

**Beyond Bonn, Beyond Berlin:  
America and the Stuttgart Republic**  
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Thank you for the gracious introduction and the opportunity to join you this evening.

Let me offer my congratulations to all of you for engaging in this wonderful program, and for maintaining a strong alumni network that is essential for the sustainability of all such efforts.

Let me also offer my congratulations to Dr. Steffen Mehlich, Dr. Katrin Amian and their colleagues for the leadership and support of the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, which has become a key catalyst for stronger transatlantic relations. I have come to know the Stiftung through many different associations, and I know the "Bukas" and other Humboldtians here will join me in applauding you for your commitment to strong and vibrant transatlantic ties.

Since this is an occasion to connect and re-connect, and given the nature of this program and this important anniversary, I thought it might be useful for us to re-connect with the country in which many of you spent a year of your lives -- and for the new Fellows -- a country you will spend a year of your life -- a country that has experienced dramatic change over the past twenty years.

When Susan Duggan, Amy Schwartz, Eric Koenig, Gilberto Pimentel and the other inaugural class of German Chancellor Fellows first came to Germany in 1990, they arrived in the waning days of the Bonn Republic – a child of the Cold War and a response to two world wars. Although the Berlin Wall had fallen, the Bonn Republic's legacy was as a democratic yet divided, semi-sovereign front-line state, dependent on its allies for its security and its eventual reunification – a prospect that seemed quite distant, if not inconceivable, only months before. For the Bonn Republic, redemption from historical tragedy was to be found in European integration, and the country advanced its national interests in the language of economics and multilateralism. Its overriding foreign policy principles were “do not get out in front” and “do not go it alone.” It had a habit of thinking like a lightweight long after it had become a heavyweight. A related perception was that military power was a declining asset. The future belonged to civilian powers; most crises, it seemed, could be resolved through nonmilitary means. It had a correspondingly narrow view of its alliance obligations. Nuclear weapons were renounced. Independent military capabilities were forsworn in exchange for strong security guarantees and deep integration into NATO and European structures. The sole task of German defense was defense of German territory. NATO was there to protect Germany. It was deemed unlikely that Germany would be called on to protect others. Outside the NATO area it was less a player than a payer. Checkbook diplomacy bailed the Bonn Republic out of many a jam.

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It was a tremendous success. And yet its achievements were built in the shadow of the Berlin Wall; millions of Germans did not participate in the *Wirtschaftswunder* or the Bonn Republic's rise to respectability. And just before this first group of Humboldt Fellows arrived, the Iron Curtain parted and the Berlin Wall opened. Suddenly, peacefully, the crisp, clean lines of the Cold War turned into the abstract colors of a Jackson Pollock painting; and a lot of people on both sides of that vanishing divide found themselves superbly trained to deal with a world that no longer existed.

Those of you who followed the Class of 1990 have been first-hand witnesses to the historic change from the Bonn Republic to the Berlin Republic -- the first liberal, democratic, market-oriented, united Germany in history, surrounded for the first time by democratic allies. The nation that once embodied Europe's division is once again *das Land in der Mitte* -- the crossroads and central power of a continent in tremendous flux. In fact, thanks to the Schengen agreement, Germany -- the nation with the most borders in Europe -- today has no borders -- except with Switzerland.

Of course, deep continuities bind the Berlin Republic to the Bonn Republic—its commitments to *Westbindung*, European integration, multilateralism, overcoming the division of Europe, and accepting responsibility for German history. It has maintained the constitutional structures and many of the basic habits of the Bonn Republic. But it finds itself in a profoundly different situation.

It no longer has the antagonistic Soviet superpower or the blood feud across the Wall that defined much of the Bonn Republic's foreign and domestic policies. It has abandoned what probably was the very symbol of the Bonn Republic, the *deutsche Mark*, in favor of the euro. A predictable three-party system has given way to a five-party free for all presided over by an east German woman Chancellor. It is an international heavyweight whose absence on the world stage can be as important as its action. It faces greater pressure to send soldiers, doctors, diplomats, police officers and aid workers, not just checks, to deal with world trouble spots. It has committed German forces to the Balkans and to Afghanistan, but it is also a Germany that has learned to say “Nein,” even to its closest partners. It is less reticent internationally, more pressured economically, more diverse demographically, and more open yet less settled politically than was the Bonn Republic.

