



Munich Conference on Security Policy

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Germany

Speech on the 41th Munich Conference on Security Policy

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Ladies and gentlemen,

The terrible tsunami disaster in Asia generated a unique ground-swell of sympathy, solidarity and readiness to help all around the world. In common with many other governments, the German Government acted quickly and in a spirit of solidarity. This disaster made it abundantly clear to us that we live in one world.

In this one world, we undertook in the United Nations Charter "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security". Today our security is threatened by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional instability and failing states. However, poverty and underdevelopment pose no less a threat. This has created ample breeding ground for international terrorism. The new dangers are causing tensions and can have an impact on any part of the world. That grim truth was brought horrifyingly home to us by the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001, in Madrid on 11 March 2004 and in Beslan last September.

But one thing is certain: we can only successfully master the new challenges if we tackle their root causes - and we must do so together, in a comprehensive manner and with a view to prevention. The fight against international terrorism must not be limited to military and police measures. Our commitment must help overcome the modernization crisis in many parts of the world, not least in the Islamic-Arabic countries. We should do so not with public admonitions but, rather, with encouragement and support for their own efforts.

Promoting democracy, the rule of law, good governance, economic and social development, education opportunities, women's rights and the protection of the sources of life on our planet play a prominent role in security policy today. We are pursuing these objectives together with our partners in the Middle East and through the G8 programme "Broader Middle East and Northern Africa" initiated by President Bush. Federal Foreign Minister Fischer presented the German proposals for this initiative here in Munich last year. They were expressly welcomed by many partners on both sides of the Atlantic and in the region.



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Ladies and gentlemen, one thing is certain: We will only master the challenges of the 21st century if transatlantic relations, the close ties between Europe, Canada and the United States are - and remain - intact. Only then will we also achieve the major international objectives which our governments have set themselves. That was true during the long years of the Cold War and it is still true in today's fundamentally different world.

The maxim continues to apply: close transatlantic ties are in the interests of Germany, Europe and America. However, we cannot look to the past when it comes to translating this maxim into practical policies, as is so often the case when transatlantic loyalty is professed. Rather, we must adapt to the new circumstances.

Every now and again during the last few years, there have been misunderstandings, strains, mistrust, even tensions across the Atlantic. I suspect that these were due not least to the fact that this process of adjustment to a changed reality has still not been completed. The changes are considerable, and some are even dramatic.

Not only the United States, but also Europe, need no longer fear a military attack on its borders today. The American military presence, which at that time both provided protection and represented a token of close solidarity, is no longer the security policy priority that it used to be. However, it continues to be of political significance.

In fact, the strategic challenges lie today beyond the North Atlantic Alliance's former zone of mutual assistance. And they do not primarily require military responses. In Asia, China and India are emerging as new world powers whose weight will have an impact not just on the region but on global politics. And the enemies we face together are no longer functioning states with a defined territory but the new global risks.

But it is not only the environment for Atlantic cooperation which has changed. The ensuing responsibility of the two states which, as it were, were the linchpins of this cooperation for many decades, namely the United States and Germany, has also changed. You, ladies and gentlemen of the US Congress, know best how your country's view of the world and perception of its role has altered during the last few years.

My country, too, sees its international role in a different light. As part of the European Union, Germany today feels that it shares responsibility for international stability and order. And our active commitment in numerous crisis regions around the world demonstrates that we Germans are living up to this responsibility. At present, some 7,000 German troops are being deployed abroad.

However, this responsibility also brings with it a right to be involved in decision-making. Our wish to see Germany become a permanent member of the UN Security Council derives from the need to base responsibility on legitimacy.

I believe that the transatlantic partnership must take such changes into consideration. And, to be honest, it does so insufficiently at present. This becomes clear when we look at the institutions which are supposed to serve this partnership. The admission of new members is proof that NATO continues to be attractive. And NATO's presence in Afghanistan has highlighted how helpful its military organization can be even in distant crises. However, it is no longer the primary venue where transatlantic partners discuss and coordinate strategies.

The same applies to the dialogue between the European Union and the United States which in its current form does justice neither to the Union's growing importance nor to the new demands on transatlantic cooperation. I hope that new impetus will be generated in both areas on 22 February when the US President visits Brussels.

Today, no-one can produce ready answers. However, we should focus with even greater determination and resolve on the task of adapting our cooperation structures to the changed conditions and challenges. To this end, the governments of the European Union and the US should establish a high-ranking panel of independent figures from both sides of the Atlantic to help us find a solution. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan set us an example by establishing such a panel to deal with the necessary reform of his organization.

This panel should submit a report to the heads of state and government of NATO and the European Union by the beginning of 2006 on the basis of its analysis and proposals, the necessary conclusions could then be drawn.

Ladies and gentlemen, in many regions of the world, not only major security challenges but also opportunities lie ahead. In Iraq, the elections held on 30 January marked an important step along the road towards the establishment of democratic political structures. The political process must now be vigorously continued and put on a broader basis. Only the participation of all political, ethnic and religious groups can provide any hope of lasting stability.

