

# Statements & Speeches



Federal Republic of Germany

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## PROSPECTS FOR U.S.-GERMAN RELATIONS

Address by the  
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Before the World Affairs Council in St. Louis

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The topic on which you asked me to speak fits very well into the job description of the German ambassador in Washington and of the U.S. ambassador in Bonn. Every day, they are asked this question over and over again: "What are the prospects for U.S.-German relations?" In our embassies the day's events are judged according to their impact on those relations; recommendations to home authorities are based on how they will affect those relations. Questions from the host country are answered with this in mind. How can we enhance good prospects and how can we prevent unfavorable courses of action and events? This covers the whole spectrum of embassy activities: political, military, economic, financial, cultural, legal and humanitarian. How can those cases be processed or resolved correctly, satisfactorily and in a way that helps the image, the interests and the objectives of one's own country as well as our mutual relations? In order to formulate a balanced judgement, valid advice or a well-founded decision in a specific case, it is necessary to look at the matter in a broader perspective, in particular to have the full dimension of our relations in mind.

The new U.S. Ambassador in Bonn, Richard Burt, who took up his duties only a few days ago, addressed the essence of U.S.-German relations when he said before the German TV audience:

The United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany are leading democracies in the world. When they cooperate in the improvement of East-West relations, in arms control and the trade problems, and when they guarantee a free exchange of goods, I am convinced that the problems can be solved. Out of this has grown a natural partnership, and both partners have to take into consideration the interests of the other partner. They have to consult and cooperate with each other.

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This is exactly the way I look at U.S.-German relations. I am very fortunate to have as my opposite number in Bonn a like-minded partner and a good friend with whom I worked closely together when he was Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs in Washington. When he left for Bonn we pledged to keep in mind the common interests, objectives and values which our two countries share so that we may work in a mutually reinforcing way from both ends of the U.S.-German connection.

Ambassadors are fortunate if they not only have behind them strong and effective home governments and embassies but also have support in their host country. This is why work in a friendly and allied country which shares our values and interests is so very different from work in an adversary relationship. It is particularly fortunate if the ambassador can build on the understanding and help of constituencies in the host country which are interested in close and active cooperation. Let me illustrate what I mean:

When a new ambassador arrives in a capital city, among the first people he will meet outside of official circles are the former ambassadors of his new host country who have served in his own home capital - in my case an important and dedicated lineage of ambassadors who have represented the U.S. in Bonn. At the top of the list is a 90-year-old veteran of U.S.-German relations, John McCloy - U.S. High Commissioner in Germany after the war and the first U.S. ambassador in Bonn, and friend and relative of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. John McCloy has never stopped being involved in U.S.-German relations. He is the first chairman of the American Council on Germany in New York, a responsibility he still holds. Then there is the last U.S. ambassador in Bonn, Arthur Bruns, highly regarded former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. There are Walter Stoessel, Kenneth Rush, Martin Hillenbrand, George McGhee. These outstanding Americans and those who worked with them have never ceased to remain personally interested and felt called upon whenever U.S.-German relations needed care, advice, criticism, new ideas and impulses. Let me pay tribute to their unpaid role of honorary guardian angels of U.S.-German relations. The moment I arrived in my post they took me under their wings, introduced me, encouraged me, advised and helped me.

There is another U.S.-German constituency which is not mentioned very often and which is not organized at all. These are the millions of American servicemen and women and their families who have been stationed in Germany since the end of the war. During my travels in this country I meet many of them. They keep a lively and friendly memory of their stay in Germany and of their towns and villages, where most of them lived as neighbors of German families. Many of them have since returned for visits and have invited German friends to visit here. They have kept in touch, have joined U.S.-German societies; many have married German women. Some even have become honorary consuls of the Federal Republic of Germany in the U.S.

The year 1983 was an important one in German-American history. We celebrated the Tricentennial of German immigration to this land. In October 1683, 13 families, weavers from my own home town of Krefeld, 36 people in all, arrived on the "Concord" near Philadelphia, where they founded Germantown, the first German settlement in North America. Since that time, almost 7 million Germans have emigrated to these shores. At the last national census about 21 percent of U.S. citizens, that is about 50 million, listed themselves as of German ethnic background. In many states of the U.S., from Texas to Minnesota, from Oregon to Maryland, there are countless German-American societies and institutions which maintain German cultural heritage, our language, traditions and folk art.

