atlantic Alliance. Germany provided U.S. forces with full logistical support for their operations in Iraq. German troops helped secure American military bases in Germany, and my country provided Turkey with military support and aid.

Europe was quite willing to participate in the common task of disarming Iraq. What divided Europe into "old" and "new," as U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggested, was a difference in views over the concept "coalition of the willing." It would be wrong, however, to conclude that this has led to a permanent split within Europe. This is definitely not the case. The lesson learned from Europe's failure to reach a consensus decision on Iraq is that European countries should not have to make a choice between European integration and the transatlantic partnership. German foreign policy has so far always succeeded in bridging a commitment to Franco-German reconciliation and cooperation, which is of the utmost importance for European integration, and my country's transatlantic orientation. Ever since German Atlanticists added an Atlantic preamble to the Elysée Treaty of 1963, the cornerstone of postwar Franco-German partnership, Germany has played a key role in preventing a collision between Europe's foreign policy ambitions and American foreign policy and interests.

In January, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, and our embassy, together with the French embassy, organized a series of activities to celebrate this event. Last night, we had a concert by a German-French jazz duo at the German Embassy, and another one will take place at the French Embassy in six weeks.

A better understanding of Germany's role in Europe, particularly our special relationship with France, would have helped to avoid the kind of irritations that unfolded in late January, when France, Russia, and Germany were only loosely connected in their opposition to the war in Iraq, but later consolidated their opposition to the

massive military build-up in the Gulf region. Germany and France cannot be divided, because this would put in jeopardy the whole European integration process, which is not in our interest. In U.S. government and media circles, the concern was that, during the German election campaign in the Spring and Summer of 2002, discussion of the Iraq issue often took on anti-American overtones, which led to a new wave of anti-Americanism in Germany. But there is no widespread anti-Americanism in Germany. There was only a strong anti-war sentiment.

The rift we have seen in transatlantic relations should not lead us to lose sight of the real issue that the West will continue to face in the future: how to deal with and – as we all hope – ultimately defeat terrorism? Transnational catastrophic terrorism is a new threat. Suicide attacks and mass killings by international terror networks, who use the language of religion for political purposes, threaten our whole civilization and must be fought and resisted for existential reasons. The existential fight against terrorism is complex, and it will take a long time for our societies to get rid of this new totalitarian threat. We have to realize that this new threat is very different from the totalitarian threat of the Cold War. The new struggle is asymmetric, and the enemy is not a nation-state. Terror networks fight in the name of religion and attempt to entangle the West in a clash of civilizations in the desperate hope that, as a result, a radical form of Islam will achieve its final victory. This conflict is much more about winning the hearts and minds of the people than the East-West confrontation of the Cold War and needs to be fought on many levels – on the political level, on the economic level, on the cultural level, and, if necessary, also with military means.

Europe also shares Washington's serious concern about weapons of mass destruction. If proliferation continues and increases, European territory will be at risk too. That is why non-nuclear European states – and Germany is and will continue to be a non-nuclear state – put so much emphasis on an effective system of non-proliferation. The shift in U.S. strategy after 9/11 to more effectively address asymmetric conflicts, particularly catastrophic terrorist attacks, is quite understandable. In Europe, too, a strategic reassessment is underway. Germany's new defense guidelines are an example of the new strategic thinking beyond the Cold War and in line with the new threats, particularly asymmetric warfare like the 9/11

attacks, transnational crime, trafficking in humans, and drug-smuggling. The German Army now focuses on conflict prevention and crisis management in support of allies, including operations beyond NATO territory. International terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation have become major concerns for the German Armed Forces. The only way to meet these challenges according to the guidelines is through a comprehensive security concept and a global collective security system. In fact, the German defense minister has stated that German defense now begins at the Hindukush, meaning in the mountains of Afghanistan – a remarkably unthinkable notion just a few years ago.

So the United States is not alone in its strategic realignment, and some of the new thinking in Europe is quite compatible with American policy. There is no way, however, that Europe will ever get close to the U.S. level of defense spending. But I don't think this is necessary. It is much more important to restructure and transform military forces in line with the new threats. Europe is also concerned, however, about the direction of the new U.S. strategic doctrine.

