

# FEATURES

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## THE GLOBAL SITUATION: A EUROPEAN POINT OF VIEW

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Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the invitation. I have been a guest in this country about a hundred times; this might very well be my 101st visit to the United States. Because I intend, among other things, to voice some opinions that will not sound convenient to every American in this audience, I would like to begin by quoting myself, so to speak, as a foreword to my remarks.

About twenty years ago, I wrote that if I ever had to leave my own country and emigrate, I would, without a doubt, try to go to the United States of America. I like this country. I have not changed my mind. I still feel strongly attracted to America's vitality and generosity, to your hospitality.

Today, of course, I am speaking as a private citizen, and my remarks should in no way be understood as expressing the opinion of the German government. I plan to address five different topics. I will assess the current global situation, introduce some global certainties in the coming decades, raise some possibilities for the future, and discuss the future role of the United States as well as that of the European Union.

Twenty years ago, I gave a similar speech in Beijing, China. It was the time of Deng Xiaoping, Yuri Andropov (or it may have been Konstantin Chernenko), and Ronald Reagan. I reread that speech this summer, and found that I had predicted that there would be three powers of global importance at the end of the twentieth century: namely, the United States, China, and Russia. It seems that this prediction has come true—so much for my otherwise limited abilities with respect to forecasting.

### **I. On the Present Situation**

If you look around the globe today, the situation in Latin America differs little from two decades ago. One finds hunger and poverty in many places, domestic unrest in others, economic and debt problems from time



**Helmut Schmidt delivering the Bucerius Lecture**

to time, but a quickly growing population as well. The same is true for Africa, but there, economic and social difficulties have assumed a more devastating character than in most places. Time and again, you will find tribal, ethnic, or religious wars as a result. From Nigeria to the Sudan, to Burundi, the Congo, and Liberia, Africa remains a deeply troubled continent. But neither Latin America nor Africa presently pose political dangers of global consequence.

The situation inside Europe is calm with minor exceptions, one being the Balkan Peninsula. Most European states have the usual social and economic problems, but the integration of Europe under the roof of the European Union is progressing slowly but steadily.

In Asia, the greatest economic progress right now is taking place in China. Somewhat slower progress is occurring in India. In Japan, there has been an economic standstill for about a decade and a half, but it might soon end. With the possible exception of the Kashmir conflict, it does not seem to me that the world today is faced with dangers originating from these three leading Asian countries. On the other hand, today one also finds an Asia with three new nuclear-weapon states: Israel, India, and Pakistan. And it is unclear whether Korea and Iran are developing nuclear weapons.

The only dangers of global importance at the moment seem to be in the Middle East. The American war against Saddam Hussein was won quickly, as expected, but the situation of the whole region is as unclear and as dangerous as before. The conflict between Israel and her immediate neighbors, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria—with terrorist activities on all sides—has escalated in recent months, and could eventually burst into the type of open warfare already seen in that region in the past. The conflict is fueling anger and emotions in Israel and many Arab countries, particularly among the younger generations.

The Arabs understandably resent the Israeli forces of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, and quite a few of them want to totally eliminate the state of Israel. But we also see that some Israelis tried to prevent the formation of a Palestinian state. Of course, Israel relies on the backing of the United States. The U.S. also has friendly relations with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Arab countries. For this reason, not to mention America's military, technological, and financial leverage, Washington is in a unique position to improve the situation and exert pressure. But for decades, American policies in the Middle East have not been very consistent or rigorous. The so-called quartet has laid out a so-called road map, but today the map appears to be an outdated piece of paper.

Outside of the United States, very few people have accepted the concept of an "axis of evil" that supposedly reaches from North Korea via Iran to Iraq. These three states have almost no connection to one another.

The future American proceedings in Iraq appear as uncertain as those in Afghanistan, and it is unclear how much the moral authority of the United States might suffer from these uncertainties.