Given all these developments, it is perhaps not surprising that Germany's new accents are evolving unevenly. We see German leaders asserting themselves forcefully on some issues and abandoning the field on others, donning their green eyeshades at times and succumbing to high-flying bursts of moralistic rhetoric on other occasions.

### **The Stuttgart Republic**

These terms -- the Bonn Republic and the Berlin Republic -- are shorthand expressions for a changing Germany. Germans themselves used the term Bonn Republic during the Cold War. When the Cold War ended, I coined the term Berlin Republic in a short book that sought to describe the Germany Americans would now be working with. That term attracted some attention, but it didn't resonate well with everyone, as you might imagine. When I arrived at the

U.S. Embassy in 1993, I found two letters on my desk. The first was from the *SPD Ortsverein Bad-Godesberg Nord*, which demanded an immediate meeting in which I was to explain myself. The second letter was from the *Bürgerinitiative "JA zu Bonn!"*, which asked the Ambassador whether he was a complete nut job for ever hiring such a clearly demented advisor.

No matter how one feels about these terms, each focuses primarily on Germany's national government, on the Chancellor and the Bundestag, on Germany and its neighbors. In the new world rising, however, these terms fail to capture the nature of German society today, its major challenges and strengths. That's why I thought it useful to speak a bit about another Germany, one that has always lived alongside and outside the preoccupations of capitals, a Germany that one might call the Stuttgart Republic. By that I mean German life outside the Berliner Ring – *Deutschland* beyond the Beltway. It's the Germany I hope you came to know as a Humboldt Fellow, the workaday world of the German people. It is not a successor or challenger to Bonn or Berlin; it has always existed with them, next to them, beyond them. It could just as well be called the *Hamburger* or the *Frankfurter Republik*, but some might think I am talking about fast food. If I called it the *Münchner Republik*, all we will think about is *Bier*. So for tonight's purposes, we might reflect a bit on the Stuttgart Republic.

The Stuttgart Republic is *Deutschland der Regionen*. It's *König Fussball* -- Bayern München, Dynamo Dresden and Bayer Leverkusen. It's *Maultaschen* and *Weisswurst*, *Döner Kebap* and *Königsberger Klöpse*. It's the dialects and mentalities that define and transcend north and south, east and west. When brave east Germans gathered their courage to unfurl their banners twenty years ago, they first unveiled the long-forgotten emblems of *Sachsen* and *Thüringen*, not *Deutschland*, *einig Vaterland*. German identity is forged in its regions, not its capital.

The Stuttgart Republic is Bosch and Daimler and SAP. It is Max Planck and Fraunhofer. But perhaps even more it is the land of the *Mittelstand*, of world-beating, small, and often family-owned companies that have figured out how integrate cutting-edge innovation into "classical" manufacturing products and processes, often rendering medium-tech industries into high-tech leaders – hidden champions that often rank #1, 2, or 3 in the world in their particular specialty. Machine tool and auto production, chemicals and electronics engineering, intelligent production processes. The test is whether German ingenuity can keep ahead of the game in industries sandwiched between competitors in both developing and developed countries.

The Stuttgart Republic is becoming less German. It is shrinking, aging, and losing ground in the battle for global talent. Every year 300,000 fewer children are being born than are needed to keep Germany's population stable. An aging German work force is exacerbating skill shortages and exposing mismatches between available jobs and relevant skills. Immigration is essential to Germany's future, and Germany remains a top destination for migrants. But Germany has become a magnet for the unskilled, and recent efforts to facilitate the inflow of skilled migrants have yet to demonstrate success. Defining what it means to be German is the everyday drama of the Stuttgart Republic – one that is being played out in its neighborhoods, schools and workplaces.