The then President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Karl Carstens, paid an official state visit to the U.S. during the Tricentennial celebrations and was warmly welcomed in many parts of this country. From this visit and from the Tricentennial originated many new German-American initiatives, in particular the agreement between our two parliaments, the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag, to institute, finance and administer a Parliamentary Partnership Program of youth exchange between our two countries. The first one-year group has left for Germany and the U.S. respectively (about 500 in each direction). They are staying with families and are each sponsored by the German and the U.S. legislator from whose constituency the exchange youth comes and in whose constituency the youth spends the year. Both legislators are to remain in direct touch with each other on their respective charges, thus contributing to a special personal relationship between German and American legislators. It was a real pleasure for me to meet with the returning American youth groups at the German Embassy in Washington after they had been welcomed back in the U.S. Congress by leading Senators and Congressmen. I greatly enjoyed talking to these bright, cheerful, observing, fair and reasonable young people about their experiences in the Germany of today, about their impressions of the divided country and Berlin, German family and school life and their companionship with German youth. Apart from this official parliamentary program, there is a distinct increase in many other exchange initiatives with Germany. There is also newly increasing interest in the study of the German language in many parts of the U.S.

Let me add one final thought on the subject of the contribution of German immigrants to the building of the American nation. My country and people are happy about and respectful of the fact that Germans - their culture and personal efforts - played an important role in the birth and growth of the American nation. We are pleased and ready to help in fostering the special ties that many Americans want to maintain with the homeland of their forefathers. But it is with the American people as a whole, with the entire U.S., that my country wants to strengthen and deepen relations. We know and appreciate that German-Americans feel themselves to be, and are proud of being American. Their loyalty to America and their interest in Germany are, in our view, mutually reinforcing because the free and democratic Germany of today is firmly anchored to the West and closely tied to the alliance with the U.S.

Talking about German-American constituencies, I must mention high on the list those in the business and financial circles in the U.S. who - together with their German counterparts - feel and act as members of an ever more integrated Western economic system. To be sure, the U.S. economy is much larger and less vulnerable to international trade and monetary shocks than the German economy. However, the German economy and the D-mark form a crucial part of the European Common Market of over 300 million people. West Germany has the largest GNP in the European Community and pays the highest net contribution to the common budget. We have the highest rate of growth of GNP, the lowest rate of inflation, a favorable ratio of budget deficit to GNP and a strongly positive balance of payments. Our current account surplus for the first seven months of 1985 came to DM 17.3 billion, far above the DM 3.5 billion in the same period in 1984 and nearly equal the DM 17.7 billion of all of 1984. Since May 1985 we have even had inflows of foreign capital into the German economy, which underlines the confidence of foreign investors in the health and growth chances of our economy.

Most important for U.S.-German relations is the identity of views of the U.S. and German governments on the basic orientation of economic and financial policies. Both are strong supporters of the open multilateral trading system. Both insist on the free flow of capital and investment and an open technological cooperation between North America and Europe, subject only to the necessary security precautions against technological leaks to the East which could enhance Soviet military potential.

Business leaders in the U.S. and in Germany remember the tremendous growth during the three postwar decades generated by the energies of the market economy. They remember as well the disaster brought about by protectionism and shrinking international trade in the early 1930s, which resulted in the Great Depression and in the rise of radicalism, of leftist and rightist extremism, and ultimately in World War II.

As ambassador in Washington, I have noticed on several occasions how quickly and effectively business and finance in the U.S. and in Germany react against opportunistic political pressures pushing for short-sighted protectionist quick-fix solutions to temporary economic difficulties: Sometimes even certain business groups, for example in steel, textiles or agriculture, press for protectionist measures against foreign competition. But the rest of the business world realizes very quickly the dangers inherent in every beginning of a new beggar-thy-neighbor cycle. Corrective counterpressures of the larger business communities have, as a rule, neutralized the schemes of sectoral protectionist lobbies and have prevailed in Administration and Congress. Western Europe, and in particular Germany, are still excellent trading partners of the U.S. American farmers still export substantially more to Western Europe than the U.S. imports from there in agricultural products. Cutting American-European trade will not help our economies. We should press for further expansion of this mutually advantageous trade. German-American business and financial circles remain the strongest supporters for such a common policy.