I must confess that I am one of the critics of the Bush administration's strategies in the Middle East. But, on the other hand, I have also invited audiences—public audiences—in Berlin, Moscow, and other places on the globe to ponder the following question. If foreign terrorists were to hijack three fully occupied, wide-body passenger planes scheduled to fly from St. Petersburg to Moscow, and crash them into the Kremlin, thereby killing three thousand people, what would be the psychological and political reaction in your nation to such a colossal crime, one that came so entirely out of the blue? Or what if this were to happen in Berlin or Paris? As a result of World War II, these places have understood their own vulnerability in a way not known in America before September 2001. Nevertheless, it seems likely to me that, in such a case, any national government would try to bring all the power it could muster to bear. Time and again, I have invited audiences to imagine the impact of such a colossal crime on their own nation, on their own government, in order to gain some understanding of the American nation's extreme psychological state, and the government's resulting domestic policies, both of which obviously dominate American foreign policy at the moment.

The proclaimed "war on terrorism" can be wrongly understood as having just one enemy. In fact, we are witnessing many transnational terrorist activities across the borders of sovereign states, from Manhattan to the Middle East, and from the Basque region in Spain to Ireland. These activities are occurring inside India and other Asian countries, in several African regions, in Latin America, Chechnya, and on the Balkan Peninsula. Beginning in the early 1970s, we Germans had to endure murderous, transnationally assisted, organized terrorism for almost two decades. In most cases, however, national, transnational, and international terrorism has different social, psychological, and political origins. For example, many murderous terrorist organizations have nothing in common with Islamic extremism. These groups differ in their motivation, their organization, and their mode of operation.

Therefore, one needs different methods and means to fight different terrorists, depending on the specific circumstances of each case. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan were fought with military operations. But if, for instance, one were to detect clandestine Al-Qaeda pockets inside a sovereign state whose government had made concerted, albeit unsuccessful, attempts to eliminate them, then other nations might actually be reluctant to undertake military action against an otherwise well-functioning state. One cannot fight the Irish Republican Army in London with warfare in Northern Ireland. We Germans could not hope to win our

fight against the terrorist organization RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion) in Germany by waging war against the country that assisted it in the hijacking of a fully occupied passenger aircraft in an African country a thousand miles away.

Because of Al-Qaeda, the catch phrase “war on terrorism” has become an expression of the decisive will of the American government and the entire nation to use all of its capabilities and power to overcome this threat. Leaders, the media, and public opinion stand in solidarity in the interest of the nation. Many other countries expressed their solidarity with America, and cooperated with the American government in various ways.

The preventive war against Iraq, however, had almost nothing to do with the war against Al-Qaeda. The war was not based on a decision by the Security Council. In my view, it thereby violated the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, the oppositional abstention of Russia, China, France, Germany, and other states was, in my view, legitimate. Nevertheless, it was very unwise, to say the least, to let the impression arise that Moscow, Paris, and Berlin were forming an oppositional group against America. Britain and some other European states actively participated in the war, and a rift formed inside the European Union. What this may mean for the future, and in particular for the future of the United Nations or the European Union, remains uncertain. Before dealing with future uncertainties, however, allow me to speak first about some future certainties.

## **II. Some Future Certainties**

I take it as a certainty that almost all Europeans, and Russians as well, share a vital interest in avoiding a clash of civilizations with Islam, since hundreds of millions of Muslims live in places that are geographically close to Europe and Russia. Millions live inside Russia’s borders, and even more live in cities such as London, Paris, Berlin, Hamburg, and Amsterdam. Today, more than one-fifth of the total population of this globe are Islamic believers, and their share is growing. Therefore, I take it as a certainty that Europe will try to resist any inclination toward a general clash with Islam.

Ominous certainties exist as well. The population explosion that has been underway since the early twentieth century will continue, reaching proportions unknown since the time of the Emperor Augustus and Jesus of Nazareth. Today, the world’s six billion inhabitants have only one quarter of the space per capita that they enjoyed just one hundred years ago. And by the year 2050, we will have only one-sixth of that space. And you only need to look at cities like Jakarta or Sao Paulo or Cairo in order to imagine what is going to happen.

