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ROADMAP FOR A RENEWED SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I see it as my role to discuss not only the positive aspects but also the critical points in the transatlantic partnership, more precisely what binds us together and what could cause us to drift apart. A reorientation in transatlantic relations is not unusual. However, the stage we have reached is particularly striking. November 9, 1989 and September 11, 2001 and possibly the natural disasters in 2004/2005 changed Germany, Europe, the US, transatlantic relations and, ultimately, the world as a whole.

The peaceful revolution of 1989 transformed Europe and reunited Germany. The second key date is September 11, 2001. The acts of terrorism committed that day accelerated and changed international developments. New threats were recognized. The experience of September 11 led to a new view of the world, first in the US and then in Europe as well. The altered awareness in the US following September 11 was underestimated by many Europeans at first. On the other hand, it is not generally known in the US why the majority of Europeans, and Germans in particular, felt disconcerted and alienated by the Bush administration's rhetoric and policy after 9/11. Finally, the recent natural disasters in Southeast Asia, in the US and in Kashmir should provide the global actors with a trigger to speed up the process of addressing the non-military global security challenges, be it natural and humanitarian disasters, climate change, infectious and endemic diseases, the fight against poverty or the protection of natural resources. In a rational pursuit of our national interests, it is key to focus on our joint vision and policy of one world.

Since 9/11, well-known categories seem to be free-floating, the system of reference is gone. Power, security and the way to achieve them must be redefined. After the Cold War, Europe was forced to realize that neither US involvement in Europe nor an automatic convergence of interests on both sides of the Atlantic could be taken for granted. Europe finds itself in a constant balancing act trying to complete European integration while at the same time maintaining close transatlantic ties. We Germans, due to our historic ties with the US, feel especially challenged by this: without the US or without Europe we would not be what we are now. There is a specific double bind that we cannot and will not neglect when shaping and pursuing our interests.

We all are aware of the fact that with the end of the Cold War the transatlantic relationship and Europe's geostrategic setting after 1989 have given rise to unavoidable changes. I would ask everyone not to regard changes as negative from the outset. Despite these geostrategic changes, if we were to cling to the modes of conduct and ideas which reflected Western Europe's geostrategic situation during the Cold War, we would undermine rather than strengthen the partnership across the Atlantic. I would therefore like to see a new Atlanticism emerge through a reform of transatlantic policies and institutions, especially within NATO, through deepening the relationship between NATO and the EU and the relationship between the US and the EU. That President

Bush met with NATO and EU leaders on the same day during his visit to Europe was an excellent signal in this regard.

What has changed strategically?

In the US consciousness the main sources of conflicts have shifted to other problems and, in geographical terms, to the Middle East and to certain parts of Asia. In a stable European order of peace, the centuries-old German question has been resolved by united Germany's membership in the EU and NATO. Both sides of the Atlantic can and should rejoice that Germany is no longer a cause or at the center of a crisis. We perceived this conflict as a European or – we Germans – even as a local German crisis. In the past, Europe had strategic importance for the US as an importer of security because it was at the heart of a global conflict and was therefore totally dependent on the US guaranteeing its security. Europe's main relevance today is due to its willingness and ability to help resolve problems in other crisis regions, i. e. as an exporter of stability and security. European politicians must now examine whether they want to reorient either in order to be relevant to the US or because they, just like the US, believe that their security and interests are at stake. Mind you, this is about the strategic orientation of the US away from a global conflict with Europe at its epicenter towards other regions (for example, the Middle East) and towards other issues (for example, the fight against international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction). At the same time, we must seek a new consensus in security policy on whether, where and under what conditions, we are prepared to use military means to protect our security, interests and values.

There is another factor. In contrast to the situation during the Cold War in Europe, in regional conflicts such as the one in Iraq, the US is no longer dependent on its European allies in order to prevail in purely military terms. In the final analysis, the military victory in Iraq was not won because of the support of other European partners. This decrease in military dependency in wars has not only military but also political consequences. A country which believes it is no longer dependent on military support but seeks support for political reasons will begin to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of partnerships. That will influence the extent to which a country is prepared to show consideration for the interests and viewpoints of potential partners.

During the Cold War, certain political and military decisions in the US would not have been made against the express wishes of key European partners in NATO. Although the European members of NATO were completely dependent on the US for their security at that time, they nonetheless wielded much influence. Prior to the Iraq war, there was a debate in Washington on whether, on political grounds, the US should still show consideration to those who doubted not only the tactics but also the goals and strategy of US policy. Or whether for the sake of protecting the autonomy of US military action and the clarity of its own objective, it would not be better, if need be, for the US to pursue its course alone and do without critical and excessively self-confident partners. After all, there were always partners who, although they did not support every tactical detail of Washington's decisions, did support its strategic orientation.

This change in thinking in some Washington circles was no longer based on the premise that solidarity among all NATO partners was the key prerequisite for military action. It was therefore no coincidence that, following 9/11, the NATO offer to invoke Article 5 of the NATO Treaty was not taken up in Washington. If the US were to carry out an emergency unilateral action (which a priori the US does not want but has not ruled out either) or if a Coalition of the Willing were to replace action by NATO as a whole, this would have serious consequences for NATO.

