



Germany and the USA

1871-2021

Detlef Junker



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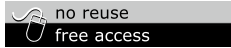


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Cover illustration: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (m.) during consultations on the sidelines of the official agenda during the G7 summit in the town of La Malbaie, Canada, at the “Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu” (1st row, from 2nd from left, Theresa May, prime minister of Great Britain; Emmanuel Macron, President of France; Shinzo Abe, prime minister of Japan; John Bolton, U.S. national security adviser, Donald Trump, President of the United States).

© Jesco Denzel. G7-Gipfel in Kanada 2018, B 145 Bild-00406492, 9. Juni 2018.
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Preface

In the loneliness and freedom brought about by the Corona Crisis, a light dawned on the author of this volume. Inspired by the public commemoration in 2021 of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the German Empire in 1871, I was astonished to discover that there is no overall account of the 150 years of transatlantic relations between the German nation-state and the U.S. federal state—an entity that first came into its own with the end of the Civil War in 1865. This astonishment was fueled by the simple fact that no country in the world has had a greater impact on German politics, security, economic development, culture, and society in the 20th and 21st centuries than the global power on the other side of the Atlantic: the United States of America.¹

Conversely, no country in the world has contributed as much to the rise of the U.S. as a superpower and to the globalization of its interests as Germany, Europe's central power. While the U.S. had kept its distance from Europe (and Asia) in military and alliance terms in the

1 There are, however, two excellent, German-language comprehensive accounts of U.S. foreign policy in the 20th century. Stefan Bierling, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Außenpolitik. Von 1917 bis zu Gegenwart*. Munich 1st ed. 2003, 3rd ed. 2007; Klaus Schwabe, *Weltmacht und Weltordnung. Amerikanische Außenpolitik von 1898 bis zur Gegenwart. Eine Jahrhundertgeschichte*, Paderborn, 1. Aufl., 2006, XIV, 560 p., 3rd ed. 2011.

While there is an impressive body of research on American-German relations published in English and German for the Cold War years, written by 132 scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, there is no comparable corpus on American-German relations since reunification. The two volumes above are without precedent. Never before was an attempt made to describe and explain in such detail the relationship between two states, economies, societies, and cultures. Cf. *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges. Ein Handbuch*. vol. I, 1945–1968, 977 p., vol. II, 1968–1990, 874 p., hrsg. von Detlef Junker in Verbindung mit Philipp Gassert, Wilfried Mausbach und David B. Morris, DVA, Stuttgart/Munich 2001. The English edition was published in 2004. *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War. A Handbook*. vol. I: 1945–1968, 664 p., vol. II: 1968–1990, 590 p., edited by Detlef Junker, Associate Editors Philipp Gassert, Wilfried Mausbach, and David B. Morris, Cambridge University Press, New York 2004.

Partial aspects of American-German relations can be found to varying degrees in comprehensive accounts of the USA: Udo Sautter, *Geschichte der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika*, Hamburg 2020 (revised version of an edition published by Kröner); Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2018; Philipp Gassert, Mark Häberlein, and Michael Wala, *Geschichte der USA*, Reclam, Stuttgart 2018; Bernd Stöver, *Geschichte der USA. Von der ersten Kolonie bis zur Gegenwart*, C. H. Beck, Munich 2018.

19th century, it was primarily the three Germany-related challenges of World War I, World War II, and the Cold War that led to the U.S. establishing itself as a military, economic, and social power on the Eurasian double continent.

The unexpected and peaceful resolution of the German question through reunification, which would have failed without the George H. W. Bush administration's strategic support of the Western Europeans, has paradoxically led to a decline in Germany's importance in U.S. global politics. Bush's oft-quoted formulation that the two countries would deal with each other in the future as "partners in leadership" turned out to be merely friendly rhetoric.

On the other side of the Atlantic, by contrast, the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, led to a "half" revolution in U.S. foreign policy. As the attack was on U.S. territorial integrity in the Western Hemisphere, on the World Trade Center (the symbol of capitalism and world trade), and on the Pentagon (the symbol of U.S. global military power), it led to a redefinition of the U.S. role in the world under the presidency of George W. Bush. The hegemonic power of the Cold War was now to take on "global primacy" and expected support from its allies in the fight against terrorism. These opposing trends on both sides of the Atlantic developed into a clash of expectations that has shaped U.S.-German relations to this day.

The Corona Crisis, however, was too short to write a classic monograph that would fill this gap of 150 years of bilateral relations. Therefore, a more modest solution suggested itself: namely, to bring together essays, articles, and lectures that the author has published in the past. This format also has advantages for the reader's time and effort budgets. First off, each contribution can be read individually and understood in and of itself. On the other hand, leitmotifs of the overall interpretation will be seen to recur again and again.

The chapters deal with American-German relations in the Kaiserreich and World War I, with the Weimar Republic, with National Socialism and World War II, with the Cold War and reunification, and, finally, with the increasingly multipolar world of the present, especially after 9/11. The volume concludes with a new contribution that leads up to the immediate present and the end of Donald Trump's presidency. This last contribution is especially important, as only those who can recall the tradition of a century and a half of nation-state relations between the United States and Germany can put into perspective the revolutionary rupture caused by the policies of the 45th president of the United States.

Indeed, Trump simultaneously endangered the democratic order in his own country and the foreign policy position of the U.S. as the West's main enforcer of the international order.

The decision to write the last contribution as an "essay" was based on two reasons. The first was the fact that the dramatic phase of world history this chapter tries to understand and explain has not yet drawn to a close. This prevents historians from having the temporal distance to their subject matter, and it is no accident that "contemporary history" is written primarily by journalists, public intellectuals, and political scientists. The second was that the essay is a preliminary mode of explanation and presentation whose nimbler style allows the reader to more easily participate in the interpretation of the present moment.

Another structural principle arises from the matter itself. One might even doubt that there have been American-German relations in the narrower sense; comparable, for example, to Franco-German relations. For American policy toward Germany was always embedded in the larger framework of European and world politics. At least since 1941, Germany was part of the overarching goal of creating a pro-American balance on the Eurasian double continent. Thus, the volume begins with a broader perspective, "Europe and the United States in Historical Perspective," with this theme of the European dimension of U.S. policy toward Germany naturally recurring in many of the later chapters.

Finally, the author has tried to utilize both eyes of the historian. Most chapters contain structural analyses of a longer period whose outcome is known. In two other pieces, the time periods of 1940–41 (chapter 8) and September 11, 2001 (chapter 14), the second eye of the historian is used in order to reconstruct open decision situations, thus giving contemporaries back their open future, as it were. With the second eye, one does not necessarily see better, but differently.

PostScript: The German edition of this book was published in 2021. Since then, World History, US Foreign Policy and German-American relations are facing new and extremely dangerous challenges on five continents and seven seas. This development might be covered in a second edition. The tools to understand and explain this next chapter of world history are already present in this book.

Acknowledgments

It was an educational experience for me to work with Heidelberg University Library to publish this volume—spanning 150 years of American-German relations—simultaneously as an e-book in open access, and as hardcover, first in German and now in an English translation. I am also very grateful for the careful and expert editing of this volume. For this, special thanks are due to Dr. Veit Probst, Director of the University Library as well as Publishing Director of Heidelberg University Publishing (heiUP); Dr. Maria Effinger, Managing Director of Heidelberg University Publishing; as well as Ms. Daniela Jakob, Mr. Frank Krabbes and Mr. Benjamin Schnepf, who were responsible for production, typesetting, and cover design. I was particularly impressed by the stylistic competence of Ms. Anja Konopka, who proofread the newly added Chapter 16.

At the Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA), I was able to rely on the advice and expertise of several of its scholars: My express thanks to Prof. Welf Werner, Dr. Wilfried Mausbach, Dr. Anja Schüler, and Dr. Martin Thunert. Four young students of American Studies at the HCA, Vivien Reinhardt, Hannah Drees, Annabelle Hennemann and Maxine Wildenstein made it clear to me that, as an octogenarian, I will never be able to compete with “digital natives.” I am also grateful to Dr. Eva Mayer from the Textvergoldung editing office.

Special thanks go to Dr. Styles Sass who mastered the exceptional challenge of translating my book into American English.

To my great regret, it is impossible to thank all the friends, colleagues, and students who have helped me understand and explain the U.S., Germany, and American-German relations for half a century. Since I landed in New York on the MS Europa in August 1970 to begin a postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University, I have spent over 8 years in the U.S., traveled to 48 states – leaving only North Dakota and Alaska – and talked with Americans “of all walks of life.” However, I’m especially indebted to my Dutch wife, Anja van der Schrieck-Junker, who has immeasurably enriched my life as a scholar and institution founder on both sides of the Atlantic for more than four decades. She has been “present at the creation” from the first line to the last.

Detlef Junker

Heidelberg, June 2023

1. Europe and the USA in Historical Perspective, 1776–2009

Upheavals of World history force us into a state of intellectual concentration; force us into the difficult attempt to determine the meaning of a revolutionary present against an uncertain future. Everyone knows that the relationship between the superpower USA and a widening and coalescing Europe is subject to great tensions. Metaphorically speaking, the width of the Atlantic has widened since September 11, 2001. This is due, on the one hand, to the disastrous U.S. foreign policy during President George W. Bush's term in office and the almost free fall of U.S. prestige in the world. On the other hand, it results from Europe's notorious inability to conceive and sustain a unified, forceful, and goal-oriented policy in any part of the world. Although the rhetoric on both sides of the Atlantic has become friendlier since the visible failure of George W. Bush's global policy, it remains the case that, in substance, the arrogance of American power is matched by the arrogance of European impotence.

At present (2009), we are faced with the question of whether these differences are merely the result of communication breakdowns across the Atlantic, (that is, whether these could be remedied by improving communication) or whether these problems have their roots in structural changes in the U.S.-European relationship.

There are, as always when anticipating the future, optimists and pessimists. The pessimists consider these structural differences to be so serious that they predict the actual end of the transatlantic alliance. In that case, America and Europe, which together account for 12% of the world's population, would no longer have a common strategy capable of creating the stability and order needed for a free and free-market world and, by extension, to finance the ever-growing juggernaut that is the "welfare state." Or, to put it another way: As has been the case since the beginning of the 20th century, the fate of Europe continues to hang on transatlantic relations.

First published in: Europa und die USA in historischer Perspektive (18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart), in: Stefan Krimm / Martin Sachse (eds.): Die alte und die neue Welt – Wege des Kulturtransfers. Acta Ising 2008. Munich 2009, pp. 195–221.

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Being an academic historian, I deal with long-term perspectives by profession, as it were. Thus, I will try to provide a positioning of the current relationship of the U.S. to Europe on a historical basis. This approach stems from my firm conviction that, confronted by the tsunami of information that floods us every day, it is only within the framework of long-term analyses that we can distinguish the important from the unimportant, and the lasting changes from the politics of the day.

Not to worry, I will not start with Adam and Eve, but only in the 18th century. However, I will combine chronology and systematics as I offer four leitmotifs:

- I. The Europeanization of the USA (1776–1914)
- II. The Americanization of Europe (1917–2001)
- III. The Hubris of Power and Transatlantic Alienation (2002–2008)
- IV. Forecast: A Crisis of Disappointed Expectations

I. The Europeanization of the USA (1776–1914)

The founding of the United States in 1776, its westward expansion and rise to world power were, according to my first hypothesis, to a large extent the result of a Europeanization of the USA. Thus, we can perhaps formulate the greatest paradox of the British colonies and the United States from the 17th to the 19th centuries. On the one hand, the U.S. was a creation of Europe, its people, its capital, its ideas and institutions, and especially its politics. On the other hand, the Americans succeeded in becoming independent, in developing their own identity as consciously distinct from Europe, and in driving the old colonial powers of France, England and Spain from the North American continent. The American identity was also born out of anti-Europeanism. Only in this way did Europeans become Americans.

1) A Creation of People from Europe

According to estimates, Anglo-American North America in 1770 was home to 1,660,000 whites of European origin and 450,000 blacks from Africa who had been transported to the New World by European traders and served as society's slaves—assuming, of course, that they survived the passage. From 1820—the year the official census began—to 1910, over 27 million people had immigrated to what was to become

the United States, including over 25 million from Europe. Today, the U.S. has over 300 million inhabitants, but due to the surge in illegal immigration in recent years, no one can determine the exact number.

2) A Creation of European Capital

The investment of European capital on a large scale began in the 1860s, when the opening of the continent by rail required sums of money that could not be raised within the USA itself. In addition, European capital contributed significantly to the formation and growth of American corporations in the 19th century.

The “cattle kingdoms” out in the high plains of the West and the Rocky Mountain states were also built primarily on European and East Coast capital. The independent cowboy who appears from somewhere, gets caught up in a burst of heroic violence, and rides off lonely into the sunset is a profitable myth. In reality, the cowboys hung on the drip of European and East Coast capital, and were usually tightly, almost militarily organized into groups. This was the only way they could drive the huge herds of cattle over great distances to the railroad loading yards that transported the cattle to the slaughterhouses of Chicago and other cities. From there, the meat was also exported to Europe. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, the armies of both sides lived on Wyoming meat. Before 1914, Great Britain was the largest investor of capital, followed by Germany, the Netherlands, and France.

3) A Creation of European Ideas

The political culture of North Americans, their self-image, their institutions, especially their law and constitutions, the technical-industrial revolution, and the country’s capitalism have also been profoundly shaped by Europe, and above all by Great Britain. This statement holds up irrespective of the Homeric debate regarding how this European heritage was melted down by the American environment, conflicts with indigenous tribes, and its own historical experience to create a “new man,” a “new society,” a “new world.” This famous frontier thesis of the historian Frederick Jackson Turner was, in socio-psychological and identity-political terms, a second declaration of independence from Europe.

Although it would be wrong to think of the USA in the 18th and 19th centuries as an appendage or a province of Europe, from an outside

perspective, for example from an Asian, Middle Eastern, or African point of view, it immediately becomes clear to what extent the USA is part of the North American-European “West.” Ancient role models and the Christian religion, the Protestant work ethic, the Enlightenment and rationalization, the separation of church and state, industrialization and capitalism, the political ideas that define America, such as liberalism and democracy, individualism, constitutionalism and federalism, fundamental rights, and the separation of powers—all this is undoubtedly part of a common Western and Atlantic tradition.

The civil-religious mission of freedom, whose latest incarnation we meet in President George W. Bush, has also been a self-evident part of American identity since the American Revolution, and it is without doubt of European origin. Being a fusion of Christianity and the Enlightenment, of Christianity and a democratic mission, this idea of freedom has produced America’s particular civil religion: a distinctive blend of Christian republicanism and democratic faith. The United States, it has been said, is a nation with the soul of a church. George W. Bush’s spiritual roots are in “Old Europe,” though the particular blend is very American.

4) A Creation of European Politics

The expansion of the nation shaped by Europe did not develop in a vacuum of international power politics, not in a “splendid isolation,” but in a world system dominated by Europe. The U.S.’s path to becoming a great power therefore ran against the interests and against the policies of the three old European colonial powers in the Western Hemisphere. This meant struggling against France, Spain and above all against Great Britain which, since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, was undoubtedly the world’s number one power because it controlled the world’s oceans and at the same time was able to maintain the balance of power in Europe.

In these conflicts with the Europeans, the Americans had a formative experience that has shaped their policy toward the individual European nation states to this day. The experience was a realization that they were always best able to assert their own interests when the Europeans were at odds with one another. The deliberate or fortuitous exploitation of the rivalries among the major European powers for the benefit of the U.S. is therefore a central aspect of its rise to power—even before 1917. As a historian put it, “European distresses spelt American successes.” In the

18th and first half of the 19th centuries, the United States was on the margins of the Eurocentric world system. European nations generally considered wars and conflicts among themselves more important than containing the newly rising power in the Western Hemisphere. If there were historical justice in the world, then the public squares of the United States should be littered with monuments to Louis XVI and Napoleon I. Without the Treaty of Alliance of 1778, the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and the Franco-English global antagonism in the age of Napoleon, the colonists would not have been able to hold their own in the two wars of independence against Great Britain from 1776–1783 and from 1812–1814.

It was not until after the Civil War, and then for the next hundred years (until the invention of intercontinental ballistic missiles) that the U.S. achieved a security situation that even evoked the admiration and envy of Bismarck. They were bordered to the north and to the south by a weak Canada and a weak Mexico, fish in the east and fish in the west.

Bismarck, who ever since 1871 was dominated by the nightmare of coalitions of other powers directed against the new German Empire (*le cauchemar des coalitions*), could therefore say: “Drunks, children, and Americans have a guardian angel.”

What was the result for world-history of this Europeanization of the USA until 1914? In summary, the special weight of the U.S. in world politics and the world economy before the outbreak of World War I can be explained in this way: Beyond the North American continent, which the nation dominated anyway, the U.S. possessed an empire in the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific, plus the Philippines which, in the event of conflict, could not be held. Throughout Latin America, the United States competed mainly with Great Britain, the German Empire, and France for economic influence. In contrast, the Americans maintained military and political distance from the Eurasian double continent before 1914.

The guiding principle here were the Monroe Doctrine of 1823—a mutual, U.S.-European hands-off declaration—and the conviction of the founding fathers that they would trade with the whole world, but under no circumstances enter into entangling alliances that would in any way bind the hands of the U.S. In Asia, the U.S. was committed to open-door principles but unwilling to intervene militarily. In order to be able to do so, according to Nobel Peace Prize winner Theodore Roosevelt, the country needed a fleet as large as England’s and an army as large as Germany’s. The country had neither at the time.

On the other hand, even before World War I, the USA was the world’s leading economic power. In 1913, the country had a 35.8% share

of global industrial production. However, the U.S. had not yet challenged Britain's leading role as the center of world trade; that was to follow later as a result of the First World War.

II. The Americanization of Europe (1917–2001)

First of all, a few remarks on the term “Americanization.” Not only books, but also terms have their fates. The latter enter the public consciousness at a certain time, their intended meaning changes, their use can be regionally limited or, as in the case of the term “Americanization,” globalized. For the rise of the United States as the world's only remaining superpower in the 20th century was accompanied by an equally global perception by the nations, regions, societies, and political systems of the world affected by American example and influence, by American hegemony and domination; namely, in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Australia, and Africa. The “Americanization” of Europe is thus part of the Americanization of the world.

It is therefore not coincidental, but rather in line with the logic of the situation, that the British journalist William T. Stead is credited with the popularization of the term “Americanization.” His book, published in 1901 carried the title: “The Americanization of the World.” In prophetic anticipation of the future, he added the subtitle: “The Trend of the Twentieth Century.” The book was immediately translated into German and French.

Everyone knows that local, regional, and national identities are sharpened by images of friends and enemies. Bavarians do not need a long explanation of this fact. That is why the term “Americanization” and the issues it refers to are at the center of identity debates in all regions of the world. All of Latin America, for example, understands itself in relation to the confrontation with the colossus from the North; large swaths of the Islam world, not only those aligned with Islamic fundamentalism, cannot define themselves without the externalization of evil, without the projection of evil onto the symbol of Western modernity, namely the USA. In many Asian countries, the U.S. is both a role model and a bogeyman. Anyone who follows contemporary attitudes in Europe as documented in public opinion polls and the op-ed pages, especially with regard to the Bush administration, could come to the conclusion that Europe cannot achieve a military, political, and cultural identity without some form of limited discord with the U.S.

Europe must therefore go through the reverse process, as the United States did in the 18th and 19th centuries, when it could not understand itself without a negative image of “Europe.”

Thus, because the term “Americanization” is inextricably woven into the identity debates of regions and peoples affected by the process of Americanization throughout the world, it has come to be a political battle cry for most people. As a result, scholars also struggle to separate the descriptive and explanatory elements of this term from its normative/prescriptive components. Or, to put it another way, in actual history, the term “Americanization” very often carries a pro- or anti-American connotation.

I myself would like to use this term only for its descriptive and explanatory potential, just as I have previously used the term “the Europeanization of America.” Thus, the Americanization of Europe is simply the political, economic, social, and cultural influence that the USA exerted on Europe in the 20th century. Despite all the mutual influences and interdependencies, despite all the circular processes that have always existed in U.S.-European relations, this shift in emphasis is meant to suggest that from the 17th to the 19th century the dominant influence went from the Old to the New World, and in the 20th and 21st centuries from the New to the Old World.

Since one could analyze the entire global history of the 20th century under the leitmotif of Americanization, it goes without saying that I can only make a few remarks on this subject. I will begin with that dimension of the Americanization of Europe that is most strongly associated with this term in the general consciousness today and which has brought generations of anti-American critics onto the scene: namely, the influence of American ideals, cultural goods, and forms of production in general, and of the American entertainment industry and popular culture in particular. It is no coincidence that French intellectuals spoke of a “cultural Chernobyl” on the occasion of the opening of Disneyland Paris. This did not, however, prevent the common people of France, after an initial hesitation, from visiting this amusement park with enthusiasm. In a similar vein, Film producer Wim Wenders proclaimed in a 1976 film: “The Yanks have colonized our unconscious.”

In no other area of the European discourse on America are so many anti-American prejudices running riot, is there so much anti-Americanism from both the left and the right, are so many products of the West defended by European intellectuals and parts of the European bourgeoisie. For the past 200 years there has never been such a fervent

distinction between American civilization and European culture as in the passionate debate about the cultural influence of the United States on Europe. Yet, despite the boisterous criticism, there seems to be no antidote against the “American-style global, mass cultural ecumenism,” against the, as one historian put it, “final banal idiocy of the reversed baseball cap.” The messages conveyed by U.S. popular culture—freedom, independence, expansiveness, consumerism, and sexuality—seem to simultaneously represent and justify larger than life global aspirations.

Also in the field of so-called high culture, the export of American ideas to Europe should not be underestimated. This applies not only to literature and the arts but to science and technology as well. In the global competition among the world’s best universities for the best researchers and students, in the “global brains business,” the United States is far ahead. According to a report in the *Economist*, the world’s top twenty universities include seventeen American, two British and one Japanese university. To be sure, at Heidelberg and Munich progress in catching up is being made.

The First World War was the original sin of Europe and the progenitor of many things. As I will discuss next, it was also the beginning of the economic Americanization of Europe. As a result of World War I, the United States became the strongest economic power on earth, with global trade interests and a global foreign and economic policy. In the twenties, it increased its lead as a producer, becoming the largest exporter and the largest consumer of raw materials. Its share of world production of industrial goods grew to an average of 45% in the years from 1925 to 1929, and U.S. national income, measured in dollars, was as high as that of the next 23 nations combined. New York became the second financial center of the world, next to London, and the world economic system became bicentric, if not America-centric. Perhaps the most consequential factor for world trade and for the U.S.-European relationship was the abrupt change of the U.S. from a debtor nation to a creditor nation.

After the Great Depression, the New Deal and World War II, the Americans, armed with the lessons of history, began to build a liberal world economic system upon which the prosperity of nations and the prosperity of Europe depend to this day. From the U.S. point of view, only a world economic system that was based on liberal principles and that was anchored in institutions could prevent a repetition of Europe’s original evil, namely a relapse into autarky, protectionism, and bilateral barter. Only the complete elimination of the forms and causes of

such policies could make Europe, as a whole, once again a productive factor in a new world economic order. Only the new superpower of the West, which was the only great power that had also become richer during World War II, had the capacity to establish a new world economic system. Consequently, the Americans dominated the Bretton Woods Conference of July 1944, where 1,500 delegates from 44 countries established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the cornerstones of a liberal world economic order. The commitment to multilateralism and open markets became the price that Europeans had to pay for Marshall Plan aid.

Since then, a history of the post-1945 world economy cannot be written without the influence of the United States on Europe, without the global economic interdependence in the Atlantic region, and without the phenomenal increase in trade between the developed industrial nations on both sides of our shared ocean. An important factor in this was the supply of raw materials to Europe, especially oil, that was ensured by American influence in other regions of the world.

This economic Americanization of Europe within the framework of a liberal world economy after World War II led to the greatest growth and prosperity in the entire history of Western Europe. And today, in regard to economic strength, Europe with its 27 member states can compete with the U.S. roughly as an equal. The gross national product on both sides of the Atlantic is an estimated 11 trillion, while over 300 million Americans are slightly less than the 484 million “Europeans” in the new EU. The U.S. and the EU together account for about 40% of world trade. The stock of European direct investment in the U.S. is 900 billion euros, and that of the U.S. in Europe is 700 billion euros, for a total of 1.6 trillion euros (in 2009). Moreover, there is a trend toward the euro becoming a second reserve currency.

It is also due to this level playing field that the strategic, political, and cultural differences between the U.S. and parts of Europe have hardly penetrated the economic sphere since January 2002 and that the regulatory and trade policy conflicts have remained limited. Both sides would have too much to lose in an “economic war” with each other.

This brings me to the political Americanization of Europe in the 20th century, which always rested on two pillars: the American claim to power and the American idea of mission.¹ The great fault line in

1 Cf. Detlef Junker: *Power and Mission. Was Amerika antreibt*, Freiburg: Herder² 2003.

this case also seems to me to be the First World War, when the two great revolutionaries of the 20th century, the communist Lenin and the American president Woodrow Wilson, proclaimed antagonistic models for the *entire* world, i.e., universalist doctrines. Wilson saw himself as an instrument of God. He wanted to make the world safe for democracy, to free Europe from the old game of “balance of power,” and to base world peace on a new “covenant” known as the League of Nations. Since then, Europe has had to deal both, with America’s political power and America’s missionary idea of freedom. Without U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, the victors of World War I would not have adopted the Articles of the League of Nations—the Senate’s refusal to ratify the treaty literally cost Wilson his life. Without U.S. political influence, the victors of World War II would not have set in motion the creation of the United Nations.

Dealing with this missionary idea from the New World was not even easy for the European allies of the USA at the Versailles Conference in 1919, as they would have preferred to foist a purely imposed peace on the defeated nations. Wilson’s toughest opponent, the French Prime Minister Clemenceau, mocked the mission-conscious representative of the New World: “God gave us the ten commandments and we broke them. Wilson gives us the 14 points. We shall see.”

There is much to be said for the American interpretation of the 20th century: from their point of view they saved Europe’s freedom, liberated the Old World from the evils of Wilhelminism, fascism, National Socialism, and communism in World War I, World War II, and the Cold War. They were directly or indirectly involved in the downfall of European colonial empires or expansive empires within Europe. The collapse of the Soviet empire is seen by many strategists as the endpoint of a development in world history that began with the breakup of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, continued with the defeat of the Third Reich and the Italian colonial empire, and ended with the painful dissolution of the colonial empires of Great Britain and France. Within this historical development, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal also parted with the remnants of their empires.

One may therefore venture this thesis: It was only because the classical European countries had been freed from totalitarian systems and trimmed back to their core national boundaries—with much help from the U.S.—that they were able to expand the European Union into Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe; to simultaneously deepen and enlarge the European Union after 1990/91. The eternal struggle of

European nations for influence, status, and prestige is now playing out by peaceful means within the European Union. When we speak of the Americanization of Europe, we should never forget one fundamental fact: The USA was the midwife of Europe.

As for the Germans, it is worth remembering that the United States fought two world wars against Europe's central power, but, unlike Germany's European neighbors, the U.S. always supported (both legally and rhetorically) Germany's right to peaceful unity: at Versailles in 1919, at Potsdam in 1945, and in the Two-plus-Four Treaty of 1990. Moreover, after 1945, the demilitarization and democratization of Germany—the struggle for Faust's soul—were among the central goals of American foreign policy. When the moment of truth came in 1989/90, it was not the Western Europeans but the United States, led by George Bush the Elder, who supported a Germany reunited in freedom and aligned to the West.

III. The Hubris of Power and Transatlantic Alienation (2002–2008)

Since 1945 in Western Europe and 1989/90 in Central and Eastern Europe as well, there has always been and still is a passionate debate about all aspects of this Americanization of Europe. Yet, according to surveys, the USA was seen by the majority of people as an ally and guarantor of freedom during the Cold War. This was due in large part to the fact that throughout this period the U.S. was predominantly experienced as a benevolent hegemon. Within the framework of its leadership role, it tried to take into account the interests of its dependent allies, to level out differences in interests by promoting dialogs that led to pragmatic compromises, and to gain voluntary allegiance in Europe on this basis. It is not without reason that U.S. foreign policy toward Western Europe during the Cold War has been described as “empire by invitation” or “empire by integration.” This pragmatic basis of European-American relations was destroyed during the tenure of George W. Bush, because after September 11, he tried to impose the blueprint of world predominance, rather than world domination itself. Seven years later (as of 2008), that attempt has largely failed. Today, the strategic debate in the U.S. also revolves around the question of whether the hubris of power from the early years of Bush's term in office has led to the U.S. having gambled away its position as the dominant superpower.

Let us recall with all due brevity this blueprint for world predominance that seems, once again, to have become a part of history. The mission-minded president, a born-again Christian who drew on the Christian Right and his country's fourth revival movement, believed deeply in his historic mission to bring freedom to the world in general, and the Middle East in particular. He said this countless times himself and thus it seems clear that George W. Bush was and is an ideologue and a man of conviction.

Bush was convinced that only the USA could really lead the world since, from his perspective, it had finally become unipolar and America-centric in both intellectual and military-strategic terms. The Pentagon divided the world into five command areas. The U.S. has 860 bases of various sizes around the globe, and its military strength grows daily. With its destructive power, the U.S. forces can pulverize any point on earth in 15 minutes. Since there is no world army under the command of the UN, and NATO has become almost irrelevant, according to Bush, only the US could stabilize the world in a pro-American and pro-Western sense in the event of a conflict. Put another way, U.S. forces are de facto the world's army. The U.S. would thus have to seek out allies as needed, depending on the definition of its own interests. NATO's offer of cooperation after September 11 was coolly rejected.

These allies were expected—and this is where the problems soon began—almost as a matter of course to share the American's perceptions of danger and the enemy; only then were they considered friends. This sole remaining hyperpower strictly refused to limit its national sovereignty through international treaties. Gulliver could not be bound by the shackles of the many dwarfs. The UN was and is a single nuisance for the conservative Republicans and they did much to discredit the world organization and its Secretary General, Kofi Annan. The global vision offered to the world by Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt had become a nuisance for George W. Bush—at the latest when Secretary of State Powell had to present a series of, as we now know, false statements before the UN General Assembly to justify the Iraq war.

What was the goal of this global military power? It was exactly what the so-called neoconservatives had envisioned in their publications and memoranda in the 1990s: the establishment of an unrivaled Pax Americana for the 21st century. This group wanted to establish, not American world domination but, to be more precise, a world primacy that would allow the U.S. to determine the structures of the world in

a pro-American sense for an indefinite future. This also applied to the structures of Europe.

In essence, this attempt at world predominance, a grandiose Pax Americana, hoped that the end of the Cold War would bring about what neither the First nor the Second World War had succeeded in doing: spreading the American model of democracy and free-market capitalism as far as possible throughout the world, and thus globalizing liberty and property. This would mean, to quote Francis Fukuyama, that “the end of history had come.” Fukuyama did not mean, of course, that history would suddenly stand still, but he did mean that there could be no alternative to the American model in the future, since all alternative visions had run their course.

Thus, under President George W. Bush, the American missionary idea of freedom had embedded within it the blueprint of world supremacy based on tough power politics—a future in which, if necessary, the U.S. would, without regard to international law, act alone as well as “preventively and preemptively.”

In the context and in the wake of European criticism of this American unilateralism, there has been increasing attention given to the structural differences between the U.S. and Europe. These interpret the communication breakdowns across the Atlantic less as a consequence of world politics than as a consequence of different social and political systems and values. Therefore, with ideal-typical brevity, I would like to analyze three particular differences between the Old and the New World at present:

1. The Market Gap
2. The War Gap
3. The God Gap

The Market Gap: Here I refer in particular to research findings by my Heidelberg political science colleague Manfred G. Schmidt, who has drawn attention—despite all their similarities—to profound differences between the political systems. According to Schmidt, there is a strategic difference, particularly with regard to a fundamental question that deeply concerns all Western states on both sides of the Atlantic: What should be done by the state and what should be done by the market? This division of labor between the market and the state can be seen particularly well in the federal spending ratio, i.e., the share of all public spending in relation to gross domestic product. Although

this ratio has risen considerably in all Western countries during the course of industrialization and democratization since the end of the 19th century, a considerable difference between the old and new worlds remains to this day. Still deeply rooted in American culture is the conviction “that government is best which governs least.” To this day, there are Americans who fear higher taxes more than the Devil himself. In 2005, the federal spending ratio was 36.4% in the U.S., 46.7% in Germany, and 56.6% in Sweden. According to Manfred Schmidt, the big differences were not in the social-investment area, but in social policy. The social benefit ratio in the U.S. is only 50–60% of the social benefit ratios of the leading European welfare states. In addition, the U.S. spends much more money on military and armaments.

This is due, on the one hand, to the interaction of the political actors and the political institutions of the USA. On the other hand, it is due to the original American vision that everyone is solely responsible for his or her own happiness, i.e., to competitive individualism, which demands courage from each individual and a willingness to take risks. A free man, today also a free woman, on his own land with a gun in the closet: that is the age-old American dream that still has cultural power, especially in the conservative camp. That is why almost all Americans regard all the varieties of European socialism, especially communism, as nothing but theories for pauperization and their proponents as having the souls of slaves. Germany’s two social democratic parties, the CDU and the SPD, also the social democratic CSU, are far to the left of the American dream and the American “mainstream.”

The War Gap: A colleague of mine at Stanford University, the historian of Europe, James J. Sheehan, recently wrote a widely acclaimed book entitled, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe*. Sheehan revisited a leitmotif with which another American, Robert Kagan, made headlines a few years ago: that warlike America was from Mars, while peaceable Europe was from Venus. The leitmotif of both books is the demilitarization of European, and especially German, society. Sheehan reminds us that 27,000 French soldiers died in one day on August 22, 1914; 20,000 British soldiers on July 1, 1916; and hundreds of thousands of French and German soldiers died within a few weeks in the fighting at Verdun. Today, the Europeans have great difficulty in raising a few thousand soldiers for a mission in Afghanistan. There are American generals who secretly wish that Germany could provide a division in Afghanistan with the fighting

strength and readiness to die like that of the Wehrmacht in the Third Reich. Then the specter of the Taliban would quickly fade. Thus, with regard to a central question that has accompanied us throughout our known history, namely the legitimacy and necessity of wars, the answer lies not in communication breakdowns across the Atlantic, but in a structural difference between the old and new worlds.

The God Gap: This brings me to my final gap, the God gap across the Atlantic. In the seven years of George W. Bush's tenure, published opinion in Europe has become increasingly concerned with religion in the U.S., especially with the Christian right, the Christian Zionists, the so-called fundamentalists, and the evangelical movements that are engaged in extensive missionary activity, especially in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, but also already in Europe. This should remind us that the U.S. has been an extraordinarily religious country from the very beginning, as two European imports have had an extraordinary influence on the country: namely, Christianity and the Enlightenment. Its path to modernity has not led to a strong secularization of society, as it has in many European countries. According to recent surveys, 90 % of Americans believe in a God. More than 70%, or over 200 million, pray at least once a week. Almost half, i.e., 150 million, go to a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple at least once a month. God, or more empirically, Americans' conceptions of God, have continued to shape their society in two capacities since the founding of the Union:

- On the one hand, God as an integral part of the “civil religion” that unites almost all Americans. This is a national religion from which they draw a considerable part of their identity and dynamism, but especially their missionary idea of freedom. This civil religion is at the center of the American trinity of God, country, and freedom.
- On the other hand, God, or, to be more empirically precise, the various conceptions of God, as the center of more than a thousand religious denominations. Since 1791, these communities have been able to develop under the protection of the First Amendment of the Constitution, under the legal protection of the separation of church and state, and under the freedom to exercise one's religion.

This separation of church and state also means that religious communities and the free exercise of religion are market phenomena to a far greater extent in the USA than in Europe. In matters of religion, there is not only a God gap across the Atlantic, but also a market gap across the Atlantic. In the churches, but also in the media, religious communities and charismatic preachers compete for followers and solvent customers. Thus, in addition to “pay-tv,” there is “pray-tv.” Overall, America is so religiously influenced that it is possible to imagine a woman or a person of color as a presidential candidate, but certainly not an atheist. In this respect, there are probably great similarities with Bavaria.

This brings me to the end, to my last point, to an attempt at a prognosis. This last argument is already shorter, due to the fact that historians are basically backward-looking prophets; that is to say, only after the fact are they wiser. None the less, they should make powerful, public use of this.

IV. Forecast: A Crisis of Disappointed Expectations

Unfortunately, as far as the immediate future after this year’s presidential election is concerned, I am not a bearer of good news. Therefore, I would like to remind you of the old diplomatic tradition which holds that bearers of bad news should neither be beheaded nor hanged. Thus, I hope to come away alive after delivering my forecast.

Put simply, I foresee a crisis of disappointed expectations in U.S.-European relations. Europeans hope that a new U.S. administration, preferably under a Democrat, will once again be a benevolent hegemon that takes a multilateral approach; relies more on diplomacy, compromise, and the problem-solving capacity of international organizations; consults Europeans before making decisions; and does *not* continually present Europeans with a *fait accompli*, while expecting them to follow unquestioningly.

For its part, even under a democratic administration, the U.S. will expect Europe to negotiate less and act more; to take more responsibility in the world; to invest much more money in the military; to admit Turkey to the EU; and, above all, to take higher risks when trying to solve problems. Moreover, from the U.S. perspective, the Europeans are currently not a power that can decisively shape world politics, i.e., they are not a major global player. And indeed, Europe is not currently capable of formulating a common foreign and security policy,

let alone sustaining it. But precisely that capability would be the first prerequisite for even being heard in Washington—even in a situation in which the Americans are aware that they need allies. Otherwise, Henry Kissinger’s old bon mot will continue to apply: “Who do I call if I want to speak to Europe?”

The Americans, at least in internal deliberations, will continue to accuse the Europeans of having become freeloaders in world history, doing too little for the strategic security of the Western world, and for securing open sea lanes and raw materials, especially oil. Therefore, as in the 1970s, there could be another debate about a fair distribution of burdens to maintain a world that is as stable, as free, and as based on free-market principles and free trade as possible. Above all, the Americans will expect the Europeans to send well-trained and well-equipped soldiers that are actually prepared to fight and die in war zones around the world. Precisely this issue is currently being harshly debated in the context of the NATO mission in Afghanistan. In particular, the Americans will take the Germans at their word. If your national interests, they will say, need to be defended in the Hindu Kush rather than in Hindelang, the German population, the German parliament—we have a parliamentary army, after all—and the German political class will have to bid farewell to their illusions. This makes the war gap I have described a dangerous minefield for NATO and the transatlantic alliance to navigate.

One of the standard European arguments, namely, the claim that the widening and deepening European community can serve as a model of peace for the whole world, does not count for much in Washington given the realities of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the increasingly fierce struggle for raw materials. Left to their own devices, the Europeans would not even be able to deal with the problems in the Balkans, let alone a new Russian imperialism.

So what is the significance of my forecast? It means that the U.S.-European relationship will be stuck in a deeply ambivalent situation for the foreseeable future. Americans and Europeans dislike each other in many ways, but for strategic reasons they cannot let go of each other either. Moreover, they share Western values because, as I explained in the first section, America’s values are an import from Europe. Moreover, Europe cannot guarantee the foundations of its security and welfare on its own.

In closing, I will take the liberty to present some considerations that are not normally permissible for an academic historian, because

in them the probable and the desirable are mixed. For example, I would claim that the unilaterally designed Pax Americana is about to fail due to issues related to foreign and domestic policy, for the Bush administration has overreached itself. In principle, this could present the opportunity for improved U.S.-European cooperation. But that would require two conditions: that the U.S. treat the Europeans as equals, at least rhetorically, and not fear a strong Europe; and that Europe would actually develop and followed through on the broad outlines of a common foreign and security policy. In other words, the Americans must abandon the arrogance of power, and the Europeans the arrogance of impotence. For if the two democratic regions of prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic were to divide further, I believe that hardly any of the world's problems would be solvable. This is precisely why, from my perspective, the institutions of society on both sides of the Atlantic must maintain a realistic and informed dialogue. This is the only way to prevent anti-Europeanism from taking root in the souls of Americans, and anti-Americanism from taking root in the souls of Europeans. Were that to be successful, it could achieve what many transatlanticists dream of: cooperation that truly rests on two pillars, one European and one American.

2. The Manichaeian Trap. American Perceptions of the German Empire, 1871–1945

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, several momentous things happened simultaneously. The Soviet tanks remained in their depots, the famous American strategy of containing both the Soviet Union and Germany—a policy of double containment most succinctly expressed as keeping the Soviets out, the Americans in, the Germans down, and the Europeans relief—began to crumble, and the question of German unity once again topped the agenda of world history. At that juncture, the government of the United States reacted precisely as one might have expected given the path of American-German relations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The American reaction is a striking example of historical continuity—it could have been virtually predicted.

Americans welcomed the prospect of German unity, liberty, and self-determination in 1989, just as they had welcomed it in 1848 and 1871. America's joy about the fall of the Wall was genuine and spontaneous. The United States supported a possible German reunification sooner and more decisively than any of the other victorious powers of the Second World War. The documents published so far, as well as the diaries of Chancellor Kohl's advisor Horst Teltschik, show clearly and emphatically the decisive role played by the United States from December 1989 onward, at a time when President François Mitterrand and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher tried to derail the train and President Mikhail Gorbachev was still unwilling to accept NATO membership for a united Germany.

Chancellor Kohl traveled to the United States during February, May, and June of 1990. When he received an honorary Ph.D. degree at Harvard University, people called out to him: "Mr. Chancellor, we are all Germans!"¹—meaning, we are all delighted that freedom has proved

1 Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage. Innenansichten der Einigung* (n.p. 1991), 264. For the perspective of the Foreign Ministry, see Richard Kiessler and Frank Elbe, *Ein runder*

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victorious. In the beginning of February 1990, close American-German consultations between Secretary of State James Baker and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and their advisors led to the idea of a “Two-plus-Four Conference,” after Kohl had categorically rejected the Soviet suggestion in January that the victorious powers of World War II convene a four-power conference on Germany. “We do not need four midwives,”² Kohl had insisted. The United States actively supported the process of unification at every one of the many international meetings that year, be it at Ottawa, Malta, Houston, Dublin, Paris, or London. Secretary of State Baker was therefore quite accurate when he stated at a press conference in Paris on July 17, 1990, one day after the famous meeting between Gorbachev and Kohl: “The terms of the agreement that were reached between Chancellor Kohl and President Gorbachev are terms that the United States has supported since at least as early as last December, when we called for a unified Germany as a member of the NATO alliance.”³

The other complementary aspect of U.S. policy toward Germany that could be expected as a result of the history of American-German relations was a continuation of the policy of containment under different conditions. Unified Germany was to remain a part of NATO and of a general European and Atlantic design; its neutralization or isolation was to be avoided at all costs. The rest of Europe had to be reassured in the face of newly rekindled fears about Germany, and America’s influence in Europe had to be confirmed.

Tisch mit scharfen Ecken. Der diplomatische Weg zur deutschen Einheit, with a preface by Hans-Dietrich Genscher (Baden-Baden, 1993).

2 Ibid., 105.

3 Adam Daniel Rotfeld and Walter Stütze, eds., *Germany and Europe in Transition* (Oxford, 1991), 179. For the early support by the United States, see Teltschik, *Innenansichten*, 48, 77, 123, 129, 137. This fact is unanimously agreed upon by the growing number of monographs dealing with the international dimension of German unification: Elizabeth Pond, *After the Wall: American Policy toward Germany* (New York, 1990); id., *Beyond the Wall: Germany’s Road to Unification* (Washington, D.C., 1993); Stephen F. Szabo, *The Diplomacy of German Unification* (New York, 1992); Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (New York and Oxford, 1994), 157–76; Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (Boston, 1992); Renate Fritsch-Bournazel, *Europe and German Unification* (Providence, R.I., and Oxford, 1992); A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification* (Princeton, N.J., 1993); Frank A. Ninkovich, *Germany and the United States: The Transformation of the German Question since 1945*, updated ed. (New York, 1994), 153–79; Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming).

In the end, the Americans were satisfied. The Two-plus-Four Treaty resulted in the kind of Germany that the United States had, in a way, desired ever since 1848: it had found its political borders within its geographic limits. For the first time in their history, the Germans were enjoying (in the words of their national anthem) “unity and justice and liberty”; prosperity in the East, Americans and many others hoped in 1990, would follow in due course. The unified Germany, as it turned out, does not pose a military threat to its neighbors: Within the terms of the Treaty, it is incapable, on its own, of either attacking others or defending itself. The world was confident in 1990 that it would remain an integral part of the West through its ties with NATO, the European Union, and numerous other organizations, and that Germany’s industries would continue to depend on an open world market. The United States would remain Germany’s most important ally, despite the permanent German diplomatic balancing act between France and the U.S. As a country dedicated to the rule of law, Germany guarantees democratic basic rights, maintains a federalist structure, and is devoted to the principles of a social market economy.

These expectations of 1990—of a reunited Germany as a Western-style democracy, of a small European replica of the United States—are reminiscent of the hopes raised in 1871 and the initial American reactions to the newly founded German national state. Only three weeks after the proclamation of the second German Empire at Versailles, President Ulysses S. Grant stated in an address to Congress on February 7, 1871, that the unification of Germany under a form of government that, in many respects, mirrored the American system was received with great sympathy by the American people. “The adoption in Europe,” he declared, “of the American system of union under the control and the direction of a free people, educated to self-restraint, cannot fail to extend popular institutions and to enlarge the peaceful influence of American ideas.”⁴

This and other statements by the president of the United States, which were probably representative of the opinion of a majority of the

4 Quoted in Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1984), 15. The American minister and historian, George Bancroft, had recommended that the president make the statement; see Peter Krüger, “Die Beurteilung der Reichsgründung und Reichsverfassung von 1871 in den USA,” in: Norbert Finzsch et al., eds., *Liberalitas: Festschrift für Erich Angermann zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 1992), 263–83.

American people,⁵ reflected America's hopes for the best of all possible Germanies—a far-away Old World country, freedom-loving, peaceful, Protestant, and with a federal structure; a country of considerable size and weight, but one without territorial ambitions in Europe, let alone any other part of the world; a country whose internal structures were shaped primarily by its sages and artists, its musicians and poets, by farmers, tradespeople, technicians, engineers, merchants, and entrepreneurs and not by its soldiers, priests, or landed aristocrats; a country without any serious conflict of interests with the United States, called upon, as a freedom-loving European state, to emulate the historical mission of the United States by promoting the progress of liberty throughout history. The United States chose to interpret German unity from this providential perspective, as it had done with other national and democratic movements in Europe during the nineteenth century, be it in Greece, Hungary, Italy, or a republican France.

This observation leads directly to my first thesis: From 1871 to 1945, the United States judged the German Empire by the extent to which Germany did or did not approximate this hopeful ideal. The varying images that the Americans formed of Germany—their opinions, their prejudices, their clichés and stereotypes, the images expressing enmity or hate—generally followed the overall political developments, i.e., the changing political fortunes and America's political judgments concerning the German Empire.

Depending on the political situation, Americans would pick certain stereotypes out of a set of typical images of Prussia or Germany that they had developed early on. These images would then dominate the public debate, while others would remain in the background. Thus, there existed, and still does exist, (1) a Germany that is romantic and “gemütlich,” characterized by enchanted landscapes, castles, and palaces (coming from Heidelberg, I am only too familiar with this view, of course); (2) a Germany that is the home of philosophers, poets, and artists, one that is industrious, efficient, reliable, productive, and

5 For the American reaction to the founding of the Empire, see, in addition to Krüger, Jonas, *United States and Germany*, 15–34; Otto Graf zu Stolberg-Wernigerode, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika im Zeitalter Bismarcks* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1933), 98–146; John Gerow Gazley, *American Opinion of German Unification* (New York, 1926); Christine Totten, *Deutschland—Soll und Haben. Amerikas Deutschlandbild* (Munich, 1964), 76–82; Hans L. Trefousse, “Die deutsch-amerikanischen Einwanderer und das neugegründete Reich,” in: Frank Trommler, ed., *Amerika und die Deutschen. Bestandsaufnahme einer 300jährigen Geschichte* (Opladen, 1986), 177–91.

technologically first-rate; and (3) a Germany that is arrogant, cynical, presumptuous, subservient, unable to handle freedom; it is aggressive, militaristic, notoriously war-mongering, anti-Semitic, and racist, striving for world power, indeed world domination. In the second thesis of my address, I argue that, at the end of both world wars, the opinion of Germany was so negative that there was no alternative to dissolving the Empire in 1918 and the Third Reich in 1945.