There also is no longer any question about the advance of global warming. It will trigger climatic shifts, and it will certainly cause the sea levels to rise, not only as it has done in the twentieth century, but maybe also in the twenty-first century, and certainly in the centuries thereafter. As a result of overpopulation and climatic shifts, there will be an increase in local and regional wars in Asia and Africa. Immigration to Europe will certainly continue to increase significantly, and only by common action will the Europeans be able to regulate this movement. It is also certain that the globalization of financial markets is no longer reversible.

The greed and speculation of private financial institutions operating globally, subject only to inadequate regulation and world-wide supervision, are undermining and obstructing the economic and fiscal policies of governments of many sovereign states. The common currency, the Euro, and the European Central Bank are only the first steps in the defense against this.

Because of communications and the Internet, the globalization of almost all technologies is certainly unstoppable, and the proliferation of all kinds of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, is just one of the consequences. Above all, jobs and the relatively high standard of living in industrially advanced countries will come under pressure as a result of competition from the outside. In terms of technology, this competition will be at our level. In terms of cost and price, however, it will be very much below our level.

For almost every sovereign country, it will no longer be possible to act in isolation to overcome cross-border epidemics. And the same is true for the transnational and international drug trade, and for all kinds of transnational terrorism. It is also true for transnationally organized crime and the international arms trade.

### **III. Possibilities and Probabilities**

So far, I have enumerated some future problems that mankind will certainly have to face within the course of the next couple of decades. Let me now ask, "What are the possibilities? What is probable? What is likely beyond these certainties?" When we ask ourselves who is winning and who is losing as a result of globalization, the answer, in my view, is threefold.

First, the winners thus far are almost all of the highly developed industrialized countries and their populations, including America, most European countries, Japan, and Australia. As of yet, the relatively high rates of unemployment in Europe and America and the growing unemployment in Japan have very little to do with globalization.

Second, in the case of developing countries, only those governed by economically enlightened—but at the same time, strictly authoritarian—

governments will be among the winners. China is the outstanding example. The same can be said of a few oil-exporting countries. Here, one might point to the countries once called the “four little tigers,” Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan, all of which have done well for their size. They no longer fit into the category of “developing countries.” But the development we have seen in the “four tigers” over the last four decades has required authoritarian governments. For me, it is conceivable, but far from certain, that Russia may also land on the winner’s side.

Third, on the other hand, a great number of the developing countries that are trying to establish markets and democracies are failing socioeconomically. Therefore, in many cases, they are failing politically as well.

In my view, it is a shameful mistake to urge them to open their borders to the import of manufactured products from our countries, while at the same time withholding the opportunity to export their own agricultural products, just as we saw in Cancun recently. The United States, the European Union, and Japan are still very egoistic sinners in this respect. They preach free trade, but they have not obeyed their own sermon thus far. Instead, they are indulging as deeply as ever in protecting their own farmers, their own steel-makers, and so on and so forth.

On top of that, many developing countries have been persuaded to open their economies in return for short-term foreign credit and short-term money, and to liberalize their current accounts, thereby opening up their countries to all kinds of speculation from the outside. As a result, they are getting into foreign debt, some of them quite deeply. The Southeast Asian credit and currency crisis of five years ago should have taught them a lesson. In my view, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank’s rescue operations, from Indonesia to Mexico and Russia, have only bailed out the recipient developing countries to a small degree. Private Western financial institutions received the interest payments and dividends due to them, and thereby got most of their money back—a situation that would not have arisen without the intervention of the IMF.