In Iraq, the international community is facing the considerable task of stabilizing the country, with repercussions for the entire region. Germany is making an important contribution towards this. Its share in the Paris Club debt relief for Iraq amounts to 4.7 billion euro. We are involved in the political and economic reconstruction and launched successful programmes to train and equip Iraqi soldiers and police officers very early on. Indeed, we were the first to do so. Due to the considerable advantages of conducting this training in the region, we are carrying out this project in and with the cooperation of the United Arab Emirates.

In Afghanistan, the presidential elections last October paved the way for national consensus. The forthcoming parliamentary elections offer hope of this country's further stabilization and democratization. The sustained support of the international community continues to be indispensable. At the same time, however, Afghanistan must, and can, gradually assume greater responsibility, also in the spheres of security and counter-narcotics policy.

Within the framework of the obligations it entered into in the Alliance, Germany will maintain its political, financial and military commitment in the long term and help ensure that the Alliance lives up to its tasks. In Afghanistan, we are prepared to support the progress made towards stabilization by assuming greater responsibility, especially in the north of the country.

2005 will also be a key year in the western Balkans where the European Union is increasingly engaged. Lasting stabilization of this region can only be achieved through close cooperation between the European Union, NATO, the UN and the OSCE. This applies to Bosnia and Herzegovina and, above all, to Kosovo. Around mid-year, it will be decided whether and when negotiations on the status issue can begin. It is up to political leaders - both Albanians and Serbs - to create the prerequisites for an acceptable solution.

We will lend our support to a solution which is both realistic and points the way ahead. Above all, this includes a long-term constructive European perspective based on European values and standards, such as protection of minorities, the repatriation of refugees and decentralization. The European perspective applies to Kosovo and to the entire western Balkans.

In the Middle East, the election of the Palestinian President Abbas and Israel's readiness to withdraw from Gaza have opened a window of opportunity for the revival of the peace process. The cease-fire agreed upon in Sharm el Sheik must become permanent. The Road Map remains the key framework for the peace process. Our goal must be to ensure that Israelis and Palestinians live together in peace in two independent and recognized states. We welcome the declared intention of the US to make an active contribution without which a solution cannot be found. Europe, too, and Germany in particular, are aware of their responsibility and are prepared to support the process.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must prevent the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which are in violation of international law. To this end, we must ensure that every state complies with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and that there are no gaps in the non-proliferation regime. We remain committed to preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

The negotiations with Iran, which we are conducting together with our British and French friends and the European Union, are intended to serve this objective. We are strongly committed to making the process a success. That would entail objective and verifiable guarantees from Tehran that its nuclear programme serves exclusively peaceful purposes. Our American friends share this goal.

I strongly encourage the US Administration to actively support the Europeans' diplomatic efforts. We must overcome Iran's massive isolation. For Iran will only abandon its nuclear ambitions for good if not only its economic but also its legitimate security interests are safeguarded. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to work with our American partner and in a dialogue with the region to develop sustainable security structures for the Gulf region.

Ladies and gentlemen, German foreign and security policy is determined by our geographic and political location at the heart of Europe. We are formulating it in Europe, for Europe and from Europe. It is in Germany's, as well as the international community's interests, that the European Union assume greater international responsibility. The step towards creating its own set of political and military instruments with the European Security and Defence Policy is therefore necessary.

The European Union is assuming an increasing number of security tasks in close coordination and cooperation with NATO. It has already demonstrated this in several missions. A strong European pillar guarantees Europe's loyal partnership in the transatlantic alliance and its willingness to share the burden of tasks. This is also in the vested strategic interests of the US.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the fundamental truths of European politics is that security on our continent cannot be achieved without, and certainly not against, Russia. Since the sea change of 1989/90, we have managed to remodel our relations with Russia and moved away from Cold War confrontation towards ever more comprehensive cooperation - in political, security and economic terms. Given the historical background, this could certainly not be taken for granted.

Russia itself has made considerable progress during the last few years, despite the enormous problems and difficulties which such an unprecedented transformation inevitably brings with it. The West has a vital interest in a democratic Russia which plays a constructive role in resolving global issues.

That is why we are working with Poland towards a truly strategic partnership with Russia, a partnership made to last which will include all key areas and benefit both sides. The NATO-Russia Council shows what opportunities lie in close security cooperation.

It would send a far-reaching message if the European Union and Russia were to agree on the content of a strategic partnership in all key areas at the EU-Russia summit on 10 May - one day after the ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. We will do all we can to achieve this goal.

The fresh democratic start in Ukraine also offers new opportunities. Developments in this European country are of great importance to the stability of Europe as a whole. We therefore have a vital interest in an independent, democratic, market-oriented Ukraine which develops close relations based on trust with the European Union and Russia. We will support President Yushchenko in this and assist him in his policy of reform and national reconciliation.

Ladies and gentlemen, no country in the world can successfully tackle the new international challenges on its own. We need a strong and effective multilateral system for this, one which provides a reliable framework for cooperation and solidarity between states and guarantees good global governance.

I am convinced that the international community will succeed in mastering these challenges. Germany is prepared to make its contribution and to live up to the international responsibility which we are expected to shoulder. Thank you for your attention.

The spoken word is applicable!

See also:

- **Schröder, Gerhard** - Speech at the 37th Munich Conference on Security Policy (02/03/2001)
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