The third observation is based on the recognition that even the most negative American judgment during those two wars never resulted in any serious doubts on the part of either the American government or the American public about the legitimate existence of a united Germany, based on the principle of self-determination, in the center of Europe—if we leave aside, that is, the brief and inconsequential interlude of the plans concerning the division of Germany or the Morgenthau Plan during the Second World War. In order to question Germany's existence and right to self-determination, Americans would have had to renounce their own best traditions.

My fourth thesis maintains that any judgment concerning the present and future status of the German Empire also involved, at the same time, a decision about the present and future status of Europe, since American policies toward Germany always remained a crucial part of its policies toward Europe as a whole. Any judgment concerning Germany was the result of relating it to judgments about other European powers, especially England, France, and Russia or the Soviet Union. Indeed, one might be tempted to ask whether a purely bilateral relationship, a distinct German policy, ever really existed in the United States.

In any event, during the first decade after the establishment of the German Empire in 1871, the political relationship between Bismarck's *Reich* and the United States remained excellent, if only of secondary importance to both. This remained true even though, of course, the newly founded German Empire, in its actual existence, differed considerably from the American image of the best of all possible Germanies; even though the young French Republic elicited a lot of sympathy after the fall of Napoleon III and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and the massive French reparations led to harsh criticism among some segments of the American public. North America remained the center of interest for the United States, while the German Reich focused on Europe. Hence, there were no significant areas of conflict.

Almost all of America's energies were absorbed by the reconstruction of the South, by industrialization and the settlement of the

continent. Whatever foreign policy there was, it was essentially concerned with the Western hemisphere: with Canada, the acquisition of Alaska, and the attempt to expand the U.S. position in the Caribbean. The initial stirrings of an East Asia policy were as yet quite confused and without any clearly defined goals. As far as Europe was concerned, George Washington's advice not to get entangled in the quarrels and alliances of the Old World remained unchallenged.

As is well known, Bismarck's policies after 1870/71, on the other hand, remained focused on Europe; the United States remained a *cura posterior*, of secondary concern. Still, for Bismarck it was in Germany's self-interest, as he understood it, to retain America's good will, and he continued to treat the United States with remarkable acuity and circumspection. In particular, he was careful to respect the Monroe Doctrine and U.S. sensibilities in the Western hemisphere, whenever he was called upon to protect the interests of German citizens in such places as Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Nicaragua, or Hawaii. On December 18, 1871, he instructed the German ambassador, von Schlözer, to inform the American Secretary of State as follows: "We have no interest whatsoever in gaining a foothold anywhere in the Americas, and we acknowledge unequivocally that, with regard to the entire continent, the predominant influence of the United States is founded in the nature of things and corresponds most closely with our own interests."⁶ Such an acknowledgment could not be obtained at the time from any of the old European colonial powers, which the United States proceeded to displace in the Western hemisphere one by one: neither Great Britain nor France nor Spain would have granted as much. It was thus no accident that the United States turned to Emperor William I for the settlement of a border dispute between British Columbia and the Washington territory on the northwestern coast of the United States. William complied by declaring the American claims legitimate. Obviously, the Americans had no reason to complain about the German Empire.

In addition, I would like to at least mention some domestic factors that helped create a generally benign image of a German Empire that was respected, indeed even admired, in the United States, even though critical voices in some parts of American society were not absent during those first decades. Among those reasons, one can name the German immigrants, whose sense of their own significance had been measurably increased by the German victory during the Franco-Prussian

6 Quoted in: Stolberg-Wernigerode, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten*, 321.

War, or the German university system, re-organized by Wilhelm von Humboldt, which served as a model for the reform of American higher education during those first decades after the founding of the Empire. Neither the *Kulturkampf* nor the anti-Socialist laws tarnished the high estimation enjoyed by Bismarck and the German Reich in the eyes of most Americans. During the celebrations of the first centennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1876, Bismarck and Emperor William I exchanged friendly messages with President Grant, in which Bismarck, with some justification, could allude to the one hundred years of friendship that had existed between the two countries, going back to the days of Frederick the Great.⁷

This kind of continuity, however, began to dissolve in a long and gradual process. Beginning with the early 1880s, and increasingly after Bismarck's fall, a profound change, the so-called "great transformation," took place in American-German relations. By 1914, it had led to such a transformation of America's image of Germany that, in marked contrast to 1870, the majority of the anglo- and francophile elites in the United States sympathized with the Western Allies at the outbreak of the Great European War. This change in the image of Germany was in part responsible for the policy of *partial* neutrality pursued by the United States between 1914 and 1916 and for justifying its entry into the war against Germany in April 1917.⁸ The Wilhelminian Empire had become an integral part of America's image of the enemy—although, until 1916, all conflicts between the two countries had been settled peacefully, be it in Europe, East Asia, or Latin America, in the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean, and the diplomatic relationship could best be characterized as a combination of limited conflict and cooperation.

7 Jonas, *United States and Germany*, 33.

8 For the change of the image, see Clara Eve Schieber, *The Transformation of American Sentiment toward Germany, 1870–1914* (New York and Boston, 1923); Melvin Small, *The American Image of Germany, 1906–1914* (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan, 1965); Jörg Nagler, "From Culture to *Kultur*: Changing American Perceptions of Imperial Germany, 1870–1914," in: David Barclay and Elizabeth Glaser-Schmidt, eds., *Mutual Images and Multiple Implications: American Views of Germany and German Views of America from the 18th to the 20th Centuries* (New York, forthcoming). For the American perception of Germany, see Konrad H. Jarausch, "Das amerikanische Deutschlandbild in drei Jahrhunderten," in: Klaus Weigert, ed., *Das Deutschland- und Amerikabild. Beiträge zum gegenseitigen Verständnis beider Völker* (St. Augustin, 1986), 10–20; id., "Huns, Krauts or Good Germans? The German Image in America, 1800–1980," in: James F. Harris, ed., *German-American Interrelations: Heritage and Challenge* (Tübingen, 1983), 145–159.

Now the German Empire occupied the position previously held by the Indians, by France, England, Mexico, and Spain.⁹

This qualitative change had to do with the changing position of both states in relation to each other and within the economic and political framework in the age of imperialism. Both states moved beyond the confines of regional interests, became, or at least sought to become, world powers that participated in the contest of all major powers for what they perceived as the final division of the globe and thus found themselves confronting each other as rivals in the Pacific, in East Asia, and in Latin America. They also became enmeshed in trade controversies, such as the pork war of the mid 1880s. This development has been exhaustively researched on both sides of the Atlantic and need not detain us here. Let us just hypothesize then that the changing image of the German Empire was not merely grounded in the real conflicts of the two states, but that it also derived from the fact that these two *nouveaux riches*, these upstarts of world politics, showed a lot of similarities and parallels in the substantive aspects of their foreign policies.

The tremendous economic growth of both states had increasingly turned Germany and the United States into both partners and competitors in trade. In both countries, political parties and powerful interest groups exerted successful pressure upon their own governments to adopt protectionist measures. While the United States continued to soak up an unlimited supply of people and capital from Europe, the development of its economy since 1861 took place behind a growing wall of protectionist tariffs, which impaired above all the importation of industrial products. The protectionist tariff policy pursued by the German Empire, on the other hand, was primarily intended to protect

9 For American-German relations to 1917, see esp. Jonas, *United States and Germany*, 35–124; Hans W. Gatzke, *Germany and the United States: A Special Relationship?* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), 27–51; Alfred Vagts, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten in der Weltpolitik* (New York, 1935); Reiner Pommerin, *Der Kaiser und Amerika* (Cologne and Vienna, 1986); Ragnhild Fiebig-von Hase, *Lateinamerika als Konfliktherd der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen, 1890–1903* (Göttingen, 1986); id., “The United States and Germany in the World Arena, 1900–1917,” in: Hans-Jürgen Schröder, ed., *Confrontation and Cooperation: Germany and the United States in the Era of World War I, 1900–1924* (Oxford, 1993), 33–68; Raimund Lammersdorf, *Anfänge einer Weltmacht. Theodore Roosevelt und die transatlantischen Beziehungen der USA 1901–1909* (Berlin, 1994); Reinhard R. Doerries, *Imperial Challenge: Ambassador Count Bernstorff and German-American Relations* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and London, 1989); id., “Kaiserreich und Republik. Deutsch-Amerikanische Beziehungen vor 1917,” in: Trommler, *Amerika und die Deutschen*, 353–66; Holger H. Herwig, *The United States and German Naval Planning 1889–1941* (Boston and Toronto, 1976).

its agrarian interests. Thus, the basic pattern was set for the mutual accusations exchanged during the protracted conflicts over tariffs: the United States kept complaining that the Germans protected their agrarian markets, while the German Empire was unhappy that the Americans kept shielding their industrial markets. Both states, as has been noted, became imperialist states. By 1914, the United States had created its own informal and formal empire in the Pacific and the Caribbean. It had also strengthened its position in East Asia where, in spite of its own protectionism, it attempted to enforce the open-door policy, sometimes with the support of the German Empire.

Both states also fairly burst with a sense of self-importance. In both countries, aggressive nationalism linked up with ideologies specific to the times, such as navalism, racism, and theories of world power. Thus, all the expansionists and naval strategists in the United States would have essentially agreed with Emperor William's grandiloquent statement that posited "world policy as the task, world power as the goal, and a great navy as the instrument" of all policies. It is no accident that Alfred Thayer Mahan's bestseller of 1890, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, became required reading in all the navies of the world.

In both countries, the navy existed also as a pressure group, supported by vociferous naval lobbies. In specific American-German confrontations, such as over Samoa, the Philippines, or Venezuela, the American "yellow press" was easily up to the level (or is it *down* to?) of its English or German counterparts. Published opinion in both countries nursed a special kind of self-righteous nationalism and intensified images of the enemy. Thus, the stereotype of the German peril developed in the United States, while the stereotype of the American peril gained prominence in Germany.

Both countries also had a problem in common, one that they shared as world powers on the rise: the old, long-established world power, Great Britain. It became a crucial aspect of America's changing image of Germany that England won out in the race for America's favor, because England's dowry turned out to be considerably more opulent than that of the stingy German suitor. The most valuable part of Britain's wedding present turned out to be her strategic withdrawal from the Caribbean and her express acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine, while the German Empire of William II chose to abandon the conciliatory approach of Bismarck on this as on many other issues.

This great transformation during the age of imperialism meant that, by 1914, the German Empire had lost its position as "Little America" in Europe. Simultaneously, American admiration for German culture

had subsided substantially, while the cultural influences of France and England had grown in the United States during the 1890's. Clumsy attempts on the part of William II and the German Empire to counter this worrisome trend by increased cultural exchanges and inappropriate gifts did not materially alter the situation. After all, a statue of Frederick the Great could hardly compete with that brilliant French gift, the Statue of Liberty.¹⁰

The criticism of an autocratic, militaristic, rude, presumptuous Germany, a Germany that may turn out a menace to civilization, had become more pronounced in the United States, since “Kaiser Bill” represented Wilhelmine Germany in the eyes of many Americans. His obsession with uniforms, his predilection for anything military, and his war-like speeches reinforced the impression that Germany was a militaristic state. His infamous speech about the “Huns,” in particular, delivered while sending off German troops to help put down the Boxer Rebellion in China, left a disastrous impression in America. During the First World War, this speech was endlessly exploited by British and American war propaganda to influence the world by equating Germans and “Huns.”

This transformation is crucial for the explanation of the most important aspect affecting the development of America's image of Germany in the course of World War I—that is, how the German Empire came to be caught in the Manichaeian trap, as I would like to call it, of America's historic mission. Let me develop this term and this assertion a little more fully.

Individuals or nations in the process of defining their own identities seem to have a hard time tolerating the idea of being merely the equals of others. They attempt to arrogate to themselves some special significance that is supposed to render them different from and superior to other individuals or nations, indeed make them unique. In the process, they frequently invoke notions of exalted generality, such as God, History, Providence, Progress, or the Salvation of Mankind—(all with capital letters, of course). Like so many other nations before them or since, Americans, too, have claimed to be a chosen people. The idea of America's special mission has been a part of American political culture that has gone without saying since the founding of the nation. The founding fathers of the union were deeply shaped by the spirit of the Enlightenment. They integrated Christian and Puritanical missionary

10 Nagler, “From Culture to *Kultur*,” 15; Gatzke, *Germany and the United States*, 45.

ideas of New England's settlers such as "the chosen people," "the Covenant people," "God's new Israel," and "God's last American Israel" into the idea of a secular mission for America. It was this fusion of Christianity and Enlightenment that brought forth the civil religion so specific to America, that unmistakable admixture of Christian Republicanism and Democratic faith that created a nation with the soul of a church. The American nation does not have any ideologies, she *herself* is one.

The goals of America's mission have, of course, oscillated over time; they have combined with the dominant aspects of the *Zeitgeist* of different ages—such as, for example, racism in the age of imperialism—only to uncouple themselves again from such tendencies. They have transformed themselves, moving from the Puritanical mission of completing the work of the Reformation to the political mission of bringing freedom and democracy to the world—or, in the words used by President Woodrow Wilson in his declaration of war against Germany in 1917: "to make the world safe for democracy." Thus, the missionary goals of the United States have changed from the *passive* notion of turning America into a new Jerusalem whose example would be a beacon for the world to the *active* missionary duty to elevate backward, less civilized nations to the American level, to create a new world order, save the world, and bring about the millennium.

Every sense of mission grounded in a teleological view of history requires for its realization some concrete negation, its counter-principle, an evil empire that has to be overcome in war in order to enable progress and fulfill the mission. This missionary zeal tends to cultivate a radical dualism, it has to divide the world and its governing principles into good and evil. This dualistic system of beliefs is known as Manichaeism, named after Mani, the Persian philosopher of late antiquity. A nation with the soul of a church can thus justify entering an actual war only on ideological grounds. It cannot fall back on material interests, reasons of state, or—*horribile dictu*—a violation of the balance of power. By the way, it took Henry Kissinger almost a lifetime to come to terms with this problem. At best, it can refer to a violation of rights, because in this kind of reasoning, legality and morality are interchangeable. Thus, whoever gets involved in any conflict or war with the United States automatically finds himself caught in the Manichaeian trap of America's sense of a special mission.

The first enemy caught in this trap were the Indians. It was with them that the battle for territory and for room to live was waged most ferociously, particularly after the greatest catastrophe of New

England in 1675/76. Under the leadership of chief Metacom, the Indians managed to almost destroy the New England settlers in a war that, in relation to the total number of inhabitants, was the bloodiest conflict in American history. Since those days, the Indians were perceived as savages who could not be civilized, indeed as devils; the wilderness was equated with hell. The Indians had lost any right to stand in the way of the conquest of the West—a conquest that was pushed ahead during the nineteenth century by the massive employment of troops and capital. The Manichaeic pattern of the ideology and mythology of the Indian Wars has determined the foreign policy behavior of the United States throughout its history, up to and including the administration of President Ronald Reagan.¹¹ Even after the secularization of America's sense of mission, this dualistic interpretation of the world played a key role in U.S. foreign policy. All the enemies of the United States were caught in the Manichaeic trap: following the Indians were the French and the British—in America's first political best seller, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, and in Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, it was King George III who embodied the principle; later it was the Spaniards and the Mexicans, and, in the twentieth century, mainly the Germans, the Japanese, the Russians, the Chinese, the North Koreans, and the Iraqis.

I would argue that it was this transformation of the German Empire into the evil empire that enabled the American people in general and President Wilson in particular to put an end to the deeply ambivalent U.S. policy toward Europe of the years 1914–1916, a policy that could not be maintained indefinitely. Wilson had, after all, won the election of 1916 because he had kept America out of war. So the battle for the American soul, which was anything but ready for war, had to be won by revolutionizing the “threat perception” of the American people in order to be able to cross the Rubicon—that is, the Atlantic—and declare war on Germany. And, finally, after the entry into the war, the propaganda machinery had to be set in motion, producing grotesque scenarios about the threat posed by German machinations in the Western hemisphere to the domestic and external security of the United States. The same pattern was repeated, more or less, between 1939 and 1941, with the exception of the witch hunts against German-Americans, whose ethnic identity had already been destroyed during World

11 Dieter Schulz, “Rothäute und Soldaten Gottes. Amerikanische Ideologie und Mythologie von der Kolonialzeit bis Ronald Reagan,” in: Jan Assmann and Dietrich Harth, eds., *Kultur und Konflikt* (Frankfurt/M., 1990), 287–303.

War I.¹² Moreover—if I am here permitted to make a value judgment—the situation in the Second World War was, of course, different, in that Germany actually was an evil empire; prior to 1914, on the other hand, a comparison of social and legal aspects, as well as of democratic theory, between Imperial Germany and the United States (*including* the South) would result in a highly complex and differentiated picture.

Wilson's deep ambivalence was based on the fact that he neither liked Europe, nor could he leave the continent alone; that he wanted to isolate the morally superior New World from the rotten Old World while also saving mankind and the international system from the ancient evils.

Thus, he appealed to his fellow Americans on August 19, 1914, to remain neutral not only in deed but also in their thoughts and asserted that the effects of the European war on the United States depended entirely upon how Americans themselves thought and acted, an assertion he repeated as late as December 7, 1915.¹³ The deeply partial and anglophile U.S. ambassador in London, Walter Hines Page, had insisted to Wilson as early as August 1914 that the system of Prussian militarism had to be excised like a tumor, while Wilson himself had maintained in November 1914, speaking to his equally pro-British intimate Colonel Edward Mandell House, that Germany did not pose any danger to America and that the U.S. could not attack Germany even if the latter should be victorious in Europe.¹⁴ During the election year of 1916, he repeatedly assured his compatriots that America had nothing to do with the causes and objectives of the war in Europe; no statement concerning Germany's war guilt crossed his lips at that

12 See Frederick L. Luebke, *German-Americans and World War I: Bonds of Loyalty* (De Kalb, Ill., 1974).

13 Declaration of Neutrality, in: Henry Steele Commager, *Documents of American History*, vol. 2: *Since 1898*, 10th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973), 96f. See also Wilson's "Annual Message on the State of the Union" of December 7, 1915, esp. the following statement: "We are at peace with all the nations of the world, and there is reason to hope that no question in controversy between this and other Governments will lead to any serious breach of amicable relations, grave as some differences of attitude and policy have been and may yet turn out to be. I am sorry to say that the gravest threats against our national peace and safety have been uttered within our own borders." Arthur S. Link et al., eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 35 (Princeton, N.J., 1980), 306.

14 Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt, *Woodrow Wilson: A Life for World Peace* (Berkeley, Calif., Los Angeles, and Oxford, 1991), 142, 180.

time. As late as November 1916, he regarded both German militarism and British navalism as mankind's two greatest scourges.¹⁵

America's neutrality was, however, no end in itself to Wilson. Until January 1917, he regarded it as the precondition for fulfilling his historic mission, i.e., to bring an American peace to an exhausted Europe that was bleeding to death and to go down in history as God's instrument, as a *servus servorum Dei*. His famous speech to the U.S. Senate, delivered on January 22, 1917, in which he proclaimed the principles of a "peace without victory" and a revolution in international politics, ended with the statement of his civil religion which contain the essence of Wilson's idea of America's mission; Wilson himself and the American people appear as the representatives of all mankind: "These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail."¹⁶

Wilson's profound hatred of and contempt for the German Empire arose only when Germany's announcement of its unlimited submarine warfare and the Zimmermann telegram not only posed a threat to the interests and the prestige of the United States, but also imperiled his historic mission.

The German Secretary of State, Arthur Zimmermann's telegram from January 1917 had been decoded by British naval intelligence and passed on to the U.S. government. It contained an offer of alliance with Mexico in the event that the United States entered the war against Germany, with Zimmermann promising to help the Mexicans recapture the territories lost to the U.S. in 1848: California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming. Although the telegram represented a preposterous fantasy with no possibility of ever being realized, it nevertheless set off a patriotic turmoil in the American West which was then used to create an equally unrealistic hysteria.

Now an agonizing Wilson faced the alternative of either renouncing his mission or of realizing it by means radically different from those just recently proclaimed—not by "peace without victory" but by "war and victory." As far as the president himself was concerned, all other reasons for America's entry into the war paled into insignificance

15 Northolt, *Wilson*, 201

16 Commager, *Documents*, vol. 2., 128.

by comparison to this ideological need for action, including even the possible loss of the balance of power through a German victory or the golden chains by which America's industries had tied themselves to the Allied economies.

Wilson broke out of his dilemma by using the idea of America's historic mission to legitimize and elevate to a universal level the impending war against Germany. In his message to Congress of April 2, 1917, which he had written himself, he called Germany's submarine warfare a war against all nations, indeed against mankind itself. The very existence of autocratic governments whose organized power was controlled only by themselves and not by the will of their people posed a danger to peace and freedom in the world. Moreover, Prussian autocracy had threatened the domestic peace of the United States by spies and criminal intrigue; it was thus the natural enemy of freedom. The U.S. had no selfish interests of its own. It fought only for a permanent peace and the liberation of all peoples, including the German people, for whom the United States felt nothing but sympathy and friendship. "The world must be safe for democracy."

Wilson ended his declaration of war with the following words: "To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace she has treasured." And he closed in a Lutheran vein: "God helping her, she can do no other."¹⁷ It was a final and necessary

17 Ibid., 132. Among the abundant literature on Wilson and world politics, see Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition: The Treaty Fight in Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987); id., *Wilsonian Statecraft: Theory and Practice of Liberal Internationalism during World War I* (Wilmington, Del., 1991); John Milton Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); Patrick Devlin, *Too Proud to Fight. Woodrow Wilson's Neutrality* (Oxford, 1975); Robert H. Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917–1921* (New York, 1985); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Safe for Democracy: The Anglo-American Response to Revolution* (New York, 1984); N. Gordon Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America's Response to War and Revolution* (New York, 1968); Arthur S. Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson and Other Essays* (Nashville, Tenn., 1971); id., *Wilson*, vols. 3, 4, 5 (Princeton, N.J., 1960–1965); id., ed., *Woodrow Wilson and a Revolutionary World, 1913–1921* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982); Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York, 1961); id., *The World War and American Isolation, 1914–1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959); Arno J. Mayer, *Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917–1918* (New Haven, Conn., 1959); and Schulte Nordholt, *Woodrow Wilson*.

consequence of the Manichaean trap that Wilson was unable to conclude either an armistice or a peace treaty with the evil empire; all the more so, since wartime propaganda had, in the meantime, turned the “autocratic” Empire and its tumor, Prussian militarism, into an “outlaw.” The slogan of “Hang the Kaiser” turned the situation into a kind of “shoot-out at high noon,” nationalistic Republicans demanded unconditional surrender, and Wilson’s Democrats feared heavy losses in the upcoming congressional elections. For all those reasons, Wilson felt he had to respond to the request for a cessation of hostilities, that the government of Max von Baden presented on October 4, 1918, with a demand for the end of the German Empire in its previously constituted form, for a change of government, and for a democratic legitimation of any party to future negotiations. It is well known that the “revolution from above,” that is, the change from a constitutional to a parliamentary monarchy, staged by Undersecretary of State Paul von Hintze and by Hindenburg and Ludendorff, took place *because* the leadership of the German Empire had anticipated Wilson’s desire. It is equally well-known that a large part of the German public had drawn the conclusion from the deliberately vague wording of Wilson’s statements that the American president was actually demanding both the abdication of the emperor and the transition to a German republic. Thus, the pressure on William II increased from all sides, because everyone expected that sacrificing the emperor would mean better conditions for an armistice and a peace settlement.¹⁸

In actuality, neither the end of the Empire nor the changes in Germany altered in the least the harsh conditions for peace that Germany had to expect; neither did the German strategy of invoking the Fourteen Points or the right to self-determination as a basis for a future peace treaty. On the contrary, several factors combined to increase Wilson’s tendencies toward a punitive peace. There was his newly found conviction that Germany was responsible for the outbreak of the European war—a conviction that, according to Clemenceau, was shared by the entire civilized world. Moreover, during the course of the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson also came to believe increasingly that the new Germany represented nothing but the old Germany in a new guise; and, finally, he had to take into account the strategies and

18 For Wilson and Germany in 1918–1919, see esp. Klaus Schwabe, *Deutsche Revolution und Wilson-Frieden: Die amerikanische und deutsche Friedensstrategie zwischen Ideologie und Machtpolitik 1918/19* (Düsseldorf, 1971); id., *Woodrow Wilson, Revolutionary Germany, and Peacemaking, 1918–1919* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1985).

interests of the Allies, especially concerning possible threats to the establishment of the League of Nations idea and to his own role as an *arbiter mundi* by the bitter German criticism.

On the other hand, a peace of punishment and revenge was not to lead to a Carthage on the Rhine. The right to self-determination even for the Germans, considerations of the overall future European order, as well as the fear of the Bolshevik threat kept Wilson from questioning seriously the unity of a German national state. He was strictly opposed to any dissolution of the Empire founded by Bismarck and would not permit France to separate permanently from Germany the territories left of the Rhine. Thus, Wilson was forced to practice at Versailles the very policy that he himself had pilloried as the greatest evil of the system of European powers and that he had intended to supersede by establishing the League of Nations. In other words, he had to act according to the principles governing the balance of power. In terms of power politics, Wilson's European policies already appear to be those of a triple containment: they aim at containing the threat to Europe posed by the Soviet Union and by Germany, coupled with the desire to meet French security concerns, without, at the same time, allowing France to become the hegemonic power in Europe.¹⁹

As far as America was concerned, the establishment of the Weimar Republic had brought a *de facto* end to the old Empire, even though the Weimar Constitution postulated a continuity with the nation-state founded in 1871 in the very first sentence of Article I, which stated: "The German Empire is a Republic." The Manichaean trap was empty

19 In addition to the titles mentioned in notes 16 and 17, the following studies are relevant for Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference: Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917–1919* (New Haven, Conn., 1963); Maurice Hankey, *The Supreme Control of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (London, 1963); Michael Hogan, "The United States and the Problem of International Economic Control: American Attitudes toward European Reconstruction, 1918–1920," in: *Pacific Historical Review* 46 (1975): 84–103; Melvin Leffler, *The Elusive Quest: America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1979); Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918–1919* (London, 1968); Keith L. Nelson, *Victors Divided: America and the Allies in Germany, 1918–1923* (Berkeley, Calif., 1975); Carl R. Parrini, *Heir to Empire: United States Economic Diplomacy, 1916–1923* (Pittsburgh, 1969); Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt, "Wilson in Versailles," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 80 (1967): 177–99; David F. Trask, *The United States and the Supreme War Council, 1917–1918* (Middletown, Conn., 1961); Arthur C. Walworth, *America's Moment: 1918* (New York, 1977); and id., *Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (New York, 1986).

again. As America saw it, Germany deserved the chance—after an appropriate period of remorse, repentance, and reform—to return to the family of nations as a respected power and to prove herself as a liberal, capitalist democracy, as “Little America” in Europe.

Given such conditions, a revision of the Versailles Treaty, which the Senate had not ratified in any case, was quite possible as far as America was concerned. In contrast to French desires, it had never been the objective of U.S. policies to cement the status quo of 1919. Peaceful change was part of the core belief underlying American policies in Europe. It was part of America’s enlightened self-interest to support such a change, which would ultimately serve to integrate Germany once again into Europe politically and into the world economically.

As is well known to historians of the Weimar Republic, these were the general tendencies of American-German relations, especially between 1923 and 1929. The decisive turning point was the Dawes Plan of 1924, a concrete result of America’s attempt to stabilize the situation in Europe. The economic stability provided by the Dawes Plan made possible the political stability achieved by the security treaty of Locarno, Germany’s entry into the League of Nations, and the withdrawal of Allied troops from the Rhineland. This economic intervention by the United States marks the beginning of the end of France’s attempt to dominate Central Europe after World War I. American support had freed Germany from its role of helpless object that the country had assumed in 1919. The massive influx of American capital made the U.S. dollar rise like the sun over Germany, as one contemporary noted ironically; it remained an important condition for the period of stability enjoyed by the Weimar Republic until the outbreak of the most serious economic crisis since the beginning of the industrial revolution.²⁰

20 For American-German relations during the period of the Weimar Republic and the American perception of Germany during those years, see Peter Berg, *Deutschland und Amerika 1918–1929. Über das Amerikabild der zwanziger Jahre* (Lübeck and Hamburg, 1963); Manfred Berg, *Gustav Stresemann und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Weltwirtschaftliche Verflechtung und Revisionspolitik 1907–1929* (Baden-Baden, 1990); id., *Gustav Stresemann. Eine politische Karriere zwischen Reich und Republik* (Göttingen, 1992); Frank C. Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1984); Peter Bruno Gescher, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika und die Reparationen 1920–1924* (Bonn, 1956); Robert Gottwald, *Die Deutsch-Amerikanischen Beziehungen in der Ära Stresemann* (Berlin, 1965); Peter Krüger, *Die Außenpolitik der Republik von Weimar* (Darmstadt, 1985); Leffler, *Elusive Quest*; Werner Link, *Die amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1921–1932* (Düsseldorf, 1970); William C. McNeil, *American Money*

Similar to the years after 1945, when the Americans found in Konrad Adenauer the political powerhouse among the Germans eager to support their plans for the integration of the Federal Republic into the West, they were fortunate, during the middle period of Weimar, to have in Gustav Stresemann a congenial politician who correctly interpreted the goals of U.S. foreign policy in Europe: to be present economically, though abstain from any entangling alliances; to be open to revisionism by peaceful means; and to pursue a multilateral approach.

To the right-wing nationalists in Germany, who had attacked the loss of sovereignty and of control over the German economy inherent in the Dawes Plan, Stresemann replied: The greater U.S. economic interests in Germany, and the larger American credits granted to Germany, the greater would be America's interest in peaceful change, a change whose ultimate goal—in Stresemann's view—could only be the revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the restoration of Germany to its position as a major power with equal rights in Europe.

World War I had made the United States the dominant economic and trade power in the world; during the 1920s, it further strengthened that position. It increased its status as the leading productive power and became the largest export country as well as the largest consumer of raw materials in the world. America's share of the worldwide production of industrial goods grew from 35.8 percent in 1913 to 46 percent, if one uses the average of the years 1925–29 as a base. In dollars, the national income generated by the United States was as large as that of the next 23 nations taken together, including Great Britain, Germany, France, and Canada. New York became the second leading financial center of the world, rivalling London. The world's economic system had become bicentric if not America-centric. America's cultural influence increased as well; its film industry, for example, began to conquer Europe. Under the catchword of "Americanism," an intense debate ensued in Germany and in other European countries about the influence of the United States, which was (and is) both admired and feared.

The tremendous difference in power between the victorious United States and a defeated Germany resulted in the virtual disappearance of the Weimar Republic from public view in the United States; only a

and the Weimar Republic: Economics and Politics in the Era of the Great Depression (New York, 1986); Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe: The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1976); Eckhard Wandel, *Die Bedeutung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika für das deutsche Reparationsproblem 1924–1929* (Tübingen, 1971).

small, informed segment of the public remained involved in developments in Germany. That small group harbored considerable doubts, at least until 1923, whether the German republic would survive and not give way to a dictatorship. Even Stresemann was met with a good deal of skepticism at first; his metamorphosis into a republican by reason (*Vernunftrepublikaner*) and a politician pursuing a policy of rapprochement had first to be tested. Hindenburg's election as president of the Republic in 1925 met with utter horror and disbelief. In a message to President Calvin Coolidge, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) demanded Hindenburg's arrest and a new election for the office of *Reichspräsident*.²¹

It was only after Locarno, after the German cooperation in preparing the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and after Stresemann had received the Nobel Peace Prize that the political classes in the United States began to look at the survival chances of Germany's first democracy with muted optimism. Nothing symbolized the new quality of American-German relations and tensions in the relationship between the United States and France better than the events of May 5, 1928, in Heidelberg, which was both a *dies academicus* and a *dies politicus*. On this day, the University of Heidelberg bestowed an honorary doctoral degree upon both Gustav Stresemann and U.S. Ambassador Jacob Gould Schurman. Stresemann used the occasion to sum up the objectives and methods of his foreign policy, while Schurman stated that he had been struck increasingly, in the course of the preceding three years, by the similarity of the basic ideals inspiring the government and people of the two countries. He continued: "Germany and the United States are marching forward in a great and noble adventure in the cause of human civilization." This statement of the American ambassador met with fierce French criticism. Secretary of State Kellogg realized the threat to the precarious balance of America's European policy, and he issued a statement to the effect that Schurman's speech had not been cleared with the State Department before its publication.²²

21 Berg, *Stresemann und die Vereinigten Staaten*, 231–73; for the reaction to the election of Hindenburg, see *ibid.*, 248ff.

22 Detlef Junker, "Jacob Gould Schurman, die Universität Heidelberg und die deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen," in: *Semper Apertus. Sechshundert Jahre Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg 1386–1986. Festschrift in sechs Bänden*, vol. 3 (Berlin, etc., 1986), 328–58; *id.*, "Die USA und die Weimarer Republik," in: *Heidelberger Jahrbücher* 35 (Berlin and Heidelberg, 1991), 27–34. See Chapter 4 in this book.

As could have been expected, the result of the National Socialists' rise to power in 1933 and the subsequent installation of dictatorship was a dramatic deterioration of the image of Germany and the Third Reich in the United States. Thanks to the new polling techniques of Gallup and Roper, this decline in sympathy can even be quantified quite accurately from the mid-1930s on. To the question, which European country they liked best, 55 percent of Americans polled in January 1937 replied England, 11 percent stated France, and 8 percent mentioned Germany. Asked in November 1938 which side they would like to see victorious in a possible war between Germany and Russia, 83 percent answered Russia and only 17 percent preferred Germany. And in a poll taken between September 1 and 6, 1939, 82 percent believed that Germany was responsible for the outbreak of the current war, followed by 3 percent for England and France, 3 percent for the Versailles Treaty, and 1 percent for Poland. At the beginning of March 1940, the question was: Which side would you like to see victorious in the present war? In their answers, 84 percent favored England and France, 1 percent Germany. And a poll taken between June 26 and July 1, 1941, asked a similar question with regard to Russia and Germany, with the result that 72 percent preferred a Russian victory, only 4 percent were on the German side.²³

During the 1930s, Americans grew increasingly apprehensive that the so-called "League of Friends of the New Germany" or Bund, that presumptive Trojan horse of the NSDAP in the United States, could pose a threat to the domestic security of the United States.

23 Printed in: Detlef Junker, *Kampf um die Weltmacht. Die USA und das Dritte Reich 1933–1945* (Düsseldorf, 1988), 70–78; for a bibliography of works on American-German relations during this period, see *ibid.*, 173–79. The following remarks are based on my own research: see Detlef Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt. Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA 1933–1941* (Stuttgart, 1975); *id.*, *Franklin D. Roosevelt. Macht und Vision: Präsident in Krisenzeiten*, 2d. ed. (Göttingen, 1989); *id.*, "Deutschland im politischen Kalkül der Vereinigten Staaten 1933–1945," in: Wolfgang Michalka, ed., *Der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1989), 57–73; *id.*, "The Impact of Foreign Policy on the U.S. Domestic Scene, 1939 to 1941," in: Maurizio Vaudagna, ed., *The United States in the Late Thirties*, Special Issue of *Storia Nordamericana*, vol. 6, nos. 1–2 (Turin, 1989); *id.*, "Hitler's Perception of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the United States of America," in: Cornelis A. van Minnen and John F. Sears, eds., *FDR and His Contemporaries: Foreign Perception of an American President* (New York, 1992), 145–56; *id.*, "The Continuity of Ambivalence: German Views of America, 1933–1945" (forthcoming in a volume of collected essays published by Cambridge University Press); *id.*, *Von der Weltmacht zur Supermacht. Amerikanische Außenpolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*. Meyers Forum (Mannheim, 1995).

Simultaneously, the foreign policies of the Third Reich were seen as a threat to world peace. This dual fear, however, did *not* lead to a policy of preventive intervention in Europe. On the contrary, it intensified the very basic isolationism of the American people and its tendency not to interfere in European affairs in the face of impending danger. This basic tendency and the objective judgments it contained about America's national interests were the most important determining factors of American foreign policy until the outbreak of World War II in 1939. By passing the neutrality laws and keeping the United States out of Europe and restricted to the Western hemisphere, the U.S. Congress had done during the 1930s what Hitler tried to achieve in vain later on by concluding the Three Power Pact in 1940, by attacking the Soviet Union in 1941, and by forging an alliance with Japan. While aggression and expansion proceeded apace in Europe and Asia, Congress had completed the index of foreign activities prohibited to the Roosevelt administration in time of crisis or war. Thus, on the level of official U.S. foreign policy that was supported by Congress, legislation, and public opinion, President Roosevelt had become an unarmed prophet, a *quantité négligeable* when the European war erupted; Hitler treated him accordingly.

Roosevelt, on the other hand, knew only too well that he would be able to regain his freedom to act and to influence world politics only by changing the “threat perception” of his people, the perception held by Americans about the threat potential to the United States posed by a National Socialist Germany. He had to demonstrate and explain to the American people that it was a dangerous illusion for the United States to restrict its national interests to the Western hemisphere, to isolate itself in a “Fortress America,” and to let the changes in Eurasia take their course. Until 1941, “preparedness” was the overriding goal of his foreign policy—the industrial, economic, and ideological preparation for a possible war. In this sense, foreign policy became, in large measure, domestic policy. Roosevelt himself had given the title “The Call to Battle Stations” to his *Public Papers and Addresses* for 1941. Like many others who had lived through World War I, Roosevelt, who had been an ardent Wilsonian and had served as Undersecretary of the Navy at the time, knew that only a threatened nation would be willing to prepare for war, let alone fight in one.

During this educational campaign, this public debate with an isolationist majority, Roosevelt developed both of the major components of U.S. global policies in the twentieth century: on the one hand, the warning against the impending world domination by an enemy power

(in this case the Third Reich) and, on the other hand, a global definition of U.S. national interest with regard to both its content and its extent. One might even be tempted to assert that it was only the tough domestic debate about the threat posed by the Third Reich and the attack on Pearl Harbor that led most Americans to perceive their country as a global power with interests in all continents and on all the oceans of the world—at least up to the end of the Cold War.

It was only recently that Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., has reminded us—quite correctly, I believe—of the tradition established by Roosevelt’s internationalism and globalism.²⁴ Like Thomas Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt, and the naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan before him, FDR shared the opinion that a balance of power on the European continent was of vital interest to the United States. Like Woodrow Wilson, he believed in the ideal of a world in which the free self-determination of nations and the principle of collective security would guarantee world peace. He shared the conviction held by his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, that only a free and open world economy would produce the goods and services needed to maintain world peace in the long run. Hitler obviously threatened all of the above simultaneously: the balance of power in Europe, world peace, and a free world economy. That is the reason why Roosevelt articulated his warning, his globalism, as a threefold anticipation of the future.

Every military success by Hitler brought closer an economic future whose realization meant *the* ultimate catastrophe for America’s economy in Roosevelt’s eyes and in those of the internationalists. Its basic structure can be described in a few sentences: Any victory by Germany and Italy in Europe and by Japan in the Far East would force those two regions into systems of planned economies that would be virtually autarkic. The U.S. would lose its investments, trade volume would be drastically reduced, and foreign trade would take place under conditions dictated by the Axis powers, if at all. South America, a natural supplier of Europe, would come more and more under the influence of Hitler’s Europe. The reduction of both U.S. import and export industries and the related secondary effects generated throughout the domestic economy of the United States would radically intensify the problem of unemployment, as yet unsolved by the New Deal, and would create social tensions that could not be alleviated within the framework of

24 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Internationalism,” in: van Minnen and Sears, eds., *FDR and His Contemporaries*, 1–16.

the existing system. In other words: as far as the internationalists were concerned, an open and undivided world market was one of the basic preconditions for the very survival of the American system.

There was a military aspect as well. At the beginning of Roosevelt's presidency, America's security area contained the Western hemisphere and half of the Pacific, or roughly one-third of the globe, as it had done ever since 1898. After Munich and after Japan's proclamation of the "New Order" in East Asia, Roosevelt pushed the limits of U.S. security out further and further until they reached global dimensions in a literal sense by the time the Lend-Lease Program was signed in 1941.

This new global definition of American security became one of the cornerstones of its political re-orientation. To limit oneself to defending the Western hemisphere was viewed as suicidal. The oceans of the world had to be controlled lest they become "highways," as Roosevelt liked to call them, which the Axis powers could use to attack the United States any time they chose. But such a control of the high sea could not be assured by the U.S. Navy on its own. It was possible only if Europe and Asia were not controlled by the Axis Powers, who had the shipbuilding capacity of two continents under their control. France, England, China, and, as of mid-1941, the Soviet Union as well, had to be supported, since they also defended the United States by defending themselves. Thus, the U.S. also had a vital military interest in restoring the balance of power in Europe and Asia.

The third component in redefining U.S. national interests before the entry into World War II was ideological. Roosevelt repeated again and again, almost *ad nauseam*: the right of all peoples to free self-determination and the duty of all nations to conduct their international policies according to the principles of international law are indivisible. These principles, he argued, applied to all nations anywhere in the world and without reservation. Force and aggression were illegitimate means to achieve any change in the status quo. Roosevelt's administration had thus accepted as its own the Stimson Doctrine of 1932, according to which the United States would refuse to acknowledge territorial changes achieved by force.

As Roosevelt saw it, the impending conflict with the Axis Powers was not merely a conflict between the "Have's" and the "Have-Not's." He interpreted the coming fight as a universal battle for the future shape of the world, a battle between aggressors and peaceful nations, between liberal democracy and fascism, between Western, Christian-humanist civilization and barbarism, between decent citizens and criminals,

between good and evil. However, he never even once mentioned the Nazi persecution of the Jews publicly before Hitler's declaration of war. Like Wilson, Roosevelt thus unfolded his Manichaeian world view; like the Kaiser's Empire, the Third Reich found itself locked in the Manichaeian trap.

In conclusion, one can posit that Roosevelt's ideas combined an ideological and economic globalism of freedom (Wilson's liberal globalism) with a new military globalism created by the development of a new military technology and the assumed plans for world domination on the part of Adolf Hitler. The United States ultimately had to enter the war itself, both in order to destroy the "New Orders" in Europe and Asia and to secure its own position as the future world power, to create that *novus ordo seclorum* proclaimed on every dollar bill.

3. The USA and the Weimar Republic, 1919–1933

Through the compulsion to reduce complexity, future historians might be tempted to call our Saeculum the “American Century.” By winning two world wars and a Cold War, the liberal, capitalist, and free-market model of the United States, it might be said in the 21st century, had prevailed in the industrialized world. Neither National Socialism nor Fascism nor Communism turned out to be a match for the tremendous dynamics of this model. The partly manifest, partly latent world civil war of the twentieth century, that began in 1917 when Lenin and Wilson proclaimed antagonistic models for the whole world, and which from 1945 on was called the Cold War, came to a dramatic close at the end of the 1980s with the intellectual and material collapse of the communist side. Contemporaries could hardly have grasped the unexpected, the unforeseen: Gorbachev, the radical innovator, ingenious bankruptcy administrator, and sorcerer’s apprentice had tried to usher the market economy into Russia, American advisors had reorganized his presidential office along the lines of the White House, and, next to Red Square, a hamburger chain had demonstrated free-market efficiency.

At that time, a debate broke out in the USA about the end of history. It was claimed that the USA had now fulfilled its historical mission to lead history to its goal as an unfolding process of freedom—to *make the world safe for democracy*. The revolutions of freedom against communist dictatorships had been a new, perhaps final stage on the ladder of progress and, within the self-concept of American civil religion, comparable only to Moses coming down from the mountain with the commandments, the Magna Charta, the American Declaration of Independence, and the American Constitution.

However, the historians of the 21st century could add that, simultaneously with American power reaching its peak, there was a turning point in world history. For the USA was afflicted by the same disease

from which the empires of the Spanish, the Dutch, the French, and the English had perished: imperial overstretch. In other words, the economic conditions of the country could no longer cope with its global projection of military power. Therefore, in the last decade of the 20th century, the world had become multipolar again. Central and Western Europe had seized the opportunity, while the Soviet Union continued to sink into anarchy and civil war.

Of course, it is impossible to interpret the totality of a century by the guideline of a single causal connection. Empirical historical knowledge is always partial and based on a specific perspective. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of the “American century” is a productive one. Not only does it allow us to interpret our century in terms of its presumably strongest driving force, but it also allows us to better understand and explain European history, German history, and American-German relations—my discussion focusing on the particular manifestation of these relations during the Weimar Republic. Germans in particular would do well to appreciate this perspective of our century. For it was the misjudgment by large sections of the German Reich’s foreign policy decision-making elite from 1871 to 1945 with regard to the strengths, values, and interests of the Anglo-Saxon naval powers, especially those of the United States, that significantly contributed to the catastrophes of this century’s German history—one need only recall 1917 and 1941.

American-German relations from the founding of the Reich to the present have taken the form of a dramatic alternation between war and cooperation.¹ Its essential content has been the strategic,

1 There are only two comprehensive accounts written by Americans on the history of American-German relations from the founding of the Reich to the 1970s: Hans W. Gatzke, *Germany and the United States. A Special Relationship?* Cambridge and London 1980; Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany. A Diplomatic History*, Ithaca and London 1984. In lieu of the lack of an overall German account, three anthologies can be consulted; Manfred Knapp/Werner Link/Hans-Jürgen Schröder/Klaus Schwabe, *Die USA und Deutschland 1918–1975*, Munich 1978; Frank Trommler (ed.), *Amerika und die Deutschen. Bestandsaufnahme einer 300jährigen Geschichte*, Opladen 1986, therein especially the contributions on foreign policy by Doerries, Schwabe, Junker, Weinberg, Maier, Hermand, Hanrieder, Sommer, and Stern; and a series of eight lectures given in Heidelberg in 1984/85 on American-German relations from 1890 to 1985; Detlef Junker (Guest Editor), *Germany and the United States 1890–1985*, with contributions by Ambrosius, Czempiel, Görtemaker, Hillgruber, Jonas, Junker, Knapp, Link (Heidelberg American Studies Background Paper, no. 2, Bonn 1986). The best analysis for the period after 1945 is Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy*, New Haven et al. 1989.

economic, legal and moral conflict between the twofold attempt of the post-Bismarck German Reich to break out of its semi-hegemonic position in the center of Europe and become a world power among world powers; and the twofold response of the United States to prevent this and to keep Germany in the position of a democratic, non-aggressive middle state that is integrated into a liberal economy and, if possible, linked to the United States. This is why out of all the Western allies, the Americans have the fewest problems with the newly unified Germany. In many ways, it is the Germany that Americans have always wanted since 1848: Left to its own devices, it is capable of neither offense nor defense. Germany has found its political borders within its geographical limits. For the first time in their history, Germans enjoy freedom, democracy, and unity. As a constitutional state, Germany guarantees basic liberal freedoms, has a federal structure, and adheres to the principle of a social market economy.

American-German relations during the Weimar Republic, the focus of Manfred Berg's award-winning dissertation,² are a particularly complex period in the history of this bilateral relationship. The overwhelming influence of the United States on the Weimar Republic was initially underestimated by historians in the 1950s and 1960s and only adequately elaborated in the 1970s and 1980s by a broad body of international research, in which particularly Americans, French, and Germans have participated. Rather than a coincidence, it corresponds to the inner dynamics of progress in knowledge that a monograph on Stresemann's American policy which had been lacking for thirty years, was first achieved with Berg's work.³

2 Manfred Berg, *Gustav Stresemann und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Weltwirtschaftliche Verflechtung und Revisionspolitik 1907–1929*, Baden-Baden 1990 (Nomos).

