

Translation of Speech by Guenter Gloser
Minister of State for Europe

"Opportunities for a New Transatlantic Agenda"

Speech on the 25th Anniversary of the "Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship
Program"

Berlin, September 18
As prepared for delivery

Prof. Dr. Sandschneider,
Dr. Liedtke,
Deputy Chief of Mission Koenig,
Mr. Berg,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear scholars,

Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier sends his regards and wishes you all the best for your visit.

In 1984, when the first group of the Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship Program visited Germany, we were still in the Cold War. Nobody would have guessed how close - on the chronological axis of history – we were to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and to Germany's reunification.

The support from the United States that helped us in 1989/90 during reunification was vital, and it was unambiguous and more tangible than that of other European nations.

We all know: A lot has happened since then. The attacks of September 11, 2001 – we just commemorated the many victims one week ago – deeply shocked the

United States and also moved Germany and Europe deeply. Since then, both sides of the Atlantic have had to think in new categories of threats and insecurity.

Only a short time later, in 2002/2003, the Iraq War became a source of transatlantic tension. We must see clearly that the trust that Germans place in the United States as a political superpower and as a friend has suffered in the last years.

In the commemorative volume on your scholarship program on the occasion of its 20th anniversary in 2004, the foundation's representatives Dieter Berg and Peter Theiner wrote: "20 years after its creation, the Fellowship Program is more important than ever. In trying times of transatlantic misunderstanding, the program helps to maintain and foster a transatlantic mindset on both sides of the ocean. Such a transatlantic mindset is needed in order to not lose sight of our common goals." Have we lost sight of our common goals? Before I answer this question, let me briefly outline the present situation in German-American relations.

The so-called "rediscovery of Europe" by the Bush Administration in its second term resulted in an especially close dialog and well-aligned actions by the U.S. and Europe in some crises, for example in Kosovo and towards Iran. It has clearly become more interesting for American politicians in the last years to schedule a visit to Berlin when they travel to Europe.

In economic terms, 2005 to 2007 were record years in transatlantic exchange, in the flow of trade and investment in both directions. Goods amounting to considerably more than 1 billion euros are moved between the European Union and the United States every day.

In the last years, the U.S. invested three times more in Germany than in China. German companies, in particular, are especially successful in the U.S. Millions of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic are the positive result. Scientific cooperation between Germany or rather Europe and the U.S. is also constantly increasing. Thousands of visitors and approximately 10 million e-mails are exchanged between Germany and the U.S. every day.

After a decline that went on for some years that had to do with the Iraq War, the numbers of exchange students and German-American training programs have again considerably increased since 2007.

But back to my initial question: Have we lost sight of our common goals? I am convinced that this is not the case. Freedom, democracy and human rights, more peace and security through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, free enterprise, social justice and improving the lives of people in other parts of the world, a careful use of our resources and an environment that is as clean as possible - these are all shared goals that we have not lost sight of.

However, we do not always agree on how we should reach these goals – in some cases, not even in our own societies, but especially between America and Germany. This realization can only lead to the conclusion that we must consult more, must get to know each other more and must try to understand each other even more.

Now, what are the prospects for even closer German-American relations? To come straight to the point: The prospects are good, but not free of risk.

As I have already mentioned: For some months, we have all been fascinated with the presidential race 2008 in the U.S. and its unexpected dimensions. Here in Europe, there is no doubt that at present, the candidate of the Democrats would prevail. In the U.S., the decision is wide open.

We will cooperate well with any new U.S. Administration, no matter whether it is headed by Barack Obama or John McCain. This cooperation will be based on the stable foundation of our shared bonds and things we have in common, as already mentioned earlier.

We will benefit from a realization that is also increasingly catching on in the U.S.: no nation can meet the current global challenges – whether it's the fight against international terrorism, the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the reduction of poverty and need or the dangers of climate change – on its own. The U.S. therefore needs partners to face these global challenges. Close consultation with Europe can generate synergy effects for the benefit of all sides.

We must therefore use all the opportunities and the new room for maneuver that comes with a new U.S. government taking office to agree on what Foreign Minister Steinmeier calls the "New Transatlantic Agenda".