Looking at the fundamentals of U.S.-German relations today, we realize the historic change brought about as a consequence of Hitlerism and World War II. Berlin, the historic capital of Germany, is divided. The American security guarantee and the presence of American troops together with the contribution of France and Great Britain and the decisive political, moral, economic and financial support of the Federal Republic of Germany keep the free part of that city from being absorbed by Soviet imperialism. If the West, and in particular the U.S., would one day be driven or tricked out of Berlin, the gates for Soviet influence, for Soviet temptations and threats vis-à-vis West Germany and Western Europe would be wide open.

The dividing line between freedom and totalitarianism, between democracy and dictatorship, runs through Berlin, through Germany and through Europe. Had not the U.S., with the formation of the North Atlantic alliance in 1949, confronted Soviet expansionism in the center of Europe, the rest of the Old Continent sooner or later would have fallen under the dominant influence of the Soviet Union. It is a military and geopolitical fact that the free part of Europe can maintain its independence only in alliance with North America. Western Europe needs the depth of the North Atlantic disposition to balance off the continent-wide colossus of the Soviet Union. Western Europe, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean countries, with divided Germany in the middle, those very individualistic peoples proud of their national identities and cultural personalities, cannot, unfortunately, for a long time to come, form a single, effective government, a political center where a united will can take prompt and resolute decisions on vital questions including central command over the armed forces. To keep in check the unitary will of the Soviet military might, the West requires a strong, determined decision center with a power potential equal to that of the Soviet Union. Such credible eye-to-eye crisis management can only be supplied by the U.S. The security and stability of Western Europe, therefore, are structurally dependent on its defense links with the U.S.

On the other hand, as we Western Europeans and particularly we Germans are dependent on our alliance with the U.S. to maintain our freedom, security and well-being, so is the U.S. dependent on its alliance with Europe for the maintenance of the global balance with the USSR. Should American power withdraw from Europe, it would be a decisive gain for the Soviet Union in the gigantic struggle between the two superpowers for influence in the world. The ability of the U.S. to project power into different corners of the world where Soviet imperialism might try to advance depends very much on U.S. military presence and structures in Western Europe. But in particular the vast human, economic, scientific and technological resources of Western Europe are a tremendous asset on the scales of the East-West balance.

The Federal Republic of Germany is a central element of the political, military and economic system in Europe. NATO would not be what it is without the Federal Republic. I don't want to list in detail our contributions to the common defense effort in men and money, in land and air space. They are well known and, maybe, more appreciated today than at the time of the Nunn Amendment in 1984. But let me mention one additional point: While terrorism is rampant in the world, my countrymen feel a particular responsibility for the safety of the 400,000 servicemen from six allied nations stationed in Germany, including 233,000 Americans. Over the years, there have been a number - though limited - of deeply troubling terrorist acts on our soil directed against NATO and our common defense effort. These are tiny, marginal groups allying themselves with other small terrorist bands in France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and other neighbors. They cannot challenge our free democratic systems of government. They want to force us to take measures like those in a totalitarian police state, limiting the civil liberties of a free society with open borders. We will not fall into that trap, but will continue to isolate them; we will separate them from any popular base and expose them as what they really are: a passing phenomenon, irrelevant to the mainstream thinking of our peoples, criminals blinded with political arrogance, a target of popular wrath and a challenge to good police work and international anti-terrorist cooperation. And then there is the difficult, responsible job of the media. They report the drama, the spectacular, the torment of the victims and the deep grief of their families and friends. Praise to those media who show also the dogged determination and resourcefulness of the fight against terrorism - with its risks and personal valor.