3 On Stresemann's policy toward England, France, and Russia, cf: Werner Weidenfeld, *Die Englandpolitik Gustav Stresemanns*, Mainz 1972; Michael-Olaf Maxelon, *Stresemann und Frankreich 1914–1929*, Düsseldorf 1972; Martin Walsdorff, *Westorientierung und Ostpolitik. Stresemanns Rußlandpolitik in der Locarno-Ära*, Bremen 1971. Important works on the relationship between America and Germany during the Weimar Republic are: Dieter Bruno Gescher, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika und die Reparationen 1920–1924*, Bonn 1956; Robert Gottwald, *Die Deutsch-Amerikanischen Beziehungen in der Ära Stresemann*, Berlin 1965; Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerich, *Die deutsche Inflation, 1914–1923. Causes and Consequences in International Perspective*, Berlin/New York 1980; Peter Krüger, *Die Außenpolitik der Republik von Weimar*, Darmstadt 1985; Werner Link, *Die amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1921–1932*, Düsseldorf 1970; Karl-Heinrich Pohl, *Weimars*

The following remarks will concentrate on two aspects in due brevity. First, structural preconditions and elements of American foreign policy toward the Weimar Republic will be outlined, then the main thesis of Mr. Berg's dissertation will be presented; namely, that the United States—not, say, France or England—was the linchpin of Stresemann's successful revisionist policy during his tenure as German Foreign Minister from 1923 to 1929.

As so often is the case with American history, a change in the domestic political mood led to profound changes in U.S. foreign policy in 1919/1920—in this case with far-reaching consequences for international policy in the interwar period.⁴ The U.S. Senate refused to ratify the League of Nations Charter that had been negotiated by President Wilson at Versailles, and thus the Treaty of Versailles as a whole. The collapsed system of equilibrium among the European powers was thus replaced not by a new and better system of collective security, as Wilson had wanted, but by an amputated League of Nations in

Wirtschaft und die Außenpolitik der Republik 1924–1926. Vom Dawes-Plan zum Internationalen Eisenpakt, Düsseldorf 1979; Klaus Schwabe, *Deutsche Revolution und Wilson-Frieden*, Düsseldorf 1971; Eckhard Wandel, *Die Bedeutung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika für das deutsche Reparationsproblem 1924–9*, Tübingen 1971; Gilbert Zieburg, *Weltwirtschaft und Weltpolitik 1922/24–1931*, Frankfurt/M 1984; Gerd Bardach, *Weltmarktorientierung und relative Stagnation. Währungspolitik in Deutschland 1924–1931*, Berlin 1976.

For Anglo-Saxon literature, see Derek H. Aldcroft, *Die Zwanziger Jahre. Von Versailles zur Wall Street, 1919–1929*, Munich 1978; Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *The United States and the Weimar Republic: America's Response to the German Problem*, in: Jules Davids (ed.), *Perspectives in American Diplomacy*, New York 1976, Arno Press; John Braeman, *American Foreign Policy in the Age of Normalcy*, in: *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 26 (1981) 2, pp. 125–158; Frank C. Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion. American Political Economic and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933*, Ithaca and London 1984, Cornell University Press; Jon Jacobsen, *Locarno Diplomacy. Germany and the West*, Princeton 1972; Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Elusive Quest. America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security 1919–1933*, Chapel Hill 1979; Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace. International Relations in Europe 1918–1933*, London 1981; William C. McNeil, *American Money and the Weimar Republic. Economics and Politics in the Era of the Great Depression*, New York 1986, Columbia Univ. Press; Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Pre-dominance in Europe. The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan*, Chapel Hill 1976; Marc Trachtenberg, *Reparation in World Politics. France and European Economic Diplomacy, 1916–1923*, New York 1980.

4 The following remarks are based on: Detlef Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt. Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA 1933–1941*, Stuttgart 1975; Junker, *Die Außenpolitik der USA 1920–1941*, in: Otmar Franz (ed.), *Am Wendepunkt der europäischen Geschichte*, Göttingen 1981, pp. 200–217; Junker, *Kampf um die Weltmacht: Die USA und das Dritte Reich 1933–1945*, Düsseldorf 1988.

which the Soviet Union, Germany, and the United States were absent. Equally consequential for Germany, France, and Europe as a whole was the simultaneous refusal of the U.S. Senate to even discuss a U.S.-French alliance treaty, thereby rendering the British pledge to France moot. The Cold War between France and Germany from 1919 to 1922, which led to the 1923 invasion of the Ruhr, resulted in no small part from this weakness in the French security system. Despite the Treaty of Versailles, the French felt both threatened by the Germans in the long term and betrayed by the Americans. For at Versailles, French Prime Minister Clemenceau, the “Tiger,” had given up his demand for the Rhine river to be France’s eastern border in exchange for Wilson’s promise of an American-French alliance. Now the French had neither the American alliance nor the Rhine border.

These decisions of the American Senate served as the prelude and the basis for the much-cited political isolationism of the USA between the two world wars: From 1919 to 1941, the United States refused to enter into alliances that would prevent the country from having a free hand, refused to support collective sanctions under the League of Nations, and would not even consider intervening militarily in Europe or Asia. Thanks to the country’s strategically secure position between the Atlantic and the Pacific, the U.S. could continue to pursue a “free hand” policy. Until the second half of the 1930s, the U.S. felt threatened neither from Europe nor from Asia. On the contrary, its security problem was simple: bordered to the north and south by weak neighbors and to the east and west by fish.

This absence of the U.S. from alliance politics and military affairs has long led contemporaries and then historians to underestimate the real weight of the U.S. in the fate of Europe and Germany after 1919. For U.S. influence did not come from guns, but resulted from the country’s dominant position in the world economy. Anyone who wants to understand American-European relations in this period, must turn his or her attention to the world economy, world markets, balances of payments, and foreign exchange holdings. The U.S.’s military and political isolationism stood in stark contrast to its influence in the world economy and to the active foreign economic policy that the Americans pursued in Europe and Germany.

The U.S. had become the world’s leading economic and trading power as a result of World War I and continued to expand this position in the 1920s. It increased its lead as the foremost producer and became both the largest exporter and the largest consumer of raw materials. Its

share of world production of industrial goods grew from 35.8% in 1913 to 46% on average for the years 1925 to 1929. Measured in dollars, U.S. national income was as high as that of the next following 23 nations combined—Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and Canada included. New York became the world's second financial center next to London, and the world economic system became bicentric, if not America-centric. Perhaps the most consequential factor for world trade and for the U.S.-European relationship was the abrupt change of the United States from a debtor nation to a creditor nation. U.S. export surpluses and war bonds left foreign countries, especially England, France, and Italy, indebted to the United States in 1919, and this indebtedness continued to grow throughout the 1920s thanks to U.S. foreign trade policy. The consequence was the often-described latent dollar shortage of the 1920s, which basically was artificially bridged by U.S. long- and short-term loans.

The overriding goal of the Republican administrations of the 1920s, which were heavily influenced by “big business” and “big finance,” was to try to use this economic position of the country to simultaneously maintain an open world market for exports, credit, and raw materials within the framework of a stable, liberal, and capitalist world order that would remain at peace. A telling principle of the Harding administration was “Less government in business and more business in government.” The means considered appropriate included a renewal of the U.S. trade treaty system on the basis of unconditional, multi-lateral most-favored-nation treatment, encouragement of U.S. banks to lend money and promote currency stabilization, and, in general, the demand for equal legal treatment of the United States in foreign markets—otherwise known as the open-door policy.

Given this definition of U.S. national interest, the European market was too important to be left to Europeans alone. The U.S. did not want to watch an unchecked Franco-German conflict over German reparations plunge Europe into economic chaos. The invasion of the Ruhr by the French and Belgians in 1923 made it clear to the Americans that important U.S. interests were at stake and that without the United States, the Europeans would neither solve the reparations problem nor return to economic stability. However, the Americans were able to wait until the supposed winner of the Ruhr struggle, French Prime Minister Poincaré, had no choice but to accept a solution on largely American terms. These were formulated and enforced not by the U.S. government directly, but through businessmen and bankers suggested by the administration, such as Charles G. Dawes and Owen D. Young.

This informal but nevertheless effective economic influence had dramatic effects that went beyond the economy. The concrete result of this American stabilization policy in Germany was the well-known Dawes Plan of 1924, which solved the reparations problem for a transitional period with the help of a large American bond, i.e., through an American loan. Thus, as one contemporary wryly remarked, the dollar sun rose over Germany—this being an important foundation for the Republic’s period of stability until 1929.

On the one hand, the Dawes Plan placed Germany under foreign control in terms of monetary and fiscal policy; on the other hand, it protected Germany from reparations payments that threatened its stability and from future military sanctions by France. The economic security provided by the Dawes Plan made possible the political security treaty of Locarno, Germany’s entry into the League of Nations, and the evacuation of the Rhineland. American economic intervention through the Dawes Plan was the beginning of the end of France’s political dominance in Central Europe after World War I. Germany was thus able to emerge from its helplessness position of 1919 with American help.

In the same way the Americans found Konrad Adenauer since 1949, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, to be a potent political figure for their policy of integrating the Federal Republic into the West. So, in the middle phase of the Weimar Republic there was a politician with a knack for foreign affairs, without whom these foreign policy successes would certainly not have been achieved: Gustav Stresemann. It is the great merit of Berg’s work to have shown for the first time, in detail and saturated with sources, the extent to which the world market, the interdependent world economy, and the paramount economic importance of the U.S. were at the center of Stresemann’s thinking from the beginning of his political career in 1907. As an economist with a doctoral degree, a representative of the business interests, and a member of the Reichstag from the National-Liberal party, he declared in the Reichstag as early as 1910 that “politics and international policy today are first and foremost world economic policy.”⁵ On a trip to America in the fall of 1912, he became convinced of the economic power of the USA. Even after the First World War and the upheaval of 1918, these insights remained central elements of his foreign policy frame of reference. This is precisely why Stresemann

⁵ Berg, Stresemann, p. 19.

already had a strategy when he took office in 1923. It was a concept centered on revising foreign policy for Germany's benefit that relied on global economic interdependence and the paramount importance of the United States. Because all capitalist states were in the same boat, he calculated, Germany's economic recovery was in the well-understood interest of yesterday's enemies—especially the U.S., which defined its foreign policy primarily as world economic policy.

However, according to Stresemann, this economic rationality would only prevail if Germany committed itself to the principle of peaceful change, strictly adhered to the multilateral and cooperative method, took sufficient account of the interests of *other states*, such as the security interests of France, and domestically kept the nationalist right in check, as they lacked any sense of proportion or potential.

With decisive help from Stresemann, this reorientation strategy was able to prevail during the period of dramatic national and international crisis management in 1923 and 1924. To domestic opponents who deplored Germany's loss of sovereignty, Stresemann explained that the greater U.S. economic interests in Germany was, the more American credits would flow, and in turn, the greater U.S. interest in a peaceful change would be—the ultimate goal of which, in Stresemann's view, being the revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the restoration of Germany to the status of an equal partner and a great power within Europe. Stresemann very effectively explained this debtor's strategy in a speech in December 1925:

“But the decisive thing for me is . . . Germany's position as a debtor. Gentlemen, you can be very strong as a creditor, but you can also be strong as a debtor, you just have to have enough debt, you have to have so much debt that the creditor sees his own existence at risk if the debtor collapses. I once knew a gentleman in Dresden, a private citizen, who held a high position and was up to his neck in debt. Someone once said to me: This is the healthiest person in Dresden, when he coughs on the telephone, every creditor sends him a special doctor so that nothing happens to him.”⁶

Stresemann's work did not survive for long after his death in 1929. The Great Depression of 1929 to 1933, the most severe world economic

6 Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik (ADAP) 1918–1945, Serie B, vol. I, 1, Göttingen 1966, p. 733.

crisis since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, ate away at the substance of American-German relations. The crisis devastated both the open world market and the factual basis for cooperation. The withdrawal of American capital, the collapse of the world monetary system in the summer of 1931, the shrinking of world trade, the move to protectionist policies by nations around the globe which only aggravated the crisis, and, finally, the actual end of the problem of German reparations and war debts of the Allies destroyed the parallel economic interests. The National Socialist attempt to establish a racially-based dominion over Europe then led Germans and Americans into a world war for the second time in this century.

If Stresemann's work did not last, he nevertheless left a legacy. If a reunified Germany wants to preserve its security in cooperative structures and its welfare within the framework of a world economy that is as open as possible, it is advisable for the nation to study Stresemann again.

4. Jacob Gould Schurman, Heidelberg University, and American-German Relations, 1878–1945

The sensational news took Rector Martin Dibelius by surprise. “It is January 4, 1928. The rector of Heidelberg University has remained alone in his office during the lunch break. A long-distance call comes through. ‘This is the Berlin *Achtuhrabendblatt*, we wish to speak to the rector.’ Speaking.’ ‘What do you say about the American foundation?’ ‘I have not heard anything about it.’ ‘We have just received a Wolff message about it.’ ‘Please read it to me.’ He listens and jots down the initial figures: “At a dinner given by the Steuben Society [in New York] Ambassador Schurman announces that he has begun collecting donations with the goal of 400,000 dollars for the construction of a new building for lecture halls and classrooms at the University of Heidelberg.” Rector Dibelius has barely hung up with Berlin when other calls start to pour in from the city: public authorities, newspapers, and colleagues—the radio had already spread the news.”¹

That sensational call from Berlin was the prelude to 1928, a year that, without exaggeration, could be called the “Schurman year” with regard to the history of Heidelberg University. At the end of January, a delegation led by the rector and Heidelberg’s lord mayor, Ernst Walz, travelled to Berlin to convey their gratitude to the U.S. ambassador to Germany, Jacob Gould Schurman. The president of Heidelberg University’s student body thanked his former classmate in writing. On May 5, members of the university, together with distinguished guests from the city, the state, and the German Reich, gathered in the large

1 Description of Dibelius in “*Neue Badische-Landeszeitung*,” June 9, 1931. Heidelberg University Archives (hereafter cited *inter alia*), B-5135/7 (X, 2, no. 49). I would like to thank Elisabeth Hunerlach and Dr. Hermann Weisert for their kind assistance.

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hall of the New Collegiate building (where the New University building now stands) on Ludwigsplatz (today: University Square) to bestow honorary doctoral degrees on both Ambassador Schurman and German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann. The Department of Philosophy had already awarded Schurman an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree on July 28, 1927. On December 17, at a ceremony in the great hall of the civic center that was organized by the city and the university, Schurman presented the sum of “more than half a million dollars for the construction of a new lecture hall.” Lord Mayor Walz conveyed honorary citizenship on the American ambassador, while the Baden minister for culture and education, Otto Leers, showed the gratitude of the state by presenting Schurman with a facsimile edition of the Codex Manesse.

Professor Christoph Voll of Karlsruhe, who had been commissioned to produce a bust of Schurman, was given an appropriate seat in the hall “in order to observe the facial expressions of Mr. Ambassador during his speech.”² That evening, the entire student body participated in a torchlight procession in his honor.

At seventy-three, Schurman accepted all these honors with surprising liveliness, an easy gracefulness, and an awareness that the funds he had collected on Wall Street would lay the foundation for an impressive building in the center of Heidelberg’s historic district that “would survive the centuries.”³ Throughout his 1928 Heidelberg speeches and addresses, he stressed that his year as a student in Heidelberg in 1878 had been the source of his life-long engagement with German cultural and intellectual history. Heidelberg had been the first German university he attended, and it had remained his best loved.⁴

Who was Jacob Gould Schurman, this man who—according to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—had bestowed this sudden bonanza upon the delighted men of the university “out of a blue American sky.”⁵ What motivated him to create this foundation? What did he think

2 On Voll, see U. A., B-5133/2 (IX, 13, no. 191) and Meinhold Lurz, *Der plastische Schmuck der Neuen Universität*, Heidelberg 1975, p. 4 (Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg, Veröffentlichungen zur Heidelberger Altstadt, ed. by Peter Anselm Riedl, vol. 12).

3 Schurman used the phrase “which will last for centuries” in a letter from Bedford Hills, New York, addressed to the University on October 10, 1930, in connection with the proposed endowment plaque. *Inter alia*, B-5133/2 (IX, 13, no. 191).

4 Cf. speech of May 5, 1928. *Inter alia*, B- 1523/2b (Heidelberger Tageblatt of May 5, 1928).

5 *Inter alia*, B-5130 (IX, 13, no. 177), *Morgenblatt*, Feb. 2, 1928, no. 87.

about Heidelberg, Germany and the Germans, and American-German relations?

Looking back on his life, Schurman could say that through his own efforts, he himself had achieved the American Dream—the rise from the bottom to the top of the social ladder; the way out of poverty and lack of education to wealth, status, public influence. But first he had to become what his Dutch ancestors never would have wanted to be: an American.⁶

Schurman was born in 1854, the third of eight children, on Prince Edward Island in Canada. Loyalists to the British Crown, his ancestors had emigrated to Canada during the American revolution. While his parents toiled on their farm, he attended a primary school and became a member of their Baptist congregation. The hard physical labor that farming demanded drove the 13-year-old boy to leave his parents' house and find a job as a sales clerk in a country store where he worked for three years. At sixteen, he had saved up enough money to be able to pay a year's tuition at a high school out of his own pocket. A year later, the outstanding student won a state scholarship that allowed him to continue his education over the next years at two colleges close to his home.

According to Schurman, that first scholarship had a great impact on his life. It was the basis for other highly-competitive scholarships and awards that made it possible for him to study in England and Germany over a five-year period. At twenty-one, he left Nova Scotia for London and Edinburgh to get a three-year degree in what, at the time, amounted to general studies in the humanities. These years of travel and education were characterized by the leitmotiv of Schurman's studies, in which he tried to achieve his own understanding of the relationship between knowledge and religion. His Baptist faith was being challenged by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, by Herbert Spencer's philosophy, as well as by empiricism, materialism, and agnosticism. Schurman searched for truth, for answers to the three classical

6 The following biographical sketch is the first scholarly publication on Schurman in German. It owes much to Maynard Moser's dissertation, *Jacob Gould Schurman: Scholar, Political Activist, and Ambassador of Good Will, 1892–1942* (University of California, Santa Barbara, Ph.D. 1976), Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor. Cf. the obituary in "New York Times," Aug. 13, 1942, p. 19; *Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Three 1941–1945*, New York 1973, pp. 696–699. A monograph on Schurman as ambassador to Germany from 1925–1930 in general, on his relationship to Heidelberg in particular, based on the German and American sources, is a desideratum of research. Schurman's accessible estate is administered by Cornell University.

questions at the basis of modern philosophy: What can I know? What may I hope? What should I do? The quest for the foundations of his existence did not, however, hinder the unerring and successful completion of his studies in the United Kingdom. In Edinburgh, he finished his courses in metaphysics, logic, and ethics with the title of “Doctor of Science” (D.Sc.). His work in London on ethics, political philosophy, and political economy earned him a Master’s degree. Rather than returning home, the young doctor used another scholarship to go to Germany for two years. Here he would learn the language, familiarize himself with German culture, and acquaint himself with the German university system, which enjoyed world-wide renown at the end of the nineteenth century and would become a model for the organization of graduate studies at elite universities in the United States. From 1878 to 1879, Schurman studied for a year in Heidelberg; from 1879 to 1880 he spent one semester at Berlin University, which, at the time, he considered “the best and most famous in the world,”⁷ and then another semester in Göttingen.

His time at Heidelberg left lasting impressions on Schurman. Even after fifty years, he spoke gratefully and enthusiastically of the special symbiosis of intellectual and aesthetic attractions, of the attractiveness of the university, of the unique combination of city, river, and landscape. He became, like many Americans before and after him, an avid hiker. Two academic teachers particularly impressed him, the archaeologist Karl Bernhard Stark and the philosopher Kuno Fischer. Stark taught him to appreciate Dürer. His lectures on European art, with their broad visual material, structured and expanded Schurman’s knowledge. Fischer, in whose house he was a frequent guest, was appreciated by the ambassador in retrospect as follows: “Kuno Fischer was not a creative mind, but his ability for empathetic understanding and appreciation and his gift of reproduction were amazing. He was the historian of philosophy, the interpreter of other men’s systems . . . He was extremely logical, and the greatest academic orator. His field included the high art of poetry as well as philosophy. I had the privilege during two semesters of listening to his lectures on modern philosophy, including Kant and Fichte, as well as his lectures on Goethe’s Faust and the life and works of Schiller. Of course, at the same time I intensely studied the writings of these masters.”⁸

7 Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

8 Cf. note 4 and Schurman’s speech at the inauguration of the “New University.” *New Mannheimer Zeitung* v. 9.6.1931, *inter alia*, B-5135/7 (X, 2, no. 49).

In Berlin, Eduard Zeller instructed him in Greek philosophy and Theodor Mommsen in Roman history. In Göttingen, he began writing a book on “Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution,” which he completed in the United States and published as his first scholarly work.

Already during his time as a student in England and Germany, Schurman had the ability to win over men of influence, standing, and wealth. With this talent, he flourished after his return to the new world. It was an important prerequisite for his meteoric academic career. In 1882, George Munro, a rich New York publisher, endowed a chair in English literature and rhetoric at Dalhousie University in Halifax and offered it to the twenty-eight-year-old Schurman. Two years later, Schurman moved to the newly created George Munro chair in metaphysics at the same university. Almost by the same act, Schurman married the publisher’s daughter Barbara Forrest Munro. This marriage, which lasted forty-one years until the death of his wife in 1930, produced seven children and made Schurman affluent and financially independent.

In 1886, Schurman moved to the prestigious Cornell University as a professor for Christian ethics and philosophy of mind who soon received a chair in the philosophy department. The president of the university, Andrew D. White, played a decisive role in this process—a man with whom Schurman had already become friends in Berlin when the former had been accredited as the U.S. ambassador to Germany. Schurman immediately developed a reputation as the best speaker at Cornell. Besides students and colleagues, his captivating lectures attracted the attention of many local citizens.

His lectures in philosophy made an especially strong impression on Henry W. Sage, the head of the university’s Board of Trustees and the owner of a lumber empire. In 1890, Sage endowed a small department at Cornell, the Linn Sage School of Philosophy. Schurman would become its dean. Finally, in a political power move, Sage imposed his will on the board, which at thirty-eight made Schurman president of Cornell University in 1892. Schurman held this position for twenty-eight years until he voluntarily resigned in 1920. He also became an American citizen, with Sage testifying to his good character.

This influential, prestigious, and costly presidency—by his own account, Schurman allocated more than \$100,000 for representational responsibilities out of his own pocket during his tenure—became the institutional foundation for an active life that he continued for the next 50 years, until reaching the age of 88. Schurman became a

school-founding philosopher, educator, planner of educational institutions, opinionated member of the Republican Party, advisor to several presidents, sought-after speaker, envoy, and ambassador of his country to Greece, Montenegro, China and Germany, world traveler and “elder statesman” whose advice was, however, not solicited by the Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt.

For almost two decades of his life, he published philosophical essays and books in which he defended Aristotelian ethics against Kant’s “formalism” on the one hand, and Darwin’s and Spencer’s “materialism” on the other,⁹ and, within a climate of widespread agnosticism, held to a belief in the knowability of God and the immortality of the soul.¹⁰ Beginning in 1898, he no longer wrote as a philosopher, and his publications became more concrete and political. He founded a philosophical school in America, the so-called school of “objective idealism.” This had its headquarters, its founder, its philosophical interpreters, and a generation of more or less faithful disciples all at Cornell University.¹¹ Moreover, in 1892, Schurman became editor of the first scholarly journal of philosophy in the USA (*Philosophical Review*).

After Sage’s death in 1897, Schurman began to dominate Cornell. Through a fortunate combination of liberality and strong-willed leadership, he was able to win the confidence of his academic colleagues. Breaking with the customs of his time, he saw to it that the departments could propose their own deans and that they would be represented in the central decision-making body of the university, the Board of Trustees—albeit without voting rights. When students protested

9 Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution (1881); *The Ethical Import of Darwinism* (1898).

10 *Belief in God. Its Origins, Nature, and Basis* (1890); *Agnosticism and Religion* (1896).

11 Cf. the characterization of Herbert W. Schneider, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Philosophie*, Hamburg 1957, p. 272. English translation: “The antithesis of personalism is objective idealism as it prevailed at Cornell University. There a philosophy of mind flourished which was indifferent to psychology and which considered complete only that empiricism which understood human experience in its historical course and in its institutional forms. The study of ‘objective mind’ as carried on at the Sage School of Philosophy of Cornell formed the American branch of that idealistic movement which in England as in Germany combined a critical analysis of the categories (the Kantian heritage) with a historical conception of the human mind (the Hegelian heritage). Critical logic and the philosophy of history were thus united to form a theory of experience for which experience in the individual is an organic whole. The first Head of the Sage School, later president of the university, was Jacob Gould Schurman.”

against the right of their black classmates to live on campus, Schurman issued a sharp rebuke. But he was not able to persuade the Board of Trustees to appoint a woman to the faculty.

During Schurman's presidency, the number of enrolled students rose from 1,538 to 5,765 while the university campus expanded from 200 acres to over 1,400. In addition, more colleges were founded and the university that was originally dependent on patrons evolved into an institution that drew on both private and public funding. As the head administrator, Schurman demonstrated an astonishing tenacity and determination in achieving the goals he set and impressed others with his intellectual and physical vitality. Occasionally he "overwhelmed" his colleagues and employees with the speed and thoroughness with which he tackled both the large and small problems of his office. In admiration of Schurman, one such colleague wrote: "If, as Plato tells us, philosophers are the ideal rulers, the condition of Cornell University is blessed in having for its king a philosopher of highest repute."¹²

By the time he plunged into politics, Schurman's personal values and political philosophy were already firmly established. In looking for the central themes of his political world view, it is impossible not to notice those values and ideals that had made his own success story possible: freedom for individual fulfillment, a tireless dedication to one's profession, and a sense of responsibility to the community. In Europe he would have been considered a free-market liberal; in the United States, he chose the Republican Party as his political home. As a "self-made man," he was absolutely convinced of the creative capacities of the individual. Through a constitution guaranteeing freedom, the body politic must put as unlimited a space as possible at the disposal of this individual. The fundamental civil rights and liberties, including freedom of religion and private property rights, stood at the core of his political philosophy. According to Schurman, equal opportunity for all individuals had to be maintained, but, due to the different characteristics of individuals, equal opportunities led to unequal results. Success and wealth were the just and justifiable products of hard work.

In a very American way, Schurman's libertarianism was closely tied to the professional ethics and the moral precepts of what Max Weber described as "ascetic Protestantism." While his education in philosophy did allow him to overcome the narrowness of his Baptist upbringing, his daily schedule and behavior continued to be influenced

¹² Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

by the expectations of a protestant way of life that was moral and pleasing to God. Schurman led a tireless and methodically disciplined professional life. He hated nothing more than people who led idle and “parasitic” lives.

In a weakened form, what Max Weber wrote about the professional ethics of those Puritan merchants who must renounce ecclesiastical-sacramental salvation applied to Schurman: “The exhortation of the apostle to make fast one’s own call is here interpreted as a duty to attain certainty of one’s own election and justification in the daily struggle of life. In the place of the humble sinners to whom Luther promises grace if they trust themselves to God in penitent faith are bred those self-confident saints whom we can rediscover in the hard Puritan merchants of the heroic age of capitalism and in isolated instances down to the present. On the other hand, in order to attain that self-confidence intense worldly activity is recommended as the most suitable means. It and it alone disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of grace.”¹³

Liberty, property, law and order, and justice all stood at the top of Schurman’s scale of values. He felt that all forms of state intervention and socialism, but especially communism, represented ideologies that ran counter to human nature. The state should intervene in society as little as possible; the best form of governing was people governing themselves. Schurman was a strong adherent of a representative political system, and he despised direct democracy. As a “Tory Democrat” he had a natural sympathy for the values of the American business community. Like the renowned conservative Edmund Burke, he understood himself as both a guardian and a reformer: “A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve taken together, would be my standard of a statesman.” Yet Schurman always distanced himself from the great reform effort of his time, the “progressive movement.” He criticized all reform programs that relied on state intervention, like Woodrow Wilson’s “New Freedom” and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” as well as the “New Nationalism” of his fellow Republican, Theodore Roosevelt. For Schurman, reforms had to start at the level of the individual and groups within society, not at the level of the government and bureaucracies.

13 Max Weber, *Die Protestantische Ethik I. Eine Aufsatzsammlung*, ed. by Johannes Winkelmann, Gütersloh 1981, pp. 128 f. (GTB Siebenstern).

According to Schurman, the creation of the common good is a moral problem. Wealth is an obligation; it is a “trust for the benefit of humanity. Charity and philanthropy are the pillars of the common good; without them, society degenerates into a “herd of animals.”¹⁴

This conviction also shows that Schurman stood in the tradition of ascetic Protestantism, according to which not the acquisition and possession of wealth, but the lazy resting on it and its uninhibited, in the worst case vicious, enjoyment were sinful. The rich man, according to Schurman, is bound in conscience to spend, even to give away, the property entrusted to him (by God) for morally irreproachable purposes. Heidelberg also owes its “New University” in no small measure to this spirit, the original foundation of the widespread American foundation system (before the invention of the tax deductibility of donations).

In addition to ambition and a desire for fame, the usually unacknowledged but classic motives of politicians, it was above all this deeply felt commitment to the community that drove Schurman to become active as a member of the conservative wing of the Republican Party beginning in 1898. Both in his home state of New York and at the federal level, he sought to influence the direction of the party. For this he had three means in particular at his disposal: his prestige as president of Cornell, public speaking tuned to a high moral and idealistic tone, and his proven talent for drawing attention from men of influence.

In the presidential elections of 1896 and 1900, he supported the victorious Republican McKinley, and from 1906 on several times the lawyer Charles E. Hughes, first in his successful attempts to become governor of the state of New York (1908, 1910), then in the latter’s unsuccessful campaign against President Wilson in 1916. Schurman had come to appreciate Hughes as a colleague at Cornell University, while Schurman’s brother became a partner in Hughes’s New York law firm. In the presidential election of 1908 and in the sharp dispute leading to the split in the Republican Party before the 1912 election, Schurman vehemently supported President Taft against his rival Theodore Roosevelt. For their part, politicians showed their appreciation by entrusting Schurman with political tasks and offices. McKinley made him chairman of the first U.S. government commission to investigate conditions in the Philippines in 1898, although Schurman had clearly been among

¹⁴ Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

the opponents of annexation of the Philippines and belonged to the anti-imperialist camp at the height of the Spanish-American War in 1898. After some fluctuations of opinion motivated by party tactics, from 1902 onward Schurman publicly and continuously advocated for Philippine independence in the foreseeable future. Among the American public he established himself as a respected authority on the Philippines who represented an independent position on the issue.¹⁵

In the summer of 1912, President Taft, with whom Schurman also maintained close private ties, appointed the president of Cornell as American envoy to Greece and Montenegro. Schurman accepted the offer but, in his own words, only in order to take a one-year educational leave as a “sabbatical statesman” at the cradle of Western civilization. Contrary to his plans, he soon had to give his complete attention to politics, as, shortly after his arrival, the first Balkan War broke out, leading to the dissolution of almost all of the European part of Turkey. With his typical vigor, he worked his way into the problems of the Balkans, conferred with political leaders in Athens, Constantinople, Bucharest, Belgrade, and Sofia, and, after his return to the U.S. in August 1913, delivered a series of lectures on the Balkans at Princeton that were then published as a book and reprinted in three different editions.¹⁶ He had spoken in German with the Bulgarian prime minister, a fellow student he knew from his time in Heidelberg.

Hughes had to wait until the era of Democratic President Wilson was over in order to pay his debt of gratitude to Schurman. When Hughes was appointed Secretary of State by President Harding in 1920, he recommended that Schurman be appointed envoy to China. Running from June 1921 to May 1925, these years in China were very challenging for Schurman. This was due to the fact that, in the midst of civil war-like conditions, he had to try to represent American rights and interests within the framework of the traditional “open door” policy while, at the same time, showing the appropriate regard for Chinese nationalism. In the opinion of the American government, he had performed his duties so well that, in the summer of 1925, he was, by the standards of the time, diplomatically “promoted” to the position of American ambassador to Berlin. This position had become vacant when the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, Frank B. Kellogg, succeeded Hughes as Secretary of State and the Schurman family’s

15 Jacob Gould Schurman, *Philippine Affairs. A Retrospect and Outlook*, New York 1902. (Scribner’s).

16 Jacob Gould Schurman, *The Balkan Wars*, Princeton University Press 1913.

longtime friend from upstate New York, Alanson B. Houghton, left Berlin to become the Ambassador in London.

Schurman was so eager to get to Berlin that he assured Kellogg that he would pay the unusually high costs of the positions' representational responsibilities himself. For Schurman, this appointment had a special significance: with his last political appointment he would be returning to a country whose language he knew and whose culture he greatly appreciated. He wrote to Kellogg that he would use all his might to do his part "to restore the old relations of warm friendship between the American and German people."¹⁷ Presumably, he also wanted to repair his personal relationship with Germany. This had been severely disrupted during World War I, when Schurman had let himself be carried away by the war fever in his country, drawing a hateful picture of Germany, albeit the "other," the "militaristic" Germany.

Schurman's relationship to the European war and his assessment of Germany from 1914 to 1918 differed only slightly from those of the Democratic President Wilson.¹⁸ This was not by chance, because for the Presbyterian Wilson and the Baptist Schurman, international politics, especially the question of war and peace, was more than a sober and power-savvy representation of U.S. national interests. For both, foreign policy was also a matter of law and morality. With the announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare by the German Reich on January 31, 1917, Wilson and Schurman convinced themselves that Germany was violating universally valid norms. Both evolved into crusaders for whom the U.S. national interest coincided with America's mission in world history: to wage the battle for democracy, morality, and justice against the "outcast" Germany, which had excluded itself from the community of civilized nations. From 1914 to 1916, Schurman blamed both Great Britain and Germany for violating American rights and the principle of freedom of the seas. He tolerated a policy of "partisan

17 Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

18 On Schurman, see Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 102 f.; on Wilson especially: Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War and Peace*, Arlington Heights, IL, 1983; Norman G. Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America's Response to War and Revolution*, New York 1968; Arno J. Mayer, *Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-18*, New Haven/Conn. 1959; Ernest R. May, *World War and American Isolation, 1914-1917*, Cambridge 1959; Arthur Walworth, *America's Moment: 1918. American Diplomacy at the End of World War I*, New York 1977; Klaus Schwabe, *Deutsche Revolution und Wilson-Frieden*, Düsseldorf 1971. Further reading in Richard Dean Burns (ed.), *Guide to American Foreign Relations Since 1700*, Santa Barbara / Oxford 1983, ch. 19.

neutrality” in favor of Great Britain, as did Wilson until the presidential election of 1916. Then, beginning in April 1917, he defended the necessity of the American war against Germany and her allies with fanatical nationalism. In Schurman’s speeches Germany now became a gangster and an “outlaw” who wanted to conquer the world. The peculiar dialectic of American world power politics in the 20th century—namely the global definition of one’s own interest in connection with the enemy’s supposed desire for world domination—also appeared in Schurman’s war speeches.

Schurman felt that Germany had betrayed modern culture and abandoned the high level of civilization that the country of Kant, Goethe, and Schiller had embodied. Having run amok, the nation had to be whipped into submission since the “Huns” only understood the language of force. They would clearly have to be beaten and pay reparations after the war.

Schurman characterized Wilson’s 14 Points from January 1918 as the “Magna Charta” of the rights of nations in the world. From June to September 1918, he was invited to Europe by the British and French governments to deliver speeches to American front-line soldiers. He was received by French Prime Minister Clemenceau and later awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

After victory, armistice, and—in the view of U.S. public opinion—the disappointing results of the peace negotiations in Paris, a profound change of mood set in across the United States. Almost overnight, the nation had had enough of years of war propaganda, Wilson’s missionary speeches, world politics, Europe, and potentially entangling alliances—the anathema of American foreign policy since the end of the first and only alliance with France in 1798. The campaign slogan of Warren G. Harding, the Republican who won the 1920 presidential election, captured the new mood perfectly: “Back to Normal.”

Schurman, too, quickly became disillusioned with the results of the First World War. The millions of dead accelerated the return to his old fundamental conviction that world peace could be secured neither by force nor by the principle of the balance of power, but only by diplomatic compromise, by treaty, agreement, arbitration, and an international court. Therefore, in the passionate domestic political dispute over ratification of the League of Nations Statute incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles, he campaigned for U.S. accession. As a “mild reservationist,” however, he attached conditions to this that were tantamount to squaring the circle. The U.S. was to join an effective

League of Nations but was not to relinquish sovereign rights. Schurman recommended deleting the controversial sanctions clause in Article X of the Statute and, in the event of conflict, relying on law, justice, and the enlightened public opinion of the world.¹⁹

But Schurman's public outreach and his discussions with Harding were unsuccessful. On March 19, 1920, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the League of Nations Statute and thus the Treaty of Versailles as negotiated by Wilson in Paris. Harding, after taking office, stated categorically that his administration would not propose joining the League of Nations under any circumstances.²⁰

This decision, with its impact on world history, was the general premise for the content and limits of Schurman's diplomatic activities in China and in Germany.²¹ The United States, which had finally become a world power—though not yet a world leader—as a result of World War I, refused to support the new order of Versailles and the League of Nations through collective action, even though, as the victor, it did in principle recognize the new status quo of the international system. As a result, the collapsed system of equilibrium among the European powers was not replaced by a new and better system of collective security, as Wilson had wanted. Rather, there was now an amputated League of Nations in which the Soviet Union, Germany, and the United States were absent and which, at least until 1925/26, primarily became an instrument of Franco-British policy.

Equally momentous for Germany, France, and Europe was the simultaneous refusal of the U.S. Senate to give its consent to a U.S.-French alliance treaty that Clemenceau had wrested from President Wilson in Paris in exchange for relinquishing the left bank of the Rhine. This also rendered the British pledge to France moot. The Cold War between France and Germany from 1919 to 1922, the relentless harshness of

19 Cf. Moser, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–130.

20 On Wilson's defeat in the Senate and the change of mood in the United States, see the colorful sketch by Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, pp. 614–623; Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, New York 1945; John C. Vinson, *Defeat of Article Ten of the League of Nations Covenant*, Athens, Ga., 1961.

21 The following interpretation of American foreign policy in the interwar period is based on Detlef Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt. Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA*, Stuttgart 1975, esp. pp. 16–42; Junker, *Franklin D. Roosevelt. Power and Vision: President in Times of Crisis*, Göttingen 1979, pp. 97–124; Junker, *Die Außenpolitik der USA 1920–1941*, in: Otmar Franz (ed.), *Am Wendepunkt der europäischen Geschichte*, Göttingen 1981, pp. 200–217.

French policy toward Germany, which uncompromisingly insisted on a so-called integral fulfillment of the Versailles Treaty, resorted to sanctions if necessary, and culminated in the invasion of the Ruhr in 1923, resulted in no small way from this weakness of the French security system. For, despite Versailles, the French felt threatened by the Germans in the long term and betrayed by the Anglo-Saxons—and especially the Americans.

The two Senate decisions were the prelude to the “non-alignment” policy maintained by the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations, as well as Franklin D. Roosevelt’s policy of “non-alignment” with Europe and Asia in the interwar period. This meant several things: isolationism in alliance policy; no preemptive alliances that might tie the hands of the United States; no collective sanctions within the framework of the League of Nations; and no military interventions in Eurasia. Consistent with these positions, when the French began their occupation of the Ruhr, the United States withdrew its last troops from the Rhineland in January 1923.

The Americans also did not participate in the regional pact system of the Locarno Treaties of 1925, despite warmly welcoming it. However, the U.S. did sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which outlawed war because it contained no binding obligations or sanctions clauses. Similarly, the U.S. signed the Washington Treaties of 1922, in which the major Pacific powers sought to halt the maritime arms race in the region, to freeze the politico-military status quo in the Pacific, and to make the U.S. “open door” policy in China binding under international law.

The absence of the U.S. military and its lack of alliance-policy stood in stark contrast to the country’s global economic weight, and its global economic policy, with which America was massively present in Europe and in Germany. The U.S. had become the world’s dominant economic and trading power as a result of World War I, and it continued to expand this position in the 1920s. In the twenties, it increased its lead as a producer, becoming the largest exporter and the largest consumer of raw materials. Its share of world production of industrial goods grew from 35.8% in 1913 to 46% on average for the years from 1925 to 1929. Measured in dollars, U.S. national income was as high as that of the next 23 nations combined, including Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and Canada. New York became the world’s second financial center next to London, and the world economic center became bicentric, if not America-centric. Perhaps the most consequential factor for world trade and for the U.S.-European relationship was the

abrupt transformation of the United States from a debtor nation to a creditor nation. U.S. export surpluses and war bonds left foreign countries, especially England, France, and Italy, \$12.5 billion in debt in 1919, and this debt continued to grow throughout the 1920s thanks to U.S. foreign trade policy. The result was the often-described latent dollar shortage of the 1920s, which basically was artificially bridged by U.S. long- and short-term loans.

The overriding goal of the Republican administrations of the 1920s, which were heavily influenced by “big business” and “big finance,” was to try to use this economic position of the country to simultaneously maintain an open world market for exports, credit, and raw materials within the framework of a stable, liberal, and capitalist world order that would remain at peace. A telling principle of the Harding administration, which was fully consistent with Schurman’s ideas, was “Less government in business and more business in government.” The means considered appropriate included a renewal of the U.S. trade treaty system on the basis of the unconditional, most-favored-nation clause, encouragement of U.S. banks to lend money and promote currency stabilization, and, in general, the demand for equal legal treatment of the United States in foreign markets—otherwise known as the open-door policy. The U.S. had already indirectly granted itself unconditional most-favored-nation treatment in the separate peace with Germany of August 1921, and this clause was a central component of the trade treaty between the U.S. and Germany, which was signed at the end of 1923 but not approved by Congress until February 1925.

It is an irony of American-German relations in the Weimar Republic that the U.S.’s economic interest in Europe and Germany finally forced American politicians to use economic means to correct important consequences that had resulted from the absence of an alliance policy. The Ruhr conflict had devastating effects on Germany and France, and indeed on Europe as a whole. With drastic clarity, it demonstrated to the Harding government, as well as the Coolidge government beginning in August 1923, and especially to its two most important leaders, Secretary of State Hughes, and Secretary of Commerce Hoover, that vital U.S. interests were at stake, and that the reparations problem—the cause of the Ruhr occupation—could no longer be left to the Europeans alone. If necessary, economic pressure would need to be exerted on France to force it to depoliticize the reparations claim, i.e., to adapt it to Germany’s verifiable and internationally controlled ability to pay. Nevertheless, America’s fear of contact with Europe remained so great

that the U.S. government did not take direct action but tried to exert its influence through experts it had suggested, such as the banker and general Charles G. Dawes and the Chairman of the Board of General Electric, Owen D. Young. This merely informal, but nevertheless effective, influence was also related to the strict refusal of the U.S. to recognize a link between reparations and the repayment of Allied debts to the United States.

The concrete result of this American stabilization policy in Germany was the well-known Dawes Plan of 1924—in a sense the Marshall Plan of the 1920s—which was then modified in 1929 by the Young Plan. With the help of a large bond, whose issuing depended primarily on the American capital market, the Dawes Plan brought about a transitional arrangement for gradually increasing annual payments. On the one hand, it placed Germany under foreign control in terms of monetary and financial policy, with Seymour Parker Gilbert—the American general agent for reparations who was responsible for transfer protection—becoming a key figure in the German economy. On the other hand, it safeguarded Germany against future French military sanctions and against any reparations payments that would endanger stability.

The economic security provided by the Dawes Plan had several successful outcomes: the security treaty of Locarno, Germany's entry into the League of Nations, and France's withdrawal from the Rhineland. This American economic intervention was the beginning of the end of French political domination in Central Europe after World War I. Germany was thus able to emerge from its helplessness position of 1919 with American help.²²

22 On European politics after World War I and on U.S.-European relations from 1919 to 1924, see: Keith Nelson, *Victors Divided. America and the Allies in Germany. 1918–1923*, Berkeley 1975; Walter A. McDougall, *France's Rhineland Diplomacy 1914–1924. The Last Bid for a Balance of Power in Europe*, Princeton 1978; Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe. The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan*, Chapel Hill 1976; Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Elusive Quest. America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security*, Chapel Hill 1979; Marc Trachtenberg, *Reparation in World Politics: France and European Diplomacy, 1916–1923*, New York 1980; Lloyd E. Ambrosius, Wilson, the Republicans, and French Security after World War I, in *Journal of American History* 59 (1972/73), pp. 341–352; Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe. Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in Decade After World War I*, Princeton 1975; Jacques Bariety, *Les relations franco-allemandes après la première guerre mondiale*, Paris 1977; Ludwig Zimmermann, *Frankreichs Ruhrpolitik von Versailles bis zum Dawesplan*, Göttingen 1971; Helmuth Rößler (ed.), *Die Folgen von Versailles 1919–1924*, Göttingen 1969; Werner Link, *Die amerikanische*

No one in Germany saw this outcome more clearly and wanted it more unambiguously than Gustav Stresemann, who was responsible for German foreign policy from 1923 to 1929 and the only German politician in the area of foreign affairs of stature in the Weimar Republic. It was only within the framework of Stresemann's overall concept that German attempts to re-engage the United States in Europe and in Germany led to any success. Since the Senate's rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, German policy toward the Americas had always been part of its larger aims to revise the treaty—the sole theme of German foreign policy after 1919. It always had an anti-French edge and was accompanied from the outset by the hope that the United States, out of its own economic interest, would counter France's sanctions policy, which England tolerated only grudgingly but did not prevent.

Germany's futile attempts had begun in the tense weeks leading up to the London ultimatum. On April 20, 1921, Reich Chancellor Fehrenbach and Foreign Minister Simons, in agreement with Reich President Ebert, asked U.S. President Harding to mediate in the reparations question, assuring him that Germany would submit to his decision "without qualification or reservation."²³ This desperate move came at a time when Germany and the United States were still in a state of war under international law—the Separate Peace was not concluded until August 1921—and official U.S. foreign policy continued to assume German guilt in the outbreak of World War I as the moral and legal basis for reparations. In the press and the parliament, Germany's right wing accused the government of a lack of national dignity. It had

Stabilisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1921–1932, Düsseldorf 1970; ed, Die Beziehungen zwischen der Weimarer Republik und den USA, in: Manfred Knapp et al, Die USA und Deutschland, 1918–1975, Munich 1978, pp. 62–106; Carl-Ludwig Holtfreich, Amerikanischer Kapitalexport und Wiederaufbau der deutschen Wirtschaft 1919–1923 im Vergleich zu 1924–1929, in: VSWG, vol. 64 (1977), pp. 497–529; Dieter Bruno Gescher, Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika und die Reparationen 1920–1924, Bonn 1956; Eckhard Wandel, Die Bedeutung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika für das deutsche Reparationsproblem, 1924–1929, Tübingen 1971.

23 Cf. Akten der Reichskanzlei, Weimarer Republik, Das Kabinett Fehrenbach, Boppard am Rhein 1972, p. 651; Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921, vol. II pp. 40–45; Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender 1921, I, pp. 121–122; II, p. 297: "In so doing, we solemnly declare that the German Government is ready and willing, without any restrictions or reservations, to pay to the Allied Powers as reparations such sum as the President of the United States, after thorough examination and investigation, should deem just and equitable."

handed over Germany, bound hand and foot, to American benevolence. And, of course, Wilson's "betrayal" of his own principles and dashed hopes for America at Versailles were not forgotten. In the Wirth and Cuno cabinets, too, futile pleas for help went out to Washington through all diplomatic channels. It was only the Ruhr conflict that finally brought about the turning point.

Stresemann recognized the opportunities that this opened up for German revisionist policy. Until his death in 1929, he continuously tried to promote the parallels of economic interests between the U.S. and Germany and to use them for the benefit of German revisionist policy. Even if he was convinced, like the Americans, of the advantages of a free and open world economic system, his main focus was always the advancement of German revisionist policy. For Stresemann believed that the greater the U.S. economic interests in Germany, the greater would be its interest in peaceful change—the ultimate goal of which, in Stresemann's view, was the revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the restoration of Germany's position as a great power within Europe. This state of affairs has been aptly described: "The USA conducted world politics as world economic policy, and Germany wanted to return to world politics via the world economy."²⁴

In a speech to the Central Executive Committee of the German People's Party in Berlin on November 22, 1925, Stresemann explained the importance of the economic component for the present phase of German foreign policy: "I believe that using world economic interconnections—using the only thing that still makes us a great power, our economic power—in order to make foreign policy is the task that every foreign minister needs to pursue today." About the foreign policy of the United States, he had previously remarked: ". . . and in the background [of Germany's relations with France and England] stands the great power of the United States, whose whole ideology is pacifist and always leads to a wonderful thing: that its idealism unites with the material interests of the country, so that a wonderful state religion can be formed out of it."²⁵

24 Link, *Die Beziehungen*, p. 65. The useful work of Robert Gottwald, *Die deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen in der Ära Stresemann*, Berlin 1965, lacks synthetic force.