One result of the difficult situation in post-war Iraq is that those in Washington who are in favor of partners and alliances have again gained ground. While it still is doubtful for some politicians in Washington whether European partners are needed to win a war militarily, it has become obvious that they are needed to win the peace. Beyond this, the concept of the transformation of the Greater Middle East requires not only the cooperation of local partners in the region but also a functioning partnership of the community of transatlantic democracies. Therefore, it is only logical that, during the last year, President Bush and several of his key advisors have emphasized their support for a strong Europe. In view of this changed debate in Washington, we Europeans should seize the occasion and, jointly with our American partners, develop concepts and strategies to renew and intensify transatlantic relations.

Both clarity about our own interests and detailed knowledge of the other side are essential as a starting point for developing common ground in the future. In order to reach a new transatlantic perspective, common ground and differences between American and European interests and security cultures must be considered rationally. In my view there might be differences in the hierarchy of our interests and values. But we agree on the fundamentals. Therefore, it is perfectly justified to talk of a transatlantic community of interests and values. This differing hierarchization of interests and values is not new, however. In the past, it contributed to the ambivalent image which Europeans and Americans had of each other.

Many in the US have ambivalent if not negative feelings concerning an ever solidifying EU not only competing in global economic markets but also organizing its military capabilities via ESDP and even recently, after long negotiations, solving its headquarters question. In the past, the recurrent European leitmotiv of ESDP being a strong European pillar of NATO and not a contender in the wings did not find many believers in the US. Sometimes it seemed that, with certain US critics, the only acceptable reason for the existence of ESDP would be that it might help Europeans spend more money on defence. In addition, an uneasiness has been existing in the US over EU members of NATO forming a European caucus and coming to the Atlantic table with a prefixed non-negotiable European position.

During the Cold War, the US was in favour of a strong European pillar of NATO. That European pillar was desirable to the US on the assumption that it would help counterbalance the Soviet threat, relieve the US of the danger of being drawn into regional armed conflicts and would not represent a competing entity. In view of the development which Europe has undergone in the last few years and decades, it is understandable that there was growing concern, particularly in the US, that this stronger Europe is transforming itself into a second rival pole in the West. In the final analysis, I

do not believe there is any real danger that Europe will endeavor to define itself in opposition to the US. Nor is there a majority for this following the enlargement of the European Union.

The reason is: Defining Europe in opposition to the US would definitely not be in Europe's or Germany's interests. However, I would also like to contradict those in the US who believe that an increased European strength in the sphere of foreign and security policy would be a negative development. The opposite is true! Europe's lack of effectiveness is one of the central problems in transatlantic relations. A Europe incapable of taking effective action has little global influence. The US would quickly lose interest in a weaker Europe. A weak Europe would also weaken transatlantic ties. A Europe which, as a result of its weakness, sees no hope of exerting influence on the US would, out of a sense of frustration, turn either away from or even against the US. Europe should have weight in the US but should not define itself as a counterweight to the US.

It is because we want to strengthen the basis for a joint transatlantic future that Europeans are in favor of making Europe more effective.

I agree as well with those who exhort Europeans to modernize and enlarge their military capabilities. But leaving aside the question of military capabilities - most of us Europeans, even more so us Germans, strongly believe that the soft approach pays off in the long run. The fact that for a long time only within a NATO framework there was sufficient European military clout is part but not all of the backdrop to this characteristic. As Kagan puts it, the EU has become a "gigantic political and economic magnet", its most attractive tool being enlargement or what Robert Cooper calls "the lure of membership". That means the EU is gradually enlarging the zone of peace, stability and prosperity along its expanding border. The EU's "soft" approach of cooperation and its political attractiveness has proved to be very effective in Europe.

The handling of the Ukrainian change of power was an excellent example of how the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy acted in a smooth and concerted way. The EU made sensible use of its new member Poland, the excellent personal relations between Chancellor Schröder and President Putin and the good offices of High Representative Solana. The initiative was backed by the EU presidency and member states, without locking the US out. I am convinced that such fine examples of smart multilateralism will become more and more numerous.

We alone cannot shape the ideal world that corresponds to our interests, values and dreams. One thing is certain however, the EU needs the US, and vice versa, be it in the war on terrorism, the fight against weapons of mass destruction or any of the crisis areas mentioned or still lurking. What we most ardently need is the common insight that the EU and the US, NATO and ESDP have complementary approaches and powers. No problem in the world can be solved faster and better when the transatlantic partners choose to approach it without the other. Why not follow the recent proposal of a "double-track initiative" fighting against terrorism and engaging the Islamic world? It should include credible law enforcement, military containment and more of the tools of the politics of power, while at the same time leading an active dialogue with Muslim cultures and societies.

I would like to respond to the growing number of people in recent times who take a skeptical view of transatlantic relations - and they are to be found on both sides of the Atlantic - with the following argument: I believe that transatlantic relations are just as important now as they were in the past. The US rightly regards itself as an "indispensable nation" but Europe should, with the same right, see itself as an "indispensable partner". Incidentally, that goes not only for military and economic issues but, ultimately, also for issues related to our democratic culture and even for environmental protection. If Europe and the US were to oppose each other, this would jeopardize the chance of achieving security and democracy in many parts of the world.