It might be a good idea to give the IMF the mission of developing a new concept for fair order and stability in global financial markets. Almost all of our states and economies need internationally compatible standards in order for regulations to advance. Likewise, they need compatible codes for bank forms, insurance, and so on. The IMF ought not to be regarded as an ever-ready lender of last resort all over the globe. Instead, its major roles should be monitoring and providing transparency and stabilizing the economic policies of sovereign states. The enormous currency flow, the enormous volume of capital and money moving transnationally, the wave of psychotic speculation, the manifold fraudulent manipulations aimed at boosting share prices, the transnational merger

mania, the feuds between private financial institutions—all of this calls for better surveillance and regulation, but I am not particularly optimistic here.

Certainly, with the process of globalization and the ongoing spread of information and technologies, global interdependence will continue to grow, whether we like it or not. And the country that tries to seal itself off from that process is likely to be left behind, with North Korea being a good example. Badly governed, poorly organized, undeveloped (or under-developed) countries will also be left behind or even left out. They will only partially benefit from globalization.

Some Asian countries, and almost all African countries, originated from former colonies and protectorates. Their borders and organization were arbitrarily determined by imperialist and colonialist powers with no regard to ethnic, religious, and cultural facts. Therefore, these developing countries embrace very heterogeneous populations. Stability plus good government will remain rare in such heterogeneous countries. It is therefore likely that the majority of developing countries will continue to suffer in the coming decades.

### *China*

The greatest economic success in the past two decades has come in China. This success has resulted from the far-sighted, courageous, but cautious leadership of Deng Xiaoping. He did not introduce perestroika or glasnost overnight; instead, he created a steady development toward individual, private businesses and markets. My first visit to China, about thirty years ago, during the time of Mao Tse-tung, allowed me to experience a rather awful Communist society. The phrase “blue ants” was quite correct; everyone had to obey the orders of the Party, and the Party had no idea how to feed and create jobs for 700 or 800 million Chinese at that time. By the way, now, only thirty years later, there are more than 1.3 billion people in China. The population explosion in China is still one of the country’s greatest problems. But, on the other hand, these 1.3 billion people are clearly better off today than they ever were before. All of them are better off: some of them a bit better off, some of them quite a bit better off. And today, if you were to go to Kwantung, Shanghai, Beijing or other big cities in the east of China, you would think at first glance that you were visiting an American city with a very modern skyline, enormous traffic on the road, and a bustling private economy. The economic growth rate in China over the last ten years or so is an almost incredible 8 percent in real terms. Of course, they still have to overcome enormous problems. They still need decades of peaceful evolution.

One of their major problems is the ideological or philosophical void. The old ideology has lost its credibility and its attraction, but there is no replacement as of yet. Of course, the hundreds of thousands who return

from universities in the United States, Canada, and Europe bring the ideas of Western civilization back to their country. But when I ask young Chinese entrepreneurs or young Chinese scientists and intellectuals aged thirty to forty about their spiritual future, I get answers reflecting the hope for an amalgam of Confucianism and democracy. It sounds rather odd to a European. At any rate, I think that the outburst of vitality in this country with a history of more than four millennia is extraordinary. Presently, they are concentrating on economic progress. Given the almost unbelievable economic successes of the 1980s and 1990s, I deem it likely that China will carry on successfully in the next decades.

Politically speaking, China is already a world power. Industrially and economically, it is going to become a world power as well. If China maintains its stability and effective government, then its gross national product will surpass that of the Japanese within about three decades. And thereafter, its economy will achieve the same order of weight and magnitude as those of the United States and the European Union. Then there will be three major currencies in the world: the American dollar, the Euro, and the Chinese yen. Of course, I should repeat: The Chinese still have to overcome enormous problems in the meantime, and they will, of course, encounter setbacks as well.

The West would be well advised not to bother the Chinese nation with any ideological or spiritual tutelage. There is no need to hurt their pride. They are a proud nation, but I do not sense any signs of aggressiveness—not even in the case of Taiwan, as long as there is no provocation. And if this condition is met, and no provocations from the outside arise, then the Chinese can, and probably will, wait patiently until the attraction of a prosperous mainland becomes irresistible to the Chinese in Taiwan. I delivered this same prognosis in a large auditorium in Taipei, Taiwan, and nobody booed me out. Recently, tensions across the Taiwan Strait have subsided. If prudence continues on all sides, then the dangers of major conflict will remain under control. The same may apply to the Kashmir conflict.