25 Henry A. Turner Jr. (ed.), *A Speech by Stresemann on his Locarno Policy*, in: VfZG 15 (1967), Cf. also a speech by Stresemann in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Reichstag on October 7, 1926: "The whole question of the reconstruction of Europe cannot be solved without America, since the entire gold base of the large capitalist countries has oriented itself toward the United States and subordinated itself to it."

The parallelism of economic interests, the problems arising from the U.S. economic presence in Germany, and the common will to pursue a peaceful, nonbelligerent foreign policy formed the basis for American-German relations in the Stresemann era. They were the narrower framework of Schurman's diplomatic activities in Berlin. Schurman was primarily concerned with the consequences of the Dawes Plan for Germany, especially with the modalities and dangers of American lending policy. While he recommended direct investment for productive purposes in Germany, Schurman also warned of the dangers that might develop from the race for American funds among the public authorities in Germany, especially among the municipalities and states. In addition, he indulged in a public controversy with the American Agent General, Felix Gilbert, and incurred repeated rebukes from Secretary of State, Frank Kellogg, after expressing personal opinions that he had not coordinated with the State Department. Schurman also attempted to diplomatically put the complaints of the American film industry and other U.S. companies about discrimination within the German market into perspective; was sympathetic to the increasing demand of Germany in 1928 for a revision of the Dawes Plan; estimated until 1928/29, with cautious optimism, that the first German democracy had a chance to survive; and worked closely with Stresemann to secure German support for the Kellogg-Briand pact.²⁶

However, Schurman's greatest enthusiasm and ambition was not for his duty to represent the interests of his country in Berlin. His heart was set on the second assignment connected to his office: promoting understanding, friendship, and goodwill between the peoples of America and Germany. For this purpose, Schurman said, there were no better means than personal contacts and social activities. This understanding of his diplomatic role in Berlin allowed Schurman to fully develop his skill, proven over decades, at winning over others. Mrs. Stresemann, with whom Schurman maintained a personal relationship even after the death of the German foreign minister, later wrote that Schurman

In: Arnold Harttung (ed.), *Gustav Stresemann. Schriften*, Berlin 1976, p. 367. On the state of research on Stresemann's foreign policy, see Karl Dietrich Erdmann, *Die Zeit der Weltkriege* (Gebhardt = *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*), vol. 4, Stuttgart 1976, pp. 258–270; Wolfgang Michalka, Marshall M. Lee (eds.), *Gustav Stresemann*, Darmstadt 1982; Eberhard Kalb, *Die Weimarer Republik*, Munich/Vienna 1984, pp. 194–198; Kalb, *Probleme einer modernen Stresemann-Biographie*, in: Franz, *Am Wendepunkt*, pp. 107–134. A monograph on Stresemann and the U.S. is also a desideratum of research.

²⁶ Moser, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–206.

had taken Berlin by storm. She did not remember any ambassador who had made so many amicable contacts in such a short time.

The American Embassy on Wilhelmstrasse became a social center in Berlin. Prominent people from politics, business, art, and science met at this hospitable location, with Schurman allocating \$50,000 a year out of his own pocket for such representational responsibilities. The Berlin press praised his understanding of German culture and language. One newspaper described him as “100 percent poise, 200 percent energy, 300 percent enthusiasm, and 500 percent charm.” Schurman very quickly succeeded in establishing a trusting relationship with Reich President Hindenburg, Reich Chancellor Luther, Reich Bank President Schacht, and Reich Foreign Minister Stresemann.

Particularly close and friendly relations developed between Stresemann and Schurman. Even if one takes into account that friendships between active politicians are almost never based on guileless sympathy alone, one may assume that, here, two congenial characters and kindred spirits came together. Both were committed liberals who had achieved social advancement largely by their own efforts. Both possessed broad intellectual and cultural interests in addition to a passion for power and politics. Both revered Goethe and German classicism. Both were impressive orators. Stresemann and Schurman had overcome the aggressive chauvinism of World War I and adopted the conviction that war must be excluded as a means of national foreign policy. Stresemann *and* Schurman no longer wanted to see the aspirations for nationalism and internationalism as irreconcilable. This common ground could explain why the German foreign minister considered Schurman his “warmest personal friend” among diplomats and was proud to have been the only guest from outside the family circle invited to the wedding of Schurman’s daughter.²⁷ This personal relationship was undoubtedly fostered by the extensive economic parallelism of interests between the United States and Germany.

Ambassador Schurman placed special emphasis on fostering the existing cultural relationships between the two countries. He worked tirelessly to solicit understanding for his nation among the intellectual and academic elite of Germany. As he explained to a professor in Berlin: “We members of universities all speak the same language and

²⁷ Cf. Felix Hirsch, *Stresemann. Ein Lebensbild*, Göttingen 1978, p. 232; Wolfgang Stresemann, *Mein Vater Gustav Stresemann*, Munich 1979, p. 506; Moser, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–153. Gustav Stresemann, *Vermächtnis*, ed. by H. Bernhard, vol. 3, Berlin 1933, includes a photograph of Schurman.

have substantially the same ideals. It devolves on us to work together for the realization of the highest ideals of human life and international intercourse.²⁸ Ambassador Schurman became a member of the Kant Society and an honorary member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the Advancement of Science. He received a very special distinction when the Prussian Academy of Science voted to make him an honorary member. There he met Albert Einstein, who gave a powerful speech in 1932 honoring Schurman's life work.²⁹ But Schurman's most spectacular act with regard to academia, which made headlines for him in both the German and international press, was his initiative to build a new lecture hall in Heidelberg.

From the time he became ambassador in Berlin, Schurman had visited Heidelberg every year, even twice in 1927, and had developed a special relationship to Johannes Hoops, a professor of English. In 1927, he learned of the long-running and unsuccessful attempts by the university to build new lecture halls for the humanities. All plans and proposals from Heidelberg University and its Baden Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs had failed due to the poor financial situation of the state of Baden.³⁰

Schurman recognized his opportunity to act and drew on his diplomatic skills for the initiative. He recalled the hundreds of American students who had been educated in Heidelberg since the first quarter of the 19th century. His countrymen, Schurman reasoned, might be happy to put up the money for a new lecture hall building as a token of American gratitude to the university. He had received a quote of 1.2 million Reichsmarks (about \$300,000) from Heidelberg but, based on his own experience with costs for new buildings as a university president, he adjusted the estimate up to \$400,000. During his vacation in the U.S. at the end of 1927, Schurman energetically but carefully promoted the idea of an endowment to his New York friends and acquaintances. On December 24, 1927, he received a commitment from one of America's greatest patrons, John D. Rockefeller Jr., to contribute \$200,000 on the condition that the other half would be raised in the near future. On the same day, New York banker George F. Baker donated \$50,000. By

28 Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 242

30 Cf. the well-documented work by Dieter Griesbach, Annette Krämer, Mechthild Maisant, *Die Neue Universität in Heidelberg*, Heidelberg 1984, pp. 7–10 (Kunst-historisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg, Veröffentlichungen zur Heidelberger Altstadt, ed. by Peter Anselm Riedl, Heft 19).

the time Schurman returned to Berlin in early 1928, \$280,000 had been raised. The Executive Committee of the Steuben Society in New York successfully took on the task of collecting the remaining \$120,000 by July 1, 1928.

When, in the course of 1928, it appeared, on the basis of Heidelberg's plans, that even this sum would not be sufficient, the endowment was increased to \$500,000.³¹

With a keen sense of potential threats to the project from nationalist criticism on both sides of the Atlantic, Schurman ensured, on the one hand, that the fundraising campaign in New York was started by Americans who were explicitly *not of* German descent or birth. Only in the final stages of the collection did Americans of German descent also participate. Schurman took into account the reverberation of the witch hunt against German-Americans during World War I that had led to the loss of identity for this group of "hyphenated Americans." It could still be dangerous for them to even be suspected of disloyalty to their new homeland. Schurman's public characterization of the three "generous American" citizens who had given the last \$100,000 demonstrated a telling caution: "They have forbidden the disclosure of their names, but it will interest you to learn that, although they are good American citizens, their cradles were on the Rhine." On the other hand, Schurman countered possible political interpretations of the foundation with consideration for the national feelings of the Germans. Only in passing did he hint that the planned lecture hall building might prove to be "a new bond for uniting the students and teachers of both countries and both peoples." The leitmotif of all Schurman's speeches in Heidelberg from 1928 to 1931 was the gratitude of American citizens for the education of American students at a time when the United States itself did not yet have "universities."³²

Schurman's caution was as wise as it was justified, for clear national resentment was evident in the deliberations of the Heidelberg university committees about the donation announcement. In a report of the smaller Senate of February 22, 1928, signed by Rector Dibelius, to the Baden Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, it was stated: "We strongly emphasize that the foundation springs from the desire of the

31 Schurman to Dibelius, Feb. 4, 1928. Inter alia, B-5130 (IX, 13, no. 173); Schurman's address, Dec. 17, 1928, *ibid.* (X, 2, no. 50a).

32 *Ibid.* and Heidelberg *Tageblatt* v. Feb. 25, 1928. Inter alia, B-5130 (IX, 13, no. 173). Frederick C. Luebcke, *Bonds of Loyal Americans and World War I*. DeKalb, Northern Illinois Press 1974.

Americans to express their gratitude for the new scientific impulses they received while in Heidelberg. Therefore, any gestures, comments, or formulations that could offend our national sensibilities have been carefully avoided. Neither do the donors have the slightest intention to interfere with any decisions the university makes concerning the execution of its construction plans.” At the meeting of the full Senate on February 27 objections could also be heard concerning the fact that, after the tearing down of the existing lecture halls, the “American edifice” should be built on such a prominent site in Heidelberg’s old town. Professor Hans von Schubert considered this a “national loss.” According to his unrealistic assessment of the situation, it would be better for the university to petition the Reich for help. Professor Karl Heinsheimer also harbored such concerns, but he withdrew them, since the donors themselves had described the funding as an expression of “gratefulness.” Had this not been the case, one would have had to reject the offer immediately.³³

The rector’s letter to the Baden Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs was, moreover, incorrect. Since February 1928, Schurman had made it clear that there was one stipulation tied to the donation. With the money, he wrote to his confidant, Professor Hoops, on February 10, 1928, a “university hall” had to be built that was paid for entirely from American funds. “. . . one thing is to me perfectly clear, namely, that the construction of the new Hall must be completed with the funds raised in America. It would produce a very bad impression upon our friends over there if the Hall were left unfinished and the Government of Baden or other parties had to be asked to supply funds for its completion.”³⁴ The message was clear: the donors wanted to see their goodwill represented in a lecture hall building paid for entirely from American funds.

The university’s leaders seems either not to have recognized this requirement at first or to have hoped to be able to realize other plans in the end. Perhaps they also misjudged Schurman’s will to assert himself, which was hidden behind his friendly manners. For neither in the competition specifications sent out on July 12 nor in the design submitted by Professor Karl Gruber from Gdansk, which was awarded first prize by the jury in November 1928, was this stipulation taken into account. Therefore, when Schurman saw Gruber’s design in early

33 *Inter alia*, B-5132 (IX, 13, no. 183).

34 *Inter alia*, B-5130 (IX, 13, no. 173).

December, he immediately insisted on a new basis for the planning. He officially communicated his concerns to the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the city, and the university the day before the announcement of the foundation on December 17 during the grand ceremony in the city hall. These were aimed especially at the basic idea of Gruber's design to create a new quadrangle by integrating existing buildings (Kollegiengebäude, Alte Post, Seminarienhaus) and "Auffüllbauten." Schurman rejected this idea, tying the handover of the donation to the construction of a single, representative new building.³⁵

In his address the next day, the ambassador then made clear the donor's intention and the earmarking of the funds in a form that was binding but unambiguous in substance: "The purpose of all these donations is the creation of a new lecture hall building for the university. The gift is not subject to any conditions of any kind. The University is free to erect the building on any site it deems suitable, and to determine the architectural design and internal arrangement. The only restriction is that which arose from the description of the project to the donors, that is, that the purpose of the gift was the creation of a new teaching building for the University of Heidelberg."³⁶

Doing his best to shield the Foundation from as political conflict as possible, Schurman request this subject not be mentioned on May 5, when 'the State Science Commission' of the Faculty of Law and Philosophy awarded an honorary doctorate to Foreign Minister Dr. Stresemann and the Faculty of Philosophy awarded one to Ambassador Dr. Schurman. In his welcoming address, Rector Dibelius simply said: "It is in accordance with your wish, Your Excellency, if I only hint at it in this hour and do not elaborate on it, with what joyful expectation, directed towards the future of our university, the hearts of all Heidelbergers are beating towards you. All Heidelberger citizens, and especially the academic youth!"³⁷

In Heidelberg on May 5, 1928, there was a *dies academicus* and a *dies politicus* at the same time. That was how it was understood and commented on by all participants, including the German and international

35 Cf. Griesbach, Krämer, Maisant, *Die Neue Universität*, pp. 13–19. A report of the Baden Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs to the President of the Baden Parliament of July 9, 1929, on these events erroneously states that Schurman had agreed to the terms of the competition of summer 1928. Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe, 235/3086.

36 *Inter alia*, B-5130 (X, 2, no. 50a).

37 *Heidelberger Tageblatt* v. 5.5.1928. U. A., B-1523/2b, p. 1. The following quotations *ibid.*

press. The leitmotif of all the speeches was the tension, deeply felt by contemporaries, between nationalism and internationalism, between the responsibility of politics (and science) for the people, the empire, and patriotic history on the one hand, and for understanding between peoples and supranationally binding legal ideals on the other. Both Rector Dibelius and the historian Willy Andreas, who in his capacity as chairman of the 'State Science Commission' granted the honorary doctorate of Stresemann, and in his role as dean of the philosophical faculty the honorary doctorate of Schurman, placed this relationship at the center of their speeches. According to the text of the honorary diploma, moreover, Stresemann was awarded the title and dignity of Doctor of Political Science "because, highly deserving of the consolidation of state and economy, imbued with Germany's right to life and liberty, he has courageously and in spite of all opposition and setbacks engaged himself as a pioneer of a policy of intellectual rapprochement and peaceful understanding between peoples, and has won respect and renown far beyond the borders of his fatherland." Stresemann was, Andreas said, the first minister of the Reich whom Heidelberg University honored in this way. He is thus henceforth associated with a university that "has always placed the idea of the Reich above all individual situations and has represented it in a pioneering way with brilliant scholarly personalities."

This remark was highly indicative of the basic tenor of the speeches that day. It dealt with the self-assertion of an empire, a people, a nation, and a fatherland in international politics, and the methods for doing so. Missing were ideas about a republic and democracy. Indeed, these terms were not even mentioned in the speeches of Dibelius and Andreas. At this Heidelberg *dies politicus*, they spelled out, as it were, only the first part of sentence 1, article 1, section 1 of the Weimar Constitution, which read "The German Reich is a Republic."

The tense relationship between nationalism and internationalism was also the theme of Stresemann's magnificent speech, in which the foreign minister justified the goal of his policy—the revision of the Treaty of Versailles under the guiding principle of Germany's "equal rights" within the framework of peaceful change—in far-reaching, historical, and systematic reflections. This speech is instructive for posterity because it reflects the state of historical research on the goals and methods of Stresemann's foreign policy, which has been succinctly summarized as follows: "In *terms of content*, Stresemann's overall concept was oriented toward the German Reich's claim to power before 1914; in *terms*

of method, his strategy was oriented toward the balance of power after 1918.³⁸ Thus, Stresemann did not pursue a policy of European integration, but rather national power politics by peaceful means.

In his Heidelberg speech, Stresemann did not promote the goal of his policy, “the securing of a free, equal Germany”—for which he was sure of approval—but his method of realizing this goal within the framework of a policy of peaceful understanding. Addressing the nationalist German right and the critics in his own party, he warned against the unfortunate misunderstanding of presenting the national and the international as opposites and of linking the concept of the international with the accusation of the non-national i.e., of treason against the fatherland. On the other hand, Stresemann considered it a grave error to regard the national only as a provisional form: “The greatest thinkers and poets, who had great and powerful things to say to all peoples, exerted the height of their powers only where they were rooted in their national soil. Shakespeare cannot be understood without England, Goethe without Germany, Dante without Italy, and all without the time in which they lived. Likewise, a world organization can never be built without the firm natural foundation which exists in the individual peoples united into national states. . . . Whoever wants to build the United States of Europe on some ideal of humanity which his theoretical thinking has conjured up misjudges the actual political development of things and repels those who are able to see progress in economic and political unity.” Stresemann justified Germany’s entry into the League of Nations and welcomed the American initiative for a pact to outlaw war, but left no doubt that these instruments of peaceful change would have to bring about German equality. Given the situation, this meant concretely both clearing the Rhineland of foreign troops and recognizing Germany’s equal rights in the armaments question.

When expressing his gratitude for the honor, Schurman first spoke of the significance of his study abroad year at Heidelberg in 1878, made a declaration of love to the university, quoted Jean Paul—“Heidelberg, divine in surroundings and beautiful within”—recalled Scheffel’s song “Alt-Heidelberg,” and then surprised his audience with the announcement: “Asking pardon from the spirit of the author and the spirits of all the great poets, Goethe included, who have loved Heidelberg and sung of its beauties in verse and prose, I will now read you my translation.

38 Michael-Olaf Maxelon, *Stresemann und Frankreich 1914–1929*, Düsseldorf 1972, p. 297; Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik*, p. 195 f.; Michalka, *Stresemann*, p. XV.

Old-Heidelberg, dear city,
 With honors crowned, and rare,
 O'er Rhine and Neckar rising,
 None can with thee compare.

City of merry fellows,
 With wisdom lad'n and wine;
 Clear flow the river wavelets,
 Where blue eyes flash and shine.

When spring from Southlands milder
 Comes over field and down,
 She weaves for thee of blossoms
 A shimmering bridal gown.

On my heart too thy image
 Is graven like a bride,
 In thy dear name the accents
 Of youthful love abide.

And if with thorns I'm pierced
 And all the world seems stale
 I'll give my horse the spurs then
 And ride to Neckar vale.³⁹

Alt-Heidelberg, du feine,
 Du Stadt an Ehren reich,
 Am Neckar und am Rheine,
 Kein' andre kommt dir gleich.

Stadt fröhlicher Gesellen,
 An Weisheit schwer und Wein,
 Klar ziehn des Stromes Wellen,
 Blauäuglein blitzen drein.

Und kommt aus lindem Süden
 Der Frühling übers Land,
 So webt er dir aus Blüten
 Ein schimmernd Brautgewand

Auch mir stehst du geschrieben
 Ins Herz gleich einer Braut,
 Es klingt wie junges Lieben
 Dein Name mir so vertraut.

Und stechen mich die Dornen
 Und wird mirs drauß zu kahl,
 Geb ich dem Ross die Spornen
 Und reit ins Neckartal.

³⁹ German version added by the author.

In the political part of his speech, Schurman recalled the horrors of World War I, warned of the terrible devastation that war would now bring in the face of advancing technology, and thanked Stresemann for supporting the initiative of his Secretary of State, Kellogg, to conclude a general pact for the prevention of war. Schurman went on to say that, during the past three years, he had become increasingly cognizant of the similarity between the fundamental ideals held by the governments and peoples of these two nations: “And now the identity of their stand on the great question of outlawing war is another example and confirmation of this international comradeship. Germany and the United States are marching forward in a great and noble adventure for the cause of human culture.”

These words, spoken by the ambassador, were at the center of the controversial response that the Heidelberg ceremony triggered in the German and international press.⁴⁰ While the German newspapers praised the honorary doctorates and speeches as a significant expression of renewed American-German friendship, and the Anglo-Saxon newspapers, such as the London *Times* or the *New York Times*, fulfilled their chronicler’s duty in a value-neutral manner, part of the French press reacted in a decidedly hostile manner. They rejected Stresemann’s assertion that Bismarck had been a forerunner of the policy of peaceful cooperation, seeing it as a historical fabrication. The Paris press reproached Schurman for not saying that the American people had not forgotten Germany’s guilt for starting the war and the sinking of the *Lusitania*. On May 7th, the “*Neue Mannheimer Zeitung*” used this retort in France as an occasion for an anti-French commentary. The article pointed out the visual lesson from history that all participants of the Heidelberg honorary doctorate ceremony had right in front of them. “The ruins of Heidelberg Castle speak an unmistakable language. It was not German barbarians who so cruelly destroyed this magnificent masterpiece of the Renaissance, but the murdering hands of the generals of the “great and cultured nation.”⁴¹

According to Secretary of State Kellogg and the State Department, Schurman had indeed gone too far out on a limb. His words were likely to jeopardize the precarious balance within American European policy, which always had to reckon with France and Germany simultaneously. Kellogg was irritated by the sharp reaction from France; after all,

40 The press coverage is well documented in: inter alia, B-1523/2b-e.

41 Inter alia, B-1523/2c.

what would later be called the Kellogg-Briand Pact had not yet been signed and sealed. In response to inquiries from foreign diplomats in Washington as to whether Schurman had correctly stated the American position, Kellogg replied that his speech had not been submitted to the State Department before publication.⁴²

The diplomatic squabbles in Washington did nothing to change Schurman's popularity in Heidelberg, which probably reached its peak on December 17, 1928, when the ambassador presented the endowment. The five-column lead story in the *Heidelberger Tageblatt* announced: "Heidelberg's Schurman Day."⁴³ With flags flying over the Ruperto Carola, lectures and classes were canceled for the day. At 11:00 a.m., the festivities sponsored by the university and the city began in the great hall of the civic center. While Lord Mayor Walz, the new rector, Professor Heinsheimer, Professor Hoops, and the AStA-chairman went to pick up Schurman and his family—wife, daughter, and sons—at the hotel "Europäischer Hof," the members of the city council, faculty members, and the leaders of the student fraternities gathered together with the guests of honor for the procession into the hall. These included Paul Löbe, President of the German Reichstag; Josef Schmitt, the president of the state of Baden and minister of finance; Franz Honold, Baden's envoy to Berlin; and Otto Leers, Baden's minister for education. Then, to the sounds of a fanfare, the guests entered the festively decorated hall. The university's banner, donated in 1886 for the 500-year anniversary of its founding, hung from the organ balcony, flanked by the American and German flags. In front of the speaker's platform, the "Head Beadle" placed the academic scepter.

After the rector's welcome address, Schurman gave his speech. As its highpoint, he concluded by reading the dedication of the endowment, whereupon "spontaneous roaring applause" broke out. The text read: "To the University of Heidelberg, which for a century has been visited and invariably loved by American students whom it always greeted with a friendly welcome and generously trained in scholarship and research, Dr. Jacob Gould Schurman, the American ambassador to Germany, hereby presents, in the name of a number of its sympathetic American friends in thankful recognition of the high-quality and helpful service it provided, this endowment of over half a million dollars for the construction of a new lecture hall. Christmas, 1928."

42 Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 166 f. Cf. Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany. A Diplomatic History*, Ithaca/London 1984, pp. 189 f.

43 *Inter alia*, B-5130 (IX, 8, no. 234). The following quotations *ibid.*

In his acceptance speech, Rector Heinsheimer was able to announce the Senate's decision to build the new lecture hall building on "Universitätsplatz"⁴⁴ in place of the *Kollegienhaus* opposite the Old University and to name it the "New University." It should be wide open to the "disciples of science from all over the world" and to increase the fame of the university for long centuries to come. Inside the building, the idea of the foundation and the names of the donors would be inscribed on a plaque of honor, next to a bust of Schurman, through which his image would be "immortalized" for the future students and teachers of the Ruperto Carola.

Incidentally, Heinsheimer's speech was also characterized by the tension between a German national identity that had been badly damaged by the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles, and hopes for a new international understanding and recognition of Germany. It was no coincidence that he dedicated the New University to a double task: "Let it be guided for all time by the German spirit and shone upon by the soul of humanity!"⁴⁵

While the Minister of Education and Culture Affairs, Johann von Leers, presented a reproduction of the Codex Manesse of Middle High German minnesingers in the name of the Baden government and the German people, the AStA representative, Rieß, unabashedly gave the foundation precisely the political interpretation that Schurman had tried to avoid. With a nationalist emphasis, the student spoke of the great injustice done to the German people by World War I and of the oppressive burdens of the "Dictate of Versailles." Schurman's initiative, which the AStA representative warmly welcomed, appeared as a kind of reparation for Versailles. If, when hearing these words, Schurman thought of his own role in World War I, he must have had highly mixed feelings.

In gratitude, the Heidelberg student body offered their "hundredth semester" a "quite powerful thundering toast." Finally, the assembly

44 In November 1928, the Heidelberg City Council had decided to rename the "Ludwigsplatz" to "Universitätsplatz." Griesbach, Krämer, Maisant, *Die Neue Universität*, p. 118 f.

45 In a reply letter of December 15, 1928, to an embittered assistant of the Surgical University Hospital, Dr. Gerhard Rose, who on behalf of many colleagues refused to take part in the celebration because he considered the building a "monument to the forgetting of honor," Heinsheimer had stated that the celebration had a non-political purpose. Inter alia, B-5130 (IX, 8, no. 234). Cf. Meinhold Lurz, *Der Bau der Neuen Universität im Brennpunkt gegensätzlicher Interessen*, in: *Ruperto Carola* 55/56 (1975), pp. 39–45.

once again joined in enthusiastic shouts of “Bravo!” and gave the ambassador a lively ovation when Mayor Walz awarded Schurman honorary citizenship from the city of Heidelberg.

From the handover of the endowment to the inauguration of the “New University” on June 9, 1931—the cornerstone was laid on January 16, 1930—the realization of the lecture building was in the hands of the architect Professor Karl Gruber (Gdansk), and the responsible authorities. The public was very attentive and judged—how could it be otherwise in Heidelberg—the design presented by Gruber to be highly controversial. Gruber himself welcomed the main consequence stemming from the clarification of the doner’s explicit insistence on a unitary building financed entirely from American funds: namely, the demolition of the “*Neuen Kollegien*” building on the south side of the University Square and the erection of the new building in its place. He was pleased to have “rendered harmless” the only “unpleasant structure” within the group of buildings foreseen by his new design.⁴⁶

Heidelberg University received Schurman’s approval for these new plans. At the end of March 1929, Gruber traveled to Berlin with his design. Schurman considered it “very successful,” but expressed concern that the top floor of the main building with the auditorium might present too much wall surface and be “out of proportion to the number and size of the windows which breaks its continuity.” The design appeared to him to be successful from every point of view—light, room layout, and access possibilities.⁴⁷ Then, in Heidelberg, on July 16, 1929, Prorektor Dibelius presented the ambassador with the building plan of the “New University” which had been approved by all the appropriate authorities and entities involved. Schurman was very pleased with the clear and practical design of the ground plan, praised many of its practical details, and noted that the facade gave a clear picture of the interior design and did not pretend anything.⁴⁸

Schurman did not participate in the extended Heidelberg discussions about the facade decoration above the main entrance (suggestions: Imperial Eagle, Baden Griffin, Palatine Lion, Pallas Athena) and the inscription (suggestions: Truth and Light, Through Knowledge

46 Gruber to the Ministry of Culture, 18.1.1929. Inter alia, B-1533/1 (IX, 13, no. 184). On the discussion in Heidelberg, see Griesbach, Krämer, Maisant, *Die Neue Universität*, pp. 120–134.

47 Schurman to Heinsheimer v. 3.4.1929. Inter alia, B-5130 (IX, 13, no. 171).

48 Memorandum Dibelius. Inter alia, B-5133/3 (IX, 13, no. 170a), also in B-5130 (IX, 13, no. 171).

to Freedom, To German Science, To the Living Spirit).⁴⁹ But, writing from Redford Hills on October 10, 1930, he did ask for corrections to the draft text for the donor plaque inside the building that had been sent to him. He called the rector's attention to the fact that his country was called "The United States of America," not "North America." He said the inscription, which would last for centuries, should not name a sum of money. Behind his name he wished to see inserted the time of his studies in Heidelberg: October 1878 to August 1879.⁵⁰

Schurman's wishes were fulfilled, and this ended his concrete influence on the building history of the "New University." He had made the construction possible through his philanthropic initiative, determined the format by clarifying the donor's intentions, and finally approved the new plans. However, he was not responsible for the location, architectural design, and internal arrangement of the New University. That was the task of the architect Karl Gruber, the project's jury, and the German authorities. On several occasions, Schurman had made it clear that he would accept any solution that adequately took into account the founder's intentions.

When Schurman returned to Heidelberg from the U.S. in mid-1931 to attend the dedication ceremony of the main building and the west wing on June 9—the south wing was completed in 1933—the economic, political, and intellectual situation in Germany had changed dramatically. In October 1929, the initial shock of the New York stock market crash had triggered the greatest crisis in the world economy since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Since then, a worldwide process of actions and reactions had caused the situation to spiral downward. There were devastating consequences for Germany as well: Drastically reduced trade, price collapses, a credit crisis, decreased production, a shrunken national income, mass unemployment, hardship, hunger, hopelessness, a growing political radicalization, and a turn to violence. Temporally parallel and causally related to the world economic crisis, Germany first experienced a governmental crisis, then a constitutional crisis, and finally a state crisis. The economic and political crises continued to drive each other forward. The economic crisis, in March 1930, brought about the breakup of the last parliamentary government of the "Grand Coalition" that had included parties ranging from the SPD to the German People's Party of which Stresemann had been a founding chairman—his death

49 Cf. Lurz, *Der plastische Schmuck*, pp. 2–4.

50 *Inter alia*, B-5133/2 (IX, 13, no. 191).

in October 1929 being a fateful event for German politics. This led to the installation of the presidential government of Heinrich Brüning by Reich President Hindenburg, and finally to the sensational electoral success of the National Socialists in the Reichstag elections of September 1930. This, in turn, triggered a crisis of confidence abroad and the first major wave of cash withdrawals from Germany. The second great wave of capital withdrawals, especially by American investors, was underway just as the inauguration of the New University was being celebrated. Indeed, in the summer of 1931, the world was in the midst of an international financial crisis that would lead to the downfall of the global monetary system.

In Central Europe, the situation had dramatically worsened with the collapse of the Austrian Kreditanstalt bank on May 11, 1931. It was feared that German banks would soon have to declare their insolvency as well (on July 14 and 15, the counters of all German credit institutions were indeed closed for two days). Moreover, four days before the Heidelberg celebration, Reich President von Hindenburg had issued a new emergency decree that literally mandated hardship. To balance the Reich budget, salaries were cut and the modest benefits of unemployment assistance, welfare support, and social insurance were further reduced. The loss of confidence in the government and the parties loyal to the constitution—indeed the loss of confidence in the republic—was as obvious as the growing appeal of the NSDAP, which benefited most from the general mood of protest. Had not Hitler always said that the whole “system” was rotten, and that Germany’s misfortunes had emanated from the “Dictate of Shame from Versailles”? It was precisely this instrumentalization of a wounded national pride—the longing for the lost greatness of the Reich and the Fatherland—that became one of the most important levers of National Socialist propaganda used to make inroads with the conservative, national, and bourgeois camps.

The changed *Zeitgeist* could also be felt in Heidelberg and threatened the dignified protocols of the dedication ceremony. Despite Rector Karl Meister’s long negotiations with them, over half of the fraternities and the majority of the color-carrying student organizations demonstratively boycotted the event. As the ceremonial procession made its way from the Old Lecture Hall to the hall of the New University, calls of “Germany wake up!” rang out. This happened on the way back as well. In addition, stink bombs were thrown at the feet of the guests.⁵¹ For the dedication of the New University, the NSDAP faction

51 *Inter alia*, B-5135/7 (X, 2, no. 49), report of the “*Volkszeitung*” of June 10, 1931.

of the Heidelberg city council published their own “Festschrift” entitled “The Jews Bring the Living Spirit.” The caricature on the title page showed a Jew who had one hand stuck in a bag labeled “Reparations” while throwing money down onto the roof of the New University with the other. The publication was an antisemitic and anti-American pamphlet. Only Schurman himself was spared criticism. There were even declarations about the sincerity of his motives and his devotion to the university due to his time as a student at Heidelberg. According to the NSDAP faction of the city council, after the German spirit of the university had been systematically undermined, now features of foreign races were being carved into its face. The tasteless white box, a Jewish “Zwing-Uri” in the heart of the old city, would always be a badge of shame—a reminder of the period when Germany was dominated by foreign spirits; when foreign gold ruled; the period of Germany’s deepest humiliation.⁵²

Although this pamphlet was still confiscated by the police in 1931, it was a harbinger of what was to come.

Apart from the aforementioned phenomena, the celebration went off without disruption and with great public attention. Among the many guests of honor who entered the main portal under the seated Pallas Athena and the inscription “To the living spirit” was Reich Minister of the Interior Joseph Wirth. Rector Meister, architect Gruber, Baden State President Wittemann, and Heidelberg’s Lord Mayor Neinhaus gave speeches, and Wolfgang Fortner had written a cantata on Goethe’s “Limits of Mankind” to celebrate the occasion. Wittemann awarded Schurman the Baden State Medal made of Gold, and Neinhaus announced the city council’s decision to name a street in Heidelberg leading from the Friedrichsbrücke along the valley “Schurman-Straße.”

Compared to 1928, Schurman himself must have sensed something of the changed atmosphere. It seems no accident that the only new element in his speech that day was calculated to cultivate feelings of German national pride. In addition to his renewed assurance that the New University was a “monument of American gratitude” to pay off a “debt of gratitude” owed by America to Heidelberg University, he now revealed the names of those three Rhineland-born Americans who had donated the last \$100,000: Ferdinand Thun, Henry Janssen, and Gustav Oberländer; all residing in Reading, Pennsylvania. These three men, he said, had also established a “Carl Schurz Foundation for

52 A copy of the manuscript in: *inter alia*, 513517 (X, 2, no. 49).

the promotion of cultural relations between the German and American peoples.” Gustav Oberländer, moreover, had donated a fund of one million dollars to make it possible for leading Americans from all walks of life to temporarily reside in Germany. Schurman concluded his address with an appeal to the students: “We call this a dedication ceremony. But in the highest sense of the word, we cannot dedicate nor consecrate this building; it will be dedicated and consecrated by its use. The consecration of this building announced today will be the task of this and future generations of students. Fellow students: We place it in your hands with the utmost confidence!”⁵³

The day ended with a garden party in Heidelberg’s castle garden and a technical premiere. For the first time in the history of radio, Heidelberg was directly connected to America, to New York. A half-hour program on the occasion of the inauguration was transmitted by cable to Berlin, and from there to New York via the Königswusterhausen shortwave transmitter. In addition to Schurman and the Anglist Hoops, a female German student, Johanna Hanser, spoke on behalf of the Heidelberg student body, and a male American student, Royce West, on behalf of the American students in Heidelberg. Schurman was delighted by the young woman’s address. He told reporters, “Look! She, this young student, with her few, short, clear sentences, she was understood in America. That is the way one has to speak to America, to our people over there, in order to really connect with us. I would have to know my countrymen very poorly if this German student were not invited to America very quickly.” Schurman indeed knew his countrymen well: Ms. Hanser received a whole batch of invitations.⁵⁴

Even for the very old, the future is always open and hardly predictable. In 1931, the 76-year-old Schurman would probably have declared as crazy anyone who predicted that he would witness the start of a second world war and a second war between Germany and the USA during his lifetime. He himself considered this unlikely until the mid-1930s.

After his return to the United States, Schurman was regarded as an expert on conditions within Germany and a sympathetic interpreter of German foreign policy—even after Hitler’s appointment as Reich Chancellor on January 30, 1933, and the process through which the

53 *Inter alia*, B-5135/7 (X, 2, no. 49), “*Neue Mannheimer Zeitung*,” June 9, 1931.

54 Cf. the amusing article in the “*Süddeutsche Sonntagspost*” of June 28, 1931, under the headline: “What Herr Curtius [the German Foreign Minister] can learn from Fräulein Hanser. A Heidelberg Student as German Ambassador.” *Inter alia*, B-5135/7 (X, 2, no. 49).

National Socialists consolidated their power. This was also related to a change of heart that was crucial for Schurman. Influenced by new documents and new research findings from historians, he became a “revisionist” in the early 1930s, revising his judgment of Germany’s sole guilt in the outbreak of World War I.⁵⁵ At the same time, he saw the Treaty of Versailles in an increasingly negative light. He began to speak of the “Paris dictators” and to blame the treaty for many political and economic evils in Europe and the United States. He was therefore predestined, like the majority of Germans and countless prominent Western politicians, to initially be fooled by Hitler’s “strategy of grandiose self-effacement”⁵⁶ and to take at face value his assurances, repeated again and again until 1938, that he only wanted to revise the disgrace of Versailles. Schurman, of course, did not become an admirer of the National Socialist dictatorship, but he did show understanding for Hitler’s supposed policy of revising Versailles. For example, Schurman explicitly welcomed Hitler’s decision of March 16, 1935, to repeal the military provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and to reintroduce universal conscription in Germany. He also approved of Hitler’s March 7, 1936, coup to reoccupy the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland.

In the first years of the National Socialist regime, the world traveler Schurman often stopped over in Germany. In August 1936, he was even received by Hitler. On this occasion, Hitler skillfully played on the keyboard of Schurman’s prejudices. The *Führer* explained to his American guest what he told all Western visitors around the time of the Olympic Games: the goal of his foreign policy during the last three years had been to achieve Germany’s equality with the other nations.⁵⁷

During his travels in Germany, Schurman kept his distance from the National Socialist Party. He did not accept an invitation to the Reich Party Congress in Nuremberg in 1936. Similarly, he declined to be a guest of honor at the University of Heidelberg’s 550th anniversary celebration that year, which was strongly influenced by National Socialism—a decision interpreted by the American press as a boycott of this event and kept quiet by the German press.⁵⁸

55 On the school of revisionist historians after World War I, see Warren I. Cohen, *The American Revisionists: The Lessons of Intervention in World War I*, Chicago 1967.

56 Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Außenpolitik 1933–1938*, Frankfurt/Main 1968, p. 328.

57 Moser, *op. cit.*, pp. 214–217.

58 Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 218; cf. Meinhold Lurz, *Die 550-Jahrfeier der Universität als nationalsozialistische Selbstdarstellung von Reich und Universität*, in: 57 (1976),

It was not until 1938 that Schurman's eyes were fully opened. The Munich Agreement and Japan's almost simultaneously voiced claim to a "new order" in East Asia convinced him that the Axis powers and Japan posed a threat to world peace and the future security of the United States. In July 1941, a year before his death, the eighty-seven-year-old Schurman testified before a senate committee hearing on military affairs, describing Hitler as the biggest apostle of violence in the world. Citing Hitler's proposition from *Mein Kampf* that "Germany will either be a world power, or it will not be at all," Schurman explained that the Tripartite Pact signed between Germany, Japan, and Italy in 1940 was evidence that Hitler's dream of world domination was aimed at America.⁵⁹

By this time, the former ambassador and celebrated benefactor had long since been declared a *persona non grata* by Heidelberg University. Schurman was probably aware that the New University's inscription "The Living Spirit" had been changed to "The German Spirit" and that the Pallas Athena had been replaced with the Imperial Eagle. However, we do not know whether he lived to learn "his" beloved university had taken down the plaque commemorating his endowment and replaced the bronze bust of him with one of Hitler. Using the letterhead "The Rector of the University," Vice Rector Johannes Stein wrote to the minister of education in Karlsruhe on October 21, 1938: "In the New University building there is a plaque listing the names of American donors. Among them are a number of Jews that clearly belong to those currently agitating against Germany. Today, even Schurman's name is no longer worth special commemoration. Therefore, I am urgently requesting that you grant permission to remove the plaque and charge the county building authority to do so. Suggestions for replacing the aforementioned plaque will be submitted later." On November 9, the ministry approved the request and stated in pure bureaucratic German: "The costs of 145 Reichsmark are to be drawn from the budget of the university's remaining construction funds."⁶⁰ On July 4, 1939, Rector Paul Schmitthenner thanked Ms. Geheimrat Hoffman, an honorary member of the university, for donating a bust of Hitler made by Arno Breker in Berlin that would replace Schurman's bust. From November 1940, Breker's bust stood in the lecture hall of the New University,

pp. 35–41; Eike Wolgast, *Kleine Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg*, Heidelberg 1983, pp. 103 f.

59 Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

60 *Inter alia*, B-5138/1.

replacing a smaller bust of Hitler, which was then exhibited outside the faculty room in the vestibule of the New University.⁶¹

But the times changed again. When American troops entered Heidelberg, which had been spared destruction, and liberated the city from the reign of National Socialism, Schurman was once again worthy of special commemoration. His long-time confidant in Heidelberg, the nearly 80-year-old professor of English, Johannes Hoops, served as vice-rector of the university until early August 1945. On August 17, 1945, the University Senate voted to return the commemorative plaque to its original location.⁶² The architect Karl Gruber also spoke up again to inquire about the plight of the plaque since he had dedicated much effort to its design: It had been made from Veronese marble and hopefully had not been broken.⁶³ In addition, Schurman's name and deed provided useful arguments for the leadership of Heidelberg University during the year-long confrontation over the gradual return of the New University, which had been confiscated by the Americans occupation authorities. In a memorandum written to the military administration on February 7, 1947, Rector Hans von Campenhausen and the senate pointed out that the building was a "gift by notable and well-respected friends and benefactors . . . from the United States." It had been "placed at the free disposal of the university," and, according to the intentions of the donors, dedicated to the purposes of teaching young students.⁶⁴

Since then, the appreciation for Schurman in Heidelberg seems to be unbroken—if one disregards an intermezzo in the early 1970s, when Schurman's bust was torn from its pedestal. The German-American Institute in Heidelberg has been supported by the "Schurman Society" since 1962. The last major celebration in his honor took place on November 29, 1978, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the conferral of an honorary doctorate, in the large Rathaus hall of Heidelberg's town hall. U.S. Ambassador Walter J. Stoessel, Lord Mayor Reinhold Zundel, Rector Hubert Niederländer, and the author of this article paid tribute to the importance of Jacob Gould Schurman for Heidelberg University and American-German relations. Whether this is the end of his impact in Heidelberg, no one can say. For the future is, as has been said, always open and hardly predictable.

61 ET AL, B-5139/3.

62 ET AL, B-5138/2.

63 *ibid.*, letter from November 29, 1945.

64 *Inter alia*, B-5139/3.

The deep ruptures and transformations in the relationship between Schurman and the University of Heidelberg reflect quite accurately the changeable fate of American-German relations since the founding of the Reich. Schurman studied in Heidelberg at a time when the German Reich in general, and German universities in particular, enjoyed great prestige in the United States. He was a contemporary of the deteriorating relations between the two dynamic “Nouveau riche” of the international system on the eve of the First World War. He witnessed how the United States and Germany fought each other as enemies in the two world wars of that century and how state-sponsored images of the enemy bred unbridled hatred in both countries. Beginning in 1925, he was actively involved in the American attempt to stabilize the first democratic republic on German soil and to integrate it into a liberal-capitalist and peaceful order for Europe and the world. As an admirer of the “other,” the “spiritual” Germany, he strove with conviction to reestablish not only the political and economic, but especially the cultural ties between the two countries. Heidelberg’s New University is a sign of this spirit.

5. The Impact of the Great Depression on the U.S. Political System, 1933–1945

Introduction

In the election campaign of 1932, in the midst of the most serious world economic crisis since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, Republican President Herbert Hoover and his Democratic challenger Franklin D. Roosevelt engaged in a passionate debate over the question that is the leitmotif of this article: whether and to what extent the federal government in Washington, headed by the president, had the right and the duty to intervene in a regulatory and orderly manner in the U.S. economy and society in order to combat the crisis and misery.¹

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- 1 For the following remarks, see especially D. Junker, *Franklin D. Roosevelt. Power and Vision. Präsident in Krisenzeiten*, Göttingen 1989, pp. 60–96; S. I. Rosenmann (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. I, *The Genesis of the New Deal 1928–1932*, New York 1938; E. A. Rosen, *Hoover, Roosevelt, and the Brain Trust. From Depression to New Deal*, New York 1977; H. Hoover, *American Individualism*, Garden City/New York 1922; H. Hoover, *American Ideals versus the New Deal*, New York 1936; H. Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 3 vols, 1951–52; a survey of Hoover's election speeches in 1932 in: K. Tracy (ed.), *Herbert Hoover—A Bibliography. His Writings and Addresses*, Stanford 1977.
- The literature on Roosevelt and the New Deal is almost impossible to survey, even for specialists. According to the most recent bibliography, 1300 books, 800 dissertations, and 2500 scholarly articles in English were identified by 1987: K. D. Kyvig/M. A. Blasio (eds.), *New Deal/New Deal: A Bibliography of the Great American Depression, 1929–1941*, Westport 1988. Classics include: W. E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932–1940*, New York 1963; E. W. Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: A Study in Economic Ambivalence*, Princeton 1966; A. M. Schlesinger Jr, *The Age of Roosevelt*, 3 vols, Boston 1956–60; J. Braeman/R. H. Bremner/D. Brody (eds.), *The New Deal*, vol. 1, *The National Level*, Columbus 1975; H. A. Winkler (ed.), *The Great Crisis in America. Comparative Studies in Political Social History*, Göttingen 1973; F. Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. 4, *Launching the New Deal*, Boston 1973; J. M. Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, New York 1956; a new synthesis that integrates the flood of results and publications from the 1980s is a desideratum of research that is both urgent and difficult to achieve.

First published in: Die Auswirkungen der Weltwirtschaftskrise auf das politische System der USA, in: Wolfgang Reinhard/Peter Waldmann (eds.): *Nord und Süd in Amerika*. Rombach Verlag. Freiburg 1992, pp. 792–808.

Hoover never saw himself as a precursor of the *New Deal*; all the crisis-combating measures of his tenure, which can be classified as timid precursors of the *New Deal* when viewed institutionally, corresponded to a different spirit. To the point of complete physical exhaustion, Hoover tried to convince the American electorate of the soundness of his governing philosophy. Just as passionately, he warned against Roosevelt's response to the crisis: the "revolutionary changes" that Roosevelt and the Democrats were offering the American people in their fear and distress would destroy the foundations of the American system that had led the nation to unprecedented heights in one hundred and fifty years. The result would be another America, fundamentally different from the one hitherto known and alienated from the best traditions of the country.

This American system, he said, was built on the principle of individual freedom and equal opportunity, which gives the capable and striving individual room for initiative, daring, and advancement in the social pyramid. This freedom of the individual creates out of itself the necessity and the joyful readiness to join forces with other individuals in a thousand ways. Individual freedom and voluntary social cooperation for the betterment of social organization, prosperity, knowledge, research, and education had made the American people great. "This is self-government by the people outside of government." Only when, in times of crisis, events slipped from the control of individuals, voluntary associations, local organizations, and individual states, only then might Washington headquarters temporarily spring into action as a "reserve power"; remembering to make itself obsolete again as quickly as possible.

But if the government begins to interfere permanently in the economy and society of the USA, it will soon begin to regulate daily life—and through it, the souls and thoughts of the American people. Free speech could not survive if free industry and free trade died. For Hoover, the danger of a perversion of the American system loomed if the publicized proposals of Roosevelt and other Democrats became reality: An expansion of public spending, Hoover argued, would condemn free men to slave labor for the public treasury. Deliberate inflation, even the issuance of currency without gold backing, would ruin the American system, as would permanent government intervention in banking. The takeover of energy utilities by the government would lead to the tyranny of the state; the use of unemployed people in public projects and their payment by the state would mean the complete abandonment of the American system.

Hoover's classic liberal creed, according to which the sum of the energies of individuals that were as free as possible from state influence would guarantee the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people, marked his as a "conservative" in U.S. political terminology. Such ideas would have been in line with the exuberant optimism connected to progress in 1928, but, in the face of the deep crisis of 1932, they were incapable of giving confidence and hope to people being hit hard by the Depression.

