

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:00 PM EST
Monday, September 15, 2003

Contact: Mike Buttry
Beth Lee, 202/224-4224

**“The Significance of the Transatlantic Partnership:
An American Perspective”
U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel
The Konrad Adenauer Foundation
September 15, 2003**

“I would like to thank Dr. Bernhard Vogel, president of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, for inviting me to speak on the significance of the Transatlantic Partnership. I also wish to acknowledge the good work that this Foundation does for both sides of the Atlantic. Thank you.

The Transatlantic Partnership has rarely been as troubled as it is today. And this, at such a critical time in its history. Many Europeans are wary of America’s intentions, believing that we are predisposed to both unilateralism and the use of force. The war for Iraq’s liberation was unpopular on the continent. It was seen as Bush’s and Blair’s war, with little popular European buy-in. The European governments that opposed the Iraq war – including Germany, France, and Turkey – were reflecting the will of their people. A recent poll by the German Marshall Fund and the Compagnia di San Paolo on *Transatlantic Trends* pointed out that majorities in all European countries [from 51% in Great Britain to 81% in Germany, and 84% in France] believe the Iraq war was not worth the loss of life and associated costs.

America, for its part, felt the sting of French, German, and Turkish resistance to its military campaign to liberate Iraq. America wanted and expected to have its European friends by its side in taking down Iraq’s dictator. After the failure of Saddam’s Iraq to comply with 17 UN resolutions since 1991, many on our side of the Atlantic saw little use in further argument, nuance, or debate on Iraq. Although that was not the universal position of Congress or America.

At the end of the day, the transatlantic alliance was a casualty of the Iraq war. Both sides of the Atlantic share responsibility for this dangerous state of affairs. But we are where we are, and we now need to look ahead.

While we have grown apart as a result of the war, America’s and Europe’s common values and interests – in combating terrorism, in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, in supporting economic growth and global stability, in combating endemic disease, and in preventing failed states and regional conflicts,

especially in the Middle East – have never been more closely aligned in so many different areas.

Neither America nor Europe can meet these challenges alone. Ours is a shared interest, a shared burden, and a shared responsibility. As Professor David Calleo of Johns Hopkins University wrote in a recent issue of *The National Interest*:

“...a more serious estrangement between the United States and “old” Continental Europe would serve the interests of neither side. Instead, a global concert is urgently needed to manage the world’s accumulating problems, above all to accommodate peacefully the rising great powers of Asia. To build such a world order, Americans and Europeans need each other’s strength and wisdom.”

The challenges of our day can neither be avoided nor deferred. The next generation need not inherit a more troubled world than our world of today. The stakes are high. We are gambling with the future of the next generation. These are historic times, and this is our watch. In challenge comes opportunity, and the opportunities are great. But there is little margin for failure.

An earlier generation met the challenge of its day with leadership, vision and sacrifice. America realized after World War II, after dabbling with isolationism and protectionism after the first World War, that our nation had a global commitment which included both helping rebuild Europe and containing the Soviet Union. America’s security and prosperity depended on the security and prosperity of Europe.

The perception of America’s judicious use of its great power enhanced the trust and confidence of the world in American leadership. Konrad Adenauer, on the occasion of his first visit to the United States in April 1953, remarked eloquently on the unique balance of power and purpose in American foreign policy:

“Those responsible for American politics as well as American public opinion have exemplary awareness of the fact that power and wealth mean obligations toward others. The American people have not only recognized this obligation, they have acted accordingly. In the history of our times, which contains so many dark chapters, it will be written in golden letters that the United States, true to its tradition and on the basis of its strength, has undertaken the defence of freedom in the world.”

The institutions of the post-World War II era – the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, The World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and many others – established a framework for conflict resolution, negotiation,

and economic development. American leadership did not suffer from these institutions. To the contrary. America gained in influence and prestige.

No relationships in life come without complications or difficulties. America's partnership with Europe is no exception, although it is a relationship like no other. History, culture, and religion have forged a special bond between the two continents. But we still have had our differences and disputes. Such was the case throughout the Cold War, including the Suez Crisis of 1956, the Vietnam War, the American deployment of intermediate range nuclear missiles in Germany in 1983, ...and the list could go on. But our larger, strategic, common interests have defined our relationship and over-powered our differences.

Today, America, Europe, and the world seek new ways to understand and organize our global system. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, marked a new era in world history. The rules have changed and need to be re-written. The new enemy may be more treacherous, more elusive, and more dangerous than past enemies. America has seized the initiative to recast global politics as it leads a war on terrorism. Many nations have joined that effort with unprecedented cooperation in the diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, humanitarian, and economic fields. America's allies in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East understand that defeat in this war is not an option. Terrorism is the global scourge of our time. Our success so far in breaking up Al-Qaeda cells and worldwide terrorist networks has depended, and will continue to depend, on a strong, seamless cooperation between all nations.

America and Europe share an interest in limiting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons programs in North Korea and Iran could destabilize Northeast and Southwest Asia, regions vital to the stability and prosperity of the global economy. Non-proliferation is therefore a global responsibility. The Bush Administration has wisely drawn China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea into our strategy of turning back North Korea's nuclear weapons program. American partnership with Europe and Russia, working through the International Atomic Energy Agency, is the best means of convincing Iran that nuclear weapons proliferation will only increase that regime's isolation. Here again, America cannot go it alone.

If the transatlantic alliance was a casualty of the Iraq war, let the liberation of Iraq be the reason for healing those wounds. This is not simply an exercise in soothing hurt feelings and bruised egos. Security and stability in the Middle East are connected to getting it right in Iraq. The hard-earned progress in Iraq must not be reversed. We are only at the beginning of an expensive, long-term commitment to assure that Iraq does not become a failed state or a breeding ground for terrorism.