### *Russia*

Speaking of probabilities in the coming decades, I must make one remark about Russia. The Russian economy is not yet in good shape. I think it likely that Russia and Putin will find ways to become internationally competitive, to integrate Russia into global markets, and to expand its foreign trade beyond natural gas. The best thing that we in the West can do is to show respect for the thousand-year-old Russian nation and to offer cooperation on an equal footing, however long Russia's domestic and economic problems may last.

Russia will remain a world power, whether we like it or not, as a result of her vast territory—try to count the number of time-zones in

Russia—her number of smaller neighbors, her riches in oil, gas, and other minerals, and her enormous military power, which includes thousands of nuclear weapons. Putin is obviously prepared for international cooperation, and is willing to be a dependable partner. Right now, his administration seems somewhat irritated by the number of East European countries that have joined NATO, and, to a lesser extent, the European Union. It would be both prudent of the West, and in its own best interests, to avoid slighting Russia, be it in matters of armaments, trade, or finances.

In the long term, it seems likely to me that we will see moderate—very moderate—economic growth in Russia. Of course, oil prices will continue to be a major factor in that development for a long time to come. The speed of institutional and domestic reform is the other major factor in that process. The creation of resilient institutions in that country will be difficult and will take time. And it will, of course, depend on the degree of domestic political stability. I would guess that sufficient stability can be expected there. In other words, for a period of many years, a relatively authoritarian type of government can be expected in Russia as in China. And like China, Russia will probably not become aggressive in the foreseeable future without being provoked.

By contrast, the future of Ukraine and Belarus appears uncertain. After all, for centuries both of these former Soviet Republics were integral parts of czarist Russia, and there are no great language barriers. Presently, the structures and economies of Ukraine and Belarus are much weaker than those of Russia. If I were to live long enough, I would not be astonished to see a re-merging of these countries within the course of the century.

One small footnote here from the German point of view: We Germans feel rather relieved that, despite two enormously bloody wars in the twentieth century, there does not seem to remain any hatred between Russians and Germans. This is very astonishing, but you feel it if you talk to people in Russia as well as to Germans. One senses the willingness for partnership on both sides.

Now, having named the United States, China, and Russia as the three powers of global importance, I am, of course, aware of the great future potential of India, which, by the middle of this century, will have 1.5 billion inhabitants. Indonesia, by then, will have about 300 million people. The next most populous states will be Brazil and Nigeria. The future development of these states seems a bit less predictable than the futures of China and Russia. Nevertheless, in the foreseeable future, I do not expect that their policies will set off worldwide conflicts or dangers. The presence of nuclear weapons on almost all sides makes a war between great states rather unlikely. But one cannot rule out another type of great conflict.

*Islam and the West*

Whether we believe in Samuel Huntington's analysis of a clash between Islam and the West or not, no one can rule out the possibility of such a conflict. If we are not careful, it certainly cannot be ruled out. Such a conflict might not take the form of a great war, but in an atmosphere of general, ongoing animosity, it is conceivable that armed conflicts or wars, guerrilla activities, and terrorist activities, in particular, will be triggered time and again.

Of the nearly two hundred states on our globe, almost sixty are populated by Muslims. Most of these states are poor. Some of them are utterly poor, and, at the same time, rather difficult to govern. Very few of them enjoy boundaries with historical legitimacy—legitimacy, for example, that goes back further than World War I or II. Very few of them have historically evolved boundaries. Even fewer of these states enjoy a functioning democracy. Presently, most of them can only be ruled in an authoritarian or dictatorial way, just as they were in their beginnings. There is no use in avoiding this fact, or trying to paper over it.