Roosevelt, on the other hand, despite all the tactics, rhetoric, and a blatant contradiction in his statements,² offered them an alternative for the situation. According to Roosevelt, Hoover's economic philosophy of *laissez-faire* was based on a false conception of man, according to which man was incapable of intervening in the supposedly immutable laws of the market and, therefore, simply had to put up with periodic depressions. "But while they prattle on about economic laws, women and men are dying." Such an uncreative philosophy of government only spreads despair, hopelessness, and fear; is profoundly un-American; favors "the selfish few" at the top of the social pyramid; and forgets the millions of people who dwell without money, power, and social status at its base, i.e., "the forgotten man." One should not allow economic life to be dominated by a small group of men whose views on social welfare were colored by the fact that they could make huge profits by lending money and selling securities. Hoover and the Republicans had forgotten that the nation was a "community of interest" within which everyone was "interdependent." Roosevelt believed that the president had to simultaneously be a leader, a spokesman, and above all an educator of the nation. Therefore, he should not see himself as the administrator of a privileged minority, but should also work to promote the welfare of the "common man."

For Roosevelt, this basic conviction was not only a situationally-appropriate response to the Great Depression, but also the result of a sense of where contemporary America stood—an evaluation he derived from his interpretation of American history. "I will not allow Hoover to cast doubt on my Americanism," he declared angrily after an attack by his opponent. A linchpin of his interpretation of American history was connected to Jefferson's victory in the 1800 campaign against the

2 While the trumpeted New Deal had to result in higher government spending, Roosevelt simultaneously promised to end Hoover's modest deficit spending policies and return to a balanced budget.

“aristocratic” Federalists. Jefferson had made the liberty and welfare of all Americans the starting and ending point of the U.S. system of government in an essentially equal, agrarian society favored by the open frontier in the West as a safety valve.

However, since the middle of the 19th century, this system had been deprived of its economic base, as it were. Due to the industrial revolution, there had been an unprecedented concentration of power, capital, and influence in the hands of a few “titans,” in the form of corporate executives and financial magnates. Roosevelt pointed out that, in 1932, the economic life of the nation was dominated by around 600 corporations that controlled two-thirds of U.S. industry. The last third was shared by ten million small businessmen. For a long time, Roosevelt said, people had not wanted to see the dangers arising from this development. These included the use of economic power without regard for the common good, and the loss of freedom and equal opportunity for the little man. The latter was all the more serious because those who had become unemployed in the East as a result of the “great economic machines” had long since ceased to find an open frontier in the West. Finally, there were also the dangers of overproduction, underconsumption, and unemployment.

In view of this analysis, Roosevelt saw himself in a similar situation to the one in which Jefferson had been. Just as the latter had averted the dangers of too strong a government without abandoning the principle of national government, so now the government must master the new economic dangers without calling into question the principle of strong economic units. The new task, he said, was an economic declaration of human rights; a new social contract guaranteeing every American the right to own property and to live decently without fear or hunger.

Faced with the worst economic crisis in U.S. history, Roosevelt promoted the most radical state interventionist planning program yet formulated in peacetime by a presidential candidate, yet without any revolutionary intent. As early as the spring of 1930 he had written, “There is no question in my mind that the country must become quite radical for at least a generation. History teaches that nations in which this occasionally happens are spared revolutions.” He saw himself as both a preservationist and an agent of change; as both a traditionalist and a progressive at the same time. He never considered attempting to challenge the foundations of the American system, such as private property, the profit motive, the regional and functional separation of powers, the free press, and the free exercise of religion. Despite

sharp attacks against the self-serving few at the top of the social pyramid, he was not an ideologue of class warfare. That would have deeply contradicted his basic conviction that the president should be an administrator of the “*community of interests*.” He maintained good relations with entrepreneurs and bankers who remained aware of their social responsibility for the whole. He also did not treat the wealthy as cardboard cutouts. He was not, of course, a Marxist or a socialist, as Hoover claimed in the final stages of the campaign. But neither did he want to be pigeonholed as a capitalist. Asked about his basic political convictions, he could say with disarming simplicity that he was a Christian and a Democrat. But if the American system did not do what Roosevelt believed it should do, namely serve the common good and provide every American with a decent living, then the government would have to intervene with reforms, planning, and unorthodox means. Common sense and human decency demanded it.

This struggle between Hoover and Roosevelt over the foundations of the American system foreshadowed nearly the entire history of effects of the Great Depression from the 1930s to the present. The term “history of effects” is commonly used, although it only covers, albeit in a linguistically elegant way, historical theory’s unsolved problem of causal attribution in historical processes—in sequences of events and structural contexts.

Among these effects is the fact that, to this day, the debate over the fundamentals of the American system has not reached a conclusion. Although Hoover lost the 1932 election campaign, his basic convictions remain alive in the hearts and minds of a large portion of the American people. For even the Great Depression was unable to revolutionize the tenants of the liberal value system—individualism, personal initiative, competition, small government, and low taxation—held by the vast majority of the American upper and middle classes. One might even hazard a guess that after the end of the Reagan era, (ironically Regan constantly identified himself with his father figure Roosevelt while preaching Hoover’s beliefs),³ 1992 would be in store for a re-run of the 1932 campaign—that is, if the leaderless Democratic Party could present a candidate of Rooseveltian stature to run against President George H. W. Bush. For, in reality, the country is ripe for a second *New Deal*. This candidate would have a great chance of winning if two things

3 Cf. the eminently readable and source-saturated work by W. E. Leuchtenburg, *In the Shadow of FDR. From Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan*, revised edition, Ithaca/London 1985, pp. 209–35.

would happen. First, if he would obtain a copy of Roosevelt’s “Public Papers” and make the best texts, slightly modified, the basis of his campaign. Second, if Congress would act to restore public discourse, which has been degraded by the market and the medium of images, by forcing all television stations to give both presidential candidates, free of charge, around half an hour in prime time, on six occasions, to present their positions.⁴

In what follows, I will highlight two effects of the Great Depression that have emphatically shaped the reality of American life, including its political system, up to the present. The first of these is the rise in importance of the federal government in general, and of the presidency in particular. The second is the establishment of the U.S. interventionist state in general, and the sociopolitical entry of the U.S. into the 20th century in particular.

The Rise in Importance of the Federal Government in General and the Presidency in Particular

With rare unanimity, historians and political scientists share the view that Roosevelt was the founder of modern American presidential democracy.⁵

4 On the decline of public discourse, see N. Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death. Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, New York 1985. While campaigners Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas subjected their voters to a total of seven hours of arguments and counterarguments in 1854, the average of uninterrupted speech for presidential candidates on the three major television networks ABC, CBS, and NBC fell from 42.3 seconds in the 1968 campaign to 9.8 seconds in the 1988 campaign. Cf. K. Adatto, *Sound Bite Democracy: Network Evening News Presidential Campaign Coverage, 1968 and 1988*. Research Paper R-2. The Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, June 1990, p. 4 ff.

5 From the profusion of literature on the “modern” American presidency since Roosevelt, the following were particularly important for the topic of this paper: A. M. Schlesinger Jr, *The Imperial Presidency*, Boston 1973; R. E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power. The Politics of Leadership from FDR to Carter*, New York 1980; M. Shaw (ed.), *Roosevelt to Reagan. The Development of the Modern Presidency*, London 1987; H. D. Rosenbaum/ E. Barthelme (eds.), *Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Man, The Myth, The Era, 1882–1945*, New York/London 1987; therein especially the contributions of M. J. Frisch, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Modern American Presidency*, pp. 231–38; A. J. Wann, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Administrative Contributions to the Presidency*, pp. 239–53; F. I. Greenstein (ed.), *Leadership in the Modern Presidency*, Cambridge/London 1988; therein especially W. E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D.*

In the long evolution of the presidency since 1789, there had been a qualitative and quantitative leap under Roosevelt. To a far greater extent than even under Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, the White House became the power center of the entire American system of government, the source of new ideas, the driving force of commerce, the engine of social change, and thus, in Roosevelt's mind, the embodiment of the common good. "No modern president has been more nearly master in the White House."⁶

Perhaps the most important aspect of this qualitative change was that, for the mass of the American population, the federal government and the president became a tangible part of their everyday lives for the first time—the center and vanishing point of their expectations and hopes. Critical interpreters claim this happened to an extent that must necessarily lead to disappointment and disillusionment, i.e., the modern president is fundamentally incapable of achieving what is expected of him every four years.⁷

The emergence of the modern American presidency under Roosevelt is, on the whole, undoubtedly due to the fact that the 32nd president of the United States led his country successively out of the Great Depression and into the greatest war in history. In a sense, the U.S. was always at war during those twelve years, first against economic hardship, then against German Nazism, Japanese imperialism, and Italian fascism. This twofold state of emergency became the hour of executive power in this case as well, but within the framework of the American constitutional system. It is significant that the metaphor of "war" also played a predominant role in the fight against economic hardship.⁸

Roosevelt. *The First Modern President*, pp. 7–40; and F. I. Greenstein, *In Search of a Modern Presidency*, pp. 296–418.

From the German-language literature, cf. the remarks in E. Hübner, *Das politische System der USA. Eine Einführung*, Munich 1991; P. Lösche, *Amerika in Perspektive. Politik und Gesellschaft der Vereinigten Staaten*, Darmstadt 1989; H. Mewes, *Einführung in das politische System der USA*, Stuttgart 1975; and the contributions in K. L. Shell and A. Falke in: W. P. Adams/E.-O. Czempiel/B. Ostendorf/K. L. Shell/P. B. Spahn/M. Zöllner (eds.), *Länderbericht USA*, 2 vols. (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Schriftenreihe 293/I-II, Bonn 1990, vol. 1), pp. 303–53.

6 Neustadt, *Presidential Power* 1980, p. 119.

7 G. Hodgson, *All Things to All Men: The False Promise of the Modern American Presidency*, New York 1980.

8 W. E. Leuchtenburg, *The New Deal and the Analogue of War*, in: I. Braeman/R. H. Bremner/E. Walters (eds.), *Change and Continuity in Twentieth Century America*, no place given 1964, pp. 81–144.

Nevertheless, the author is among those historians who attribute the qualitative leap to the modern presidency in large measure to the *New Deal*. This is due to the fact that, for the first time ever during a period of peace, the Roosevelt-driven federal government made massive interventions in the economy and thereby established a new normal. Despite the changing fortunes of federal legislation in a wide variety of areas, the interventionist state has continued to be part of the “*American way of life*” ever since the Great Depression. The transformation from the liberal night watchman state of the 19th century to the precautionary and interventionist state of the 20th century, which can be observed in all Western democracies, was considerably accelerated in the United States by the Great Depression and the *New Deal*.

“Roosevelt ran the show,” pushing against the limits that the American constitutional system imposes even on a president who demonstrates strong leadership.⁹ Like no president before him, he wrested legislative initiative from Congress and, in this sense, expanded the legislative function of the presidency. Roosevelt broke all records in the use of his veto power, using it a total of 635 times.¹⁰ He courted the crucial congressmen and senators in personal conversation, used his opportunities for patronage of office, and, when necessary, pressured Congress through public opinion. Roosevelt was also able to focus public attention and expectations on the presidency because he knew how to use the two forms of mass media in that time, the press and radio, as instruments of his policies in unparalleled ways. Roosevelt was the first media president. He dominated the headlines like no president before him, not least because of his self-confident “open door” policy toward journalists working in Washington. Twice a week, year in and year out, the president, who was paralyzed from the waist down, gathered up to 200 journalists around his desk. They were allowed to ask him any question they wanted without written advance notice. These conferences were show pieces of how to deal with the free press. They have been compared in importance to Question Time in the British House of Commons.¹¹ The secret of the success of his “*fireside chats*” over the radio, which drew an audience of millions, was that this dialogue with his fellow Americans was not a manipulative ploy for Roosevelt, but emerged from the core of his understanding of democracy.

9 For the following, see Junker, Roosevelt 1989, p. 60 ff.

10 R. J. Spitzner, *The Presidential Veto. Touchstone of the American Presidency*, Albany 1988, p. 72.

11 F. I. Greenstein, *Leadership* 1988, p. 18.

The monumental shift of policymaking toward the president and the Washington executive branch was also evident in terms of personnel and institutions. Particularly between 1933 and 1935, and then again from 1939,¹² new agencies, offices, boards, and commissions sprang up like mushrooms. They were constantly transforming, dissolving, and reorganizing, not infrequently overlapping, and driving devotees of clearly delineated authority and an orderly path of official channels to despair. During Roosevelt's tenure, executive branch personnel doubled to tripled: in 1933, the federal government employed nearly 600,000; in 1939, before the outbreak of the European war, it employed about 920,000. By the time the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the number had risen to more than 1.5 million, and then, due to the war, it soared again. Under none of his successors did the number ever drop below two million again.¹³ Indeed, if you look at the figures, Reagan's fight against "big government" turned out to be a sham revolution.

Finally, the reorganization and staff expansion of the presidential office itself were probably among the most consequential effects of the Great Depression on the U.S. political system. Roosevelt quickly realized after 1933 that his office was institutionally unable to cope with the enormous tasks and demands placed upon it. He appointed a panel of experts, the famous *Brownlow Committee* which, in 1937, concluded "The president needs help."¹⁴ It proposed the creation of an "*Executive Office of the President*." Within this structure, there would also be a "*White House Office*" staffed by competent, energetic people who above all would be distinguished by one thing: "a passion for anonymity." After a fierce political tug-of-war, Congress, which is granted organizational power by the constitution, passed legislation in 1939 to reorganize the Office of the President. Roosevelt then put the changes into effect through Presidential *Executive Order* No. 8248.¹⁵

12 Cf. D. Junker, Zur Struktur und Organisation der amerikanischen Rüstungswirtschaft 1939–1945, in F. Forstmeier/H.-E. Volkmann (eds.), *Kriegswirtschaft und Rüstung 1939–1945*, Düsseldorf 1977, pp. 314–32; D. Junker, *The Impact of Foreign Policy on the United States Domestic Scene*, in: M. Vaudagna (ed.), *The United States in the Late Thirties*. Special Issue of "Storia Nordamericana," vol. 6, nos. 1–2, Torino 1989, pp. 17–34.

13 Wann, *Administrative Contributions* 1987, p. 16 ff.

14 Greenstein, *In Search* 1988, p. 301.

15 Rosenman (ed.), *Public Papers* (1939 vol.) 1941, pp. 490–96; the commentary authorized by Roosevelt *ibid.*, pp. 496–506.

When Roosevelt presented this plan to Congress and the American people, he argued with extraordinary skill. On the eve of the outbreak of the European war, on April 25, 1939, he reminded the audience that even a democracy needs the necessary means for efficient government. The proposed reform had only one aim: "... to make democracy work—to strengthen the arms of democracy in peace or war and to ensure the solid blessings of free government to our people in increasing measure." After this there followed a key phrase in Roosevelt's understanding of the situation: "We are not free if our administration is weak."¹⁶ He told Americans that the proposed reorganization would make government more effective and cheaper, and assured them that his personal White House staff would in no way become "assistant presidents," would have no authority over anyone in any department, and should in no way come between the president and the tops of departments and offices.¹⁷

Of the five special administrative units incorporated into the *Executive Office* in 1939, the *White House Office* and the Bureau of the *Budget* were by far the most important. For all their internal evolution, they have also survived to this day, with the Bureau of the Budget renamed to the *Office of Management and Budget* (OMB) in 1970.

It has been determined that from 1939 to 1981, there were a total of 44 different organizational units within the *Executive Office*. Today, ten departments, each with several subdepartments, have special significance. In addition to the two already mentioned, these include the *Council of Economic Advisers* since 1946, the National Security Council (NSC) since 1949, the Office of the Special Representative for Trade Negotiations since 1963, the Council on Environmental Quality since 1969, the Domestic Council and Domestic Policy Staff since 1970 and 1978, respectively, the Intelligence Oversight Board and the Office of Science and Technology since 1976, and the Office of Administration since 1977.¹⁸ Of particular political significance was the transfer of the Bureau of the Budget from the Treasury Department, where it had a kind of accountant's function, to the center of power. It was only since

On reorganization, see K. Barry, *Executive Reorganization and Reform in the New Deal: The Genesis of Administrative Management, 1909–1939*, Cambridge 1963; R. Polenberg, *Reorganizing Roosevelt's Government: The Controversy over Executive Reorganization, 1936–1939*, Cambridge 1966.

16 Rosenman (ed.), *Public Papers* (1939 vol.) 1941, p. 246.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 247, 492.

18 Wann, *Administrative Contributions* 1987, p. 244.

this restructuring that the president has been able to play a predominant political role in drawing up the budget.

These Rooseveltian reforms gave the constitutionally defined executive power of the president an independent bureaucracy. Within the framework of the U.S. system of separation of powers, this added weight to the presidential office. Indeed, today it can even compete with the bureaucracies of the departments and the bureaucratic apparatus of Congress, which itself has grown considerably. At the same time, this expansion always harbors the possibility of abuse: the temptation to assemble a power elite in the White House that is insufficiently controlled by Congress and the public, thereby circumventing the constituent principle of the separation of powers and establishing an “imperial presidency.”

Only with this independent administration can the president, if at all, fulfill his many tasks and the expectations of the population. After all, he is simultaneously responsible for the executive branch, legislation, foreign and security policy, and, as commander-in-chief, the military. In addition, he is also a politician tied to his party’s platform who must keep his election promises and who is increasingly under pressure to project a positive image in the media. The president’s “entourage” has also grown steadily. The number of personal staff in the *White House Office*—the number of those with a supposed passion for anonymity who do not require Senate approval in their appointments—grew from 37 in 1939 to more than 900 in 1988, while the number of staff in the other departments, in the so-called institutionalized presidency, has grown from zero to several thousand. It is one of the most important tasks of a president, once elected, to fill these positions with his own people. The often-criticized downside of this “spoils system” is obvious: When a new president is elected, the ensuing loss of institutional memory causes a lack of political continuity at the core of the government.

Within this presidential bureaucracy, there is a constant, bitterly fought battle for the scarcest commodity of American democracy: the president’s eyes and ears. Indeed, it was easier for a minion at the court of Louis XIV to get to the bedside of his king than for a lowly White House staffer to enter the *Oval Office* for a face-to-face meeting with his president.

The Dawn of the Interventionist State in General and the Sociopolitical Entry of the U.S. into the 20th Century in Particular.

The Great Depression and Roosevelt's fundamental belief in the responsibility of government to its people established the American interventionist state and led to the sociopolitical entry of the U.S. into the 20th century. The federal government had already intervened in the peacetime economy of the U.S. on a case-by-case basis in the 19th century, for example in the expansion of a transportation system by water and by land. Nevertheless, the Great Depression also brought about a qualitative and quantitative change in this area: the emergence of a "mixed economy" in which the state intervened in a regulatory, controlling, planning, and administrative capacity. Under Roosevelt's successors—Truman (*Fair Deal*), Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson (*The Great Society*), Nixon, Ford, and Carter—the respective challenges of the time repeatedly led to a political and programmatic struggle over the wisdom and desirability of certain state interventions. However, none of these administrations, whether Democratic or Republican, fundamentally questioned the legitimacy of state interventionist policies. Even Reagan's pleas for a return to the country's liberal (in American terminology, conservative) tradition, and his initiatives for tax cuts, deregulation of many sectors of the economy, and the curtailment of government spending on welfare programs, did not substantially alter the reality of the interventionist state and the "mixed economy." At present (December 1991), many signs indicate that the disastrous legacy of "Reaganomics" and so-called *supply side economics*, the structural weaknesses of the American economy and society, and the drastically reduced international competitiveness of many parts of the American economy will force a new state interventionist cycle in American history—a second *New Deal*.

To illustrate and justify the qualitative change that occurred during President Roosevelt's tenure, the New Deal's major areas of intervention will briefly be summarized. In varying combinations, they reflect the three goals promised by Roosevelt in the 1932 campaign: short-term relief (relief), economic recovery (recovery), and long-term reform (reform).¹⁹

19 Cf. note 1, Junker, Roosevelt 1989, p. 77 f.; Detlef Junker, *Die unteilbare Weltmacht. Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA*, Stuttgart 1975, pp. 43 ff.

One of the areas in which the Roosevelt administration intervened immediately after taking office was the U.S. monetary and credit system, proclaiming a four-day “bank holiday.” All measures in this area served three purposes: a thorough reform of the rather chaotic banking system, supervision, and control of trading in securities, and, especially important in the early stages, the creation of the legal foundations that would allow the state to implement inflationary policies based on money creation in order to fight deflation.

Under the wide-ranging Banking Act, state regulators could review the liquidity and realizable value of the banks. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which had already been set up under Hoover, began to buy preferred shares in private banks on a large scale, thus strengthening their capital base and exerting influence on business policy and management through the associated shareholder rights. The powers of the federal reserve banks (*Federal Reserve System*), including the government’s influence on this institution, were decisively expanded, thus, for the first time, making something like a national money supply policy possible. The previous universal bank was also divided up, and from then on normal commercial banks were no longer allowed to engage in the securities business. The provision that was psychologically most important for the average citizen was a limited guarantee and insurance obligation for all private deposits since, beginning on July 1, 1937, deposit insurance became mandatory for all banks in the country. The stock market also felt the regulating hand of the state: henceforth, the issuance of shares was subject to a government-controlled reporting procedure designed to prevent an excessive increase in shares or even speculation with shell companies—the lessons of such pernicious practices having been learned from the crisis.

But simply reopening the banks was not enough, for it was not possible to wait for the reform legislation to bear the hoped-for economic fruit. If he wanted to regain the people’s confidence in the government, Roosevelt had to act immediately to address the most urgent social problem and improve the lot of at least some of the more than twelve million unemployed and their dependents. The first means of temporary assistance were direct federal welfare payments to the individual states and municipalities. But the main instrument was a large-scale public job creation program. This began in March 1933 as a temporary emergency measure but, contrary to the original intention, did not expire until the U.S. entered World War II. This was due to the realization that, while the *New Deal* could considerably alleviate the

joblessness problem in peacetime, it could not eliminate unemployment altogether. The outward image of the successive and complementary programs and organizations (CCC, FERA, PWA, CWA, WPA) was indeed confusing, not to mention the fact that the capital-intensive (Secretary of the Interior Ickes) and labor-intensive (Harry Hopkins) projects often rivaled each other. But the basic idea was simple: to get those able-bodied people who could not find jobs in the private sector off the streets, to save them from destitution and despair, and to restore their self-esteem by assuring them that they were not living on welfare but earning a living through meaningful employment in public works.

At times, federal assistance payments reached as many as four million families in the years from 1933 to 1935. The largest procurement program was headed by former New York social worker Harry Hopkins, one of Roosevelt's closest confidants after the death of Louis Howe in 1936. It employed a total of eight million people from 1935 to 1941, and over two million on a monthly average from August 1935. Including their dependents, 25 to 30 million people benefited from the, albeit modest, wages from public work. Under Hopkins, the *Works Progress Administration* (WPA) constructed 122,000 public buildings, built 664,000 miles of new roads, 77,000 bridges, and 285 airfields. But teachers, scientists, visual artists, and writers also received work, winning Roosevelt the support of an important opinion-forming constituency that was in favor of the *New Deal*. There was almost no program of "public interest" that was not carried out.

Among the deepest state interventions into the American market economy were the aid measures for agriculture, which was by far the hardest hit sector of the economy. Backed with legislation hastily enacted by Congress, the Roosevelt administration made a large-scale attempt to regulate production and prices. The essence of the *Agricultural Adjustment Act* (AAA) was to drive up prices through voluntary—and in later years, statutory—restrictions on cultivation. In addition, farmers received compensatory subsidies for what they did not grow or raise. For example, cotton, wheat, corn, tobacco, pork, beef, dairy cattle, rye, barley, and sugar beets were included in this program in order to tighten supply. As emergency measures, ten million acres of cotton were plowed under, and six million piglets were slaughtered in August 1933.

The stated goal of these policies was to restore farm incomes relative to other sectors of the economy to the level they had been in the years from 1909 to 1914. In addition, a whole series of laws were enacted to increase farmers' borrowing opportunities, reduce their debts, and

strengthen protection against mortgage foreclosures. Resettlement projects and structural assistance, such as the Land Conservation Act and agricultural electrification, complemented these measures. Finally, in 1938, legislation created a government purchasing agency to remove surpluses from the market to support price levels.

The curse of overproduction also drove intervention in the industrial sector. The federal *National Industrial Recovery Act* (NIRA) hoped to eliminate “ruinous competition” and its consequences for prices, wages, and working conditions. Through a form of corporate self-regulation under loose government supervision and involvement, it would be replaced with rules for “fair competition.” Government, business, and labor were to cooperate voluntarily to stabilize production, prices, and wages. For industry and commerce, this meant the authorization to make production and price agreements and thus was a *de facto* undermining of the anti-trust laws, which had, however, already been fairly ineffective.

As part of this concerted action, labor in return received the right to unfettered industry-wide organization and collective bargaining for the first time in U.S. history. Furthermore, maximum working hours and minimum wages were promised, while child labor under the age of 16 was banned. Monitored and promoted by a new authority, the *National Recovery Administration* (NRA), working hours and *codes* were to be established in all factories and decided by arbitration in the event of conflict. The president himself issued a regulatory framework that set minimum wages and limited the workweek to 35 hours for industrial workers and 40 hours for white-collar workers.

The first New Deal measures were met with general approval and great propagandistic support in the initial phase, but subsequently encountered increasing criticism from the business community as well as from labor, which felt betrayed, disadvantaged, and put under severe pressure by the companies during implementation. Moreover, in May 1935, the Supreme Court declared the legislation unconstitutional, essentially for the following reasons: Congress had delegated too much power to the executive branch, and, furthermore, it lacked the authority to regulate local and regional economic life through national laws.

Thus, the concept of comprehensive and voluntary cooperation between the Roosevelt administration, industry, and labor had failed. From 1935 to 1938, the relationship between these three factions changed significantly. The government, with the help of Congress (*Wagner Act*), did succeed from 1935 onward *in* securing the gains

of organized labor through a series of new laws. But, at least verbally, there was a fierce confrontation between government and business, especially in 1938, when an investigating committee probed the monopolization that had been exacerbated by the NIRA policy. Roosevelt's message to Congress on April 29, 1938, in which he called for such a committee, is perhaps the harshest indictment of the power of monopolies and cartels, and of the unequal distribution of wealth in the United States ever made publicly by an American president. But this indictment remained merely rhetoric. The closer the United States came to entering World War II, the closer the government and the business community became again; although, for part of the business community, Roosevelt remained the most hated man in the country.

The laws meant to strengthen organized labor led to the consolidation of two large unions, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), but this only came about after fierce resistance from the business community and through violent strikes. In particular, two other additional New Deal initiatives served to provide social security for workers: the aforementioned job creation program, which was launched as a temporary emergency measure, and the unemployment insurance and pension laws, which were intended to be permanent but were still very inadequate.

The U.S.'s first step on the road to a welfare state was taken by the Social Security Act of 1935, which introduced unemployment insurance and old-age pensions. The law marked not only a departure from the liberal night-watchman state, but also a break with America's deep-rooted pioneering spirit, which relied on individualism, personal responsibility, and initiative, and saw protection against social hardship to be the domain of private charity. These beginnings of social security, however, were extraordinarily modest, with nearly half of Americans being excluded from the benefits of these already low payments. Compulsory health insurance was not introduced.

Perhaps the state's most successful attempt at a large-scale planning intervention into the economy was the modernization of the impoverished Tennessee River Valley area. Through the federal agency created under the *New Deal*, the *Tennessee Valley Authority* (TVA), hydroelectric plants were built, cheap energy provided, rivers regulated, soil erosion inhibited, malaria eradicated, agriculture modernized, industrial manufacturing plants established, shipping traffic was enabled, and many new jobs created. However, the success of this regional planning project remained an example without imitation. Roosevelt appealed to

Congress in a special message in 1937 to authorize six more regional planning projects that would have encompassed most of the United States, but his request was unsuccessful.

It is impossible within the scope of this paper to trace the checkered history of the U.S. interventionist state in these various policy areas from the 1930s to the present. Nor is it possible to trace the history of the labor unions or the organizations representing agricultural interest that established themselves as countervailing forces to the business world during Roosevelt's administration and as a result of the Great Depression. Thus, only a few remarks on the history of the impact of the welfare state will be presented.²⁰

It has often been said, and rightly so, that the “*big bang*” for the American social and welfare state came in 1935 with the passage of the Social Security Act.²¹ Compared to other industrialized countries—such as Germany, England, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden—the U.S. was a “Johnny-come-lately” in the field of social policy, and to this day the social safety net in the U.S. is much more widely-meshed, even full of holes, than in Western and Northern European countries. Despite the fact that, since the turn of the century, the socio-political reformers within the Progressive Movement have also envisioned socio-political programs, the federal government had only assumed socio-political responsibility once before the Great Depression. This was through payments to Civil War veterans and their dependents, which effectively amounted to old-age pensions for this group of people.²² It is significant that reformers did not take this wartime pension as a model for peacetime social policy—this pension, incidentally, having been

20 Cf. A. Murswieck, *Sozialpolitik in den USA*, Opladen 1988; A. Murswieck, *Sozialpolitik*, in: Adams et al, *Länderbericht USA 1990*, vol. II, pp. 160–82; A. Murswieck, *Sozialversicherung und Sozialfürsorge*, in: C.-L. Holtfreich (ed.), *Wirtschaft USA: Strukturen, Institutionen und Prozesse*, Munich/Vienna 1991, pp. 105–30 (with further references); A. Windhoff-Heritier, *Sozialpolitik unter der Reagan-Administration*, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Beilage zur Wochenzeitschrift Das Parlament B44/88* (1988), pp. 25–35; G. D. Nash/N. H. Pugach/R. T. Tomasson (eds.), *Social Security. The First Half-Century*, Albuquerque 1988; M. Weir/A. S. Orloff/T. Skocpol (eds.), *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States*, Princeton 1988; J. T. Patterson, *America's Struggle Against Poverty 1900–1985*, enlarged edition, Cambridge 1986; A. Gutman (ed.), *Democracy and the Welfare State*, Princeton 1988.

21 Murswieck, *Social Policy* 1990, p. 160; Weir/Orloff/Skocpol (eds.), *The Politics* 1988, p. 6.

22 A. Orloff, *The Political Origins of America's Belated Welfare States*, in: Weir/Orloff/Skocpol (eds.), *The Politics* 1988, pp. 37 ff.

pushed through Congress not solely out of a sense of sociopolitical responsibility, but because the patronage parties were able to buy votes with these payments. It took the hardship of the Great Depression, the leadership and tactical skill of the president, and the socio-political ethos of intellectuals and bureaucrats that Roosevelt drew into his sphere of influence to overcome the strong resistance of the American tradition to the interventionist welfare state. At the same time, traditional values—particularly those of the Southern Democrats on whose votes Roosevelt depended for passage of the bill in Congress—limited the quality and quantity of the intervention.

While conservatives criticized the passage of the 1935 law, Roosevelt also wanted to take the wind out of the sails of populist mass movements whose hopes had been raised by the *New Deal* but not fulfilled. The most politically dangerous man for Roosevelt was Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana. Long dominated the politics of his state and won a mass following at the national level with his radical slogan of “share the wealth,” promising every citizen a home worth \$6,000 and a guaranteed annual income of \$2,500. The Democratic Party believed he could garner three to four million votes with his intended presidential bid. But this remained conjecture, for in the summer of 1935 Long was the victim of an assassination attempt, and his movement disintegrated.

Less threatening to Roosevelt, but just as characteristic of the social unrest in the country, was the movement of the Californian physician Dr. Townsend. Townsend proposed to solve the problem of old-age poverty with the promise to have the state treasury pay every citizen over the age of 60, 200 dollars a month, on condition that the money be spent by the end of the month. The 4,500 clubs he founded managed to mobilize 500,000 people in thirty U.S. cities on a single day.

New Deal legislation has shaped the dual structure of federal social policy to this day. Both basic principles of the welfare state, contribution-financed social *security* and tax-financed social assistance or *welfare*, date back to the 1930s. Today, social spending is also the largest single item in the U.S. federal budget, accounting for 41% of the total in 1989.²³ Contributory social insurance is now accepted by Americans as the result of their own, individually earned work. The *New Deal* was thus the beginning of a mental revolution. This is particularly true of old-age pension insurance, which was introduced in 1935 and financed by employer and employee contributions, and was extended

23 Holtfreich (ed.), *Economics USA* 1991, p. 264.

to survivors in 1939 and to the disabled in 1956. But it is also true of federal subsidies for unemployment insurance (1935); accident insurance, which has been introduced in all individual states since 1948; and health insurance for pensioners (Medicare), *which has* been in effect since 1965. The socio-political consequences of this development, which have been accepted by the majority of Americans, is that in American society it is not the poorest but the elderly who are comparatively the most well-protected group. They are allowed to enjoy in old age what they have earned through their own labor. During Eisenhower's presidency, it was Nelson D. Rockefeller in particular that ensured this system was preserved. Later, when Reagan tried to touch the "sacred cow" of American social policy, the old-age pension, in 1981, he was immediately rebuffed by his Republican party friends.²⁴

Tax-funded federal welfare benefits also date back to the New Deal. These began in 1935 with income support for the needy seniors, the blind, and families with minor children. This was followed in 1950 by aid to the disabled, in the context of the "War on Poverty" under President Johnson; by nutritional assistance (*Food Stamp Program*); in 1965 by coverage of the costs of medical care for the needy (*Medicaid*); and, finally, in 1974 by income maintenance assistance. Today, there are more than 70 individual programs in the area of social assistance, accessibility to which depends on an individual examination of income and need.

Reagan's attacks against the—in his view—exaggerations of the welfare state and his proposals for savings were primarily directed against this area. In his fight to tame the excesses of the welfare state, he was able to draw on a widespread pattern of opinion that these programs suffered from corruption and bureaucratic incompetence and, above all, did not separate the "truly needy" from the parasites and the lazy. Today, the public debate oscillates between the need of citizens to protect themselves against the risks of old age, illness, accident, and unemployment, and to alleviate the hardships of the bottom third of the American population, and the call for less government, less taxes, more personal initiative, more personal responsibility, and a return to traditional American values. In principle, as they were in 1932, these opposing positions are based on different views of the individual and society. Thus, the election campaign between Hoover and Roosevelt is still not over.

24 Nash et al, *Social Security* 1988, pp. 77 ff; an excellent overview of U.S. social legislation in: Murswieck, *Social Policy* 1990, pp. 162–66.

6. Germany in the Political Calculus of the United States, 1933–1945

The essential content of American-German relations from 1890 to 1945 was the strategic and economic antagonism between the twofold attempt of the post-Bismarck German Reich to break out of its semi-hegemonic position in the center of Europe and become a world power among world powers, and the twofold response of the United States to prevent this and to keep Germany in the position of a democratic middle power in Europe. The intellectual, moral, and political antagonism between democracy and National Socialism was an integral part of this conflict. The rise of America as the world hegemonic power of 1945 and the establishment of a Pax Americana in the immediate postwar period were a consequence of these dual German challenges.

Change and discontinuity are the special external features of relations between the German Reich and the United States. This is true for the period 1890–1945 in general, and for the 12 years of National Socialist rule in particular. The high point and turning point of this struggle were the years 1939–1941, when National Socialist Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan threatened to establish “New Orders” on the Eurasian continent that would destroy U.S. global interests and the *one American model for the whole world*, the “*novus ordo seclorum*,” as can be read on every dollar bill. By the fall of 1940 at the latest, Hitler saw in the American President Franklin D. Roosevelt the real enemy and world political opponent to his attempt to force Europe under National Socialist racial rule. That was exactly how Roosevelt saw himself, and that is also how the Western world saw Roosevelt at the time. In 1940/41, when the future of Western, i.e., Christian-Jewish, liberal, and capitalist civilization was at stake, Roosevelt was the last hope of the democracies and the real alternative to Hitler; not the Soviet dictator Stalin, nor the conservative Tory and politician of empire Churchill.

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The following summary and problem-centered reflections will focus on the “factor” of Germany in U.S. foreign policy calculations from 1933 to 1945. They will attempt to answer two questions. First, why, even *before* the attack on Pearl Harbor and before Germany’s declaration of war on the United States on December 11, 1941, had U.S. President Roosevelt and the so-called interventionists led a divided nation, stuck in an atmosphere of isolationism with regard to political alliances, to a point where it was no longer a question of *whether*, but only *when* and *how*, the United States would enter World War II? Or to put it another way: What were the causes of American entry into the war against Germany? Second, from the U.S. perspective, what was to happen to the German Reich and the German people in the center of Europe after the foreseeable defeat of National Socialism? Or to put it another way: What was America planning for Germany during the war?

I.

When Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor on January 30, 1933, American-German relations lacked almost any substance. Germany and America were “oceans apart.” Germany played only a marginal role in the actual foreign policy of the United States in 1933. This loss of substance had occurred in two stages. In terms of strategic alliance policy, the U.S. withdrawal from Europe had begun with the two refusals of the U.S. Senate in 1920 to ratify, on the one hand, the League of Nations Statute and thus the Treaty of Versailles in the form negotiated by President Wilson in Paris in 1919, and, on the other hand, to give its consent to an American-French alliance treaty, which the French politicians had wrested from Wilson in exchange for relinquishing the left bank of the Rhine. In keeping with President Harding’s campaign slogan, “Back to Normalcy,” the Senate returned to traditional American foreign policy. Since the end of the first and only alliance with France in 1798, this meant not allowing alliances to limit the U.S.’ free hand and entangle it in the affairs of old Europe, which, from the American point of view, was corrupt anyway. This anathema of American foreign policy held true for 150 years, from 1798 until the founding of NATO in 1949.

Therefore, only the extraordinary economic influence of the U.S. in Europe and Germany gave support and substance to American-German relations in the 1920s (Dawes Plan, Young Plan, U.S. investments in

Germany, etc.). There were no alliance relations, and the temporary common ground in disarmament rhetoric remained verbal because it concealed profound clashes of national interest and different geographic starting points. The Great Depression of 1929–1933, the most severe economic crisis since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, also eroded the remaining economic basis of the American-German relationship. Along with the open world market, the crisis also destroyed the factual basis for cooperation. The withdrawal of American capital, the collapse of the world monetary system in the summer of 1931, the shrinking of world trade, the crisis-exacerbating protectionism imposed by the governments of all states for domestic political reasons, and, finally, the actual end of the problem of German reparations and the Allies' war debts to the United States destroyed the parallel economic interests of both countries.

Objectively, and in Hitler's eyes, the world economic crisis led to the loss of influence of the USA. Hitler therefore considered America's goodwill useful but comparatively trivial. In the short and medium term, he could expect to pursue his foreign policy goals in Europe without regard to the United States. Therefore, in his actual foreign policy, he ignored the United States altogether until the Munich Agreement of 1938 and largely until the invasion of Poland. Roosevelt, for his part, when he took office on March 4, 1933, no longer possessed even the economic means to influence Nazi foreign policy—if he had wanted to, and given the dominant isolationist zeitgeist in the United States, he could have. Both politicians set priorities in 1933 without regard for the other country, with the consequence that behind the official façade of diplomatic normality, the web of relations continued to unravel in 1933. For Roosevelt, the domestic reform strategy to overcome the severe economic crisis in the United States, the “New Deal,” had absolute priority. On July 3, 1933, Roosevelt's “bomb-shell message” blew the lid off the London World Economic Conference. The president thus made it clear that the U.S. was not initially prepared to cooperate economically with other countries to overcome the Great Depression.

Hitler also set priorities in 1933. Germany walked out of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on October 14, 1933, and, at the same time, announced Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations. While Europe and the United States were shocked, Roosevelt tried to limit the domestic damage tactically. He did so by reaffirming the creed of the isolationist majority (which he did not share) that the

“New World” had nothing in common politically with the “Old World.” The European states would have to know for themselves whether they wanted to continue disarmament talks after Hitler’s decision.

The American people’s initial reaction to the establishment of the National Socialist dictatorship was on the level of domestic politics. Already in the first six months of Nazi rule, German prestige in the U.S. began to decline dramatically; as early as 1933, part of public opinion in the U.S. came to the conclusion that the new dictatorship represented a danger to world peace and that the effects of the National Socialist revolution were not limited to Germany. In 1933, a movement was formed for a boycott of German goods in America, and on March 7, 1934, a “show trial” took place in Madison Square Garden in New York, when 20 witnesses testified against Hitler and National Socialism, and 20,000 people subsequently condemned the German government for crimes against civilization. At the same time, the American public turned its attention with growing disquiet to the supposed “Trojan Horse” of the NSDAP in the U.S., the “League of Friends of the New Germany,” formed in July 1933 with financial help from the NSDAP and support from German consulates.

The fear that National Socialist Germany would endanger world peace and possibly U.S. domestic security did not, however, lead to a preventive U.S. interventionist policy in Europe, but, on the contrary, to a strengthening of the prevailing isolationist mood of the American people to separate themselves even more decisively from Europe in the face of these danger signals. This prevailing mood is the most important determinant of American foreign policy until the outbreak of the European war in 1939. What Hitler, Mussolini, and Japan later tried in vain to do with the Three-Power Pact in 1940, namely, to keep America out of Europe and Asia and to scare it back into the Western Hemisphere, the American Congress initially did itself by passing neutrality laws.

The world political situation was paradoxical. 1935 saw the beginning of one of those accelerated processes in Europe and the Far East that would have provided Jacob Burckhardt with a global illustration of the kind of historical crises that he contemplated. In that year, congress, under the pressure of public opinion, brought the process of political isolation from Europe, which had begun after Versailles, to its logical and radical end. Through the Neutrality Acts of 1935 to 1937, Congress completed the index of foreign policy measures forbidden to the Roosevelt administration in times of war and crisis. The rigorous Third Neutrality Act of May 1, 1937, included a *nonpartisan ban on the export of arms*,

munitions, and implements of war; a ban on loans to belligerent nations; a ban on American citizens traveling on ships of belligerent nations; a ban on American merchant vessels transporting goods to belligerent nations; and a ban on arming American merchant vessels engaged in nonprohibited trade with belligerent nations. These prohibitions automatically went into effect when the President “found” that a state of war existed between nations. Once this finding was made, the President’s discretion was limited to the “cash-and-carry clause.” Under this clause, belligerent nations were permitted to purchase all but “deadly weapons” in the United States if they had become the property of foreigners by cash payment before leaving American ports (cash) and were carried off by them on their own ships (carry). Since this clause was limited to two years, Roosevelt no longer had this means at his disposal when the European war broke out in September 1939.

Although Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull had not wanted this legislation and, as will be shown, did not share the isolationists’ basic conviction that the U.S. national interest should be limited to the Western Hemisphere, they allowed this legislation to pass so as not to jeopardize the legislative majority for the New Deal’s domestic reform measures. On the other hand, this domestic consideration meant a further decrease of Roosevelt’s influence on foreign policy in Europe and Asia.

Only when one compares the resources Roosevelt had at his disposal with America’s European policy from 1917 to 1929 or from 1941 to the present, do the extraordinary limitations placed by Congress and public opinion on the president’s room for maneuver from 1933 to 1940 become sufficiently clear. As an unarmed prophet, he could only send signals to Hitler and Mussolini, for example, during the Sudeten crisis, after the German invasion of Prague, or after the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. The trade policy pinprick of expressly exempting Germany from the unconditional most-favored-nation clause when concluding foreign trade treaties with third countries apparently did not impress Hitler, nor did the mutual recall of ambassadors after the *Kristallnacht*. In light of the neutrality laws and the prevalent isolationist opinion—in early September 1939, according to a Gallup poll, 84% of those interviewed answered “no” to the question of whether the U.S. should use its army and navy against Germany¹—the Roosevelt administration could only hope to pursue an active European and

1 The Gallup Poll. Public Opinion 1935–1957, vol. I, 1935–1948, New York 1972, p. 180.

Asian policy once it had convinced the majority of Americans that the vital interests of the U.S. were threatened by the Axis powers and Japan. This was precisely the president's central message since 1937 throughout his domestic struggle with the isolationists, which was only ended by Pearl Harbor.

The core of this domestic conflict was, however, not the moral and democratic problem of whether Roosevelt acted tactically toward the American people with regard to the question of war and peace, concealing parts of the truth from them or even lying to them (all of which he did). Nor was it the problem of whether the isolationists distorted Roosevelt's motives and labeled him a warmonger with dictatorial tendencies (all of which they did). Rather, it was the irreconcilable disagreement between the two camps over the current and future position of the United States in the world. Between 1937 and 1941, the fourth major domestic political debate was conducted regarding the foreign policy question of whether the United States should be a world power in the literal sense or should be content with the role of a major regional power in the Western Hemisphere—the fourth debate after those in 1898, 1914–1917, and 1920. In this debate, the assessment of the Nazi, rather than the Japanese, threat to the United States occupied a central place. *The conflict centered on the threat potential of Hitler and National Socialist Germany to the United States.* Those who ask about the circumstances and causes of U.S. entry into the war against Germany would therefore be well advised to reconstruct the main arguments of this conflict. For the reason for U.S. entry into the war lay not in the challenge from Germany, Italy, and Japan as such, but in the way the internationalists, with Roosevelt at their head, interpreted that challenge. Therefore, in what follows, the positions of both camps will be presented with ideal-typical brevity.

The isolationists had created a very effective organization, the America First Committee, whose most prominent member became the aviator, crosser of the Atlantic, and folk hero Charles Lindbergh. In any case, Lindbergh was Roosevelt's most popular domestic opponent until 1941. The four principles of the "America First Committee," copies of which were distributed by the millions and propagated over the radio, limited the vital interest of the USA, i.e., to be defended by force of arms, if necessary, to the Western Hemisphere, the Eastern Pacific, and the Western Atlantic—in the geographical sense to just under half of the globe. These four principles were worded as follows:

1. The United States must build an impregnable defense for America.
2. No foreign power, nor group of powers, can successfully attack a prepared America.
3. American democracy can be preserved only by keeping out of the European war.
4. “Aid short of war” weakens national defense at home and threatens to involve America in war abroad.

Resulting from these principles, the isolationists strongly advocated that the U.S. not intervene in the European war. As long as the U.S. itself was not attacked, the isolationists believed that U.S. entry into the war could not be justified—whatever happened in Europe and Asia. The evils that would result for the U.S. were greater than the consequences of an Axis victory.

For many isolationists, the First World War and its aftermath were a striking example of the utter futility of trying to have a say in what happened in the old Europe, which was morally rotten and continually shaken by wars. Had not developments since 1919 convincingly demonstrated how correct the traditional “splendid isolation” of the U.S. in the 19th century had been? Had not the investigating committee chaired by Senator Gerald P. Nye in 1934/35 demonstrated before all the public that the American nation had been dragged into the First World War by the international bankers and the armaments industry, the “merchants of death”? Instead of once again playing the role of world policeman, instead of once again pulling chestnuts out of the fire for the British Empire, the U.S. should continue to remember George Washington’s wise farewell address in which he advised the nation to stay out of Europe’s wars.

U.S. security, the isolationists argued, was not threatened by Hitler; an America armed to the teeth with defensive intent, a “Fortress America” in possession of a two-ocean fleet, was impregnable to any attacker. Through the President’s speeches and through government spokesmen, a hysterical fear of Nazi invasion was being stoked. Statements such as that of the former American ambassador to France, William C. Bullitt, that Hitler would invade Independence Hall in Philadelphia after a fall of England, were nothing but warmongering. Economically, too, the isolationists argued, the United States could cope with the loss of markets in Eurasia. Even after victory in Europe, Hitler could by no means dictate terms of trade. Trade, they argued, was never a one-way street. Moreover, a five percent increase in domestic

trade would bring in more dollars than a 100 percent increase in foreign trade. All in all, there was “no clear and present danger” to the survival of the United States.

The internationalists, on the other hand, with Roosevelt at their head, did not reduce the U.S. national interest to the Western Hemisphere, but determined it on a global scale, economically, militarily, and idealistically. What they never admitted to the isolationist majority of Americans until Pearl Harbor was that U.S. entry into the war was the necessary consequence of this definition of the national interest.

Already since 1934, with the promulgation of the new U.S. Foreign Trade Act, a trade policy antagonism had developed between the U.S. and the later aggressor nations. Through the military successes of these powers, this antagonism acquired a qualitatively new function, namely that of co-deciding the entry of the U.S. into the war. For each military success brought with it the possibility of a specific economic reality, the realization of which, in the eyes of Roosevelt and the internationalists, would have meant disaster par excellence for the American economy. Its basic structure may be outlined with a few sentences: A victory of Hitler and Italy in Europe, and of Japan in the Far East, would force both regions into a system of an almost autarkic planned economy. The U.S. would lose its investments, the volume of trade would fall drastically, and foreign trade, if any, would take place on the terms of the Axis powers. South America, Europe’s natural supplier, would noticeably fall under the influence of Hitler’s Europe. With the shrinkage of U.S. import and export industries and the attendant secondary effects on the economy as a whole, the unemployment problem, unsolved by the New Deal, would come to a radical head and create social tensions that could not be resolved under the existing system. In other words, for the internationalists, the open, undivided world market was one of the basic conditions for the survival of the American system.