The Stuttgart Republic is where the global meets the local. Germans are gloomy about globalization, yet Germany has been one of globalization's great winners. Most people

understand that their prosperity is tied to an open, vibrant global economy, yet most also believe that globalization's gains and pains have not been fairly shared within German society. Many are anxious about the pace of economic change, about their livelihoods, about their future. They worry that a job gained abroad means a job lost at home, that their hard-won prosperity could simply slip away. They are concerned that the future winners of globalization could live in Mumbai, Shanghai and Dubai rather than in Mannheim, Chemnitz, or Cologne.

These concerns are real, widespread, and legitimate. They sound very familiar. They are exacerbated, in turn, by home-grown problems "made in Germany." The German education system, once a world-beater, has become the Achilles heel of the German innovation economy. Unemployment remains stubbornly high, yet tens of thousands of jobs go unfilled for lack of skilled applicants. Twenty years after unification, many areas of eastern Germany still struggle.

Those who live in the Stuttgart Republic remain committed to European integration. But in a larger and looser Europe they have less confidence that there are always European solutions to German problems. The burdens of unification and global competitiveness challenges have led them to be wary about the costs of "EU Europe," not to mention the continent's still-turbulent East.

I recently had an interesting encounter with a senior German official when we were discussing the turbulent space between the EU and Russia. I said, "Europe is not yet at peace. Europe is not yet stable. And the Europe of which we dream – whole, free and at peace – will not become real until we work to stabilize wider Europe." He was aghast. His answer? "My" Europe is at peace," he said. "My" Europe is stable. "Wider Europe?" he said -- "That is not "my" Europe."

Let's be honest, most people in the Stuttgart Republic are also confused about their American partner. Many Germans who thought they "knew" America have been consistently surprised by our twists and turns. During the past eight years the German-American relationship saw more cliffhangers than in a whole season of "Desperate Housewives." Today, it's "no drama Obama." Expectations are extraordinarily high. And yet behind Obama's stratospheric approval ratings lurk doubts -- doubts that Obama's America can really deliver on its promise, doubts about America's continued vitality, and, particularly since the economic crisis, concerns that what many Germans call *amerikanische Verhältnisse* could spread to Europe -- even though many banks in Europe, including in Germany, were all too willing to embrace the risky lending practices of their American counterparts, bulking up on risky debt instruments while relying on short-term, sub-prime loans to finance their activities.

Those in the Stuttgart Republic also find it hard to believe that German security begins at the Kyber Pass rather than the Fulda Gap. They were strongly supportive of German efforts to help the United States in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks. But they weren't prepared to join a war, nor did they believe the U.S. had a strategy to move from conflict to a stable peace. They may be with us on the ground, but they still aren't convinced.

Many in the Stuttgart Republic simply want to be left alone, to get on with their lives. *Ich will meine Ruhe haben*. It's an understandable sentiment that I'm sure resonates with many Americans. But how do we simply get on with our lives in a world where it takes hours to cross

the ocean, minutes to flash news or seconds to transfer wealth? Harry Truman said it well – domestic policy is important, but foreign policy can kill you. Today foreign policy can also raise or lower the cost of your mortgage, give you a job or take it away. France’s Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner has been even more direct: “Do you want peace?” he asks those critical of greater European engagement. “Or do you want to be left in peace?” If we only want the latter, we will never achieve the former.

What does all of this mean for relations between Germans and Americans? The key challenge is the growing perception that the other partner is less relevant to one’s own concerns, and a worrying pessimism -- on each side of the Atlantic -- that the other side is in secular decline. Unless people on both sides of the Atlantic understand how the ties between our countries are directly relevant to their lives, we risk ending up like a couple that has been married for 60 years, each of whom sporadically remembers the good old days but gradually forgets why they are still together today. Addressing this challenge means understanding what makes the transatlantic relationship distinctive. And we can only do that if we supplement the agendas that are set in capitals with those that emerge from our societies.

Some argue that with the Cold War over and new powers rising, the transatlantic partnership has had its day. I disagree. Our partnership remains as vital as in the past, but now we must focus on a new agenda.