The Western public, and even the Western political elite, has only a very limited knowledge of Islam and its history. We tend to forget, for instance, that concepts like universal individual rights and democracy are Western achievements of only the last two centuries. They are maybe only 250 years old or so. Thomas Jefferson still had slaves, just like Pericles in ancient Athens two thousand years before him. The Torah, the New Testament, and the Koran have only given us commandments. They have not given us democracy; they have not given us human rights.

The era of enlightenment in America and Europe, 200 or 250 or 300 years ago, was necessary to conceive of equal rights, to conceive of the rule of law, to conceive of the rule of democracy. These concepts evolved steadily in England, America, Holland, and France, and did so in my own country as well. But they did not develop in Arab regions, the Middle East, Iran, Indonesia, China, or Japan. The enlightenment has not yet reached most of the Muslim people, and it certainly has not reached the Islamic masses, all together about one-fifth of the global population. In the West, the process of enlightenment needed centuries, and this process cannot be condensed into a brief period of years or decades or brought to the Islamic world by way of military force.

I often wonder about our Western attempts to transform the Muslim masses into democrats. They will easily accept television and automobiles and Western technologies, which we export to them, along with modern weapons. But to convert them into democrats will take generations, if it ever happens. And it will also take understanding, economic aid, and tolerance on our side. I believe it would already be an enormous success

if we could bring all of their states and governments to acknowledge and obey the rule of international law, and to obey the Charter of the United Nations. It would be quite something. But alas, in the meantime, we sell them weapons and military technologies.

I would hope that arms limitation remains on the international agenda. But poverty, the population explosion, and migration—not to mention oil and gas—will probably make for armed conflicts in the future. For all of these reasons, the Middle East will remain a region of unrest and conflict in the coming decades. The same holds true for great parts of Africa, and possibly central Asia as well. I will avoid, however, mentioning any states by name.

#### **IV. The Superpower: The United States of America**

Some Americans believe that September 11 changed the world. That is not quite correct. Instead, it deeply changed the way in which Americans perceive the outside world; this is the real change. Despite all of their power, Americans suffered a violent attack on their own soil. And this experience led the American leadership to use its enormous military power to fight the so-called war on terrorism. As a result, tendencies toward hegemonic behavior vis-à-vis other nations appear to have come to the forefront.

An imperialist element in American foreign policy has always coexisted with other elements, including isolationism, internationalism, and idealism (nowadays called multilateralism). Sometimes one of these elements prevailed, sometimes another. The history of imperialism goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century. It goes back to Commander Perry in the Bay of Tokyo, who brought about the vast, so-called Meiji Restoration in Japan. It goes back to the wars against Mexico and Spain. It goes back to Teddy Roosevelt, who was called an imperialist at a time when the term had no derogatory overtones. In modern times, we have heard catchwords like “rogue states,” and we have seen Presidents Reagan and Clinton, one after the other, bombing Grenada and Belgrade without a decision from the Security Council. Of course, America is not the only state that has violated the Charter of the United Nations, and American leaders are not the only ones to forcefully spread their own ideologies beyond their borders. A sense of mission has been part of American strategy for a long, long time. Think, for instance, of Woodrow Wilson; think of Franklin Roosevelt, George Marshall, and many others.

From a European point of view, it does not really make a great difference whether you are French or German or Italian or Dutch. One might characterize America’s present strategy by two principles: first, the belief that freedom of action should not be impeded by entangling alli-

ances, to use a very old phrase from American constitutional history; and second, the willingness to wage preventive wars.

Many Europeans take these principles to represent democratic imperialism. You do not hear this from them; people think that speaking their mind is politically incorrect. However, it seems conceivable to me that these guiding principles will persist longer than President George Bush Jr.'s term in office. Right now, only a minority of sovereign states is happy with America's strategic attitude or the extension of the American fear of interference. Most people, particularly in Europe, would prefer America to act as a leader in internationalism or multilateralism, and they try to influence America in that direction. My own guess is that the world will have to live with a considerable degree of American unilateralism for a while. Such a situation will not necessarily entice other nations and governments to voluntarily engage themselves. Hearing these words, you will think only of France, but you are mistaken to do so.

