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Ladies and gentlemen,

One year ago, we met here in Munich at the height of the Iraq crisis. We had experienced months of tension in the Atlantic community. Europe was disunited and divided. The result was an inability to undertake joint action.

Today, a year later, Saddam's regime in Iraq has been toppled. The dictator has been captured.

And yet the same old questions still haunt us. Ultimately, was there really no alternative to a military conflict? Did Iraq have weapons of mass destruction? Western democracies cannot sidestep these questions, whether they want to or not. In the USA and Great Britain, independent commissions are being set up to investigate the reliability of the intelligence.

Even if these inquiries ultimately only make a tiny contribution towards restoring public confidence in political decision-making processes, they will have been worthwhile. But if they merely divert attention from the real issues surrounding the Iraq conflict, that would be regrettable.

For what was - and is - the real issue is the clash between democracies and despots, between free societies and twenty-first century threats. The issue is also which position we adopt in this situation and at this time, both within Europe and in relations between Europe and the USA, and how we establish our authority as democracies - an authority which is also necessary in order to enforce UN resolutions.

At Princeton University last November, in what I believe was an important speech on "Europe and the Future of the Transatlantic Relations", Federal Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer made the following comments, and I quote: *"One of the favourite gloomy questions being asked by political journalists at present is, "Is the West at an end?" My clear answer is "no!"*". And he continues: *"The West would only be at an end if the transatlantic community were to have no future due to a lack of common interests, and Europe and America were to go their separate ways. However, our interests demand the very opposite."* End of quotation.

I agree with Foreign Minister Fischer. The West is not at an end. Our values - human rights, equality for women and men, the rule of law, freedom of opinion, freedom of religion,

tolerance, and democracy - are more relevant than ever. Our values place the individual above ideologies. They are immutable, defying every setback, disappointment and nadir. But in order to enforce them, we must clearly define our interests.

There are successful examples. In Kosovo, America and Europe were able to prevent a genocide through their joint action. Stability in the region is good for the local people, but it is also good for a Europe which is uniting. The Taleban regime in Afghanistan was toppled under US leadership. Today, Germany, not least, is making an important contribution to rebuilding the country. Free elections are imminent. A different government will be good for the Afghani people, but it will also reduce a potential threat to us in Europe and America. Libya, Syria and Iran have started to read the signs of the times and are beginning to cooperate on the control of potential weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqi people have embarked on a difficult path towards self-determination and democracy - a path which, only a little time ago, would have been almost inconceivable. Such liberalization processes can be a piece of the jigsaw in the very difficult peace process across the entire Middle East, but they also dismantle potential threats to us in Europe and America.

The link between values and interests thus becomes visible. To put it another way, our interests are value-oriented.

But more than that: the West really is not at an end. Europe and America are building bridges and are starting to talk again. Chancellor Schröder will be meeting President Bush later this month. Washington is asking the UN and the European partners for support in rebuilding Iraq. The erstwhile opponents of the war are about to take on a role in shaping Iraq's post-war order - through debt relief, humanitarian aid or offers to participate in stabilizing and rebuilding the country. NATO's possible involvement at the request of a freely elected government in Iraq within the framework of a UN resolution is also being discussed. In such a case, Germany must not shy away from the challenge. I cannot imagine that in light of the lesson we have learned over this past year, Germany will, for example, withdraw its thirty NATO officers from the Mönchengladbach headquarters if it is relocated to Iraq. This will show how much weight we can attach to the Federal Chancellor's statement - which we welcomed - that he will not block any decisions by NATO.

These are positive and hopeful developments. So is all well that ends well?

I would urge us to be cautious. We must rephrase the question, with an eye to the future. That is why Wolfgang Schäuble, the deputy chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Bundestag, did not call his new book "Is the West at an End?" Instead, the title he chose was: "Is the West Failing?" This latter question is not only phrased differently from the first; it also means more. It relates to future developments, which is why it is also more difficult to answer.

For the truth is real. So let's ask the real question: Could the situation which arose in relations between the US and Europe, and within Europe, over the Iraq conflict ever happen again? How can we prevent it from happening again? Resolving this issue is the real test of strength for the transatlantic relationship, whose prospects we are discussing here today.