With regard to the military aspect, at the beginning of Roosevelt’s presidency, the American security zone included the Western Hemisphere and half the Pacific Ocean—in total about a third of the globe. Since the Munich Conference and Japan’s almost simultaneous proclamation of a “New Order” in East Asia, Roosevelt pushed the boundaries of U.S. security further and further until, by 1941, through the Lend-Lease program, they had literally taken on global dimensions. The expansion was rooted in the conviction that the ultimate goal of the Axis powers, especially Hitler, was the conquest of the world, including the United States. In April 1941, the majority of Americans

shared Roosevelt's assessment. According to a poll, as many as 52.9 percent of the population believed that after a fall of England and the elimination of the British fleet, Hitler was indeed capable of successfully carrying out an invasion of the USA.²

One of the cornerstones of this reorientation was precisely a new definition of the limits of U.S. security. In this view, a limitation to the defense of the Western Hemisphere was suicidal since, without control of the world's oceans, these would be like "highways"—an often-used comparison by Roosevelt—that the Axis powers could use at any time to attack the United States. Control of the seas, however, could not be achieved by the U.S. fleet alone; it was possible only if Europe and Asia were not dominated by the Axis powers and if they had the shipbuilding capacity of two continents at their disposal. France, England, and China, and since June 1941 also the Soviet Union, would have to be supported because they were co-defending the USA by proxy. Thus, also in a military sense, the United States had a vital interest in restoring the balance of power in Europe and Asia.

The third global component in the determination of U.S. national interest before entering World War II was the idealistic one. At risk of being tedious, Roosevelt repeatedly declared the right of peoples to free self-determination and the duty of states to submit to the principles of international law in international politics were indivisible. These principles would have to apply unreservedly to all states everywhere in the world. Force and aggression as a means of changing the status quo were illegitimate. The Roosevelt administration had fully adopted the Stimson Doctrine of 1932, according to which the United States would not recognize violent territorial changes. In Roosevelt's understanding, the emerging confrontation with the Axis powers was never merely a conflict between the "haves" and the "have-nots." He interpreted it as an epochal struggle for the future shape of the world between aggressors and peaceful nations, between liberal democracy and fascism, between Western, Christian humanist civilization and barbarism, between citizens and criminals, between good and evil.

To sum up, in Roosevelt's thinking, both the ideal and the economic globalism of freedom ("Wilson's liberal globalism") was combined with a military globalism conditioned by the development of weapons technology and Hitler's assumed plans for world domination. Therefore,

2 Cf. Hadley Cantril, Mildred Strunk (eds.), *Public Opinion 1935–1946*, Princeton 1951, pp. 977, 982 f.

the U.S. had to enter the war itself, both to destroy the “New Orders” in Europe and Asia and to secure its own position as a future world power. The peculiar dialectic of American world power politics in the 20th century, namely the global definition of one’s own national interest in conjunction with the enemy’s asserted will to world domination, was also clearly evident from 1939 to 1941.

II.

Whereas from 1933 to 1941 the momentum of American-German relations had emanated from Hitler and National Socialist Germany, from December 11, 1941, the military, and especially the political, initiative passed to the United States. With the military defeat of the Third Reich becoming apparent by 1943 at the latest, it was clear that the future fate of Germany would depend to a considerable extent on America’s plan for Germany during the war. The following remarks will focus on this central aspect of American-German relations.

There was no unified, coherent planning for Germany. Roosevelt, the American people, and the Allies agreed only on the negative war and peace objectives: unconditional surrender, i.e., no negotiated peace, with the destruction of National Socialism and German militarism. The German people had to be disarmed, denazified, and re-educated, the National Socialist organizations disbanded, the war criminals tried, and any possibility of renewed German aggression prevented for all time. But beyond these goals, American policy did not develop a unified plan for Germany until Roosevelt’s death on April 12, 1945, because it was impossible to decide what was desired in the long run; whether to impose on Germany a harsh peace of revenge and oppression, dismemberment and impoverishment, or to give the country a chance to return to the community of nations as a denazified, peaceful, and economically stable state.

For it was over this very question that there was a fierce, back-and-forth struggle within the American government. The lack of clarity on this central question, combined with Roosevelt’s determination to postpone problems of the postwar order as far as possible, combined with struggles between civilians and the military, with a juxtaposition of different planning commissions, with confused decision-making processes, and with an alternating struggle among authorities and persons to influence Roosevelt, prevented a unified concept of Germany

from being reached. A prime example of this is the power struggle within the alliance and the government over the Morgenthau Plan, the detail of which can almost only be described as a satire.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the decisive questions concerning the unity or division of Germany, its borders, reparations, and the quality of occupation policy had to be decided, or at least premeditated, in a climate of unbridled war passion, hatred, and contempt for Germany and the Germans—these feelings only intensifying as, with the advance of Allied troops on all fronts, the full extent of the Nazi policy of extermination and genocide of Jews, Poles, Russians, and other peoples became known to world public opinion.

The ambivalent planning was matched by contradictory results. Until his death, Roosevelt clung to plans for the dismemberment of Germany, which had been elevated to a decision at the Yalta Conference. While Roosevelt, as an advocate of a hard peace, at least remained consistent on this issue, conflicting conceptions of Germany led to two other central problems being decided in opposite ways: Reparations and American occupation policy after the war. While Roosevelt eventually (at least since the preparations for the Yalta Conference) gave in to the moderate and economically based arguments of the State Department on the reparations question, Directive 1067 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on occupation policy after the war still sprang to a considerable extent from the spirit of revenge, namely the spirit of the Morgenthau Plan. This, according to its title, was intended to prevent Germany from starting a third world war. In view of this fact, which is no longer disputed in recent research, the following will not recount the well-known details of planning with regard to occupation policy, the reparations question, the Allied Control Council, or the Morgenthau Plan, but conversely attempt to answer the question of *why there was no coherent German policy during World War II*. Two main reasons can be given for this, in addition to several secondary ones: The first and most important thesis is that for Roosevelt American planning for Germany during World War II was a subordinate function, a dependent variable of American policy toward Stalin and the Soviet Union. To make this case, it is necessary to explain the President's principal motives for cooperating with the Soviet Union.

Two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt concluded one of his famous fireside chats with the hopeful phrases, "We will win the war, and we will win the peace." For both, Roosevelt believed he would need the cooperation of the Soviet Union.

Roosevelt needed the Soviet Union in the war because he needed to fight and win an *American war*, i.e., with unprecedented use of materials and comparatively little sacrifice of American lives. The U.S. needed the Soviet soldiers to help it put down the German and Japanese land armies. It was the only way Roosevelt could hope to politically survive the massive war effort. It is useful to occasionally recall that, excluding ethnic Germans outside Nazi-Germany and Austrians, Germany lost an estimated 3.76 million soldiers, Japan 1.2 million, the Soviet Union 13.6 million, and the United States nearly 260,000 in World War II. For every American who died in the war, 15 Germans and 53 Russians died. As early as 1942, Roosevelt knew “that the Russian armies were killing more Axis men and destroying more war material than the other 25 United Nations combined.”³ Faced with the global challenge and the compulsion to win the world war the American way, Roosevelt, like his ally Churchill, was willing to make a pact with the devil, i.e., with Stalin. While Churchill’s famous saying was, “If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons,” during World War II Roosevelt used to occasionally quote his version of an old saying: “My children, it is permitted you in time of grave danger to walk with the devil until you have crossed the bridge.”⁴

What did that mean? All of Roosevelt’s decisions, and even Truman’s up to the Potsdam Conference and Japan’s surrender, were not allowed to endanger the alliance with the Soviet Union. We know today that Truman’s overriding goal at Potsdam was to obtain a renewed assurance from Stalin of the Soviet Union’s entry into the war against Japan. The German question, on the other hand, was secondary. Stalin’s notorious distrust about a special peace between the West and the Nazis and his fears that the opening of the “Second Front” would be postponed in order to wipe out as many Russian soldiers as possible by using them as cannon fodder had to be mitigated to the greatest degree possible.

The announcement of “unconditional surrender” at Casablanca was also a signal to Stalin that the West would not conclude a special peace treaty with the aggressors. Roosevelt’s much-maligned policy of “postponement,” of deferring many problems until after victory, was also intended to avoid the danger that the alliance would be blown up by serious differences over postwar problems. Finally, Roosevelt’s

3 Cited in: John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941–1947*, New York, London 1972, p. 5.

4 Quoted in Gaddis’ *Strategies of Containment. A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, New York 1982, p. 3.

tendency to take the Soviet Union's security interest into account in his German policy deliberations had the dual function of securing wartime and postwar cooperation with the Soviet Union. In the only monograph to date on the entire period of Roosevelt's foreign policy, the American historian Robert Dallek entitled the chapter on the period from 1942 to 1945: "The Idealist as Realist."⁵ This captures the dual character of Roosevelt's postwar planning, which is also evident in his behavior toward the Soviet Union.

However imprecise American conceptions of peace were with regard to many details of the planned postwar order, and however long Roosevelt tried to postpone controversial questions in the interest of undisturbed wartime military cooperation, the general American ideas about a future peace were known to the world throughout the war. They also remained unchanged during the war. These principles, these ideals, had already been proclaimed in the Atlantic Charter in 1941. If one looks closely, these principles call for what Roosevelt feared losing if the Axis powers and Japan were victorious: indivisible security, indivisible freedom, and an indivisible world market. The Atlantic Charter was a form, cast in principles, of the global reach of the U.S. national interest. The right of self-determination for all peoples and the principle that boundary adjustments should be made only in accordance with the will of the people concerned were intended to secure indivisible freedom. Free access by all nations to world trade and the earth's raw materials, freedom of the seas, and cooperation among nations to ensure improved working conditions, economic advancement, and social security should make the indivisible world market possible. Renunciation of violence, secure borders, disarmament of aggressor nations, and a more comprehensive and permanent system of general security were to make security indivisible. These guiding principles for the future were old American ideals, no different in substance from Wilson's ideas.

What was new was the historical experience of the interwar period. Not only Roosevelt and the internationalists, but also the vast majority of the so-called isolationists now recognized in retrospect that all attempts in the 1930s to keep the U.S. out of the wars of Europe and Asia through rigorous neutrality laws had failed. In the future, the U.S. would be able to avoid wars only if America joined a system

5 Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy 1932–1945*, Part IV, New York, Oxford 1979.

of collective security that was also truly capable of avoiding future wars. America's entry into an improved and strengthened League of Nations seemed the only hope for future peace.

On the other hand, there was also the realist Roosevelt, who knew from the autumn of 1943 that victory in World War II would make the Soviet Union a Eurasian world power; with the consequence that world peace after the most murderous war in history would depend on cooperation with the Soviet Union. Roosevelt, as a realist, knew that future peace would have to be, at its core, not a peace of rights but a peace of power. Therefore, he developed his idea of the four world policemen, which remained the central concept in his thinking throughout the war. According to this concept, the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China were to secure peace indefinitely after the war as an international police power. The confusion about the political postwar order and postwar planning of the United States, which is also widespread in the historical literature, stems not least from the fact that Roosevelt concealed his power-political concept of peacekeeping after the war from the American public, but explained it in great detail to Soviet politicians (Molotov in May 1942 and Stalin in Tehran) as well as to the British.

The United Nations Charter finally adopted in San Francisco in 1945, with its two central organs, the General Assembly and the Security Council, in which the five permanent representatives have veto power, can be seen formally as a compromise between the two conceptions of a general League of Nations (“one nation, one vote”) and the privileged position of a few favored nations.

The realist Roosevelt never had any illusions that both the concept of the four world policemen and that of the Security Council would depend on continuing political agreement among the four world policemen. Therefore, Roosevelt had to recognize to a certain extent the Soviet Union's need for security in East Central Europe in order to gain cooperation with the Soviet Union in Europe, in the Far East, in the United Nations, perhaps even in building a new world economic order.

This was possible from Roosevelt's perspective because he did not consider Stalin a communist world revolutionary, nor did he think that the Soviet Union, unlike Nazi Germany and imperialist Japan, was a fundamentally expansionist and aggressive state. It was necessary, Roosevelt said again and again, to have confidence in Stalin and to give him what could be given within the framework of the Atlantic Charter in order to reduce Stalin's distrust of the West.

Only when this overriding goal of Roosevelt's foreign policy is kept in mind does it become clear why planning on Germany became to a considerable extent a function of American policy toward the Soviet Union. The de facto acceptance of the incorporation of the Baltic states, the westward shift of Poland, the plans for the dismemberment of Germany, and Roosevelt's temporary approval of the Morgenthau Plan also served the function of letting Stalin know that one was sympathetic to the Soviet Union's security needs. Only because it included *demands for both Soviet-friendly governments and governments resulting from free elections*, could American Eastern European policy achieve its goals. For Roosevelt, these concessions to Stalin were also comparatively easy to make because they were consistent with his basic conviction of imposing a harsh piece of vengeance and punishment on Germany. And herein lies the second thesis as to why there was no coherent policy toward Germany. The uplifting, milder, more economically reasonable path had to prevail against Roosevelt's conviction. Or, to put it another way, Roosevelt's heart was behind the basic tendencies of the Morgenthau Plan.

Roosevelt had not had a particularly good opinion of Germany and the Germans throughout his life. Even as a nine-year-old, when, for the first and only time in his life, he came into contact with an elementary school for six weeks in Bad Nauheim in 1891, the first anti-German resentments began to form in him. These were later intensified during bicycle tours through southern Germany before the First World War. From a very early age, he considered the Germans to be overbearing, arrogant, militaristic, and aggressive. Even before the outbreak of World War I, he viewed Germany as a nation that could threaten the security and welfare of the United States. If crucial decisions in World War I had been decided by him, in his position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Wilson administration, the U.S. would have declared war on Germany much earlier than 1917.

Wilson's interpretation of the U.S. entry into World War I as a crusade for democracy of liberal-capitalist pattern met with his full approval, all the more so because, as with the average American, his image of the Germans—the "Huns"—became increasingly negative as time went on. When he was sent on an inspection tour of Europe in the summer of 1918, this view was reinforced by tales of German atrocities told to him by King George V of England and French Prime Minister Clemenceau. The rise and success of Hitler confirmed these sentiments. For Roosevelt, Hitler was not an exceptional phenomenon;

for him, National Socialism reflected a basic trait of the aggressive, Prussian-German national character. At the same time, Roosevelt began a reassessment of the Treaty of Versailles. He now saw this treaty as bad because it had turned out too lenient for Germany. This time, the safeguards against the resurgence of a Prussian-German militarism would have to be better. He considered a fragmentation and partition of Germany the only means to prevent future aggression.

Before and during the Quebec Conference, Roosevelt could not be persuaded to abandon his support for the Morgenthau Plan. He backed away only when the plan, which had become public through an indiscretion, began to play a role in the 1944 presidential campaign. The pressure to do so grew when the argument gained currency that the plan would only strengthen German resistance on the Western Front and lead to an increase in American casualties. The latter was indeed a politically dangerous argument, and Roosevelt, as a domestic politician, had no choice but to distance himself from the plan, against his basic convictions. Inwardly, he probably held to the concept of a Carthaginian peace until his death.

The spirit of the Morgenthau Plan, however, found its way to a considerable extent into Directive 1067, as already indicated. This was the result of a protracted power struggle involving representatives of the State, Treasury, and War Departments. The penultimate version was approved by Roosevelt on March 20, 1945, and the final version by Truman on May 11, 1945. On that day, Morgenthau wrote in his diary, “This is a great day for the Treasury Department. I hope somebody doesn’t recognize it as the Morgenthau Plan.”⁶

On the other hand, and this was the profoundly contradictory aspect of this development, the State Department regained greater influence over the reparations question during the planning phase for the Yalta Conference, which was also due to Edward Stettinius Jr. replacing Cordell Hull as Secretary of State. In any case, the State Department’s preparatory papers for this conference reflected the more moderate position, which was guided in large part precisely by long-term, economic considerations. It was important, the basic tenor went, that military commanders in the planned three occupation zones pursue a unified policy. Only in this way could it be ensured that the highly industrialized western parts received the all-important foodstuffs from

6 John Morton Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries. Years of War 1941–1945*, Boston 1967, p. 460.

the Soviet occupation zone. The long-term goal was the assimilation of a reformed, peaceful, and economically non-aggressive Germany into a liberal world trading system. On the reparations question, planners in the State Department firmly pointed out that the mistakes made after World War I should not be repeated. To avoid the problems of transferring money as after World War I, reparations were to be made only in goods and services. The time for economically reasonable reparations should be limited to five years, if possible. Above all, under no circumstances should Americans be put back into the position of financing reparations directly or indirectly through borrowing. The whole senseless debt-reparations merry-go-round of the twenties should not be repeated. First and foremost, imports would have to be paid for with the foreign currency that a German economy limited to peacetime production could acquire. It was due to this basic American position that the controversy with Stalin and the Soviets over the reparations problem developed at Yalta and Potsdam.

Thus, until the German surrender, the Americans had not succeeded in solving occupation policy and the reparations question according to the same principles. On the question of reparations, the State Department had finally been able to assert itself, while on the question of occupation policy, Morgenthau, parts of the War Department, and the United General Staff won out. Only in the period from May to July 1945, in the time between the German surrender and the Potsdam Conference, did Truman gradually, but still recognizably, decide in favor of the State Department's conception; namely, to prevent a planned economic chaos in Germany and Europe. Truman could soon be convinced of the nonsense of the Morgenthau plan, and in early July, he forced Morgenthau's resignation. In his memoirs, Truman wrote that he had never approved of the plan; it was an act of revenge, and there had already been too many peace treaties in history that had been born of this spirit.

7. The Continuity of Ambivalence. German Images of America, 1933–1945

Although research on the German image of America from 1933–1945 occupies only a modest place in the historiography of Hitler, National Socialism, and the Third Reich, and an overall account of the subject has been lacking until recently,¹ the individual studies that have been published do permit an attempt to present in systematic order some well-confirmed hypotheses about Germans' "images of America" from 1933–1945—about judgments, prejudices, clichés, stereotypes; about images of enemies and hatreds. This is the intention of the following essay, which the author was inspired to write by his study of Hitler's image of America.²

An overall chronological view of the years from 1933 to 1945 leads to the by no means surprising but, nevertheless, fundamental insight that published opinion on the policies of the United States and of the American President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the Nazi system of rule, which was characterized by press control, censorship, and propaganda, was primarily a function of Nazi foreign policy. In the early years of the Nazi regime, moreover, coverage of the New Deal served to legitimize Hitler's rule. The overriding foreign policy interest that Hitler and the National Socialists had in America also resulted in the major turning point in the production of images of America: from a benevolently neutral commentary on Roosevelt and American policy one finds until the second half of 1937, to a climate of opinion that became more hostile beginning in 1938/39. Whereas from 1938 onward, depending on tactical expediency, hostile propaganda toward Roosevelt and the

1 See Philipp Gassert, *America in the Third Reich. Ideology, Propaganda, and Popular Opinion 1933–1945* (Stuttgart, 1997).

2 Detlef Junker, "Hitler's Perception of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the United States of America," *FDR and His Contemporaries: Foreign Perceptions of an American President*, ed. Cornelis A. van Minnen and John F. Sears (New York, 1991) 145–56, 233–36.

First published in: Die Kontinuität der Ambivalenz. Deutsche Bilder von Amerika, 1933–1945, in: Michael Wala (ed.): Gesellschaft und Diplomatie im transatlantischen Kontext. Festschrift für Reinhard R. Doerries zum 65. Geburtstag. Franz Steiner Verlag. Stuttgart 1999, pp. 165–180.

United States was intensified or diminished, after the German declaration of war on the United States on December 11, 1941, it changed to open hatred. Although the number of publications on other aspects of the image of America, such as on economics, technology, and construction, architecture and culture, on everyday American life, and the leisure behavior of Americans, on Hollywood and the American “moneyed aristocracy,” also depends on other factors—for example, the relative prosperity of the years from 1936 to 1938 seems to have led to an “American boom”—an anti-American turn can also be detected in these areas from 1939 onward.³

The Great Depression, along with American “isolationism” and neutrality legislation, led to a rapid decline in America’s importance to Germany. From 1933 to 1936, the United States and Nazi Germany were an ocean apart. When Hitler became chancellor, he considered U.S. goodwill helpful but also relatively insignificant. Hitler ignored the United States completely until the signing of the Munich Agreement, with this hardly changing until the German invasion of Poland. None of his foreign policy decisions during these years show any consideration of American interests. In important documents, such as the Four-Year Plan and the Hossbach Memorandum, America is not even mentioned.

In the period from 1933 to 1936, Roosevelt, the New Deal, and the U.S. in general are treated kindly by Hitler and the National Socialist

3 This general assessment is derived from Hans-Jürgen Schröder, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten 1933–1939* (Wiesbaden, 1970); Harald Frisch, “Das deutsche Rooseveltbild 1933–1941” (Diss., Berlin, 1967); Josef Roidl, “Das Amerikabild der Zwischenkriegszeit in der Berliner Illustrierten Zeitung” (M.A. Thesis, Regensburg, 1987); Günter Moltmann, “Nationalklischees und Demagogie: Die deutsche Amerikapropaganda im Zweiten Weltkrieg,” in *Das Unrechtsregime. Internationale Forschung über den Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1: *Ideologie – Herrschaftssystem – Wirkung in Europa*, ed. Ursula Büttner (Hamburg, 1986) 217–42. See also *German Publications on the United States 1933 to 1945*, compiled by Hans Hainebach, The New York Public Library (New York, 1948) 3: “It will surprise no one to learn that the great majority of the items listed here reflect the ideology of the government then in power, taking a rather negative view of America as compared to Germany. Still, up to 1938, a certain measure of objectivity—attempted or achieved—can be found in many German writings, while hostile attitudes toward the United States are often confined to attacks on the anti-Nazi groups in America. After 1938, anti-Americanism becomes much more outspoken, but is still restrained as long as there seems to be any hope for continued American neutrality. An openly hostile attitude toward everything American is evident in most writings after 1941. Thus, the year of publication can give some indication of the degree of objectivity or aggressiveness to be expected in a specific item.”

press—despite massive and growing criticism in the American media about the incipient terror in Germany.⁴ To Louis P. Lochner of the Associated Press on February 24, 1933, Hitler described his government's attitude toward the United States as "sincere friendship."⁵ Hitler's response to Roosevelt's May 16, 1933, call for disarmament was couched in friendly platitudes.⁶ On March 14, Hitler sent a message to Roosevelt through Ambassador William E. Dodd congratulating him on his "heroic efforts in the interests of the American people." The German people, he said, were watching the President's successful struggle against the economic crisis with interest and admiration. What follows can be understood as the official interpretation of Roosevelt and the New Deal in the early years of Nazi rule: "Reich Chancellor agrees with President that the virtues of duty, sacrifice, and discipline must govern the entire nation. This moral demand, which the President made of each individual citizen, is also the quintessence of the German concept of the state with its motto "The common interest before self-interest."⁷

If one follows the German press during these years, Roosevelt faced similar revolutionary challenges as Hitler and Mussolini; he too was a kind of "Führer," using dictatorial measures to intervene in economic affairs; he too had understood that the days of unfettered individualism and parliamentarism were over. Parallels were drawn between the personalities of Hitler and Roosevelt and between the tasks they faced. Roosevelt's book *Looking Forward* appeared in German translation only a few months after its publication in the United States in 1933 and was well received by Nazi Germany. The Nazi party organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, wrote that many of the statements could also have come from National Socialists and that Roosevelt had a good deal of insight into National Socialist thought.⁸

A study of the image of Roosevelt and American politics in the largest European illustrated journal of its time, the *Berliner Illustrierten Zeitung* (BIZ), comes to the same conclusion for the years 1933–1936. The illustrated journal, which belonged to the Ullstein publishing

4 See Schröder, *Germany and the United States*, 95–119; Frisch, "The German Roosevelt Picture," 31–44.

5 Schröder, *Germany and the United States*, 98.

6 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1933* (Washington, D.C., 1950) 1: 143–45 (cited as FRUS); *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, Serie C: 1933–1937* (Göttingen, 1971) 1: 445–50 (cited as ADAP).

7 Hitler's Message, ADAP CII, 1, p. 515, no. 325.

8 *Völkischer Beobachter*, June 7, 1933; quoted in Schröder, *Germany and the United States*, 102.

house, had to be sold at Hitler's express wish to the Eher publishing house—the NSDAP party publishing house where *Mein Kampf* was also printed—far below its market value; the Jewish editors then being dismissed. The mass-circulation newspaper was able to increase its appeal again after a considerable drop in sales during the Great Depression, not least because it combined readers' need for apolitical entertainment with subtle propaganda.

President Roosevelt was portrayed in the illustrated and text articles as a strong-willed leader who had overcome the affliction of polio. Numerous photos showed a likeable president fishing, playing cards, entertaining children in the White House, or in the company of his family. While U.S. foreign policy is hardly discussed in the BIZ, the alleged parallels between Roosevelt and Hitler, the New Deal and Nazi economic policy are among the leitmotifs of the mass-circulation paper. In 1934, for example, the BIZ wrote that Roosevelt was trying to “transform the capitalist economy of North America into a planned economy”; in 1936, it said that the president was on his way to “combine a fragmented economic system into a unified organization.”⁹

Obviously, such a description of the New Deal had the function of justifying one's own economic policy, with the increasingly numerous photo reports from 1937 onward on labor disputes, strikes, and violence between police and demonstrators conveying the (still) unspoken message that the National Socialists were more successful than the Americans in combating economic hardship. The BIZ' turn toward coverage hostile to Roosevelt and American policy begins abruptly in 1939, in accordance with Goebbels' instruction to the press of February 9, 1939: “The tone against Roosevelt cannot be sharp enough.”¹⁰

For Hitler himself, but also for Goebbels, for example, Roosevelt's famous quarantine speech in Chicago on October 5, 1937, seems to have been a turning point. The speech caused a sensation—and not only in the U.S.—because it completely contradicted the spirit of isolationism and impartial neutrality laws. It seemed to announce active U.S. involvement in quarantining the “present reign of terror and international lawlessness.”¹¹ According to the notes of Hitler's aide, Nikolaus

9 Roidl, “Amerikabild der Zwischenkriegszeit,” 7, 19, 33–34, 53–54, 74; the quotation is from p. 75.

10 Frisch, “Das deutsche Rooseveltbild,” 94; Roidl, “Amerikabild der Zwischenkriegszeit,” 76.

11 Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. 4, 1937 (New York, 1941), 406–11.

von Below, Hitler took this speech “very seriously.” Hitler was particularly incensed by Roosevelt’s claim that 90 percent of humanity was threatened by 10 percent. This, he declared, was proof that Roosevelt no longer counted the Russians as aggressors. Hitler saw the reason for Roosevelt’s “turnaround,” Below said, in the alarming decline of the American economy and the precipitous increase in unemployment.¹² In Goebbels’ diaries, too, the mood against Roosevelt shifts after the quarantine speech. While the few entries about Roosevelt since 1933 are kept in a tone of neutral condescension,¹³ on October 6, 1937, he writes: “Roosevelt made a mean speech. With hidden attacks against Japan, Italy, and Germany. As stupid as it was underhanded. Great global sensation. We want to place it in the press as small and incidental...”¹⁴

The quarantine speech as a watershed of America’s reception in the National Socialist leadership could also explain why, so far, no negative statements by Hitler about the USA have become known for the period from 1933 to 1936—if one disregards the dubious recollections of an Ernst (“Putzi”) Hanfstaengel or Hermann Rauschning. Especially Rauschning’s alleged conversations with Hitler should no longer be used as a source.¹⁵

A systematic complete overview of the years from 1933–1945 leads to the—possibly also unsurprising—insight that the traditional ambivalence of the German image of America changed little during these years as well. In part, this consisted of repeating judgments and prejudices that had been part of German admiration and criticism of America

12 Nikolaus von Below, *Als Hitlers Adjutant* (Mainz, 1980), 47.

13 The diaries of Josef Goebbels. *Sämtliche Fragmente*. Edited by Elke Fröhlich on behalf of the Institute of Contemporary History and in conjunction with the Federal Archives (Munich, 1987) vol. 2, 1931–1936: 716 (entry of November 5, 1936); vol. 3, 1937–1939: 11 (entry of January 15, 1937), 36 (entry of February 7, 1937), 99 (entry of April 4, 1937), 211 (entry of July 24, 1937).

14 The Diaries of Josef Goebbels, vol. 3, 1937–1939: 291 (entry of October 6, 1937).

15 Ernst Hanfstaengel, *Zwischen Weißem und Braunem Haus. Erinnerungen eines politischen Außenseiters* (Munich, 1970); Hermann Rauschning, *Gespräche mit Hitler* (Zurich, 1940). On the problem of the reliability of Rauschning’s supposed “conversations” with Hitler, see Theodor Schieder, *Hermann Rauschning’s “Conversations with Hitler” as a Historical Source* (Opladen, 1972); Wolfgang Hänel, *Hermann Rauschning’s “Conversations with Hitler”—a Falsification of History* (Ingolstadt, 1984); Martin Broszat, “Enthüllung? The Rauschning Controversy,” in *After Hitler. Der schwierige Umgang mit unserer Geschichte*, ed. Hermann Graml and Klaus-Dietmar Henke (Munich, 1986) 249–51. Hänel argues convincingly that Rauschning by no means spoke with Hitler a hundred times. He had had only four opportunities for conversation, and none of them were in private.

since the Romantic period¹⁶, and included topoi that had emerged since the Kaiserreich and the Weimar Republic—in the face of the hostility of World War I, the rise of the U.S. as a political, economic, and cultural world power, and the confrontation with “modernity” that the U.S. represented.¹⁷

At the same time, as in all historical processes, there was, in addition to continuity, unique exceptions. The special feature of the National Socialist production of images of America was that a marginal phenomenon of German criticism of America since the end of World War I, namely, the anti-Semitic racist anti-Americanism of the extreme German right, gradually became the dominant factor from 1938/39 onward. The racist component of National Socialist anti-Americanism initially receded completely into the background after the seizure of power for reasons of political expediency, presumably also because of the insignificance of the United States with regard to power-politics. It became an integral part of party and state ideology only at the moment when it became apparent to Hitler that Roosevelt and the so-called “internationalists” were denying the National Socialists a “free hand” to build a racial empire from the Atlantic to the Urals. As a reconstruction of his image of America in the 1920s shows, Hitler

16 Ernst Fraenkel, *Amerika im Spiegel des deutschen politischen Denkens. Äußerungen deutscher Staatsmänner und Staatsdenker über Staat und Gesellschaft in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Cologne and Opladen, 1959); Manfred Henningsen, *Der Fall Amerika: Zur Sozial- und Bewußtseinsgeschichte einer Verdrängung* (Munich, 1974); Günter Moltmann, “Deutscher Anti-Amerikanismus heute und früher,” in *Vom Sinn der Geschichte*, ed. Otmar Franz (Stuttgart, 1976) 85–105; Rob Kroes and Marten van Rossem, eds, *Anti-Americanism in Europe* (Amsterdam, 1986); Hartmut Wasser, “Die Deutschen und Amerika,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, supplement to *Das Parlament*, B 26/76, 3–15; Walter Kühnel, “Towards the Tricentennial of Happy Misunderstandings: Intercultural Studies of America,” *Perceptions and Misperceptions: The United States and Germany*, eds. Lothar Bredella and Dietmar Haack (Tübingen, 1988) 177–202; Hildegard Meyer, *Nordamerika im Urteil des deutschen Schrifttums bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg, 1929).

17 Peter Berg, *Germany and America, 1918–1929* (Lübeck, 1963); Erich Angermann, “Die Auseinandersetzung mit der Moderne in Deutschland und den USA in den ‚Goldenen zwanziger Jahren.‘” *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichts- und Geographie-Unterricht* 11 (1967) 76–87; Klaus Schwabe, “Anti-Americanism within the German Right 1917–1933,” *Amerikastudien* 21 (1976): 89–107; Detlef J.K. Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik. Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne* (Frankfurt/M., 1981) 166–90; Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion. American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca, 1984) 167–83; Manfred Berg, *Gustav Stresemann and the United States of America. Weltwirtschaftliche Verflechtung und Revisionspolitik 1907–1929* (Baden-Baden, 1990) 231–73.

himself embodied, both traditions, the continuity of ambivalence and anti-Semitic racist anti-Americanism.¹⁸

In the 1920s, Hitler's attitude toward the United States was ambivalent. Alternating between admiration and contempt, between "wonderland" and "madness," Hitler's views never formed a firm or realistic picture of the United States. Hitler's view of the United States was shaped by his ideological dogmatism and surpassed the ideological prejudice of such famous "armchair travelers" as Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, or Karl May. In his role as an ideologue and programmatic thinker, Hitler declared that the competition of races and peoples for limited living space, based on war and violence, was the eternal law of world history. The fanatical autodidact absorbed only such information as fit his prejudices, so that they could never be questioned.

In addition to these limitations resulting from his dogmatic nature, however, there were also objective obstacles for Hitler to form a realistic picture of the United States. Hitler spoke no English, had never been to an Anglo-Saxon country, and he viewed all democratic tendencies as Jewish, internationalist traditions and crimes against humanity. His worldview was Eurocentric, fixated on the European theater and the power of armies. He never developed even a rudimentary understanding of Anglo-Saxon naval power. Moreover, Hitler hated the water and the sea. In 1928 he wrote that on land, he was a hero; at sea, a coward.¹⁹

18 On Hitler's view of the United States and Franklin D. Roosevelt see James V. Compton, *Hitler and the United States. The American Policy of the Third Reich and the Origins of World War II* (Oldenburg, 1968); Saul Friedländer, *Prelude to Downfall. Hitler and the United States 1939–1941* (Stuttgart, 1965); Joachim Remak, "Hitler's American Policy," *Aussenpolitik* 6 (1955): 706–14; Gerhard L. Weinberg, "Hitler's Image of the United States," *World in the Balance. Behind the Scenes of World War II*, ed. Gerhard L. Weinberg (Hanover, NH, 1981) 53–74; Andreas Hillgruber, "Der Faktor Amerika in Hitlers Strategie 1938–1941," in Andreas Hillgruber, *Deutsche Großmacht- und Weltpolitik im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf, 1977) 197–222; *ibid.*, "Hitler and the United States 1933–1945," *Germany and the United States 1890–1985*, Heidelberg American Studies Background Paper no. 2, ed. Detlef Junker (Heidelberg, 1986) 27–41; Gordon A. Craig, "Roosevelt and Hitler: The Problem of Perception," *German Question and European Balance. Festschrift für A. Hillgruber*, ed. Klaus Hildebrand and Reiner Pommerin (Cologne, 1985) 169–94; Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Roosevelt and Hitler. Prelude to War* (New York, 1989); Junker, "Hitler's Perception of Franklin D. Roosevelt"; Frisch, "The German Image of Roosevelt," Gassert, *America*, 87–103.

19 Quoted in Holger H. Herwig, *Politics of Frustration: The United States in German Naval Planning, 1889–1941* (Boston, 1976) 188.

Since Hitler regarded war simultaneously as the normal state of history and as the engine of progress, it is not surprising that war was also central to his thinking in relation to America. The most important theme of Hitler's not very numerous statements about the USA until 1924 are the causes of that country's entry into the First World War; from 1924 until the Great Depression, his assessment of America is dominated by the potential threat to Europe from the USA; he developed little interest in the weak America of the Great Depression and the Neutrality Acts; and from 1938 to 1945, his thinking about America again revolves around the war with the USA.

For America's entry into World War I, Hitler blamed the Jews, the Jewish race, the Jewish press, Jewish-dominated "international loan capital," the "capital and trust democracy." As their puppet, Hitler said, President Woodrow Wilson had driven the American people into war.²⁰ The alleged Jewish conspiracy was clearly the main motive of these early years, with the European platitude about American "materialism" being brought into close connection with the Jews: "The Americans put everything above business, money remains money, even if it is soaked in blood. With the Jew, the purse is the most sacred thing. America would have seized the opportunity with or without a submarine."²¹ It is noteworthy that he did not yet use his knowledge of American immigration laws in these early years to assert a dominance of the Germanic element in American society.²²

Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* and his Second Book from 1924–1930, when the strong economic and cultural presence of the United States in Germany, under the heading of "Americanism," triggered a new discussion about the importance of the United States, even on the far right. Hitler was forced to rethink and clarify his image of America. It is therefore no coincidence that longer passages about the USA only appeared in his *Second Book*.

If one searches *Mein Kampf* for statements about America, one finds that the U.S. plays no role in Hitler's Eurocentric program, nor in his thinking about possible allies for Germany. Agitations against the Dawes Plan do not occur, and the differences between National Socialist ideology and American democracy are either too obvious or too irrelevant to mention. The few mentions of the United States contain

20 Eberhard Jäckel and Axel Kuhn, eds., *Hitler. Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen 1905–1924* (Stuttgart, 1980) 97, 135, 148, 198, 204, 235, 237, 257, 328, 372–73, 890–91.

21 *Ibid.*, 97.

22 *Ibid.*, 96, 717, 908.

expressions of admiration. Hitler believed that the Germanic race dominated America, thanks to a skillful racial and immigration policy, but was perpetually threatened by the Jewish bacillus. For Hitler, the United States was the model of a state organized on the principles of race and space. Because of the favorable ratio of population to space—the decisive criterion in Hitler’s ideology—the United States was the archetype of a world power, destined to replace the British Empire.²³

In his *Second Book*, these assumptions come even more to the fore. The U.S. appears here as the prototype of a world power characterized by sufficient living space, a proper racial policy, a large domestic market, high living standards, exceptional productivity, technical progress, mobility, and mass production.²⁴

One of the younger scholars who has studied Hitler, Rainer Zitelmann, has even hypothesized that Hitler’s goal was not an anti-modernist agrarian utopia but an American-style industrial society. Hitler may have despised American culture and society, Zitelmann writes, but he was fascinated by U.S. economic and technological development.²⁵ Jeffrey Herf has probably struck at the heart of the problem of linking Hitler’s fascination with American productivity and technology to the German tradition of “reactionary modernism”—a peculiar balancing of the irrational anti-Semitism of the “völkisch” tradition of the German right with modern technology—when he writes: “I have tried to show that the paradoxical combination of irrationalism and technics was fundamental to Hitler’s ideology and practices and to National Socialism ... Fulfillment of Nazi ideology and industrial advance reinforced one another until the former brought about the destruction and self-destruction of German society.”²⁶

However, the United States is presented in the *Second Book* not only as a prototype of a world power and a model for the National Socialist organization of living space, but also as a danger and challenge to Europe and Germany. Hitler criticized the incredible naiveté of bourgeois nationalists who believed that such a challenge could be met within the framework of an open world economy and free world

23 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (16th ed.; Munich, 1932) 1: 313–14, 2: 490, 2: 721–23.

24 Adolf Hitler, *Hitler’s Second Book. A Document from 1928*. Introduced and commented on by Gerhard L. Weinberg (Stuttgart, 1961) 120–32.

25 Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler. Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Hamburg, 1987) 320–24; see also Peter Krüger, “Zu Hitlers ‚nationalsozialistischen Wirtschafts-erkenntnissen,“ *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 6 (1980): 263–82.

26 Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism. Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1984) 222. See also Gassert, *Amerika*, 12 ff.

trade. He also attacked the pan-European movement of his time, which was under the illusion that American hegemony could be countered by the formation of a United States of Europe. For him, the conflict with the United States was inevitable—a peaceful coexistence of rival states did not figure in his worldview—and could be effectively waged only by a thoroughly rejuvenated Europe under German leadership. Only a united Europe would be able to hold its own against North America. The task of the National Socialist movement was to prepare the Fatherland with its entire potential for this task.²⁷

The transformation of his image of America, astonishing at first glance but consistent within the framework of Hitler's racist worldview, lay in the realization, new to him, that the menacingly strong USA had risen to become a world power because it had retained a high racial value through a consistent immigration policy; in contrast, for example, to Russia, which for Hitler was incapable of becoming a world power because of its racial mixture and alleged domination by the Jews, although it could compete with the USA in terms of living space and population size.²⁸ While Hitler's overall judgment was shaped by the stereotypes of the German extreme right,²⁹ in 1928 he belonged to the faction that justified America's imperialism³⁰ not by the success of the Jews but by the victory of the Germanic, Anglo-Saxon elite in the intra-American power struggle.³¹ The anti-Semitic leitmotif did not return to Hitler until the next war with the USA became apparent.

The loss of importance of the U.S. during the Great Depression, foreign policy isolationism, and American neutrality laws, official benevolence toward the New Deal, and the mindset of "reactionary modernism" led to the toleration of a journalistic freedom by the National Socialists that made it possible for the ambivalent image of America prevalent in the Weimar Republic to persist during the peacetime years of 1933–1939. The United States was present in the everyday life of the Third Reich in a variety of ways. The National Socialists obviously saw no reason to change this as long as the racial dogma was not touched. The debate about the U.S. as a symbol of modernity, about "Americanism" evaluated positively or negatively, continued, albeit with diminished intensity. The old leitmotifs of the perception

27 Hitler, *Hitler's Second Book*, 122, 130.

28 Ibid, 128–32.

29 Klaus Schwabe, "Anti-Americanism," 96 ff.

30 See Otto Bonhard, *Jüdische Weltherrschaft?* (Berlin, 1928).

31 See Alexander Graf Brockdorff, *American World Domination?* (Berlin, 1929).

of America from the Weimar Republic, such as technology, rationality, and productivity, the media and commodity world of America, mass consumption, mass entertainment and the leisure industry, sports, and the cult of the body, did not disappear from published opinion. Nor did the traditional stereotypes of cultural criticism, such as accusations of materialism and culturelessness, continue to apply. This plurality and ambivalence in the production of images of America did not change until the start of the war, when propaganda directed hate campaigns against the United States and only negative images of America were allowed to be published.

Systematic research on “Americanism” during the peacetime years of the Third Reich is still in its infancy. So far, there are only a few individual studies, on the results of which the following remarks are based.³²

The ambivalent relationship of the Nazi dictatorship to the United States is a mirror of its ambivalent relationship to modernity. The National Socialists were not luddites, but they claimed to establish the true synthesis of technology and “spirit.” Their fascination with technology, production, rationalization, automation, and mass consumption not only attracted Hitler’s gaze to the United States; their rebellion against the Enlightenment and “soulless” modernity of the West, as well as their claim to marry technology and production with “Aryan-German spirit,” with “German soul,” “German blood,” “völkisch

32 See especially the works of Gassert, *America*, 148–82, and Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein. Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945* (3rd ed.; Munich, 1983) 114–46; idem, “Amerikanismus im Dritten Reich,” *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung*, eds. Michael Prinz and Rainer Zitelmann (Darmstadt, 1991) 199–215; “Bekenntnisse zur Neuen Welt. USA-Kult vor dem 2. Weltkrieg,” Deutscher Werkbund e.V. and Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, eds, *Shock and Creation. Jugendästhetik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1986) 383–88. On the specific problem of jazz and swing, see Michael H. Kater, “Forbidden Fruit: Jazz and the Third Reich” *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 11–43; idem, *Different Drummers. Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 1992); Horst H. Lange, “Jazz: an Oasis of Desire,” *Shock and Creation*, 320–323; idem, *Jazz in Germany. Die deutsche Jazz-Chronik 1900–1960* (Berlin, 1966); Thorsten Müller, “Furcht vor der SS im Alsterpavillon,” *Shock and Creation*, 324–25. See also Roidl, “Amerikabild der Zwischenkriegszeit,” passim; Christian H. Freitag, “Die Entwicklung der Amerikastudien in Berlin bis 1945” (diss., Free University of Berlin, 1977) 131–244; and the Marxist interpretation of Wolfgang Röll, “Die USA – das entartete Europa. Zu einigen ideologischen Komponenten des ‚Amerikabildes‘ des deutschen Faschismus 1933–1945,” *Jenaer Beiträge zur Parteigeschichte* 47 (November 1984): 70–88.

aesthetics,” and the National Socialist special relationship to Providence,³³ drove them at the same time into the traditional patterns of America criticism.

Nor were the National Socialists anti-capitalists or socialists of the Marxian type. But capital was to be withdrawn from “international Jewry” and the “plutocrats”; was to be nationalized—not socialized—; was to serve the development of a war industry and a self-sufficient large economic area of Europe; and, at the same time, was to help satisfy the consumer needs of the “Volksgemeinschaft.” While they admired the ability of the large American market to produce consumer goods for the masses, by no means demonizing the ideas of competition and rivalry, the decoupling from the world market established an economic and trade policy opposition to the USA.³⁴ Moreover, Hitler and the National Socialists always defended the primacy of war and the military over the constraints of the market and the needs of a bourgeois acquisitive society. Hitler was a warrior, not a merchant: “The very ultimate decision on the outcome of the struggle for the world market will lie with force and not with the economy itself ... For finally the economy, as a purely secondary matter in the life of nations, is bound to the primary existence of a powerful state. Before the plow must stand the sword, and before the economy an army.”³⁵

Although the Nazi state gradually usurped powers of control over the economy after 1933, and the Four-Year Plan of 1936 had the task of preparing for war in peace, a private-sector, largely nonpartisan space of competition survived; a market in which American corporations remained visible and American products and American culture remained consumable by Germans. Subsidiaries of American companies continued to have a presence in the German market. They did not hesitate to participate in German rearmament. Opel (General Motors) had a 50 percent share of the German car market in 1935 and by 1939 was the largest producer of tanks in Germany, along with Ford.³⁶ It is unknown what images of America existed in the minds of Opel and

33 Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 189–216.

34 See Detlef Junker in: *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt. Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA 1933–1941* (Stuttgart, 1975) 93–116.

35 Hitler, *Hitler's Second Book*, 123–24.

36 Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt*, 103; Gabriel Kolko, “American Business and Germany, 1930–1941,” *Western Political Quarterly* 15 (1962): 713–28; Gerhart Hass, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor. Zur Geschichte der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen 1938–1941* (Berlin-Ost, 1965) 52–63. On the Ford companies, see also Johannes Reiling, *Germany: Safe for Democracy?* (Stuttgart, 1997).

Ford employees; how they reacted when Ford pledged in 1938 to produce only with “German workers and German materials,”³⁷ whether Berliners even thought of Ford as an American company when they walked past Berlin’s Europahaus and gazed at two fifty-meter-long neon banners from the Ford plant. Analogous problems apply to the Coca-Cola corporation, which expanded rapidly during the Third Reich, was present at major sporting events, and not just from the walls of the Sports Palace, where Goebbels gave his speech, urged Germans to drink “Coca-Cola ice cold.”³⁸

The car enthusiasm, indeed the car cult of the 1930s, was also partly based on the U.S. model. The German Automobile Club organized its trade journal *Motorwelt* along American lines. Hitler himself had already been impressed by motorization in the U.S. and especially by Henry Ford in the 1920s. After seizing power, he pushed Germany’s motorization and highway construction. When he called on manufacturers to produce inexpensive cars at the opening of the International Motor Show in 1936, he declared that the German people had the same needs as the American people.³⁹ As late as September 1941, during the undeclared naval war in the Atlantic, Hitler asserted, “Undemandingness is the enemy of progress. In this we resemble the Americans, that we are exacting.”⁴⁰ Included in these demands were the raising of the standard of living for the mass of “Volksgenossen” and the production of durable consumer goods based on the U.S. model: Electric stoves, electric refrigerators, electric coffee makers, grills, radios, caravans, and tents. Production of these goods began in Germany in parallel with the armaments boom. When the Blaupunkt company launched an overseas receiver in 1937 for the “spoiled critical listener,” it advertised with the New York Statue of Liberty and the promise of “pleasurable reception from the ‘New World.’”⁴¹

Other evidence also suggests that Americans were among the Germans’ “favorite foreigners” before World War II. Promoted by the shipping lines, there was a remarkable amount of travel activity by tourists, professional associations, and National Socialist organizations

37 Ford Almanac (Cologne, 1938) 6; “Ford Works in Germany,” in: *Motor-Kritik* 15 (1935): 711, quoted in Schäfer, “Amerikanismus im Dritten Reich,” 207.