During the Bonn Republic, and also during much of the past twenty years of the Berlin Republic, most of the daily agenda of transatlantic relations was about stabilizing Europe itself. Today, our agenda includes this issue, particularly in wider Europe, but our agenda today is more about what Europeans and Americans are prepared to do together in the wider world, to meet a range of challenges neither of us can meet alone.

In the Cold War, a nation’s strength and influence depended on the power resources it could amass. Today, influence derives from networks, from the connections one builds with others. As Tom Friedman characterized it, “In the Cold War, the most frequently asked question was: “whose side are you on?” Today, the most frequently asked question is, “To what extent are you connected to everyone?” In this regard, the Stuttgart Republic presents us with opportunities.

If we look beyond the ups and downs of relations between Washington, Berlin and Brussels, and focus more on the ways in which Germans and Americans are simply connecting, then it becomes quite clear that since the Cold War our economies and societies have not drifted apart, we have in fact become so intertwined that in a number of specific areas we have transcended “foreign” relations. We have moved into a new arena of “transatlantic domestic policy” -- *Transatlantische Innenpolitik* -- in many areas of public policy. Transatlantic policy sharing has become a major pathway of change in our respective domestic policies – from vocational training models, car-sharing programs, rustbelt revival and urban revitalization to energy sustainability, transportation, and social and civic activism. Moreover, European and American scientists and entrepreneurs are pushing the frontiers of human discovery in such fields as genetics, nanotechnology and electronic commerce where there are neither global rules nor transatlantic mechanisms to sort out the complex legal, ethical and commercial tradeoffs posed by such innovation.

Transatlantic relations today are being defined by webs, not walls, as much by networked cooperation among private actors as by hierarchical rules set by capitals. The ties between our societies are the thickest weave in the world wide web of connections either of us has with any other pole in the multipolar world. The Cold War image of a two pillar Atlantic world is being challenged by dense transatlantic networks within a common Atlantic space that has no center.

These networks, symbolized by the Stuttgart Republic, remind us that the strength of our relationship depends ultimately on the ties between our people. Individuals make the difference. Individuals who have chosen public service, such as Phil Gordon. Individuals who try to explain us to each other, such as Abigail Greenwald. Individuals who help us learn from each other, such as Andrea Broddus, Jamie Chan, and Geraldine Gardner. Individuals such as Bob Grathwohl and Donita Moorhus, who led the US activities of the Humboldt Stiftung for so long. Individuals such as Cathleen Fisher, Virginia Barth and Diedre Kelley, who continue that work today.

In today's world, we are flooded with information, but information is not understanding. Winston Churchill was already lamenting this face six decades ago, noting that in the face of so much information his "brain got no better, but it buzzed more." The possibilities can simply mean that misunderstandings and prejudice can travel today at the speed of light. It is the very closeness of the transatlantic relationship that makes it especially vulnerable to such misunderstandings, because misunderstandings usually arise precisely when we think we understand each other best. We think we "know" each other, and so we become complacent. We allow superficiality to guide politics and policy. And then we are surprised – on a fairly regular basis – when our partner does not act in ways we had anticipated.

When the famous musician Isaac Stern was once asked why all professional musicians seemed to be able to play the same notes in the same order, yet some sounded wonderful and many did not, he scratched his head. "It isn't the notes that are important," he said. "It's the intervals between the notes."

This is a wise comment, not only about music, but about other forms of knowledge as well. It is not mainly our capacity to dig out the facts, but rather our ability to arrange facts in meaningful patterns, that makes all the difference.

Science provides similar insights. "The light that enters your eye," Einstein once said, "is never the light that enters mine." That's not only a fun physics fact, it's an important statement about human nature. We all start from different points of view. Learning about those points of view is a deeply rewarding experience. It is why the Humboldt program exists.

This theme is also reflected in great literature – in the works of Shakespeare and Goethe, Chekhov and Soyinka. The space between the notes is to a musician what the space between understanding and judgment is to a playwright. In plays, as in real life, conflict is caused by judgment without understanding. The great playwrights know that while we must all make judgments at some point, it's best to understand first, judge second. This we do not always do. We rush to judgment. We become self-righteous. We fill in the blank spaces of our ignorance

with cartoon images and caricatures. And we do it not only with those we know the least, but also with those we think we know the best.

