

February 13, 2005

Remarks of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

German Media Prize Dinner

Having just attended the Munich Conference on security policy, my thoughts are of course focused on not only peace and security but also on our transatlantic relationship. A major focus of this year's conference was on the future of NATO. To me, NATO embodies the possibilities of that transatlantic partnership. Its successes—our successes of the past—show what we can accomplish when we work together in partnership and trust.

Winning the Cold War for example or keeping the peace in the Balkans were possible only because member countries and governments on both sides of the Atlantic were committed to the three C's of ally action—consultation, coordination, and cooperation.

In these perilous times, the transatlantic bond is withstanding a great deal of stress. Even during the Cold War, there were times when disagreements between Europe and the United States rose to the surface. In the past few years, these disagreements have become more pronounced. But one thing has not changed—all members of the transatlantic relationship remain fully committed to helping to create and preserve a world of greater peace and understanding.

In view of the evolving dangers we face, it is important that we remind ourselves of these deep and unassailable bonds because they are not just between governments, they are between peoples. And we need to reaffirm the underlying strength of that relationship as we talk honestly about we need to do to make it better and more effective in the future.

Indeed during this past week, you have seen two representatives of our Administration in Washington—Condoleezza Rice, on her maiden trip of Secretary of State and of course, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who came to the Munich Security Conference yesterday and assured us that he was a new Rumsfeld, no longer the old Rumsfeld. But I think—both of their visits—plus the upcoming visit of the President—are certainly signs that efforts are being made to bridge the gap that unfortunately has opened between us.

So the world is changing and we must adapt to that change. But we must do so sure in our friendship, firm in our common resolve, and bound by our mutual respect and affection. What uniquely defines the transatlantic alliance and the core of its strength are the values we share. And I think it's sometimes important to remind ourselves of those values. As the NATO preamble states, "The parties to the NATO treaty are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage, and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."

Those principles are as, if not more, important today than they were at the end of the Second World War. These principles that we just so easily talk about—democracy, tolerance, rule of law, individual rights—they are the bedrock that has sustained our societies, that has created in Germany the opportunity for so many Germans after the Second World War to have prosperity, peace and security, and eventually, reunification.

It is precisely those values that we share that are under attack from the radical Islamist extremists. Their ideology disdains our liberal democratic values and seeks to destroy all that we hold dear.

Now in principle, President Bush is right when he argues that an antidote to extremism is freedom. Of course freedom must be embedded in these values. It must be accompanied by responsibility. And so freedom in and of itself is not the end destination. It, too, is a means to a better life, to an opportunity to

come together to build a prosperous future for our people. So we should encourage political and economic freedom abroad. But to combat stateless terrorists, what you need, more than anything are allies, allies with whom you gather and share intelligence, allies who speak the language and understand the cultures of our enemies, allies who will work with you to build the best possible defenses and counter-strike capabilities. In fact, we need each other now as much as we ever did before.

So if we are to win these new struggles of the 21st century, we have to be united and work together. That doesn't mean we will always agree. And I think we should be honest about our disagreements. I don't think I have a single close friend with whom I agree on everything. The necessary elements of a lasting friendship are trust and respect and the existence of common ground on issues of fundamental and enduring importance.

But moving from that common ground to productive collective action can only come from dialogue and candor, from a shared understanding of mutual threats and good-faith efforts to craft joint responses.

So if we are to continue to have in the 21st century this extraordinary transatlantic partnership, we have to be frank about what we each need to do on both sides of the Atlantic. Both the United States and the nations of Europe need to recognize, of course, that the world has changed. But I think each of us has to look at ourselves and honestly assess what we are doing with respect to dealing with that change.

Let me start with the American side of the equation.

First, the United States, regardless of who is in power in the White House or the Congress, must recognize a basic truth: a strong Europe is good for the United States. This is not a zero-sum game where your strength should be viewed as threatening to American interests. We should not be talking about old or new Europe. We should welcome the growing vitality of European institutions including the newly expanded European Union. Your strength contributes to ours just as I believe our strength contributes to yours.