Iraq's transition to stability and democracy will require the active engagement of the United Nations and our European and regional allies. There is no other way. That is

why the United States has proposed a new UN resolution that would allow for an expanded UN role, a UN multi-national force, and a clear time-table and plan for a transition to Iraqi self-rule. The Iraqi Governing Council, and future Iraqi governments, will require the legitimacy and programmatic support that only the United Nations can help provide.

There are currently differences in the Security Council about the exact definition of the UN role and the timing of the transition to Iraqi self-rule. These differences are of means, not ends. We all agree that the UN must play a larger role. And in principle we all agree that the sooner we can transfer full authority to Iraqis, the better. In reality, however, we must be assured that the Iraqi government will have the capability and legitimacy to govern.

The costs of rebuilding Iraq are staggering. Congress will soon consider an additional \$87 billion supplemental appropriations spending request, almost all of it for Iraq; of that, \$20 billion is being asked specifically for Iraq's reconstruction. That \$20 billion is a down payment on a reconstruction price tag expected to cost at least between \$50 and 75 billion. It will probably be more. Iraqi oil revenues, projected to be only \$14.3 billion from July 2003 through December 2004, will not close the gap. Iraq's debt is estimated at between \$70-120 billion, and unpaid UN reparations claims against Iraq are approximately \$116 billion.

It would be easy for our friends across the ocean to fold their arms and let America pay the costs of "its" war. But that would be irresponsible, as was America's disregard for some of our European allies' concerns and warnings before the war. America's failure in Iraq would be the world's failure. As we approach a critical donor's conference in Madrid on October 23, our friends across the Atlantic must act out of global interest and vision, not spite. The stakes are too high for all of us.

We should not forget Afghanistan, which despite liberation from the Taliban also hangs on the razor's edge. President Hamid Karzai wages a daily struggle against regional warlords and drug dealers, as well as reconstituted Taliban forces, who undermine his government and his power. Our allies, including NATO and Germany, which presently lead the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), have offered vital security and development assistance in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the first test case in the war on terrorism, and we cannot fail.

America and Europe, along with Israel and our Arab allies, will pay a high price if the Road Map in the Middle East continues to unravel. We must work together to get the parties to take concrete steps toward peace. This is a common cause for the Transatlantic alliance. Europeans have not been spared by terrorists in the past. Europe's free societies, like America's, invite the hatred and wrath of those who thrive on violence, despair, and intolerance. An intensification of radical politics in the Middle East will only make these problems worse. Thomas Friedman, reflecting on the "death grip" of suicide bombers in Israel in a *New York Times* column last week, wrote, "A credible peace deal here is no longer a U.S. luxury – it is essential to our homeland security." Terrorism knows neither boundaries nor limits. If our efforts to end the violence in the Middle East fail, and, over time, terrorist attacks become part of American life, Europe will surely share the same fate.

We live at a historic time. Historic times are times of change, and change is unsettling. Our alliances and international institutions, including the Transatlantic Partnership, must respond to, lead and shape these changes in the world, as we did after World War II. The UN, NATO, The World Bank and other multi-lateral organizations are as vital today as anytime since World War II. It will be the mark of American leadership to work with and through these institutions and alliances to support our common global interests. Few would argue that the regimes in North Korea and Iran are on the wrong side of history. But as Professor Robert Jervis of Columbia University recently wrote in *Foreign Policy*, "the fate of the U.S. design for world order lies in the hands of Washington's allies more than its adversaries."

The poll on *Transatlantic Trends* that I referenced earlier captures the complexity and nuance of transatlantic relations today. The news is not all bad. Americans and Europeans agree that international terrorism is the top international threat, and both sides agree that WMD programs in Iran and North Korea, Islamic fundamentalism, and the Arab-Israeli conflict round out the five most urgent threats we face. And 74% of Europeans and 70% of Americans polled said the United Nations should be strengthened.

Following the events of the past year, the transatlantic alliance is in need of adjustment, not overhaul. This is normal and healthy. Of course we will have our differences, and some of those differences will be spirited and contentious. Iraq was one. But ours is a shared heritage and a common destiny. A return to "balance of power" politics would undermine the potential and promise of a bright future on both sides of the Atlantic, and for the rest of the world.

In preparing for this speech, I took the opportunity to reflect upon the life of Konrad Adenauer, who shaped so much of the post-war history of Germany and Europe. Under Adenauer's leadership – in 1949, at age 73, he was elected West Germany's first post-war chancellor – West Germany became a democratic and prosperous state with strong ties to the transatlantic alliance. Adenauer's enlightened statecraft focused and fused the alliance's common interests of a rebuilt and united Europe with that of a reborn and democratic Germany. Those were early and sometimes dark days of the Cold War, and the path for Germany was neither easy nor assured. But Adenauer knew that Germany's own future depended on the stability, security, and prosperity of Europe, as well as a close European partnership with the United States.

In his magisterial two-volume biography of Adenauer, Hans Peter Schwarz uncovers a telling cable from Secretary of State Dean Acheson to President Harry Truman on May 26, 1952, at the conclusion of the negotiations over the Western Treaties:

“Adenauer, though a good and patriotic bargainer, has revealed himself once again to be a European statesman who knows when it is essential to compromise in order to save a possible great future from the threat of present difficulties of detail. I hope we have him with us for a long time.”

Acheson's cabled tribute to Adenauer is a testament to inspired leadership of any era. More than 50 years later, we are called once again, “to save a possible great future from the threat of present difficulties of detail.” That is the charge of the Transatlantic Partnership. That is our glorious burden. That is chapter one of the history of the 21st century.”

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