An issue of European concern is that, by adopting a policy of creating coalitions of the willing, depending on the issue, the U.S. is creating a world order in which the United Nations, NATO, and other multilateral institutions can be replaced at any time by such ad-hoc coalitions. Europeans, due to the lessons learned from two devastating wars, came to the conclusion that to give away the right to wage war – the right of self-defense notwithstanding – is an important step forward and not an encroachment on national sovereignty. By replacing permanent allies with shifting coalitions of the willing, the U.S., in my eyes, would give up an enormous amount of normative power, soft power, or rule-setting capacity, for a narrow, in my eyes, too narrow, purpose. Coalitions of the willing, whether intended or not, will weaken existing permanent institutions. As a result, the new flexibility would come at a high price for the United States – and for us as well. It could also be a source of new instability.

It is not at all difficult to put together a list for transatlantic cooperation. Indeed, think tanks and individual experts on both sides of the Atlantic have done so and continue to do so. One idea, which has been put forward, is to create a new architecture for

European-U.S. relations and a new transatlantic charter. Architectural designs look nice, but reality is normally much more modest. It should not be our first priority to create a new architecture for transatlantic relations. There are so many urgent problems to be jointly addressed. The stabilization of Iraq and Afghanistan are our concern as much as Washington's. Both are far from assured. The Atlantic Alliance capability could also be applied to peace-keeping tasks in Iraq, under the umbrella of the United Nations.

Since NATO's Prague summit meeting in November 2002, an evolutionary process has been underway to strengthen the Alliance's European pillar. This process is important if NATO is to exercise its full weight in the long struggle for peace and stability in Europe and beyond. The European Union can take over a number of peace-keeping operations that no longer require the full hardware of military alliance. It has already done so in Macedonia, and Bosnia will be next. An EU peace-keeping operation backed by a UN mandate was launched in the Congo this summer. The European Union is now on its way to creating the first modern constitution providing for a confederation with strong institutions. This historically unique effort of pooling national sovereignty is in itself an important contribution to peace and stability in Europe. European leaders have made it clear, before, during, and after the Iraq war, "the transatlantic partnership is a fundamental strategic priority for Europe" and "this partnership is a precondition for security and world peace."

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has declared time and again that moving forward with European defense has nothing to do with decoupling Europe from the U.S.. Rather it is intended to strengthen the Atlantic Alliance through a more efficient European pillar. Despite much American concern, it is safe to say that the strategic objective of the Europeans is the strengthening of both the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union.

Our ambitions are driven by the old two-pillar concept first suggested by President John F. Kennedy. Three weeks ago President Bush and Chancellor Schröder met for the first time since the Iraq war. The message was clear. President Bush and Chancellor Schröder are in agreement: "We should look to the future. We must work together to win the peace in Iraq."

The international community has a key interest in ensuring that

stability and democracy are established as soon as possible in Iraq. The unanimous adoption of UN Security Council 1511 on October 16, 2003, after a long process of negotiation, underlines the commitment of all nations to set aside differences in opinion and strategy for the greater good of advancing stability in the region. Involving the United Nations and other international institutions in the building of coalitions against terrorism and on other global issues is multilateralism in the best sense of the word. We would like to see more of it in the future. It is in everyone's interest, including America's.

Henry Kissinger expressed this very clearly when he wrote: "America's special responsibility as the most powerful nation in the world is to work towards an international system that rests on more than military power, indeed, that strives to translate power into cooperation. Any other attitude will isolate and exhaust us."

An American observer wrote long ago, and I quoted her a year ago as well, "When the United States and Europe see eye-to-eye, there is little they cannot accomplish. When they do not agree, however, there is little they can achieve."

We must be aware of our strengths and join forces so we can rise to the challenges of the 21st century and strive for a more just and peaceful system of global governance. The solid foundation of German-American friendship offers an excellent basis to jointly bridge the troubled waters of a globalized world.