Second, the United States needs to acknowledge that there are costs when we go it alone on foreign policy. That doesn't mean that we are not capable of achieving our ends when we act alone. In fact, in most instances, in the short run, we obviously are. And if we are alone on a position that is honestly held in good faith, than of course we must stand by our principles, even if that means paying the cost of acting alone. But I suspect such occasions are rare. Most of the time we can build basic agreements with our European friends and when agreement and cooperation are within our grasp, we must understand that the benefits of compromise are well worth it and we are usually better off than when we go it alone.

We saw that in most recent history in Bosnia and Kosovo. It was frustrating for a number of years first for Europe to come together then for Europe and the United States to come together to take action against the atrocities occurring in Bosnia and then the ethnic cleansing occurring in Kosovo. It took a very concerted diplomatic effort that lasted for months to put together a coalition to act on behalf of human rights, of justice and to prevent the spread of disorder in Europe.

We have also seen this in Iraq. Now it is obvious that a broader and more active coalition would have secured the country faster and would have been seen by the Iraqi people as having more legitimacy and we have seen some of costs of going it alone in some of our attempted dealings with Iraq.

We also see the problems now in Iran. Iran is attempting to develop nuclear weapons, which could have disastrous consequences for the region. Yet our ability to pressure Iran is limited unless both Europe and the United States act in concert. We may be, at this moment in history, the most powerful nation in the world, but if we do not use that power wisely it has the potential to breed distrust and fears of our ambitions, mostly in my view unfounded, but nevertheless, real, in the minds of people around the world.

Every sovereign nation has the inherent authority to defend itself against external threats and many have the means to take unilateral, even preemptive action. However, acting unilaterally when it is not necessary can be counterproductive to our interests and to our goals.

The United States must also recognize that new and stronger international agreements and institutions are not encumbrances on our freedom of action, as some believe. On the contrary, they can be of enormous benefit to the United States and to the world on issues that are too big for any single nation to address alone.

This morning we heard from Secretary General Kofi Annan about the new reform agenda that Gro Brundtland was instrumental in helping to develop. I said then and I have said it many times that a strong United Nations is in America's interest. And I hope that we're able to muster support for these reforms in the Congress and in the Administration.

Another example is the Kyoto Treaty. It enables the nations of the world to work collectively to deal with global warming. The fact is, that the treaty is not perfect but I agreed with the approach of the Clinton administration, which signed the treaty and simultaneously announced that it would seek to improve it from within the treaty tent.

These institutions, these treaties, these alliances, and agreements served us well in the second half of the 20th century. I believe they remain essential in the 21st century. International legitimacy is a very powerful tool. A reinvigorated, reformed United Nations can play an important role going forward. A reinvigorated NATO can be a powerful force for peace and stability. NATO remains as important to our future as it was to our past.

And so I hope that my country will engage in the process of revamping these international and multilateral organizations and will do so with a deep understanding of their continuing value to our country and to the interests of a more peaceful world.

Finally, the United States must recognize that yes, freedom is an antidote to extremism. But freedom cannot be effectively imposed either involuntarily or unilaterally from the outside. We talk about freedom in our country as being the result of "the habits of the heart" a phrase that Alexis de Tocqueville wrote to describe Americans back in the early decades of the 19th century.

If we are serious about fostering freedom, we also have to help foster development. We have to help foster the education of young people, particularly girls and women. We have to try to reach the millennium development goals within an international framework that understands the importance of providing the tools of freedom to those who we would hope to be free.

But it's not just the United States that must look hard at ourselves and at our transatlantic partnership. I think there's work to be done on this side of the Atlantic as well.