In my view, it would be helpful for Americans today to analyze the reasons for the relatively quick, totally unforeseen disappearance of sympathy and solidarity that characterized public opinion all over Europe after September 11. It was really overwhelming in France, in Germany, and even in a number of non-European Arab countries. Are you aware that this undesirable change in the mood of public opinion was triggered by American unilateralism, and by some instances of verbal arrogance, as well?

Several possible answers to these questions lead to a basic question that many leaders outside America ask themselves: namely, will the United States stick to the Charter of the United Nations? Or will unilateralism determine America's geostrategy for decades to come? It may be difficult to arrive at a clear-cut answer, but, then again, there are quite a few additional questions and choices to be made. I will only mention two of them. First, what is America's policy vis-à-vis the more than one billion Muslims in Africa, Asia, and Europe? Is it really realistic to believe in your own ability to guide them toward democracy in their fifty-odd states? Second, is the United States prepared to accept the growing role of China? What is America's policy toward this world power, with its current population of 1.3 billion, which will grow to 1.5 billion in just a couple of decades?

Right now, the U.S. appears free to make its own choices, and it will do so. Future historians may be able to decide whether the early years of the twenty-first century were a watershed or not. My private guess is this: Not quite soon, but somewhat later, Americans will again become conscious of the fact that this century will present mankind with dangers and challenges that no state or nation, not even the most powerful, can face on its own. Whether these challenges take the form of the global population explosion or global warming, whether mankind is confronted with global

environmental decay or global epidemics, global crime, globally operating terrorist organizations, or global monetary disorder—in none of these cases will America be able to unilaterally impose answers, provide means, or even shelter itself. And, of course, the same goes for all less powerful nations. It applies to the European Union, to Russia and China.

American leaders have long since realized that all of these cases require international cooperation. Whether it is the law of the sea, going back hundreds of years, or the law of the sky, going back two generations, whether it is the rules by which payments are managed—you have long since realized that international cooperation is needed. I trust that American leaders will again head in that direction. After all, it is the imperfect United Nations and its imperfect charter upon which the rule of law in international affairs is based. This imperfect world has no other globally binding constitution. The European nations will try to uphold the charter and the United Nations.

## V. The European Union

In order to preserve their self-determination in the face of the global dangers and disorders of this century, Europeans will try to stick together; they will try to develop the European Union, try to shape it into a more competent entity. That undertaking was started half a century ago by just six West European states—France, Germany, Holland, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Italy, primarily under the guidance of French statesmen, and with benevolent assistance from America. Despite the aforementioned rift resulting from the member states' differing positions on the Iraq War, the relationship that has grown among the European Union's fifteen member states (and, in a short while, its twenty-five member states) can be considered an enormous success.

One need only look back at a millennium of devastating European wars, or at the two World Wars of the twentieth century, to realize that this is an enormous achievement, even if we are not totally satisfied at the moment. One need only remember that almost all of the European nations, and their corresponding national languages, have histories of around a thousand years. Ask an Englishman how long the English nation has existed; ask a German. The French may give you an answer that refers to a slightly longer history. The Italians may speak of an even longer history. With a few exceptions, including Poland, one thousand years is the approximate length of time over which these nations and their languages and their particular cultures have evolved.

It is this long history that made it so hard for many Europeans to sacrifice some of their national autonomy and establish a European Union. Particularly difficult is the task of arriving at a common foreign policy. I think it may still take anywhere between twenty-five and fifty

years to come to a common foreign policy. In particular, the role of Great Britain is still undecided, and a common defense policy might take even longer than twenty-five to fifty years.