38 Ibid, 205; Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein*, 118. 39 *ibid.*, 119.

39 Ibid, 119.

40 Adolf Hitler, *Monologues at the Führer’s Headquarters 1941–44*, ed. Werner Jochmann (Hamburg 1980).

41 Illustration in Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein*, Annex. 42.

to the United States, especially in the years from 1936 to 1939. In addition to traditional tourist destinations, Germans studied American automobile factories, department stores, and prisons. They surveyed American road construction and American crime fighting methods. German tourism to the U.S. was supported by new travel books—also yet to be researched—that produced images of America.⁴² The “Carl Schurz Association,” which came under the control of the Ministry of Propaganda in 1933, organized trips to the United States for professors, pupils, and students.⁴³

Even the import of popular American culture, which had reached an initial peak in the mid-1920s, was channeled, not stopped by the Nazis during the peacetime years, because the regime tolerated the private-sector dynamic within limits. Hollywood film, as well as jazz and swing, were popular, and their toleration increased approval of the system. The means of prohibition and censorship were generally used only when racial dogma was involved. Attempts to counteract the “Americanism” of popular culture through writing and words, for example, to dismiss American film as superficial, trivial, vulgar, lacking in culture and art, remained half-hearted and probably also unsuccessful.

Despite import restrictions and foreign exchange controls, the imported films from Hollywood exceeded the success of all German pre-war productions. The American films ran in the big cities for up to four months, and in the cities it was also possible to see a Hollywood film in the original version or dubbed every week until 1940. The Hollywood stars belonged as a matter of course to the star cult of the 1930s, which was promoted at special film weeks or in magazines.⁴⁴ They included Clark Gable, Robert Taylor, Joan Crawford, Vivien Leigh, Shirley Temple, Katherine Hepburn, Fred Astaire, and Ginger Rogers, but above all Greta Garbo and ... Marlene Dietrich, although in 1935 a press campaign was staged against her. The Germans’ imagination was ignited more by the erotic charisma of the dangerous “vamp” than by the homespun charm of a Paula Wessely or Marianne Hoppe.⁴⁵

Among the best researched areas of popular U.S. culture during the Third Reich are jazz and its polished and tamed variant, swing.⁴⁶ Jazz and swing were frowned upon as “nigger and Jew music” according to

42 Ibid, 206.

43 Friday, “Development of American Studies,” 149–57.

44 Roidl, “Images of America in the Interwar Period,” 113–18.

45 Schäfer, *The Split Consciousness*, 128–33.

46 See footnote 32, the works of Kater, Lange, Schäfer, and Müller.

the National Socialist worldview; they were considered undesirable, but a general ban on this music was not imposed during the peacetime years. From 1935 there was a ban on broadcasting jazz on the radio, and it was not until the outbreak of war in 1939 that “English music” was first banned, and from the end of 1941 “American” music as well. In reality, however, during the peacetime years, and in a considerably more limited way during the war years as well, the maxim of the fans applied: “Jazz is where you find it.” Anyone who wanted to was able to buy jazz records in Germany’s cities; both imported original records from the USA and German products. Privately or in “hot clubs” and “jazz clubs,” jazz fans enjoyed the big names: Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Louis Armstrong, Gene Krupa, Wingy Manone, Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, Nat Gonella, Harry Roy, Bert Ambrose, also the first records by Glenn Miller and Harry James. The jazz fans, usually from the educated middle classes, set themselves apart from the somewhat more ordinary “swing hunks,” who danced (“hotten”) with passion to jazz and swing music, occasionally greeted each other with “Swing Heil,” and so displeased the National Socialists that on October 11, 1938, “swing dancing” was banned. Nevertheless, people continued to dance, and swing music also continued to be produced and heard under imaginative camouflage.

The followers of jazz and swing formed loose groups that demonstrated nonconformist behavior without offering political resistance. It was an indirect protest against the intellectual-cultural *Gleichschaltung*; an opposition through lifestyle. These groups were increasingly observed by the Gestapo after the start of the war and their basic Anglophile tendencies were considered “subversive.” In January 1942, Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler ordered ringleaders of the Hamburg Swing Youth to be committed to a concentration camp for two to three years, to be beaten up, and to be put to forced labor.⁴⁷

While much remains to be done in the difficult study of the ambivalent “Americanism” in the Third Reich, the stereotypes of enemy propaganda in World War II are well known.⁴⁸ A problem that is difficult

47 Müller, “Fear of the SS in the Alster Pavilion,” 324.

48 See especially the excellent contribution by Günter Moltmann, “Nationalklischees und Demagogie” in: Detlef Junker (ed.), *Kampf um die Weltmacht*, 157–64; Willi A. Boelcke, *Die Macht des Radios. Weltgeschichte und Auslandsrundfunk 1924–1976* (Frankfurt/M., 1977) 379–89; Peter Longerich, *Propagandisten im Krieg. Die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop* (Munich, 1987) 81–85; Karl-Dietrich Abel, *Presselenkung im NS-Staat* (Berlin, 1968) 132–33; *Kriegspropaganda*

to overcome in terms of research methodology, however, is answering the question of how successful Nazi propaganda was in World War II and what Germans actually thought and felt about America. There is some evidence that propaganda received a great response only during the terror bombardment of Allied air raids, but otherwise remained limited in its impact.⁴⁹ Anyone who reads the tirades of Hitler and Goebbels, especially in non-public speech and diary entries, might conclude that the Nazi leadership became a victim of its own propaganda through autosuggestion.

Almost all negative images of enemy propaganda were leitmotifs of Hitler's public and non-public statements about the USA and Roosevelt from the quarantine speech to the declaration of war on December 11, 1941.⁵⁰ Only the stereotype of American lack of culture became more prominent after the U.S. entry into the war.

The overriding theme of propaganda against the U.S. was Hitler's basic conviction that Roosevelt was not acting independently but as an agent of international Jewry, of Jewish capitalism, of the Jewish world conspiracy that encompassed the U.S., England, and the Soviet Union, and had driven the American people into war against Germany. When Hitler confronted Goebbels on May 3, 1943, demanding "more powerful anti-Semitic propaganda," he seems to have been satisfied with Goebbels' response that anti-Semitic propaganda accounted for 70 to 80 percent of foreign broadcasts anyway.⁵¹ During World War II, Hitler returned to the conception of America from his early years: his interpretation of the American entry into World War I and of Woodrow Wilson's motives.

This anti-Semitism runs like a thread through all his public and private statements from 1937 to his so-called "political testament" of 1945. It is well known,⁵² that in Hitler's dogmatic, Manichaeic teleology, the element of complete negation, the satanic, and evil itself is embodied by the Jews, since they—a people, without a "living space" for 2000 years—threatened the course of history. As Hitler saw his own vocation as leader of the Germanic race and of the German people in the decisive battle against the Jews in the context of world history, any nation that denied him this claim to power, any politician who

1939–1941. *Geheime Ministerkonferenzen im Reichspropagandaministerium*, edited and introduced by Willi A. Boelcke (Stuttgart, 1966) 693–94, 703–704.

49 Moltmann, "National Clichés and Demagogy," 236–38.

50 Junker, "Hitler's Perception," 151–55.

51 Boelcke, *The Power of Radio*, 384.

52 See Junker, *Kampf um die Weltmacht*, 39–42.

opposed him, was ipso facto an agent of “international Jewry.” The fact that the United States was pursuing anti-German policies was obvious proof to Hitler that the Germanic element in the United States had been poisoned and corrupted by the Jews. To support this statement, a few sentences from his December 11 war speech will suffice: it must be borne in mind, Hitler said, “that it is the intention of the Jews and their Franklin Roosevelt to destroy one state after another. We know what force is behind Roosevelt. It is that eternal Jew who considers his time has come to carry out also on us what we, shuddering, all had to see and experience in Soviet Russia.”⁵³

Goebbels’ diaries are also full of hate speech against Roosevelt, whom he calls a “Jew’s servant and a slave of capital democracy” and the “evil spirit of American politics.”⁵⁴ In his war speech, Hitler calls Roosevelt a hypocrite, a faker, and a warmonger. He continues: “That he calls me a gangster is all the more indifferent since this term probably originated not in Europe but in the USA for lack of such subjects. But apart from that, I cannot be offended at all by Mr. Roosevelt, for I consider him, as Woodrow Wilson once did, to be insane as well.”⁵⁵

Hitler’s negative, hateful perception of Roosevelt, especially his characterization of the American president as a puppet of Jewish capitalism, allowed him to answer a question he had posed to himself and to the German people in his war speech: Why had Roosevelt, like Wilson before him, become a fanatical enemy of Germany? Even on the day Hitler declared war on the United States, he repeated his view that there was no real conflict of interests between the United States and Germany. Germany was the only great power, Hitler said, that had never possessed colonies in North or South America, the United States had only benefited from the millions of German immigrants, and Germany had never taken a hostile attitude toward the United States. Regarding the outbreak of World War I, Hitler drew attention to the

53 Domarus, *Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen* 1804, 1807–808; see Hitler’s speech on January 30, 1939, in Detlef Junker et al, *Deutsche Parlamentsdebatten*, vol. 2, 1919–1933 (Frankfurt/M., 1970–1971) 288–95. Hitler reacted similarly to the Lend-Lease Act. See Hildegard von Kotze, ed., *Heeresadjutant bei Hitler 1938–1943. Aufzeichnungen des Major Engel* (Stuttgart, 1974) 99.

54 Entries of June 22 and August 23, 1940. See entries of November 18, 20, 24, 1938; December 17, 1938; January 24, 1939; November 12, 1939; June 17, 1940; September 5, 1940; October 8, 1940; February 1, 1941; March 17, 1941; April 27, 1941; June 8, 1941, in Joseph Goebbels, *Tagebücher 1924–1945*, vol. 3 and 4, ed. Ralf Georg Reuth (Munich, 1992).

55 Domarus, *Hitler. Speeches and Proclamations*, 1807.

findings of the Nye Committee that economic interests had prompted U.S. entry into the war. Nor, he said, were there any territorial or political conflicts that threatened U.S. interests, let alone existence. There were differences in the structure of the respective states, but this was, according to Hitler, not yet a reason for hostility as long as a state did not attempt to move outside its natural sphere of influence.⁵⁶

If one compares Hitler's remarks about Roosevelt and the United States in the period from 1937 to 1941 with his monologues at the Fuehrer's headquarters from 1941 to 1944 and the astonishingly detailed remarks about the United States in his political will of 1945, one finds that there were no changes or developments in his thinking in the years from 1941 to 1945. Only his hatred of Roosevelt grew: when the president was mentioned, it was always as a lunatic, a criminal, or a stooge of the Jews. But criticism of American culture and the "American way of life" also came more to the fore. A remark by Hitler on January 7, 1942, is particularly revealing: "Ancient Rome was a colossal serious state. It was great ideas that animated the Romans. It is not so in England today. Nevertheless, I prefer an Englishman a thousand times more than an American. We have no internal relations with the Japanese. They are too foreign to us in culture and way of life. But I have a hatred and aversion of the deepest kind against Americanism. Every European state is closer to us. America, in its whole spiritual attitude, is a half-Jewish and negro society."⁵⁷ On February 24, 1945, Hitler revisited the central idea of his war speech, while holding fast to his racist worldview and anti-Semitic obsessions. The war with America, Hitler dictated for posterity, was a tragic concatenation of circumstances, senseless and against all logic. An unfortunate historical coincidence would have it that his rise to power coincided with the moment when "the chosen one of world Jewry, Roosevelt, took the helm in the White House." For Hitler, the war was pointless because "Germany makes no demand on the United States and the latter has not the least to fear from Germany. All the conditions for peaceful coexistence, each to his own, are present. But everything is spoiled

⁵⁶ Ibid, 1801–802.

⁵⁷ Hitler, *Monologues*, 184. A documentation of Hitler's most important statements about Roosevelt and the United States from 1942 to 1945 in Junker, *Kampf um die Weltmacht*, 157–64.

by the Jew, who has chosen the United States as his most powerful bulwark. This and only this disturbs and poisons everything.”⁵⁸

Grouped around this anti-Semitism were the three other major topoi of World War II propaganda against America. First, Roosevelt’s foreign policy was a domestically motivated flight to war, a way out of Roosevelt’s inability to get the unemployed off the streets and stop the decline of the American economy. Newsreels and films showed labor struggles, police action against protesters, slums, and pauperization to demonstrate the decline of the American economy. Of course, the Germans learned nothing of the achievements of the American war economy. Second, Roosevelt was an arrogant hypocrite who preached peace but serially violated international law, falsely accused the German people of striving for world domination, while he was bringing the British Empire under control and wanted to impose American world domination himself. Thirdly, Goebbels deliberately instrumentalized what were probably the oldest German and European stereotypes about the USA: America was a country without culture and far inferior to Europe; a country of materialism, egalitarianism, superficial lifestyle, tinsel-culture, and sham civilization, dominated by gangsters, old, degenerate and morally bankrupt.

However, Goebbels was dissatisfied with the results of this propaganda in the last days of the Third Reich. While propaganda against the Bolsheviks had helped stabilize the front in the East, it had failed to harden the German people against the Anglo-Americans and fill them with hatred. In his diary on March 31, 1945, Goebbels attributed the lack of defensive readiness in the West and the fact that so many German soldiers surrendered in the West to the fact “that the Anglo-Americans are considered more humane by the German people than the Soviets.”⁵⁹ However ambivalent the Germans may have been toward the United States in the years since 1933 and at the end of the war, in 1944/45, for the second time in this century, the hopes of many Germans rested on the United States, whose campaign in Germany was at the same time the beginning of a moral conquest.⁶⁰

58 *Hitler’s Political Testament. The Bormann Dictates of February and April 1945*. With an essay by Hugh R. Trevor-Roper and an afterword by Andre Francois-Poncet (Hamburg, 1981) 103 ff.

59 *The Diaries of Joseph Goebbels*, 5: 2180–81.

60 Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *The American Occupation of Germany* (Munich, 1995).

8. Roosevelt and Hitler. Struggle for World Power, 1940–1941

The history of American-German relations from the founding of the Reich in 1871 to the present is the story of a dramatic alternation between conflict and cooperation. Until 1945, its main theme was the strategic and economic conflict between the twofold attempt of the post-Bismarck German Reich to break out of its semi-hegemonic position in the center of Europe and become a world power among world powers, and the twofold response of the United States to prevent this and to keep Germany in the position of a middle state in Europe. The legal, moral, economic, and political conflict between democracy and autocracy, between democracy and National Socialism formed an integral part of this conflict. That is why the United States and the Kaiserreich faced each other as enemies in World War I, why the United States and the Third Reich faced each other as enemies in World War II, why the United States twice became the co-founder of a bourgeois democratic republic on German soil, the Weimar Republic, and the Federal Republic. The rise to world hegemonic power and the establishment of Pax Americana in the immediate postwar period were a consequence of the double German challenge.

Without a doubt, the years 1939 to 1941 represent the watershed of this century because Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan threatened to revolutionize the Eurasian double continent, putting the future of Western, that is, Judeo-Christian, liberal, and capitalist civilization at stake.

The United States declared its neutrality on September 3, 1939, and remained neutral in the sense of international law until the German declaration of war on December 11, 1941, although American policy repeatedly broke the neutrality rules of classical international law and very soon took sides with the Allies in the political sense. Diplomatic relations continued to exist officially from 1939 to 1941, although they were almost devoid of content and downgraded to the level of *chargés*

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d'affaires. Moreover, consulates in both countries were closed in July 1941. Neither Roosevelt nor Hitler ever thought of involving the United States as a peace broker in the European war. Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles's exploratory mission to Rome, Paris, London, and Berlin in February 1940 was primarily related to Roosevelt's domestic political considerations in the 1940 presidential election. Hitler himself had not the slightest interest in peace talks at that time. Roosevelt, like the British after the outbreak of war in Europe, was never willing to agree to a peace plan that could lead to the consolidation of Nazi rule over parts of Europe or, indeed, all of Europe. Such a "Super-Munich" would have represented the worst of all possible cases for Roosevelt. Conversely, Hitler would have been willing to negotiate peace only under such a condition.

More important than the level of international law was that of the actual power-politics of both states. For, although their actions remained related to each other and, at the latest since the summer of 1940, took place on both sides within the context of global visions and conflicts of interest, they were carried out independently of each other, without any interactions to speak of. One has therefore rightly described the dynamic of "two roads to war" (M. Jonas).

The overriding goal of Hitler's America policy was to keep the United States out of the European war without letting the United States prevent him from conquering continental Europe. At the same time, since September 3, 1939, the United States became a decisive factor in Hitler's repeated attempts to force England to recognize his "New Order" in Europe and to make peace on his terms. The stronger the actual U.S. aid to the British Empire became, the longer the American shadow grew over the Atlantic. When Hitler realized in July 1940 that England was not willing to make peace on his terms in large part because of American support, the United States, contrary to Hitler's original plans, moved more and more into the center of his "world blitzkrieg strategy." Roosevelt put Hitler in a time crunch. The "Führer" had to "solve" the continental European problems before the U.S. would be in a political and military position to intervene in Europe.

Thus, he made considerable efforts to keep America out of Europe. Hitler showed determination in keeping the German Navy on a tight leash in the U-boat war to avoid anything in the Atlantic that could serve as a pretext for the U.S. to enter the war. On this point, he had learned from World War I. He adhered to the rules of law for naval warfare in the naval war against the formally neutral but actually partisan USA; German propaganda was strictly forbidden to even

use the term “unrestricted submarine warfare”; and even when the first armed incident between the USA and the Third Reich occurred on September 4, 1941, between the American destroyer “Greer” and a German submarine, Hitler stuck to this basic line against the advice of Grand Admiral Raeder.

Finally, U.S. deterrence became a central component of Hitler’s global strategy beginning in the summer of 1940.

Two statements by him in July 1940 and July 1941 make this problem situation particularly clear: “England’s hope is Russia and America. If hope in Russia falls away, America also falls away, because [on the] removal of Russia there will be a revaluation of Japan in East Asia on a tremendous scale” (July 31, 1940). “If we can keep the U.S. out of the war at all, it will be only by destroying Russia, and then only if Japan and Germany take an ice-cold and unequivocal stand” (July 14, 1941). What a change in the assessment of America from September 1939 to July 1940! Ten months after the outbreak of war in Europe, England’s refusal to make peace was forcing Hitler to integrate the five world powers of the time—England, the United States, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the Third Reich—into wishful projections of global proportions in order to find any kind of concept against the United States. The realization of his main foreign policy goal, which had been fixed since the 1920s, of creating living space in the East by destroying the Soviet Union, was now at the same time to free Hitler from the nightmarish pressure of an American entry into the war. Victory over the Soviet Union was to destroy England’s hopes of help from Russia and America, and force Hitler’s “desired ally,” England, to finally recognize a National Socialist continental empire. At the same time, Hitler sought to win Japan as an ally in the struggle to deter America: to tie the United States, like Britain, in East Asia; to divert its energies from Europe; and to unsettle the United States with the possibility of a two-front war. The most striking expression of this policy was the Three-Power Pact concluded on September 27, 1940, between Germany, Japan, and Italy.

In it, the parties pledged to recognize and respect “the leadership of Germany and Italy in creating a new order in Europe” and the “leadership of Japan in creating a new order in the Greater East Asian region.” The case for alliance was to occur if Germany, Italy, or Japan were attacked by a power “not presently engaged in a European war or in the Sino-Japanese conflict”—that is, by the United States.

From Hitler’s point of view, therefore, the negotiations on a *modus vivendi* in the Pacific that had begun between Japan and the United

States in the spring of 1941 must have seemed particularly threatening. An agreement between the two states would have destroyed his entire concept and would have conjured up the danger of a repetition of the situation of World War I—America's entry into the war against Germany with its Pacific shore secured. The likelihood of such a development was also great in the spring of 1941 because, with Roosevelt's reelection in November 1940, it became apparent that the Three-Power Pact had not had a deterrent effect on American policy but, on the contrary, had strengthened the American will to support the Allies. Presumably, the failure of the deterrence concept and the increasingly likely eventuality of American entry into the war—Hitler expected the U.S. to be ready for war in 1942—were the main reasons why Hitler, in a conversation with Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka on April 4, 1941, went beyond the commitment of the Three-Power Pact and promised Japan Germany's support even in the event of a Japanese attack against the United States.

But as long as the Eastern campaign was not finished, an entry of the USA into the war had to be avoided and America's provocations in the Atlantic had to be ignored. Since the summer of 1940, Hitler no longer had any conception of America without Japan. Without Japan, it was neither possible to deter the U.S. from entering the war in Europe, nor to wage war against the U.S., let alone win it. This basic fact is probably also the key to answering the question, which is disputed in research and can only be answered hypothetically due to the lack of detailed sources, why Germany declared war on the United States on December 11, four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, even though the German armies were bogged down in the mud outside Moscow. This move by Hitler is puzzling because it seems to make no sense even in the only language Hitler claimed to understand, the language of power, and because it ran counter to Hitler's own world political constructions and hopes he had developed since the summer of 1940. Neither the British Empire nor the Soviet Union had been defeated, and, in such a situation, it must have seemed like megalomania, like a suicidal loss of touch with reality, and like playing with the existence of the German Reich to declare war on potentially the strongest state on earth. If there is any explanation at all that is rational in terms of power politics, it lies in the Japanese alliance.

On December 4, 1941, at the latest, Hitler, without being informed of the planned attack on Pearl Harbor, decided to give in to Japanese insistence and, in the event of Japan going to war with the United

States, to agree to a German-Japanese-Italian alliance pact on a reciprocal basis—provided that the other two powers would also commit to fight together until victory and not make any special peace deals with their enemies. This treaty was signed in Berlin on December 11, shortly before the German declaration of war was delivered in Washington and Hitler's speech in the German Reichstag. Hitler's calculation seems to have been that war with the United States would come anyway. The Third Reich's only chance of surviving in such a war and keeping the U.S. out of Europe was to engage the U.S. in a two-front war simultaneously in Europe and Asia, in the Atlantic and the Pacific; for, as he told Ambassador Oshima on Jan. 3, 1942, Hitler believed that England could be destroyed. How to defeat the USA, on the other hand, he did not yet know.

America's road to war, the "second road" to war, led through the gradual abandonment of a neutral position and ever-intensifying U.S. aid to states threatened by the aggressors. Even before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt and the internationalists had led the American nation to a point where it was no longer questionable whether, but only when, how, and where—in the Atlantic or Pacific—the United States would enter World War II. At this point, they were committed to a concept of defense, war, and victory that could be described as a strategy of global forward defense, in which the distinction between defensive and offensive in the *geographic sense* had become blurred beyond recognition.

The buildup of the U.S. global presence from the outbreak of the European war to December 1941 has often been recounted by historians. Here we need only recall its most important stages: the proclamation of a 300-mile security zone around the entire Western Hemisphere (with the exception of Canada, which was already at war), by the Pan-American States Declaration in Panama on October 3, 1939; the renewed cash-and-carry clause in the Fourth Neutrality Act of November 4, 1939, which lifted the arms embargo and permitted the purchase of arms with cash by those states that could carry them on their own ships; the exchange of fifty American destroyers for military bases on British territories from Newfoundland to British Guiana on September 2, 1940; the Lend-Lease Act of March 11, 1941, which gave the President general authority to sell, lend, or lease all arms, goods, and commodities that were in any way vital to the war effort to those nations whose defense, in the President's view, was of vital interest to the defense of the United States; the secret British-American staff

briefings in February and March 1941; the Atlantic meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill in August 1941, at which the Atlantic Charter was published; the securing of British convoys by the American fleet beginning 17. September 1941; the limited and undeclared naval war between Germany and the United States in the North Atlantic; and finally, the freezing of Japanese assets in the United States on July 26, 1941, which, together with sanctions by Great Britain and the Netherlands, effectively constituted a worldwide oil embargo and presented Japan with the alternative of war or surrender.

All of these steps occurred against the backdrop of a massive rearmament program, the introduction of selective conscription in the fall of 1940, and Roosevelt's proclamation of an "unlimited national emergency" on May 27, 1941. By December 1941, American troops were stationed outside the Western Hemisphere and the insular territories of the United States in Greenland, Iceland, China, and Dutch Guinea. After his reelection, Roosevelt, on December 29, 1940, proclaimed the United States should become the "arsenal of democracy." Even before December 1941, under his general authorization in the Lend-Lease Act, he had declared that the defense of Great Britain, India, Burma, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (virtually the entire British Empire), Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Egypt, China, and Russia was of "vital interest" to the defense of the United States.

The American nation was led into war on promises of non-entry. In deference to the isolationists, Roosevelt avoided openly confronting the American people with the alternative that had been America's only foreign policy issue since 1939: whether or not the United States should enter the wars of Europe and Asia.

On both sides of the Atlantic, self-image and conception of threat, analysis of the present and anticipation of the future culminated in *antagonistic conceptions of world power* that allow the American-German relationship from 1939 to 1941 to be characterized as an anticipated struggle for world power. However, even in this case, the American objective can be described more precisely and unequivocally than Hitler's much-discussed "ultimate goals." This greater clarity on the American side is also related to the fact that the United States, as the only great power on earth, enjoyed the privilege of being able to discuss for some years whether or not the vital interests of the country were threatened by the Axis powers and Japan. This privilege was due to the country's strategically secure position in the Western Hemisphere.

The Atlantic and Pacific guaranteed an open decision-making situation and the discussion of alternatives that were not dictated *solely* by the will of the aggressor nations. Those who ask about the circumstances and causes of the American entry into the war are therefore well advised to consider the domestic political struggle between the so-called isolationists on the one hand, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the internationalists on the other.

The core of the struggle was not the moral and democratic problem of whether Roosevelt dealt tactically with the American people on the question of war and peace, concealed parts of the truth from them or even lied to them (all of which he did), nor the problem of whether the isolationists misrepresented Roosevelt's motives and labeled him a warmonger with dictatorial tendencies (all of which they did), but the irreconcilable opposition between the two camps over the position of the United States in the world. Between 1937 and 1941, the fourth major domestic debate was conducted over the foreign policy question of whether the U.S. should be a world power in the literal sense or should be content with the role of a major regional power in the Western Hemisphere—the fourth debate after those of 1898, 1914–1917, and 1920. In this debate, the assessment of the Nazi threat to the U.S.—less so the Japanese threat—played a central role. The conflict centered on the threat potential of Hitler and National Socialist Germany to the United States.¹

From a historical perspective, it is a central question whether Roosevelt's contemporary view was correct and whether Hitler really planned world domination, which—as a final stage, as it were—envisaged an invasion of the Western Hemisphere and an attack on the continental USA. This question aims at the center of a discussion that has been controversial in international research for more than twenty-five years, and it would be presumptuous to try to answer it exhaustively within the framework of a short text. Here are just a few key points:

1. The radicalism and the literally mass-murderous consequences of Hitler's worldview had their basis in the certainty of action and the fanatical sense of mission that Hitler drew from the "granite foundation" of his worldview. This foundation was a simplified and primitive but nevertheless clearly recognizable historical teleology,

1 See Detlef Junker, *Kampf um die Weltmacht. Die USA und das „Dritte Reich“ 1933–1945*. Düsseldorf 1988.

from which Hitler derived for himself and the National Socialist movement a world-historical mission and a potentially universal, in the truest sense of the word “unbounded,” claim. Hitler interpreted world history along the lines of a principle that necessarily had to end in universal projections.

What was the content of this teleology of history? The law and sense of motion of all history so far lies in the war and fight between races and peoples for scarce living space. In history, as in nature, there is a merciless struggle of all against all. Every nation is faced at every moment of history with the alternative of fighting or perishing. The earth, according to Hitler, is a challenge cup and therefore has the desire to always come into the hands of the strongest.

For him, evil, the quintessentially diabolical element of world history, was embodied in the Jews. The mission of the National Socialist movement was to call the German people to the final struggle against Jewry. Therefore, Hitler considered the extermination of the Jews to be the central mission of his life, along with the conquest of *Lebensraum*. Hitler’s statements about a future “world domination,” about the future “Lord of the Earth,” about “the greatest Germanic revolution in world history” were anticipations of Hitler’s desired period after the end of his struggle, anticipations of a lasting racial domination of the Germanic peoples, which, after the extermination of the Jews, would bring the previous dialectic of history to a standstill. This vision of world domination was at once universal and placeless, not global in the concrete sense.

2. The concrete goal of Hitler’s policy and alliance planning in the 1920s and 1930s, on the other hand, was domination of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. In Hitler’s mind, however, such domination over Europe would automatically put the Third Reich in the position of a world leader, which even the democratic naval powers, the British Empire and the United States, would have to recognize and tolerate, if necessary, by force.
3. Even in July and August of 1941, at the height of his power and in view of the supposed imminent victory over the Soviet Union, Hitler did not speak of an invasion of the western hemisphere and an attack on the continental USA. Invasion plans to conquer the United States were never developed, and even if they had existed in 1940–41, they would have been mere pipe dreams. The fear or propaganda of American interventionists of a Nazi invasion proves to be without substance in the cold light of historical distance.

4. The war of the Third Reich against the USA, predicted by Hitler in 1928 for the distant future and then becoming more probable in 1941, was for him politically and militarily a war to keep the USA out of Europe and to force it to recognize the National Socialist empire. I am not aware of any statement so far that would permit the conclusion that the impending war was to be interpreted as a means of dominating the Western Hemisphere. Hitler's concrete design of a racially based world power always remained Europe-centric, in contrast to Roosevelt's liberal model of one world, which already in anticipation of the future encompassed five continents and seven oceans.
5. The measures contemplated by Hitler at the height of his hope for victory in July and August 1941, to build up a system of military bases in the Atlantic after the defeat of the Soviet Union, to create a strong surface fleet, and to develop long-range bombers, would have been sufficient, in the best but still unlikely case, to force the United States and Great Britain into a *modus vivendi* with Hitler's Europe. His famous statement to Japanese Ambassador Oshima on July 14, 1941, that both countries would have to "destroy the United States together" would have been devoid of reality even years after a defeat of the Soviet Union. This evaluation is based on experience, measure, and possibility, because any "destruction" of the United States would require the conquest of the Western Hemisphere and/or the invention of an intercontinental ballistic missile with an atomic explosive charge. Both possibilities lay beyond the horizon of Hitler's life.

9. Politics, Security, Economics, Culture, and Society. Dimensions of Transatlantic Relations during the Cold War, 1945–1990

When historians attempt to describe and explain the significance of American-German relations in the second half of the twentieth century, they are forced to look at the entire century. This is because the relationship between the two states, societies, and cultures in the era of the Cold War was shaped by history in a twofold manner: by the objective consequences of American intervention in both world wars and, second, by the lessons learned from these historical experiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

When we look at the entire century from an American perspective, we might venture to say that no country in the world has contributed as much to the ascent of the United States to superpower status and to the globalization of its interests as Germany, Europe's central power.¹ The United States had kept its distance from the Eurasian continent in the nineteenth century, particularly in terms of military engagement or alliance politics. It was the triple challenge posed by the German problem in World War I, World War II, and the Cold "World" War that finally established the United States as a military, economic, and cultural power on that continent.²

1 On American-German relations in the twentieth century, see Hans W. Gatzke, *Germany and the United States: A "Special Relationship"?* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980); Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1984); Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, eds., *America and Germany: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1985), vol. 2; Carl C. Hodge and Cathal J. Nolan, eds., *Shepherd of Democracy: America and Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, Conn., 1992); Klaus Larres and Torsten Oppelland, eds., *Deutschland und die USA im 20. Jahrhundert: Geschichte der politischen Beziehungen* (Darmstadt, 1997).

2 Samuel F. Wells, Jr., Robert H. Ferrell, and David Trask, *American Diplomacy Since 1900* (Boston, 1975); Akira Iriye, *The Globalizing of America, 1913–1945*

First published in: Politik, Sicherheit, Wirtschaft, Kultur und Gesellschaft: Dimensionen transatlantischer Beziehungen im Kalten Krieg, in: Detlef Junker (ed.), in Verbindung mit Philipp Gassert, Wilfried Mausbach und David B. Morris: *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges 1945–1990*. Ein Handbuch. vol. I. 1945–1968. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt Stuttgart/Munich (2nd ed.) 2001, pp.17–56. All cross-references in the footnotes refer to this manual.

Germany was America's chief adversary in World War I, and the United States waged two wars against it: a military one in Europe and a cultural one against German-Americans at home. The American political and military elite viewed Germany as its most pressing enemy in World War II, even after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. After 1945, the American-Soviet conflict became the major structural principle of international relations, and the German question was to a large extent a dependent variable in the relationship between those two superpowers. Nonetheless, Germany remained America's central problem in Europe. The power vacuum created in Europe by the unconditional surrender of the German Reich can be viewed as the most important cause of the emergence of Soviet-American antagonism after 1945. The establishment of NATO and the permanent stationing of American troops on German soil—both revolutions in American foreign policy—were direct results of the fact that the major victors of World War II could not agree on a system of domestic order for Germany or on its proper place in Europe. The Berlin Crises of 1948–49 and 1958–62 were among the gravest Cold War threats to world peace. The second crisis, closely related to the Cuban Missile Crisis,³ and the erection of the Berlin Wall sharply exposed the dilemma of the Americans, who wanted neither to die for Berlin and the Germans in an atomic war nor to endanger their prestige and position as a European hegemonic power in Europe by withdrawing from West Berlin.

National Socialism shadowed American foreign policy after 1945. The overriding goal of containing the Soviet Union was linked with the major lesson that a whole generation of American politicians had learned from the failure of democracy in the 1930s. Never again should

(Cambridge, Mass., 1993); Warren I. Cohen, *America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945–1991* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993); Robert D. Schulzinger, *American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, 3d ed. (Oxford, 1994); Lloyd C. Gardner, *A Covenant with Power: America and World Order from Wilson to Reagan* (New York, 1984); Detlef Junker, *Von der Weltmacht zur Supermacht: Amerikanische Außenpolitik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Mannheim, 1995); Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1900* (Chicago, 1999); Michael J. Hogan, ed., *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations Since 1941* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

3 John C. Ausland, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Berlin–Cuba Crisis, 1961–1964* (Oslo, 1996); Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York, 1997); Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, eds., *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997); Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (New York, 2000).

a policy of appeasement be pursued toward dictators; there must be no second Munich, neither in Europe nor in Asia. This experience also gave rise to the domino theory, which was used in the United States during the Cold War as an all-purpose political weapon for justifying alliances, military interventions, and economic aid to Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and that ultimately drew the Americans into the Vietnam War.

From a geostrategic perspective, containing the power of the German nation-state in the center of Europe had been a leitmotif of American policy in Europe since the age of imperialism, when Kaiser Wilhelm II's Germany and an imperial America outgrew their status as regional powers and became competing world powers. Yet, Germany did not become a problem for the United States until it threatened to rise to the level of hegemonic power or an oppressor of Europe. Unlike Germany's European neighbors, the distant United States feared not the German nation-state created in 1871 but rather its potential as a rival world power. That is why the United States not only fought the German Empire and the Third Reich in world wars but also sought to contain and stabilize the Weimar Republic through economic integration, just as it attempted to contain and stabilize the Federal Republic through economic, military, and diplomatic integration beginning in 1949. European stability and German containment were among the chief strategic objectives of American foreign policy in the twentieth century, from Woodrow Wilson to George H. Walker Bush.

In the first half of the century, the Germans not only served twice as the enemy but also twice provided America with the paramount image of an enemy. The American civil religion—that unmistakable mixture of Christian republicanism and democratic faith⁴—certainly facilitated the propagandistic transformation of the German Empire of Kaiser Wilhelm II into the evil empire. It was this Manichean pattern of distinguishing between good and evil with religious fervor that permitted the Wilson administration to win the battle for the soul of

4 Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (Boston, 1997); Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Conn., 1987); Knud Krakau, *Missionsbewusstsein and Völkerrechtsdoktrin in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Frankfurt am Main, 1967); Kurt R. Spillmann, *Amerikas Ideologie des Friedens: Ursprünge, Formwandlungen und geschichtliche Auswirkungen des amerikanischen Glaubens an den Mythos einer friedlichen Weltordnung* (Bern, 1984).

the American people, who were not eager to go to war in 1917.⁵ From 1937 to 1941, the general outline of this process was repeated: The major difference was that Nazi Germany, unlike Wilhelm's empire, really was an evil empire.

The Germans also played a central role in bringing about the positive aspect of this Manichaeic pattern in American politics: the mission of bringing freedom and democracy to the world. In this respect, too, the "American century" is difficult to imagine without the Germans.⁶ It was the German challenge that forced President Wilson to broaden and globalize America's mission beyond the passive idea of turning America into a new Jerusalem that would serve as a beacon for the world by virtue of its example to the active responsibility of raising to the American level those peoples who were less free, less civilized, and who had been left behind.⁷ Wilson's call to make the *world* safe for democracy was the ideological climax of the declaration that he used to justify his country's entry into the war against Germany in April 1917. Segments of the American political elite interpreted the failure of this mission in Germany during the period between the wars partly as a failure of their own country, which withdrew from Europe in its military and alliance policy after the Treaty of Versailles and remained in Europe only in an economic and cultural role.

After 1945, therefore, the pacification and democratization of Germany (and Japan) were among the central goals of American foreign policy. Never before or since have the Americans expended so many resources to remake two foreign and occupied nations in their own political, social, and cultural image. Under the influence of the Cold War, the United States incorporated the western part of Germany into an Atlantic community—of security, values, production, consumption, information, leisure, travel, and entertainment—under American hegemony. Berlin, which had been the headquarters of evil from 1933 to 1945, became not only a symbol of the Cold War and a divided world but also an outpost of freedom, the "city upon the hill" on which the

5 Detlef Junker, *The Manichaeic Trap: American Perceptions of the German Empire, 1871–1945*, German Historical Institute, Occasional Paper 12 (Washington, D.C., 1995). See chapter 2 in this book.

6 Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J., 1994); Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York, 1982).

7 H. W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy* (New York, 1998).

eyes of the world were focused.⁸ Nothing was a more obvious symbol of the victory of freedom over communism and dictatorship for the Americans than the fall of the Berlin Wall, and they reacted almost more enthusiastically than many surprised and disconcerted West Germans.

At the outset of the new millennium, ten years after German reunification and the fall of the Soviet empire, these two fundamental experiences of Germany—as evil empire and as democratic ally in a transatlantic community—are united and yet separate in a curious melange in the American collective consciousness and memory industry. It is not the Cold War but World War II that appears to be the axis of twentieth-century American identity. The morally ambiguous Cold War could easily have ended in nuclear catastrophe⁹ and was accompanied by a series of disturbingly opaque and inhuman wars on the periphery, most conspicuously the American debacle in Vietnam. By contrast, the war against the Axis powers is considered the most important event of the century and, at the same time, America’s great, noble, and just war.¹⁰ In this war, however, it was Nazism and not communism that was the paramount foe.

World War II has special significance for America’s identity and its culture of remembrance, not only because it objectively marks a qualitative transition from major power to superpower or because,

8 See the chapter by Diethelm Prowe, vol. 1, Politics.

9 Some scholars of the Cold War think this was only a remote possibility, given the transformed international system after 1945. See John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (Oxford, 1987); John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York, 1989).

10 A 1999 survey asked Americans to name the most important event of the twentieth century and an important, but not most important event. The results were: World War II (71 percent responded most important; 21 percent important but not most important); the granting of the vote to American women in 1920 (66 percent; 22 percent); the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima (66 percent; 20 percent); the Holocaust (65 percent; 20 percent); the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (58 percent; 26 percent). In sixth to eighth place were: World War I, the 1969 moon landing, and the assassination of President Kennedy. It is striking that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 ranked ninth, ahead of the Great Depression of the 1930s (10), the end of the Soviet Union (11), and the Vietnam War (12). According to this survey, Americans considered World War II to be not only the most important event of the century but also the most just war that the United States has ever waged: *Gallup Poll Releases*, Dec. 6, 1999. Among American Jews, 24 percent consider remembrance of the Holocaust to be “extremely important,” 54 percent “very important,” 20 percent “somewhat important,” and only 2 percent “not important.” See also Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II* (New York, 1984).

along with the American Civil War, it is particularly well suited for a patriotic and heroic view of history in the American mass media. More importantly, the Holocaust, embodying pure evil, overshadows all other crimes of the century in the American consciousness. Since the 1960s, historians, politicians, artists, and theologians in the United States and elsewhere have devoted increasing attention to the genocide committed against the Jews in Europe. The universalization, commercialization, trivialization, and functionalization of this discussion by the media and politicians have led to a debate on the “Americanization of the Holocaust.”¹¹ This process is related to the growing importance of Holocaust remembrance for Jewish communities in the United States, Israel, and other parts of the world;¹² to the relationship of American Jews to Israel; to their fear of losing their identity without the Holocaust; and to the successful institutionalization and broadening of research on and remembrance of the Holocaust.¹³

At the beginning of the new millennium it is difficult to predict what significance the Americanization of the Holocaust will have for the American image of Germany, the German image of the United States, and American–German relations in the coming decades. However, for historians, the shadow of the Holocaust cannot obscure the fundamental fact that, from not only a German but also an American perspective, American–German relations after 1945 have been a success story unprecedented in the history of international relations.¹⁴

The solution of the German problem is among the greatest American foreign policy successes of the twentieth century. No one could have foreseen this success in 1945, when World War II ended and images of the liberation of the concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dachau evoked an elemental revulsion in the United States. For almost forty years, Germany was an integral component of the dual

11 Hilene Flanzbaum, ed., *The Americanization of the Holocaust* (Baltimore, 1999); Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, 1999); Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York, 1999); Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler. How History Is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* (New York, 1999); Norman G. Finkelstein, *Holocaust Industry: Reflection on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London, 2000). See chapter 13.

12 David S. Wyman, ed., *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore, 1996).

13 Shlomo Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations: The American Jewish Community and Germany Since 1945* (Detroit, 1999). See the chapters by Shlomo Shafir, vols. 1 and 2, Society, Alan E. Steinweis, vol. 1, Culture, and Jeffrey Peck, vol. 2, Culture.

14 See Fritz Stern, “Die zweite Chance? Deutschland am Anfang und am Ende des Jahrhunderts,” in: Fritz Stern, *Verspielte Größe: Essays zur deutschen Geschichte* (Munich, 1996), 11–36.

containment policy of the United States in continental Europe: namely, containment of the Soviet and German threats. This policy went hand in hand with the desire to satisfy the French need for protection against Germany and the Soviet Union, while preventing France from ascending to the level of a hegemonic power capable of competing with the United States. The unification of Germany under Western conditions produced nearly the best possible Germany from the American perspective: a medium-sized democratic country in Europe with political influence and international economic significance. Germany lacks any vital conflicts of interest with the United States, is integrated into and contained by European and Atlantic institutions, and—given the Two-Plus-Four Treaty on reunification and its political culture—remains incapable of and uninterested in threatening its European neighbors militarily. Finally, despite the increasing Europeanization of German foreign policy, it remains the most important ally of the United States on the European continent.

From the German perspective, no country in the world had as great an influence on the fate of the Germans in the twentieth century as the United States. Its military and political resistance twice foiled attempts by the German Reich to move beyond a semi hegemonic position in Central Europe and become a world power among world powers. At the same time, these two “battles for world power” also represented the conflict between two opposing worldviews. America, as embodied by American President Woodrow Wilson, emerged in World War I as the primary ideological opponent of the antiliberal, authoritarian camp in Germany. Behind the German debate over *Siegfrieden* and unlimited submarine warfare were differing views concerning not only strategy and war objectives but also the internal structure of the German Reich.¹⁵ Images of the enemy established during World War I dominated the German image of America until well into World War II. Even in the years after 1939, two antagonistic ideologies confronted one another. The Americans saw National Socialism as the mortal enemy of democracy; Hitler and many Germans saw democracy as the mortal enemy of National Socialism. Held together by anti-Semitism as its overall ideological framework, Nazi propaganda characterized “Americanism” as a scourge of humanity equal to or even greater than Bolshevism, not least because the United States was becoming the most

15 Ernst Fraenkel, “Das deutsche Wilson-Bild,” *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien* 5 (1960): 66–120; Torsten Oppelland, *Reichstag und Außenpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg: Die deutschen Parteien und die Politik der USA 1914–18* (Duesseldorf, 1995).

serious threat to the German domination of Europe as the war went on. Images of America generated by the Nazis built on traditional stereotypes, but beginning in 1938–9 they were increasingly dominated by the racist, anti-Semitic anti-Americanism of extreme right-wing Germans. Again, it was an American president who personified this ideological enmity toward America. According to Nazi propaganda, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the “main warmonger” and an agent of the world’s Jews and the international Jewish Bolshevik conspiracy, had driven the American people into war with the Third Reich.¹⁶ Occasionally, echoes of this radical, National Socialist criticism of America are still heard from right-wing anti-American elements in the Federal Republic today.¹⁷

A democratic Germany twice turned to the dominant Western power, the United States, following the end of hostilities. American democratization policies after 1945 thus had their roots in the period between the wars, when the growing economic influence of the United States in Germany was accompanied by the first timorous attempts to create a transatlantic “alliance of ideas.”¹⁸

It is largely because of the United States that the citizens of the “old” Federal Republic enjoyed freedom, democracy, prosperity, consumption, modernity, and mobility like no other generation of Germans before them. On an even more existential level, security or destruction—the physical survival of the Germans or their potential extermination in a nuclear holocaust—depended on the decisions of American presidents. Ultimately, *all* Germans owe their unity, on the one hand, to Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and, on the other, to the determined and consistent support of the United States. It was the superpowers who divided and united Germany. Its European neighbors played a considerable role in both processes, but not a decisive one.

The enormous influence of the United States on the security, politics, economics, culture, and society of the Federal Republic during the Cold War can essentially be attributed to seven factors. The first

16 Philipp Gassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich: Ideologie, Propaganda und Volksmeinung 1933–1945* (Stuttgart, 1997); Detlef Junker, “The Continuity of Ambivalence: German Views of America, 1933–1945,” in: David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt, eds., *Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany and America Since 1776* (New York, 1997), 243–63.

17 See the chapters by Philipp Gassert, vol. 1, Society, and Thomas Grumke, vol. 2, Society.

18 Ernst Jäckh, *Amerika und wir: Deutsch-amerikanisches Ideenbündnis, 1929–1959* (Stuttgart, 1959).

was the overwhelming political, military, economic, cultural, and technological status of the American superpower after 1945. Second, the foreign policy decision-making elite in the era of President Harry S. Truman from 1945 to 1952 possessed a determination and vision the likes of which the United States had not seen since the time of the Founding Fathers. This elite drew its lessons from history and was determined to do everything in its power to prevent the Germans from ever again posing a threat to the peace of Europe or the world. The third factor was the dramatic transition from the wartime coalition to the Cold War and anticommunism. Fourth, Americans' images of the enemy in Europe gradually shifted from a focus on the Germans to a focus on the Russians.¹⁹ Closely related to this was the fifth factor, the fear Germans and Americans shared of Soviet aggression and expansion. Sixth, out of necessity, insight, enlightened self-interest, and a turning away from the past, the West Germans became willing to open themselves up to the West and to see the United States for the most part as the guarantor of their own security and prosperity. The seventh and final factor was the increasing willingness of the West Germans after the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961, to submit to the inevitability of detente by paying the price for the Western alliance: the de facto division of Germany. From that point in time, the postponement of Germany's reunification steadily became less of a burden on American-German relations.

The influence of the American superpower on the western part of Germany was certainly greatest during the era of the Allied Control Council (1945–49) and under the reign of the Allied High Commission (1949–55). Nonetheless, after West Germany joined NATO (without ever becoming completely sovereign either politically or under international law) and after the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the four victorious powers collapsed in Geneva in 1955, Germany still depended on America's hegemonic power, its nuclear umbrella, and the presence of American troops west of the Iron Curtain to guarantee its existence. The Federal Republic's economic recovery and its integration into the

19 The American image of Germany was not, however, as bad after 1941 or as good before 1955 as has long been assumed. See Thomas Reuther, *Die ambivalente Normalisierung: Deutschlanddiskurs und Deutschlandbilder in den USA 1941–1955* (Stuttgart, 2000). See also Astrid M. Eckert, *Feindbilder im Wandel: Ein Vergleich des Deutschland- und des Japanbildes in den USA 1945 und 1946* (Munster, 1999), and, from the older literature, Christine M. Totten, *Deutschland – Soll und Haben: Amerikas Deutschlandbild* (Munich, 1964).

world market were possible only in the context of a liberal, capitalist international economic system guaranteed by the economic weight of the United States and by American dominance of crucial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the tariff reduction rounds. American influence in other regions of the world guaranteed a supply of raw materials, particularly oil, to Europe and Germany. The West Germans' internal turn toward the West, their eventual arrival in the West, and the incremental transformation of the values, mentality, society, and culture of the Federal Republic also cannot be explained without the considerable role of American influence.