First, Europe must recognize that the outcome in Iraq is as important to you as it is to us and the Iraqis. I understand that most in Europe and certainly most in Germany believe that the Iraqi military action was a misguided enterprise. And I have been on record at home speaking to that issue. But failure now is not an option. Basking or reveling in the challenges that now face the Iraqi people in their nascent democracy may feel good for some, but it is not worthy of Europe.

Collapse of the emerging democratic government in Iraq would not only be disastrous for the Iraqis, for the region, and for the cause of freedom in the world but it would be disastrous for Europe and for the United States. That doesn't mean there should be an unlimited, open-ended, international military commitment, but it does mean that Europe, and particularly Germany, must figure out ways to join the enterprise of helping to build a new Iraq run by the Iraqis. And the United States must be open to that new partnership and perspective.

Secondly, Europe must acknowledge that the threat of fundamentalist, Islamist terror is not just directed at the United States. It is a threat to us all. No one can make a separate peace. None of us, as we saw in Madrid, is immune. Our safety will be collective or it will be non-existent. We will either work together to preserve the security of all or we will work individually and achieve security for none. Collective action is our only rational force.

Third, Europe cannot define its identity in the beginning of the 21st century as "not America." Just as we need a strong Europe, I think you need a strong United States. Indeed the greatest danger we face in the coming decades may be not too much power being exercised in the world, but too little, a vacuum of power, into which the forces of destruction and disintegration will step.

Fourth, Europe must acknowledge that the United States has global responsibilities that create unique circumstances. For example, we are more vulnerable to the misuse of an **international criminal court** because of the international role we play and the resentments that flow from that ubiquitous presence around the world. That does not mean, in my opinion, that the United States should walk out of the **International Criminal Court**. But it does mean we have legitimate concerns that the world should address, and it is fair to ask that there be sensitivity to those concerns that are really focused on the fact that the United States is active on every continent in the world. As we look to the future, there are so many opportunities for us to renew our relationship and we need to because we face so many challenges.

On Friday I was in Ukraine and visiting with the new President, Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House, meeting with students, talking about their extraordinary bloodless revolution. Their aspirations are to be European. They could not stop talking about how much they want to be connected with Europe, to be seen as European. They fully recognize they have to deal with the reality of Russia and they have to be very sensitive to Russia's concerns about their border. But they are looking both east and west and they are yearning to be part of Europe.

Much of what motivated their extraordinary revolution is rooted in the fall of the Berlin Wall, in a story of someone like Dr. Merkel, who now is the head of a major political party after having been raised on the other side of that wall. In the Velvet Revolution, in Czechoslovakia, in all that has happened since the shipyards in Poland, their inspiration came from what Europe has done in the last 20 years to further freedom and democracy. It was extraordinarily moving for me personally and a great reminder of how there are people watching us as we speak, hoping that they could have the opportunities we take for granted in Germany or in the United States.

And their best hope of that becoming a reality is that Europe and the United States remain committed to the values that unite us and the partnership that was so instrumental in creating the last 50 years of the 20th century. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but I am, by nature, an optimist. Someone once said after I made that comment, "well if I had lived your life I'd have to be an optimist too," but that is how I feel about what lies ahead.

Everyone of us has no control over the circumstances that life deals us at birth, and oftentimes, when it comes to health, and, what President Franklin Roosevelt said, "the hazards and vicissitudes of life," which is why it's important for us to recognize our collective responsibility of one to another. But we all, as individuals and as nations, have an opportunity to chart a different future.

The future I see for this extraordinary alliance that has united us is a positive one. There will need to be work on both sides of the Atlantic but there is just too much to be done and too many risks that if we don't do it together, a very different future awaits.

When the Berlin Wall was pulled down, former Chancellor Willy Brandt expressed his fervent wish that "now should grow together, what belongs together." This sentiment fully applies to our transatlantic relationship. We belong together as partners and leaders, and I know that, despite some of the bumps along the way, we will continue to walk that road together and create a better future, not only for Europe

and the United States, but for all of those people looking at us and yearning to be part of what we are.
Thank you very much.