This new transatlantic agenda should focus on the following, from a German standpoint:

1. Climate protection and energy security:

We hope for new impetus in the climate negotiations under the framework of the United Nations, when the future McCain or Obama administration breaks with the restrictive position of the Bush Administration, as announced.

In this context, Germany and its European partners must support the many initiatives that already exist in the U.S. on a local level. I would like to mention specific examples: the team from Darmstadt University that won a competition organized by the U.S. Department of Energy for the design of an environmentally

friendly model home or the "International Carbon Action Plan" initiated by the Europeans in which several states and cities in the U.S. took part.

2. Disarmament / Arms Control / Nonproliferation:

We must create new impetus for conventional and nuclear disarmament in close transatlantic cooperation. At the same time, we have to get Iran and other states without nuclear weapons to renounce building up their own arsenals.

3. Combating fundamentalism and extremism while maintaining our constitutional standards:

German-American cooperation in preventing terrorist attacks is working well. But Guantánamo, military tribunals, torture accusations and secret renditions of prisoners have not only damaged the reputation of the United States but also the reputation of our transatlantic community of values. We therefore have to persistently urge our American partners to remedy these abuses.

4. Our strategic relations with Russia:

Here, I think still closer and more open dialogue across the Atlantic is vital. An isolated Russia helps nobody. We, Germans and Americans, need Russia's constructive contribution in a wide range of tasks. At the same time, we should remember that Russia, too, has a lot to lose if the current crisis becomes a long-term disruption in our cooperation.

Speaking about our future relations with China and India should also be more important on the transatlantic agenda.

5. Economy and trade:

Despite the rapidly growing economies in Asia and other regions, despite the shifting global weights, the United States of America and the European Union are still by far the most intertwined economic regions globally.

Together, they only make up approximately 10 percent of the global population but still account for 60 percent of the world economic product. They are by far the most important source of foreign direct investment for each other.

The German government, however, thinks it is very important that we are not just content with all these facts but that we also tackle the less compatible fields in our economies and the - few, but important – disputes in transatlantic economic relations.

That is why the German government made the intensification of these relations one of its priorities during the German EU Presidency in 2007 and created the Transatlantic Economic Council. This body is to help reduce non-tariff trade obstacles, simplify bureaucratic procedures, recognize or adjust standards on both sides and to promote central topics like the standardized transatlantic patent protection.

The German government firmly believes that the new U.S. government – no matter who it will be headed by - will welcome this approach to expand our economic cooperation.

I would like to say one more thing on the financial crisis.

The American government has up to now been rather skeptical of efforts to regulate the financial markets. Faced with the lasting financial crisis, however, the U.S. government has now intervened several times to stabilize the financial situation. For example, when it supported the Federal Reserve by effectively nationalizing Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac or also by acquiring 80 % of the largest insurance company, AIG.

This crisis has already had its effects on European and German banks, in particular. This raises the question of whether international, especially

transatlantic cooperation does not make sense in the future development and regulation of finance flows when the situation has calmed down and the finance sector has been consolidated.

That means there is a possibility of making German-American relations even more trusting and creative than up to now after the U.S. elections.

But we Germans have to be careful not to allow our expectations to rise too high. Basic differences in the political system and in foreign-policy power as well as in our priorities and methods will remain. When multilateral organizations fail, the U.S. will - no matter who is President - continue to reserve the right to act with select partners in certain cases or on its own, if necessary.

Naturally, we Germans, we Europeans cannot just voice our expectations but also have to do our homework.

Despite all remaining skepticism in Washington towards the EU, the notion seems to be spreading that the EU's economic and political influence is increasing together with its ability to make a substantial contribution in meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

It is not just we politicians who bear responsibility for an open dialog between Germany and America.

You also bear responsibility - now, during your exchange year and especially later, when you have returned home, and maybe some day in an especially responsible position.

Learn more about Germany and Europe, but also speak about your American views, take an active part in the ever expanding network of transatlantic contacts

and friendships, make a contribution to solving the problems of future generations together.

To conclude, I would like to use the opportunity to thank the representatives of the Bosch Foundation for their active contributions for international understanding.

With your programs, you are making a vital contribution to Germany's bilateral relations, whether it is with the United States, or France, or the Western Balkans.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Berg and Mr. Oppenheim, for the award for your program as one of the "365 Places in the Land of Ideas".

Thank you for your attention.