In this context, I think it is worth casting a glance at the autobiography of the former US Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration, Madeleine Albright, which was published last year. At the start of the chapter "Dueling with Dictators", Mrs Albright writes, and I quote: *"The purpose of foreign policy is to influence the policies and actions of other nations in a way that serves your interests and values. The tools available include everything from kind words to cruise missiles."* End of quotation. I'll say it again: this is not a quote from Donald Rumsfeld, for example, but from Madeleine Albright, but that is not really relevant.

Basically, this is an amazingly simple definition of foreign policy: to serve the interests and values of your own nation, making use - as necessary - of every available tool. But it is also a definition which, in my view, must apply not only to US foreign and security policy. It should - or better still, must - also be a benchmark for a European foreign and security policy.

So if we want to serve our interests and values in line with this definition, Europe must:

firstly, be vigilant to the new threats to which the free and open societies are exposed. Free societies are threatened in many different ways:

- On the economic front, they are at risk from instability in major regions of the world, with consequent implications for world trade.
- In terms of internal security, they are at risk from terrorist attacks in their own countries and, at the very least, from the fact that fundamentalists and terrorists have quite obviously been agitating and operating in our cities for some time.
- In terms of external security, they are at risk from the possible link between terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These have substantially altered the nature of prevention and defence. It is the greatest qualitative shift since the invention of the atomic bomb more than half a century ago.

Even today, the Iraq conflict vividly demonstrates how difficult it is, in European thinking, to identify new benchmarks for permissible self-defence.

Secondly, Europe must be clear about its self-perception as the European Union. I emphasize "as the Union", which will undergo enlargement with the forthcoming accession of ten Central and Eastern European states on 1 May 2004. The purpose and objective of a European constitutional treaty is to facilitate this process. Sadly, the failure of the European Summit last year has been something of a setback for Europe in this respect. However, there is no alternative to this course. Without a European constitution, Europe would have no future. The constitution clarifies competences and enables unity to be achieved. So it will come, and with a little luck, this may even happen before the European elections in June. And it will not set Europe on a collision course with America, for every rational person in Europe knows - and Europe's experiences with the Iraq conflict have taught us this as well - that there cannot, and will not, be a common and united Europe against America.

But there is one further truth too: only if Europe is united can it be a genuine partner for the USA in a multilateral approach to global security issues. For this will continue to be true as well: even the greatest superpower will ultimately be dependent on reliable

partners and a set of binding international treaties. However, no country advocating the multilateral approach, such as Germany, should itself be the first to rule out that approach, plunging Europe into profound disarray.

Europe has learned the initial lessons from this experience. In December, the European Council adopted the European Security Strategy [ESS] presented by Javier Solana - although sadly, this only happened after the Iraq crisis. The ESS systematically identifies the key threats facing us in the new era and outlines the implications for European foreign and defence policy. It includes a commitment to the full spectrum of instruments for crisis management, including military activities as a last resort. Never again should calls from the international community - such as those latterly set out in UN resolution 1441 on Iraq, for example - appear to be not worth the paper they are written on. Only resolution and unity among free societies can impress despots and totalitarian regimes. Anything else weakens and harms us.

Thirdly, the international institutions must be strengthened.

The ESS, which I have just mentioned, is committed to strengthening the UN and developing international law. But how is international law to be developed in the face of qualitatively new threats? The ESS is vague on this point. Experiences over the last ten years - in the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East - have shown that the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principle of non-intervention under international law are not - or are no longer - sufficient as the sole parameters for order. My party has drawn conclusions from this. As early as last year, we adopted an Executive Committee Resolution which states, and I quote:

"Since the right to self-defence, including emergency assistance and the principle of non-intervention, are no longer enough to secure peace and stability, international law must be developed further in a cautious manner. If, as a result, the concept of sovereignty becomes less effective as a factor for order, legitimization by means of decision-making procedures based on international law assumes even greater importance." - End of quotation. [CDU Executive Committee Resolution of 28 April 2003: "Germany's foreign policy interests: Stability through partnership and trust"].

This is a clear commitment to making every effort to legitimize a multilateral approach. And in line with this commitment - though this may be hard for us to imagine today - the UN's importance as the place where decisions are taken will increase.

However, the ESS not only aims to strengthen the UN. It also recognizes, above all, that Europe's new security and defence architecture is not intended to be an alternative, or indeed a counterweight, to the USA.

For that reason, an EU defence component must directly mesh with NATO structures. Friction losses must be avoided. That means that rather than establishing a separate military headquarters in order to demonstrate our independence, we should make the full European contribution to the NATO Response Force as soon as possible. The European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance can already prove its usefulness by taking on autonomous tasks, as it has done in Macedonia, for example.