German-American cooperation is of particular importance in dealing with the problems of divided Germany and in preparing the ground for overcoming that division. The 56 million Germans in the free part of our country cannot ignore the 17 million Germans kept under communist tutelage. The division of Germany is maintained by force. You only have to look at the Berlin Wall, barbed wire and watch towers along the intra-German demarcation line. Let us assume that one day the Soviets find it in their interest to replace the precarious, unstable and costly situation of tension in Europe with a carefully negotiated process of normalization and cooperation between the two German states in the framework of a larger East-West understanding, keeping in mind the vital security interests of both sides as assured in the equilibrium of forces of the two alliance systems. The Soviet Union would then find the West, the U.S. and Western Europe, ready to prepare the necessary agreements and procedures which would assure a transition to more normal conditions between two parts of one nation, in an environment of stability and general advantage. The Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), signed 10 years ago by the heads of state and government of the 35 participating states, provides a good basis and framework for such a process of peaceful change.

We are very grateful to the U.S. for its support in our striving for national unity. Secretary of State George Shultz has stated the American position on several occasions. Twice he formally and explicitly placed it on record before the 35 states participating in the CSCE process. On January 17, 1984, at the opening of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence-und Security-Building Measures in Europe, Mr. Shultz said:

Europe - all of Europe - deserves true peace and true security. Since 1945, Western Europe has seen a great reconciliation of old enmities and a great resurgence of freedom, prosperity, unity and security....But throughout the same period, an artificial barrier has cruelly divided this continent - and, indeed, heartlessly divided one of its great nations. This barrier was not placed there by the West. It is not maintained by the West....Let me be very clear: The U.S. does not recognize the legitimacy of the artificially imposed division of Europe.

On July 30, 1985, at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the 35 participating states meeting in Helsinki to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the CSCE Final Act, he said again:

Today, tragically, Europe is a divided continent.... Yet the ideals of European civilization have not been extinguished.... The barriers, the walls, the barbed wire, the weapons cannot truly divide Europeans from each other or from their heritage.

And later on in the same speech:

For now, we all live uneasily with the brutal and artificial division of this continent, even as we search for ways to end it. But nothing in human history has proven irreversible.

President Reagan emphasized the importance of progress on the German question when, on September 24, 1984, outlining before the UN General Assembly the basic orientation of U.S. foreign policy, in particular in East-West relations, he said, "We take heart from progress by others in lessening the tensions, notably the efforts by the Federal Republic of Germany to reduce barriers between the two German states." In that trend-setting speech, he explained his concept of U.S.-Soviet consultations on regional problems affecting the East-West relationship as follows: "The objectives of this political dialogue will be to help avoid miscalculation, reduce the potential risk of U.S.-Soviet confrontation, and help the people in areas of conflict to find peaceful solutions." And President Reagan continued immediately, in a very interesting line of thinking: "The U.S. and the Soviet Union have achieved agreements of historic importance on some regional issues. The Austrian State Treaty and the Berlin Accords are notable and lasting examples. Let us resolve to achieve similar agreements in the future."

Western Europe and North America have grown together in many ways, maybe the most important factor being the common basis of respect for human rights, self-determination of peoples, civil liberties, democratic institutions and the rule of law. In spite of some passing political currents, like the Greens and the Peace Movement, which the media tend to dramatize out of proportion, the basic fact is that a constant, large majority of Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany regard the close partnership with the U.S., the presence of U.S. troops in Germany and the Atlantic alliance as vitally important for the maintenance of freedom and democracy. Polls and elections prove it regularly.

But it is not only the common value system and the common security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union that provide the glue between Western Europe and the U.S. We have become even more closely integrated partners in a common economic and financial system, in investments, technology and science. A historic change of the international system is taking shape: Western Europe and North America are forming a new cooperative zone of common values, common security, interacting and interdependent economic and financial systems. The European-American connection can mobilize tremendous strategic, political, economic, and, especially, moral assets - but only together can we be convincing. Divided we lose influence.

It is, in particular, the free part of Germany which must be vitally interested in the cohesion of the West. Only on that basis can we hope to make progress on the long road to a new unity of the German people living now in two states. We will not exchange freedom for unity. We are striving for free self-determination of the German people as a whole. A new totalitarianism under Soviet domination is not a goal for which the Germans in the free part of my country will ever vote. Our goal is unity in freedom.

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