When you chose your Humboldt year, you chose not to do that. You chose to find the space between understanding and judgment and to live in that space for a year. Hopefully you are still living there. This is what a program such as this provides – context, perspective, the ability to see the light from another's eyes, to find the space between the notes. The Humboldt Fellows program has given you that space. Keep it with you. Fill it. Use it to hear above the noise, to read between the lies.

We of course can understand even more if we also understand our partner's language. In my mind that is a distinguishing feature of this program that lifts it above most others. The Stiftung's commitment to helping you learn German – and your commitment to do so -- is a singular feature. So how's your German? Keep it alive.

I'm here to tell the Stiftung -- and those Bukas who are about to head to German language boot camp -- that the advantage of learning German is that you also improve your English. In fact, a few years ago, our national Spelling Bee champion won by spelling *Ursprache*. The runner-up tripped on *Weltschmerz*. Another favorite lost on *Heiligenschein*. Here's the *leitmotiv*: German is very American. It has worked its way into our world. While some worry about too much Spanish, German has become everyday English. We check the weather on the *Doppler* and the temperature in *Fahrenheit*. If your neighbor chokes on his *Bratwurst*, you give him the *Heimlich*. Behind all the *angst* there is a simple lesson. German and English share many word origins and characteristics. That makes German a good choice for every English-speaking *Mensch*, whether you are a *Kindergarten*, a *Student*, or just one of the *Familie*. You don't have to be a *Wunderkind* to learn a little German. Even Einstein was no *Wunder* as a *Kind*. Once you learn the basics, words that stumped the super spellers are a piece of *Kuchen*. German is basically a Lego language – just take word blocks like *Welt* and *Schmerz*, smash them together, and you've got some real *Weltschmerz*. It may sound painful, but it can be practical. For starters, we can all understand those Volkswagen ads. And for the *Doppelbonus*, everyone here can actually pronounce *Fahrvergnügen*. If we work really hard, we are even able to understand Arnold the Governor – you might even start to understand his politics.

Looking at your list, I see that some Humboldtians may have found that a little German can help you *meister* your business -- after all, it's the *Wirtschaft*, *Dummkopf*. And what better word to learn in this time of recession than *Schadenfreude*?

Three dangers loom. The first is nostalgia. Old bonds cannot substitute for lack of new substance. The second danger is complacency -- taking each other for granted while letting the foundations of our relationship erode. The third danger is superficiality. American knowledge of modern Germany is woeful. And too many Germans think they "know" America, and yet are regularly surprised by American society's twists and turns.

These challenges can only be addressed through sustained attention to the human dimension of our partnership.

Our common strategic interests make cooperation necessary. Our common political values make cooperation possible. That is America's agenda with the Berlin Republic, one that is rooted in the alliance forged with the Bonn Republic. But in the end this agenda is insufficient. It is our complementarity, the fact that each of us brings something special to our relationship from which the other can learn and profit, which makes German-American cooperation so potentially rewarding. Building on the human dimension of our partnership is America's agenda with the Stuttgart Republic.

These days, there is much discussion in the United States about wars of necessity and wars of choice. During the Cold War, we forged an alliance of necessity. Today, our alliance is one of choice. To paraphrase Goethe, it's a *Wahlverwandtschaft* – for those who haven't been reading Goethe lately -- an "elective affinity." But whether Germans and Americans retain this affinity and continue to choose this partnership depends on whether we believe the other is relevant to our lives.

That is why the work of the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung remains so critical, why it is so important to strengthen the human foundation of our relationship and to build transatlantic leaders ready and able to address the challenges of this new century. So congratulations again. At its best, this anniversary is not just a celebration, a re-connection, but a re-commitment. I am confident that you will treat it as such, and wish you great success und *viel Erfolg*. Thank you and *vielen Dank*.