And what of the half-century since the start of the European Union in 1950? If we only needed another fifty years to function as a fully operating entity, then that would not be too bad. Such a thing has never happened in any part of the world. We saw the Roman Empire, but its states, countries, and peoples did not always volunteer to become Roman provinces; rather, they were forced to join. In the history of mankind, sovereign nations with long histories have never before voluntarily given up part of their sovereignty to form a greater union.

Nevertheless, there is one big "if" standing in the way of our success in the coming twenty-five to fifty years. We will succeed only if our present and future leaders (and public opinion in two dozen nations) uphold the conviction that a well-functioning union is necessary in order to maintain the basic patriotic interests of individual nations. It is something that nobody conceived of in the nineteenth century, or in the first half of the twentieth century. It is something that only a few people thought about in the second half of the twentieth century.

We are slowly coming to realize the importance of that conviction. One cannot rule out the future possibility of an enormous enlargement of the European Union by the accession of ten states at once. One cannot rule out the possibility that this may challenge the competencies of the Union. One cannot totally discount the possibility that a small group of nations within that union will develop a closer cooperation.

It is also possible that deep disappointments with the EU will cause some countries to attach themselves, in one way or another, to the United States. I would not exclude that possibility—let us wait and see. In this case, it seems highly likely that the common market and the common currency would persist. But perhaps little more than these two institutions would remain functional. I am not an optimist; I am not a pessimist either, but realistically, one has to admit that right now, the European Union is not in the best of shape.

Europeans will continue to try to influence America's foreign policy. They will attempt to discourage America's hegemonic tendencies, and they will try to strengthen multilateral ones instead. Right now, the French and British elites are working most actively to create change, but they are pursuing it along quite different lines. In response to some unpleasant exchanges about Iraq that have taken place on the other side of the Atlantic, I have publicly urged my own government to maintain an attitude of composed dignity. In my view, it would have sufficed to remind our American friends and partners of the terms of the Two-Plus-Four Treaty upon which the unification of Germany was based thirteen

years ago. By the way, this treaty was conceived of in this very city by an American foreign secretary and his staff. According to the language of the treaty, a unified Germany can only use its military weapons in cases that are in "accordance with the Charter of the United Nations." This treaty was ratified by the Soviet Union, France, Britain, the United States of America, and also by the former East Germany. This treaty, the result of James Baker's initiative, should have been invoked to explain why the Germans could not participate in actions in Iraq. Without mentioning any names, there was a lot of fuss from the German side, and a lot of fuss from the American side.

Good neighborly relations and cooperation between America and Europe need to be maintained. Whether American or European, we stand upon the shoulders of common ancestors such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire, and all of us follow in the footsteps of the American Federalist Papers. The basic principles of democracy and human rights were created in America, England, Holland, France, and other European countries as the result of mutual collaboration. It was a long process that evolved slowly. And without Charles Darwin or Albert Einstein, modern science on both sides of the Atlantic would never have progressed so far. Both Europeans and Americans have inherited the same enormous wealth of insights into culture and civilization. It is desirable to remind the public of our common roots.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the U.S. is the only state with the power to operate militarily all over the globe. This is true today, and will also be true tomorrow. Americans have the power to act unilaterally, alone and without much respect for the opinion or advice of others. It is for Americans to decide whether they will listen and take advice. If you decide against it, then Europeans will have to accept it as a fact that they cannot change. But after taking unilateral action in Iraq, America can hardly expect Europeans to send troops and finances to clean up and rebuild the demolished houses and bridges and cities like we did in Bosnia and Kosovo.

## Conclusion

Let me conclude with three points. First, growing dependence, or growing interdependence, in an ever more densely populated world means the growing potential for conflict, but, at the same time, it also means the growing necessity for compromise. Second, in the future, the conscientious will for compromise and tolerance will become more decisive than it has been in the past. And third, no one is morally entitled to exclusively pursue his or her own rights or claims or interests; everyone has duties and responsibilities vis-à-vis the others.