But it is NATO's track record in practical fields of action that is even more effective in strengthening transatlantic cohesion. The Alliance's involvement in Afghanistan is an encouraging example.

Fourthly, if we want to serve our interests and values, we must view foreign policy as global domestic policy. Global domestic policy encompasses much more than security and defence policy. Globalization is the keyword here. Whether it is climate protection, the world trade system, ever-progressing digitalization, the fight against hunger, natural disasters around the world, species protection, the campaign against child labour and much more - ultimately, there is just one objective: to enable everyone to have a fair share in social, economic, scientific, technological and medical progress. Globalization is associated with a number of risks, as we all know, but it also offers a wealth of opportunities. The alternative is isolation, and in the 21st century, that is not an option.

Ladies and gentlemen, what does all this mean for us in Germany? What value-oriented interests do we have, and how can we do them justice?

- Germany is the largest country in the EU. We are expected to show commitment, reliability and leadership. A "German way" is always the wrong way. Relying on different partners on a case-by-case basis destroys the transatlantic relationship and European integration equally. It is deeply damaging to German interests.
- The Bundeswehr's capabilities must be aligned to the threat analysis and Germany's Alliance commitments. In a speech to the Japanese Parliament almost exactly a year ago, US President Bush said that he believed that the 21st century would be the "*Pacific century*". And he pointed out that America is a "*Pacific nation*". So it is clear that the Americans will not necessarily concentrate on Europe. It is therefore also in our interests for Europe to be regarded as a major partner. And why am I mentioning this now? Because it highlights the different capabilities, also within Europe. France and Great Britain have strong security policy capabilities of their own. Germany does not. Germany must therefore bring its defence budget into line with the average in the European NATO states. Otherwise, there will be a permanent discrepancy in defence investment, which will further widen the technological gap between Germany and our Alliance partners in an irresponsible way. Germany must also maintain appropriate capabilities for international missions undertaken within the framework of the NATO Response Force and the EU's Rapid Reaction Force. To safeguard our capacity to act, we must also ensure, by means of a Law on Parliamentary Participation in Decisions on the Deployment of the Armed Forces, that these troops can be mobilized quickly.

Missions abroad involving the Bundeswehr will increase. In the 21st century, the task of defending our interests and our security must be carried out on a worldwide basis. In this context, an intensive political and public debate about compulsory military service is currently taking place in Germany. If the Bundeswehr's mandate were confined solely to missions abroad, retaining compulsory military service would no longer be justified. However, as well as missions around the world, our armed forces have another task: to defend and protect our country. In light of this dual task and the need for a well-functioning system of national defence, my party will continue to advocate the retention of conscription in Germany in future too. Germany needs a comprehensive security strategy - and here, our efforts are only just beginning.

- Ultimately, Germany - as the largest country in Europe - will only be able to make an effective foreign and security policy contribution to a global domestic policy in

the full sense if our economic power increases substantially overall. We need economic growth, generated through our own efforts, to drive Germany and Europe forward, not to slow them down. In the context of European integration and the reshaping of transatlantic relations, I would like to see Germany regain its image as the driving force for development, not as the country which slackens the pace or brings up the rear.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year, numerous regional elections will take place at Land and local level in Germany. Some people are afraid that these elections and the associated election campaigns will mean that 2004 is a wasted year in terms of further social and economic reforms. I am not so pessimistic - largely because the public will not let us politicians get away with that, whether we are in government or in opposition.

Nonetheless, in foreign policy and in the transatlantic relationship too, we must make every effort to ensure that 2004 is not a wasted year - despite the European elections in June, despite the setback in the adoption of a European constitutional treaty, and despite the forthcoming elections in Russia in a few weeks' time and in the USA in November. We cannot let it be a wasted year, for the problems and challenges facing us - Israel and Palestine, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, the future of Africa and many, many more - will brook no delay. If we decide to take our values and interests seriously in a genuine sense and work on defending them - and do so on a united basis - then the West will not only not fail; the disruptions in the transatlantic relationship which arose in the Iraq conflict will not happen again either. Instead, we will even have made a modest contribution to more peace and freedom for our new world order.

But this takes courage. It means that we must face up to the challenges and not hide our heads in the sand. We have every chance to present a better image as "the West" in the next major conflict. Will we manage to capitalize on these opportunities? History will be the judge of that.