The Presence of the Past

In the beginning were Hitler and National Socialism, not Stalin and communism. German-American relations from 1947 on came under the spell of the ultimately global confrontation that formed political blocs in East and West. However, the overriding point of departure for American policy on Germany was the attempt of the German Reich to force the racist domination of National Socialism upon Europe. Never again, according to the great lesson of history, would the Germans be allowed to pose a threat to the security and welfare of Europe and the world. This starting point dominated America's plans for Germany during World War II. And it influenced American occupation policy through 1949, the formation of the West German state that year, the actions of the High Commission, the release of Germany into a state of limited sovereignty, and its entrance into NATO in 1955. It continued to have an effect during the period of detente and arms control, was partially responsible for the American refusal to grant Germany access to nuclear weapons, and was a leitmotif in the integration of the German economy into a liberal international economic system. Even the American attempt to transform and democratize German society and culture was born of this principle. The legacy of the Third Reich was the *raison d'être* for inclusion of Germany within European and transatlantic organizations—indeed, even for American policy during German reunification and for the conditions of the Two Plus-Four Treaty. One glimpse into the abyss of a Europe ruled by the National Socialists was enough to nourish the dominant motive for containing Germany through integration until 1990.

Despite a shared anticommunism, despite the Atlantic community's avowals of shared values that have become almost a ritual, and despite the unrelenting declarations of German gratitude for American aid, the fact that the German past refuses to die in America has irritated generations of German politicians, citizens, and visitors to America. Over the course of contemporary decision making, it has fostered mistrust and even downright crises in German-American relations.

The legacy of the Third Reich can probably be seen most plainly in the forty-five years of American security policy toward Germany. "Program to Prevent Germany from Starting World War III"²⁰ was the title of one version of the notorious plan by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr., calling for the dismemberment, demilitarization, deindustrialization, and long-term occupation of Germany's fragmented territory by its European neighbors to ensure that the country in the heart of Europe would be forever incapable of waging war. Although Morgenthau's recommendations had been weakened and diluted by the time they found their way into the principles of American occupation policy issued on May 10, 1945 (JCS 1067/8),²¹ even Morgenthau's most vehement domestic critics agreed with his ultimate goal. The German people had to be disarmed, denazified, and reeducated. National Socialist organizations had to be dissolved and the war criminals brought to justice. And the possibility of renewed German aggression had to be prevented for all time.

The resolve to use all available means to prevent a repetition of the past remained a constant in American security policy during the decisive decade from 1945 to 1955. Beginning in 1946, however, it became increasingly clear that it was not possible to reach agreement with the Soviet Union over the principles of external disarmament (e.g., long-term military disarmament and future foreign trade policy) and internal disarmament (e.g., denazification, reeducation, reparations, dismantling of industry, and decartelization of the German economy). Like Great Britain and France, the United States was not willing—even

20 U.S. Department of State, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1941–1949*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C., 1985), 269–72. See Wilfried Mausbach, *Zwischen Morgenthau und Marshall: Das wirtschaftspolitische Deutschlandkonzept der USA 1944–1947* (Düsseldorf, 1996); Bernd Greiner, *Die Morgenthau-Legende: Zur Geschichte eines umstrittenen Plans* (Hamburg, 1995); Warren F. Kimball, *Swords or Ploughshares? The Morgenthau Plan for Defeated Nazi Germany, 1943–1946* (Philadelphia, 1976).

21 See the chapter by Steven L. Rearden, vol. 1, Security; see also the chapter by Wilfried Mausbach, vol. 1, Economics.

after the founding of the Federal Republic—to give up control over German security policy. Despite the developing Western integration of West Germany, a deep-seated skepticism about the German capacity for democracy and peace remained.²²

The Germans had an overwhelming need for and interest in shaking off the burden of the past on their long road back to sovereignty and “normality,” on the path to becoming a full member of the world community politically, economically, and morally. They would deal with their past in a very selective manner, particularly during the 1940s and 1950s.²³ Nevertheless, the Allies in general and the United States in particular continued to draw their motivation for new actions from the lessons and experiences of the Third Reich.

With the onset of the Cold War, securing the Western occupation zones and Western Europe against possible Soviet aggression increasingly became a major problem for American, British, and French military planners. Nevertheless, until the outbreak of the Korean War, the Truman administration found it impossible to get the American public used to the idea of West Germany contributing militarily to the defense of the West. In light of this deep-seated skepticism, the Americans considered it necessary to cast a safety net of controls and provisos over the West German state founded just four years after the demise of the Third Reich.²⁴ Security policy, foreign policy, and foreign trade policy were taken out of German hands, and deep incursions into the domestic policies of the Federal Republic were considered necessary until such time as the Federal Republic proved itself to be a democratic and peaceful state.

22 See the chapters by Thomas A. Schwartz, vol. 1, Politics, and Thomas Reuther, vol. 1, Society.

23 They saw themselves primarily as victims of war, imprisonment, displacement, and the terror of Allied bombing. Omer Bartov, “Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,” *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 771–816; Elizabeth D. Heinemann, “The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany’s ‘Crisis Years’ and West German National Identity,” *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 354–95; Robert G. Moeller, “War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 1008–48; Eike Wolgast, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit,” in: Ruperto Carola: Forschungsmagazin der Universität Heidelberg 3 (1997): 30–39.

24 See the chapters by Frank Schumacher and Richard Wiggers, vol. 1, Politics, Steven L. Rearden, vol. 1, Security, and Regina Ursula Gramer, vol. 1, Economics. See also Hermann-Josef Rupieper, *Der besetzte Verbündete: Die amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik 1949–1955* (Opladen, 1991), 34–40.

This test might have lasted some time had not the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 sent shock waves around the world and revolutionized American foreign and security policy. The effect of the Korean War on American policy and on the overall course of the Cold War can hardly be exaggerated. The only other events of comparable significance were the Chinese revolution, the explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb, and the American assumption that the Soviets had developed long-range bombers and missiles capable of crossing the ocean and threatening the security of the continental United States. After the Korean War, the American superpower decided for the first time in its history that it needed more than just potential resources to wage war and promote its own interests. For the first time, the United States began to build a massive fighting force on land, at sea, and in the air. A military-industrial complex developed that put food on the table for millions of people and offered a simple, dualistic worldview on which to fall back. This complex was composed of military forces, government departments and bureaucracies, congressional representatives, senators and lobbyists, think tanks, universities, research and production facilities, intelligence services, nuclear strategists, and Kremlinologists, all producing constantly new images of an enemy, scenarios, missile gaps, and “windows of vulnerability,” both real and imagined.²⁵

This revolution in American foreign policy necessitated what had previously been unthinkable: the rearming of the (West) Germans. The West’s collective experience with the Third Reich and German militarism, the deep-seated fear of an armed Germany, collided with the fear of Soviet aggression. This collision produced incongruities that can only be explained by the German past: the desire for German weapons that could only be fired toward the East; the desire for German soldiers who would not have their own general staff or high command, but who would unleash into combat a power at least as great as that of the Nazi Wehrmacht in a war against the Soviet Union, the East bloc, and the Germans in the GDR;²⁶ the desire to use German manpower

25 For the Truman administration’s interpretation of the Korean War, which was deeply influenced by the domino theory and the “lessons of Munich,” see Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif., 1992), 369–74; Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State* (New York, 1998).

26 See the chapter by David Clay Large, vol. 1, Security.

without setting up a German army;²⁷ and the desire to defend Europe against Germany while defending Germany and Europe against the Soviet Union.

It speaks for the realism of the Federal Republic's first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, that he immediately recognized the historic opportunity that this crisis presented to the occupied Federal Republic: The offer of German rearmament could be used to secure an end to the controls, a new sovereignty, and an equal status in the Western alliance. Adenauer and the German government only partially achieved their objective in the complicated negotiations with the Western Allies over Adenauer's bargain (a German defense contribution and sovereignty in exchange for the annulment of the Occupation Statute and the dissolution of the Allied High Commission). The West Germans' failure to gain full sovereignty in either a legal or political sense was due less to the new international constellation of the Cold War (defense of Western Europe and West Germany) than to the legacy of the past (defense against Germany). In the October 23, 1954, Paris Agreements, Adenauer pushed through the following laconic wording: "The Federal Republic shall accordingly [after termination of the occupation regime] have the full authority of a sovereign state over its internal and external affairs."²⁸ If this was intended as a statement of fact, it must be conceded that it was partly fiction and, if interpreted as wishful thinking, it was a promise that went unfulfilled until 1990. The Allies maintained their rights and responsibilities regarding Berlin and Germany as a whole, particularly the responsibility for future reunification and a future peace treaty. These provisos were safeguards and veto clauses of great political significance. Their application by the Western powers played a significant role, for example, in the second major Berlin crisis of 1958–62, during the political battle over the Moscow and Warsaw treaties and the entry of the two German states into the United Nations between 1970 and 1973, and during the reunification process in

²⁷ See the chapter by Erhard Forndran, vol. 1, Security.

²⁸ Convention on Relations Between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany, May 26, 1952, as Amended by Schedule I of the Protocol on Termination of the Occupation Regime in Germany, signed at Paris, Oct. 23, 1954, in U.S. Department of State, *Documents on Germany, 1944–1985* (Washington, D.C., 1985), 425; see Helga Haftendorn and Henry Riecke, eds., "... Die volle Macht eines souveränen Staates ...": *Die Alliierten Vorbehaltsrechte als Rahmenbedingung westdeutscher Außenpolitik 1949/1950* (Baden-Baden, 1996); Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Adenauer: Der Staatsmann 1952–1967* (Stuttgart, 1991), 153–4; See also the chapters by Richard Wiggers, vols. 1 and 2, Politics.

1989–90. Although these developments transformed Western troops on German soil into allied protective forces, negotiations over their continued stationing in Germany made it clear that the Western powers were not giving up their original rights as occupying powers (*occupatio bellica*). Rather, they reserved their indirect right to station troops in Germany. Even after 1955, the ally could legally become a vanquished enemy again.²⁹

Just as significant in the long view was the system of arms control, arms limitation, and arms renunciation that permitted the controlled participation of the Federal Republic in the Western military alliance from the time it joined NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) in 1955 until reunification.³⁰ Under no circumstances would an independent German army be permitted. The Americans were in agreement on that point with the British, French, and all of Germany's other European neighbors. In addition, Adenauer was forced to "voluntarily" renounce on behalf of the Federal Republic the right to manufacture nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons, and to agree to additional arms limitations. Adenauer did not, however, completely renounce all German participation in the control of nuclear weapons, because the nuclear arms race between the superpowers and the shifting nuclear strategies of the United States—from "massive retaliation" to "flexible response"—had existential consequences for the Federal Republic. Its geography as a front-line state in the Cold War posed an insoluble dilemma. The strategy of deterrence was based on nuclear weapons, so the failure of deterrence would mean the nuclear annihilation of German territory. For this reason, the Federal Republic attempted to participate in some way in the nuclear arena, either within a multilateral NATO nuclear force or through European options. This attempt failed due to French and British resistance, and the Federal Republic's hope for nuclear participation collapsed when the common American and Soviet interest in a nuclear duopoly (with Great Britain as a junior partner) finally forced the Federal Republic to renounce the manufacture, possession, and use of nuclear weapons by putting its signature on

29 Daniel Hofmann, *Truppenstationierung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Die Vertragsverhandlungen mit den Westmächten 1951–1959* (Munich, 1997); Sebastian Fries, "Zwischen Sicherheit und Souveränität: Amerikanische Truppenstationierung und außenpolitischer Handlungsspielraum der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in: Haftendorn and Riecke, eds., *Die volle Macht*, 125–57.

30 See the chapters by Wolfgang Krieger and Erhard Forndran, vol. 1, Security, and Wolfgang Krieger and Matthias Dembinski, vol. 2, Security.

the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1969. This treaty primarily represented an attempt by the two superpowers to protect their dominance, prevent an uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear powers, and thereby keep the system of deterrence manageable. But it was also the experience with the German past that made the German signature so important for America and, especially, the Soviet Union.

It was these fears fed by the past that in the end made continued military control of Germany a central component of international diplomacy concerning the external conditions of German reunification. Containing Germany through integration was again the overriding objective of American foreign policy. Indeed, it was the prerequisite for America's approval of German unification. The country had to remain part of NATO and an overall Atlantic-European structure. On their own, the land-, air-, and sea-based armed forces of the Federal Republic are capable of neither offensive nor defensive action. Unified Germany is still bound by the rights and obligations arising from the Nonproliferation Treaty of 1968. Germany's self-containment through renunciation of nuclear weapons was the factor that made German unity tolerable to its neighbors.³¹

The Americans dictated the framework not only for the security of the West Germans (and West Europeans) but also for their prosperity. In this area, too, lessons from the past were the overriding motivation at first. As the Federal Republic attained the status of a major Western economic power in the early 1960s, however, this motivation disappeared. The social market economy (established with considerable assistance from the United States), its successful integration into the world economy, and the associated dependence of German foreign trade on open markets and raw materials convinced the world that there would be no revival of National Socialist economic policies.

The primary objective of both American wartime planning and American economic policy after 1945 had been to use economic and security policy to prevent any possible recurrence of the Nazi regime's protectionist, highly centralized, armament-oriented economy that had freed itself, through autarkic policies and bilateral barter trade, from dependency on the world economy and had ruthlessly exploited subjugated peoples. As early as the late 1930s, American politicians—especially Secretary of State Cordell Hull—considered the economic

31 See the chapters by Stephen F. Szabo, vol. 2, Politics, and by Karl Kaiser, vol. 2, Security.

policy of the Third Reich to be one of the major causes of German aggression.³² In the 1940s, this perception of National Socialism would combine with a generally negative view of the world economy in the period between the wars. According to this widely held view, the system of international trade that had been arduously and incompletely rebuilt after World War I was devastated by the Great Depression. The international economic crisis undermined the world monetary system. Taking the position of “every man for himself,” virtually all countries resorted to protectionist and interventionist measures. The result was an atrophied and fragmented system of international trade that exacerbated worldwide misery and fostered the development of dictatorships and fascist political systems.

This dominant view of the past necessarily led to several conclusions. Only a new international economy based on liberal principles and anchored in international institutions could prevent a repetition of the past. Only the complete elimination of all forms and causes of National Socialist economic policy could make Europe as a whole a productive partner in a new international economic order. Only the United States, the only major power that grew richer in the course of World War II, had the resources to establish this new international economic system. In 1945, the United States held two-thirds of the world’s gold reserves. Its share of more than 50 percent of the world’s production of industrial goods even exceeded its share in the period from 1925 to 1929. An undamaged economy of extraordinary productivity and great competitive advantage stood in stark contrast to an impoverished and divided Eurasian continent.³³ The Americans dominated the conference at Bretton Woods in July 1944, where 1,500 delegates from forty-four countries established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the central pillars of a liberal international economic order.³⁴

According to the Bretton Woods principles and liberal theory, it would have been logical to cleanse the German economy of National Socialist structures and integrate it as quickly as possible into an international system of free trade, but that did not happen right away. The onset of the Cold War very soon divided the German economy, and East Germany disappeared behind the Iron Curtain. The economic policies

32 Detlef Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt: Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA 1933–1941* (Stuttgart, 1975).

33 Detlef Junker, *Von der Weltmacht zur Supermacht*, 71.

34 Harold James, *International Monetary Cooperation Since Bretton Woods* (New York, 1996).

of the Western occupying powers—the United States, the United Kingdom, and France—differed considerably. The United States faced several constraints. In the short term, it had to bring down the high mortality rates in its occupation zone. In the medium and long terms, industrial disarmament measures motivated by security considerations and fueled by the spirit of the Morgenthau Plan ran the risk of destroying the basis for German and European economic recovery. These measures included reparations, the dismantling of production units, restrictions on German industrial production, the expropriation of German foreign holdings, and a ban on foreign trade. The ghosts of the past thus paved the winding road by which the West German economy was reintegrated into the international marketplace. A clear direction was found only through the Marshall Plan, the currency reform, the introduction of the social market economy, the U.S.-backed establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community, and Germany's ultimate reintegration into a multilateral system of international trade.³⁵

Once the German *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) began in the 1950s and Germany again rose to the position of Europe's most significant economic and trading power, the legacy of the past no longer played a role in economic policy relations between the two countries.³⁶ The United States and the Federal Republic became the two largest trading nations in the world. In a mixture of cooperation, competition, and conflict, the two nations sought to adapt to the crises in the economic system of the Western capitalist world that were triggered by the slow-down in the growth of the world economy after 1965, by the oil shocks, and by the Nixon shock when the United States abandoned the Bretton Woods system in 1971 and thereby forced the industrial nations to convert to a system of floating exchange rates. Although the United States still periodically exerted pressure on the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Federal Republic in transatlantic economic conflicts, the weight of West Germany in American-German economic relations continued to grow. There were essentially four reasons. The primary reason was the Federal Republic's growing economic power and its significant contribution to the growth of the world economy. Second, beginning in 1957, the EEC developed into a zone in which the

35 See the chapters by Christoph Buchheim, Wilfried Mausbach, Jörg Fisch, Regina Ursula Gramer, Werner Plumpe, Gerd Hardach, and Werner Bühner, vol. 1, Economics.

36 See the chapter by Welf Werner, vol. 2, Economics. This is why the chapters in the Economics section of vol. 2 no longer address the presence of the past.

Federal Republic could exert economic influence and find economic protection. The EEC brought about a broadening and deepening of trade within Europe, reduced dependency on the United States, and faced the Americans as a bloc in trade conflicts. Third, beginning in the early 1980s, the Federal Republic was less and less willing to do what it had been required to do for two decades due to its dependency on the United States in matters of security: to pay not only the costs for its own armed forces but also a share of the cost of stationing American forces in Germany by such means as offset payments and purchases of American armaments.³⁷ Fourth, despite conflicts with its transatlantic ally, the Federal Republic turned out to be, by and large, an economic power that adhered to the fundamental principles of liberalism and an open world market. It always took a very cooperative stance toward the United States in the various tariff reduction rounds of the post-war period and at the international economic summits beginning in the 1970s. Above all, it always attempted to mediate the more serious conflicts between the Americans and the French. Bridging economic and other differences between the United States and France was a standard exercise in West German foreign policy.

It is very probable that nothing contributed more to the democratic stabilization of the Federal Republic than the German *Wirtschaftswunder* of the 1950s, which enabled the Federal Republic to bear the heavy burden of occupation, reconstruction, integration, and reparations costs. The unprecedented growth of the world economy between 1945 and 1965, as well as the liberalization of international trade and the explosive growth in trade between industrialized nations, proved to be a windfall for the Federal Republic. Therefore, to the extent that it determined the framework for the social market economy and the growth of the world economy, the United States was responsible for laying an economic foundation for democratic development in the Federal Republic of Germany.

It is much more difficult to determine the impact of American denazification and democratization policies on the democratic development of the second German republic.³⁸ The only certainty is that the attempt to change German society and political culture in a

37 See the chapter by Hubert Zimmermann, vol. 1, Economics.

38 See the chapters by Barbara Fait, Cornelia Rauh-Kühne, and Hermann-Josef Rupieper, vol. 1, Politics; by Rebecca Boehling, James F. Tent, Jessica C. E. Gienow Hecht, and Karl-Heinz Füssl, vol. 1, Culture; and by Klaus-Dietmar Henke, Petra Gödde, Claus-Dieter Krohn, and Raimund Lammersdorf, vol. 1, Society.

fundamental way was again motivated decisively by the lessons of the past. The “crusade in Europe” (so Eisenhower) must not end with the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich. Rather, all Americans who had been involved in planning for postwar Germany during the war were convinced that the crusade must lead to a radical transformation of German society and, indeed, the German national character.³⁹ Thus, the packs of the GIs who were shipped across the Atlantic to Europe contained not only weapons and ammunition, but also fifteen million books.⁴⁰ The books symbolized the superpower’s belief in its 1945 mission of not only defeating Germany, but also transforming the politics, constitution, culture, and mentality of the Germans—of taking up the “fight for the soul of Faust.”⁴¹ The lessons of the past could be summed up as follows: never again National Socialism, never again dictatorship, never again racism, never again German subservience to authoritarianism. On account of the Nazi past and their interpretation of German history, leery Americans in 1945 considered the Germans incapable of returning to democracy on their own. They first had to be denazified, reeducated, and led to democracy in measured steps, a process that the Americans controlled very tightly in their zone. This was necessary because the American government, Congress, and public opinion regarded developments in Germany with skepticism. As late as 1949, 55 percent of Americans still did not believe that the Germans were capable of governing themselves in a democratic manner.⁴²

Leaving aside the trials against the major war criminals in Nuremberg, which were conducted jointly by the Allied powers, it is difficult to determine the immediate and long-term effects of denazification, reeducation, democratization, and other punitive measures that the United States carried out in the regional states of its occupation zone—Bavaria, Württemberg-Baden, Greater Hesse, and

39 Günter Moltmann, *Amerikas Deutschlandpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Kriegs- und Friedensziele 1941–1945* (Heidelberg, 1958); Paul Y. Hammond, “Directives for the Occupation of Germany: The Washington Controversy,” in: Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil-Military Decisions* (Birmingham, AL, 1963), 311–464; Anthony J. Nicholls, “American Views of Germany’s Future During World War II,” in: Lothar Kettner, ed., *Das “andere Deutschland” im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Emigration und Widerstand in internationaler Perspektive* (Stuttgart, 1977), 77–87; Uta Gerhardt, “Reeducation als Demokratisierung der Gesellschaft Deutschlands durch das amerikanische Besatzungsregime: Ein historischer Bericht,” in: *Leviathan: Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft* 27 (1999): 355–85; Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *Die amerikanische Besetzung*.

40 See the chapter by Martin Meyer, vol. 1, Culture.

41 See the chapter by Thomas A. Schwartz, vol. 1, Politics.

42 See the chapter by Thomas Reuther, vol. 1, Society.

Bremen—either alone or, beginning in 1949, together with Great Britain and France within the framework of the High Commission. There are several reasons for this. These measures were aimed at a “society in ruins”⁴³ that lacked the characteristics of a normal, structured society. The means and the ends of a prescribed, licensed “democracy from above” were locked into an irreconcilable conflict. Rule by command or decree demands that people obey orders; the essence of democracy is self-determination. The mass denazification and related punitive measures in the American zone confronted a population that used nearly all its energy in the battle for survival, food, heat, shelter, and caring for family members. It was a population that suppressed as much as possible any mention of the Third Reich, the war, and the genocide of the Jews, and that saw itself predominantly as victims rather than perpetrators. Moreover, the advent of the Cold War added a new dimension to democratization and “reorientation” policies. Anti-Nazism turned into Anti-Totalitarianism that tended to equate Nazism and communism, thus retroactively legitimated the anticommunist propaganda of the Nazis. And it diverted the spiritual and emotional energies of the West Germans away from dealing with the past, turning them instead toward the new front: the free West against the totalitarian communists.

It is difficult in the end to distinguish what part of the incremental development of democratic structures was due to coercion and understanding by decree, what part to the prior existence of German democratic traditions, and what part to insights freely acquired by the Germans living under occupation. Three hypotheses, however, have a high degree of plausibility. Without the trials against war criminals and without forced denazification, the “cleansing” of German society might have been even less extensive than it actually was. Without the American decision to begin a process of controlled democratization in its zone in early 1946, it would have been much more difficult to establish a representative democracy in West Germany. Without a democratic, constitutional tradition in Germany, the “prescribed democracy”⁴⁴ would not have become a natural, freely accepted part of West German political culture. The most important domestic policy

43 Christoph Klessmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung: Deutsche Geschichte 1945–1955*, 5th ed. (Göttingen, 1991), chap. 3; Theodor Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung 1945–1949* (Stuttgart, 1983).

44 Theo Pirker, *Die verordnete Demokratie: Grundlagen und Erscheinungen der “Restauration”* (Berlin, 1977).

foundations of the Federal Republic—the introduction of the social market economy, the currency reform and abolition of price-fixing, and the promulgation of the Basic Law—are excellent illustrations of the complex relationship between American and Allied influence, on the one hand, and, on the other, Germany’s traditions and desire for self-assertion.⁴⁵

Between 1949 and 1955, after the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany and the intensification of the East-West conflict following the outbreak of the Korean War, the Allied High Commission and its American representative, John J. McCloy, gradually lost control over Germany’s policy on its past because they wished to retain control over the present—namely, over West Germany’s rearmament and integration into the West. Sometimes reluctantly and sometimes with resignation, the Allies had to recognize that—if they expected to keep their new ally in the Western camp—they had to tolerate the overwhelming longing of most West Germans to put their past behind them. Time and again, the U.S. High Commissioner pointed out to the State Department and the administration in Washington that the fundamental conflict between the United States’ role as victor, occupier, and enforcer of Allied justice and its role as ally and friend of Germany was becoming sharper and that this conflict was causing ever clearer damage to American policy toward Germany.⁴⁶

45 See the chapters by Christoph Buchheim and Werner Plumpe, vol. 1, Economics, and by Hermann Josef Rupieper, vol. 1, Politics. For a discussion of American influence on the Basic Law, see the report on the literature in Adolf M. Birke, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Verfassung, Parlament und Parteien* (Munich, 1997), 64–70; Eberhard Pickart, “Auf dem Weg zum Grundgesetz,” in: Richard Löwenthal and Hans-Peter Schwarz, eds., *Die zweite Republik: 25 Jahre Bundesrepublik Deutschland – eine Bilanz* (Stuttgart, 1974), 149–76; Erich J. C. Hahn, “The Occupying Powers and the Constitutional Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945–1949,” *Cornerstone of Democracy: The West German Grundgesetz 1949–1989*, German Historical Institute, Occasional Paper 13 (Washington, D.C., 1995), 7–36; Karlheinz Niclauss, *Der Weg zum Grundgesetz: Demokratiegründung in Westdeutschland 1945–1949* (Paderborn, 1998); Edmund Spevack, “Amerikanische Einflüsse auf das Grundgesetz: Die Mitglieder des Parlamentarischen Rates und ihre Beziehungen zu den USA,” in: Heinz Bude and Bernd Greiner, eds., *Westbindungen: Amerika in der Bundesrepublik* (Hamburg, 1999), 55–71.

46 Thomas A. Schwartz, “John McCloy and the Landsberg Cases,” in: Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, Axel Frohn, and Hermann-Josef Rupieper, eds., *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945–1955* (New York, 1993), 433–54; Ulrich Brochhagen, *Nach Nürnberg: Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Westintegration in der Ära Adenauer* (Hamburg, 1994); Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich, 1996); Jeffrey Herf,

The end of the occupation regime and the establishment of a partially autonomous Federal Republic in 1955 were important turning points for the presence of the past in postwar American-German relations. The American government lost its legal right to intervene in Germany's policies touching upon the past. This did not eradicate the legacy of National Socialism from American-German relations. But from that point until the fall of the Berlin Wall, it seldom provoked confrontation in the official foreign policy of the allied states. The most famous exception was the thoroughly unsuccessful attempt of Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1985 to force a reconciliation over the past with President Ronald Reagan over the graves at Bitburg. Commenting on the incident, Secretary of State George P. Shultz told Arthur Burns, U.S. ambassador to the Federal Republic, "Hitler is laughing in hell right now."⁴⁷

Relations between the two nations up to the point of reunification and beyond were generally characterized by careful efforts on both sides to ensure that American-German relations were not adversely affected by the increasing attention accorded the Holocaust inside and outside academia beginning in the 1960s, or by its growing importance in both German and American consciousness. German politicians and diplomats, the party-linked foundations, and American-German organizations such as the Atlantik-Brücke attempted to expand their dialogue with Jewish organizations and leading Jewish personalities in the United States. On the German side, this meant not denying the past but promoting the new, democratic Germany. Although the majority of American Jews were and are still distrustful of the democratic Germany, many Jewish organizations have attempted, even after Bitburg, to keep this dialogue going.⁴⁸

Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanies (Cambridge, Mass., 1997); Aleida Assmann and Ute Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit, Geschichtsversessenheit: Vom Umgang mit deutschen Vergangenheiten nach 1945* (Stuttgart, 1999).

47 George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York, 1993), 550. Shultz's sharp criticism of Kohl stands in contrast to the position taken by Reagan, who continued to defend his decision to visit the German military cemetery. See Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York, 1990), 376–84. See also David B. Morris, "Bitburg Revisited: Germany's Search for Normalcy," *German Politics and Society* 13 (1995): 92–109, and the chapter by Jeffrey Peck, vol. 2, Culture.

48 See Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*.

Dual Containment

The prevailing interpretive model of American policy toward Europe beginning in 1947–1948—namely, the concept of double or dual containment—is also impossible to understand without considering the presence of the past. The Soviet Union was to be contained by building up an opposing force in Western Europe while the Federal Republic would *simultaneously* be contained by integration in the Western alliance and the liberal international economy. Political scientist Wolfram F. Hanrieder has written about the significance of this concept. Although he did not coin the term, he has contributed more astutely than anyone else to its diffusion:

“Every major event in the postwar history of Europe follows from this: the rearmament and reconstruction of the Federal Republic within the restraints of international organizations, the development of NATO from a loosely organized mutual assistance pact into an integrated military alliance, American support for West European integration, and the solidification of the division of Germany and Europe. So long as the two components of America’s double containment were mutually reinforcing, America’s European diplomacy was on a sure footing. In later years, when tensions and contradictions developed between the two components, American-German relations became increasingly strained.”⁴⁹

The concept of “dual containment” has been criticized because the nature and scope, the origin and immediacy of the German and Soviet threats to the United States were fundamentally different. An analysis of the situation in Europe after 1945 purely in terms of power politics would need to reject the idea that American policy toward Germany and the Soviet Union could be construed as comparable even on only a conceptual level and would, therefore,

49 Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Conn., 1989), 6. See also Wilfried Loth, “Die doppelte Eindämmung: Überlegungen zur Genesis des Kalten Krieges 1945–1947,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 238 (1984): 611–31; Thomas A. Schwartz, “Dual Containment: John J. McCloy, The American High Commission, and European Integration,” in: Francis Heller and John R. Gillingham, eds., *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe* (New York, 1992): 131–212; Rolf Steininger et al., eds., *Die doppelte Eindämmung: Europäische Sicherheit und deutsche Frage in den Fünfzigern* (Munich, 1993); as well as the chapters by Thomas A. Schwartz, Michael Wala, Ruud van Dijk, Frank Schumacher, and Frank Ninkovich, vol. 1, Politics; Steven L. Rearden, vol. 1, Security; and Klaus Schwabe, Gottfried Niedhart, and H. W. Brands, vol. 2, Politics.

also reject the concept of “dual containment.”⁵⁰ But such a view of the Cold War geopolitical constellation ignores the cultural and mental dispositions that arise during the collective interpretation of historical experiences. For example, the notion of a catastrophic German tradition from Luther to Hitler, popularized by William Shirer’s bestseller in the 1960s,⁵¹ demonstrates that the Americans did not see their military victory over National Socialism as a definitive answer to the German problem. German authoritarianism, Prussian militarism, and National Socialist fantasies of destruction could become virulent again—if not today, then tomorrow; if not in the same form, then in a new form. Skepticism about the German national character linked the past and the future of American policy, which actually sought to “contain” the latent danger of such excesses.

Herein lies the qualitative difference from the kind of hegemonic control that the United States sought to exert over Britain or France. The Western superpower never acknowledged France’s *vocation mondiale et européenne*, its claim to the role of a major international power and a hegemonic position within Europe. For decades, American politicians were bent on preventing France from using European integration to push the United States out of Europe and free the Federal Republic from its dependence on the transatlantic colossus by making it France’s junior partner in Europe. The United States wanted—and wants—to remain the decisive balancer and pacifier in Europe.⁵² Unlike the Federal Republic, France never accepted this claim.

French President Charles de Gaulle, the self-appointed embodiment of “eternal” France, always envisioned a French-led Europe that would achieve parity with the two superpowers.⁵³ Anglo-Saxon resistance foiled de Gaulle’s plans to be accepted into a nuclear directorate consisting

50 See the chapter by Wolfgang Krieger, vol. 1, Security, and the concluding essay by Hans-Peter Schwarz, vol. 2.

51 Rohan O’Butler, *The Roots of National Socialism* (London, 1941); William Montgomery McGovern, *From Luther to Hitler: The History of Nazi-Fascist Philosophy* (London, 1946); William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York, 1960).

52 Frank Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance Since World War II* (New York, 1992); Klaus Schwabe, “Atlantic Partnership and European Integration: American-European Policies and the German Problem, 1947–1966,” in: Geir Lundestad, ed., *No End to Alliance. The United States and Western Europe: Past, Present and Future* (New York, 1998), 37–80; Pierre Melandri, “The Troubled Partnership: France and the United States, 1945–1989,” *ibid.*, 112–33.

53 Georges-Henri Soutou, *L’alliance incertaine: Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands, 1954–1996* (Paris, 1996), 131; Robert Paxton and Nicholas Wahl, eds., *De Gaulle and the United States. A Centennial Reappraisal* (Oxford, 1994).

of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. In response, France took the liberty of denying Great Britain access to the EEC (1963). It also shocked the United States and NATO allies with its decision to withdraw French forces from NATO's integrated military command (1966), called for the withdrawal of all-American troops from French soil, undermined the American dominated monetary system of Bretton Woods, and made a vain but daring attempt to forge a bilateral alliance with the Federal Republic in the Franco-German Treaty of 1963.⁵⁴

Politicians in the Federal Republic dared not even dream of such latitude in dealing with the Western hegemonic power. That was due in part to the greater, indeed, existential dependence of the Federal Republic on the United States in the area of security policy. It was also because the legacy of National Socialism made an independent German claim to power untenable. The United States would not have tolerated it. The American policy of containing Germany through integration was geared precisely toward withholding from the Federal Republic the military, political, or social basis for such a power play. German politicians understood this well and chose multilateral routes for pursuing their interests.

Unlike Germany, France had not forfeited its right to conduct unilateral power politics. De Gaulle's hegemonic plans for Europe may have been inconvenient and annoying, but they could not shake a French-American trust rooted in a two-hundred-year-old shared tradition. The two nations perceived and continue to perceive themselves as standard-bearers of the universal mission of freedom, which began its victory march through the world with the American and French Revolutions. A veiled battle over the birthright of this mission is part of the tradition of French-American rivalry. Despite or perhaps because of this shared tradition, French national pride, born of the consciousness of French greatness and sovereignty, has chafed for several decades against American hegemonic policies in Europe, while the Federal Republic has viewed these policies primarily as protection and assistance toward the goal of integration. This wounded pride was the underlying reason for the series of French-American conflicts, all of which had repercussions for American-German and Franco-German relations and that forced the Germans into continual diplomatic gymnastics between the United States and France.⁵⁵

54 Klaus Hildebrand, *Von Erhard zur Grossen Koalition 1963–1969* (Stuttgart, 1984), 99–111.

55 See the chapter by Eckhart Conze, vol. 2, Politics.

International Economic Crises, Multipolarity, and the Second Cold War

The Federal Republic did play a more significant role in bilateral relations with the United States beginning in the second half of the 1960s. But military protection by the United States and NATO remained vital to German survival until reunification and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the price for this protection was the military containment of the Federal Republic and the division of Germany. In the economic sphere as well, neither the Federal Republic nor the European Community (EC) became a truly equal partner in terms of power or rights. This state of affairs is well concealed by the fact that the EC and the Federal Republic were engaged in nearly continuous negotiations with the United States within numerous multilateral organizations for the purpose of resolving economic crises.

The *relative* increase in significance of the Federal Republic in the economic realm was also related to diminishing American hegemony over the world economy. The entanglement of the United States in the Vietnam War and, in particular, the year 1968, in many ways a decisive turning point in the Cold War,⁵⁶ played a significant role in this process. The United States appeared to be falling prey to the fate of all great world empires. Its resources were no longer adequate to meet global requirements. America was at risk of losing its dominant position because of imperial overstretch. President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–69) had hoped to be able to wage two wars at once: the war on poverty at home and the war on communism in Southeast Asia. Congress, however, refused to fill the growing hole in the budget with a tax increase. Loans from the international capital markets—that is, from the European and Asian allies (primarily Germany and Japan)—therefore, had to cover mounting deficits. The consequences—a weak dollar, chronic American balance-of-trade and balance-of-payments deficits, and rising prices at home—began to undermine the stability of the international monetary system of Bretton Woods that had served to institutionalize American domination of the world economy since World War II.⁵⁷ Although the currency exchange mechanism

56 See the first attempt to interpret 1968 as a global turning point for domestic and foreign policy: Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (New York, 1998).

57 Diane B. Kunz, *Butter and Guns: America's Cold War Economic Diplomacy* (New York, 1997).

was temporarily restored during the gold crisis of March 1968,⁵⁸ that year was the beginning of the end of an era of unparalleled economic growth. During the half-decade from 1968 to 1973–4, political decisions and developments contributed to a slowing of international economic growth. The political reaction of the oil-producing countries to the Arab-Israeli Six Day War in 1967 led to the first oil-price shocks of 1973 and 1974.⁵⁹

In the face of international economic crises and its own weakened position, the United States attempted to do the same thing that the British had done after 1763 and drove the American colonists into the Revolutionary War: to externalize the costs of its own empire in part and recover them from a dependent clientele. The United States was still strong enough to force primarily the Europeans and Japanese—although not itself—to adapt actively to the new international economic problems, to thwart the largely multilateral economic crisis management with unilateral measures if necessary (much to the aggravation of the Europeans), and to threaten the Federal Republic in particular with the withdrawal of American troops in order to obtain economic concessions. The American colonists had been free to rebel in part because their external enemies, the French and the American Indians, had been conquered with the very effective help of the British in the global war of 1756–63. The West Germans, however, lived in fear of the Warsaw Pact’s military potential. President Johnson instructed his staff to demand from the Germans what Congress would not give him: “What you have to do is put great pressure to get the Germans; I want to use all the influence I can to hold the Alliance together and get the Germans to pay the bill; but they don’t want to do it, and if they can’t do it, I can’t do it by myself.”⁶⁰

The 1970s and 1980s, which were marked by monetary and trade conflicts between the United States and Europe, began with a unilateral

58 Robert M. Collins, “The Economic Crisis of 1968 and the Waning of the ‘American Century,’” *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 396–422.

59 See Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York, 1991); Jens Hohensee, *Der erste Ölpreisschock 1973/74: Die politischen und gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen der arabischen Erdölpolitik auf die Bundesrepublik und Westeuropa* (Stuttgart, 1996).

60 Memorandum for the Record, Subject: President’s Conversation with John McCloy Concerning U.S. Position in Trilateral Negotiations, 10:45–11:40 A.M., Wed., Mar. 1, 1967, Francis Bator papers, box 17, folder: Trilateral-McCloy Meeting, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Tex. I am grateful to Philipp Gassert for pointing out this document.

termination of the principles of the Bretton Woods system by the Nixon administration in 1971, the Nixon shock. The United States freed itself of the obligation to exchange dollars for gold at any time. When the major trading nations switched to floating exchange rates in 1973, the United States was able to use the dollar as a political weapon even against its own allies. To respond to what it deemed “unfair” trade practices of other countries, the United States acquired further foreign trade policy tools in 1974 and 1988; these enabled it to respond with retaliatory measures to actual or perceived protectionist practices of other nations.⁶¹ Foreign trade policy had been a collective task of the EC since 1974. National economic policies had been multilateralized through international institutions such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the GATT, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Finally, the World Economic Summit of heads of state had been created in 1974 at the initiative of French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and communications were increasing between finance ministers and central-bank presidents of the major industrial nations. These developments notwithstanding, however, multilateralism remained only a means—albeit one that kept conflicts within limits—by which the nations involved could pursue their own national interests as defined by their political leaders.

The United States remained the most significant power in terms of pursuing its national interests. It secured its access to oil and other raw materials. Despite the various crises, the dollar remained the most important currency. And the enormous American domestic market remained relatively invulnerable to retaliatory measures; the United States remained much less dependent on exports than the Federal Republic and Japan, for example. Neither the Federal Republic nor the EC could change these facts despite improved Franco-German and intra-European cooperation. The unilateral latitude enjoyed by the United States in economic matters became even more visible in the 1980s when President Ronald Reagan terminated the policy of detente in his first term (1981–85), initiated a massive (reactive) arms buildup, and let Japan and the Europeans foot a significant part of the bill.

The American arms buildup had, of course, severe economic consequences. From 1980 to 1984, military expenditures in the United States

61 See the lead essay and chapter by Harold James and the chapters by Monika Medick-Krakau, Andreas Falke, and Bernhard May, vol. 2, Economics.

climbed 40 percent at the same time that Congress was passing tax cuts. The two measures together led to a spiraling budget deficit and an immense foreign debt for the United States. In 1985, the country became a debtor nation for the first time since World War I. Whereas the United States still had a positive net external asset position of \$106.2 billion in 1980, by the end of the Reagan administration in 1988 it had a negative net external asset position of \$532.5 billion.⁶² The national debt grew from \$914 billion in 1980 to \$1.823 trillion in 1985; by 1991, it was approaching the \$4 trillion mark.⁶³ The Americans have been living on credit since the Reagan administration, particularly capital transfers from Europe and Japan. President George H. Walker Bush's administration could not provide Mikhail Gorbachev—the great mover and shaker, failed reformer, and sorcerer's apprentice—with the massive economic aid he desired. Given the attitude of Congress, the administration would have had to borrow the money on capital markets. In the 1990–91 Gulf War against Saddam Hussein, the Americans may have been militarily dominant, but they let Saudi Arabia, Japan, and Germany bear most of the costs.

Although the international economic crises and the loss of American economic hegemony presented a challenge mainly to those nations, international organizations, and “summit meetings” that sought to influence the rules of the international “free” market, the loss of American nuclear superiority improved the position of its paramount Cold War enemy, the communist, totalitarian Soviet Union. The atomic stalemate between the superpowers and its political and military consequences were the overriding structural problem of security policy in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The problems resulting from this strategic situation for Europe and its “frontline” state, the Federal Republic, could in principle only be handled within the triangle consisting of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Western Europe. In security policy, these decades can be seen as a continual attempt by the Europeans to influence the nuclear policies of the Western superpower as the United States simultaneously attempted to reach bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union while making only as many concessions to its

62 Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerich, *Wirtschaft USA: Strukturen, Institutionen und Prozesse* (Munich, 1991), 369.

63 Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, 1987), 527; Paul M. Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* (New York, 1993).

NATO allies as was necessary to preserve the alliance.⁶⁴ Much was at stake for the Federal Republic: namely, its security and its hope for reunification.⁶⁵

The nuclear stalemate, reflected in the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), offered compelling motivation for arms control, cooperation, and limited detente between the United States and the USSR in order to prevent the worst possible disaster, a nuclear holocaust. The arms race, driven by competing risk scenarios and the interests of the military-industrial complex on both sides, had long since entered the realm of the absurd. By 1972, for example, the United States and the Soviet Union possessed enough nuclear weapons to explode fifteen tons of radioactive TNT over every man, woman, and child on earth.⁶⁶ After the shocks of the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis, the two superpowers had signed several treaties aimed at slowing the arms race and reducing the risk of a nuclear surprise attack. In 1962, the two powers agreed to the joint, peaceful use of outer space in several areas. In 1963, a direct teletype connection, the “hot line,” was installed between the Kremlin and the White House. In 1967, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain signed a treaty on the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. On July 1, 1968, these nations attempted, with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, both to preserve the nuclear powers’ monopoly and to prevent an uncontrolled increase in the number of nuclear powers. All three nations had an overriding interest in keeping the Federal Republic of Germany from gaining access to nuclear weapons. The first round of negotiations on strategic arms limitations (SALT I), which had begun in 1970, was brought to a close with President Richard M. Nixon’s visit to Moscow in May 1972. The goal was to limit offensive delivery systems by establishing limits on the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles

64 On the problem of cooperation in the hegemonic alliance structure beginning in 1945, see Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies* (Princeton, N.J., 1995); Geir Lundestad, *“Empire” by Integration: The United States and European Integration 1945–1997* (Oxford, 1998); Josef Joffe, *The Limited Partnership: Europe, the United States, and the Burdens of Alliance* (Cambridge, 1987). An excellent illustration from the German perspective are the memoirs of Helmut Schmidt, *Men and Powers: A Political Retrospective* (New York, 1989), 119–284.

65 See the chapters by Klaus Schwabe, Gottfried Niedhart, Klaus Larres, Werner Link, H. W. Brands, Steven Brady, and Christian Hacke, vol. 2, Politics; and by Wolfgang Krieger, Kori Schake, Michael Broer, and Matthias Dembinski, vol. 2, Security.

66 Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad Since 1750* (London, 1985), 615.

and submarine-launched ballistic missiles that each side could have. At the same time, the two sides agreed to allow each country to build no more than two antiballistic missile (ABM) systems, which were theoretically capable of removing the other side's second-strike capacity and would, therefore, have destroyed the balance of terror.

The policies of arms control and detente on both sides rested on political assumptions and expectations. Soviet objectives included nuclear parity with the United States, recognition as an equal superpower and competitor in all regions of the world, the preservation of the political status quo in Europe (i.e., the division of Europe and Germany), and finally, actual acceptance of a communist bloc under Soviet leadership. For its part, the United States was prepared to enter into arms-control negotiations and—as established by the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference in 1975—to cement into place the foreign policy status quo in Europe (i.e., renunciation of the use of force, the inviolability of borders). This made a principle—not necessarily binding under international law—out of the pattern of response that the United States had demonstrated at the time of the uprisings of the East Germans in 1953 and the Hungarians in 1956, the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in 1968: the pattern of not intervening militarily in the communist sphere of influence. However, the United States never recognized the Soviet Union as a politically or morally equal superpower. For the Americans, communism remained an inhumane system with no regard for the right to freedom. In Helsinki, therefore, the Soviet Union reluctantly had to declare its acceptance of the right of peoples to self-determination and its respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the citizen (Basket III). It did so knowing full well that the actual implementation of these freedoms would be the downfall of the communist regimes in the Eastern bloc. The Helsinki Final Act, like the Federal Republic's Moscow and Warsaw treaties, was thus an instrument for both maintaining and overcoming the status quo.⁶⁷

Even after the end of the Vietnam War, the basic antagonistic structure of the Cold War remained in place until the collapse of the Soviet Union. The global competition between the superpowers continued even at the height of the period of limited detente from 1970 to 1975. Midway through Jimmy Carter's presidency, the policy of limited detente began to lose its domestic political support. Americans reached the conclusion

⁶⁷ See the chapter by Michael Lucas, vol. 2, Politics.

that the Soviet Union was attempting to establish itself as the dominant superpower worldwide through its military interventions in the Third World and a dangerous arms buildup that included new intercontinental missiles, new nuclear-powered submarines, the buildup of six deep-sea fleets, and the deployment of new medium-range missiles that were particularly threatening to Europe. President Reagan ended the policy of detente in his first term and led the United States into an ice-cold war with the Soviet Union. Anticommunism and an arms buildup were the pillars of his program. Reagan surprised and shocked the world the most with his announcement in March 1983 that he intended to develop an impenetrable barrier in space—the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)—that would protect the United States from nuclear surprise attack by the Soviet Union. Such a barrier promised to return to Americans the unassailable security of the nineteenth century. At the same time, it threatened to decouple Europe from the United States and to destroy not only the logic of mutual deterrence but NATO as well.⁶⁸ The message of Reagan's first term was clear: The United States would find its security not through detente and arms control but through more armaments and technological advances.

Both the policies of arms control and detente and the second Cold War had severe consequences for American-German relations. As in the early phase of the Cold War, this bilateral relationship was a dependent variable of American policy toward the Soviet Union and Western Europe.⁶⁹ The policy of detente deferred the prospect of German reunification to the indefinite future. Adenauer's promise that a policy of strength would lead to reunification was exposed as an illusion by the Berlin Wall. The politics of arms control made the Germans fully aware for the first time of the dilemmas of their security situation in the nuclear age. It was, therefore, no accident that Kennedy's new security policy led to serious conflict with the Adenauer government; that the joint Franco-German reaction to that policy, the 1963 Elysee Treaty, contributed to Adenauer's departure

68 The resuscitation of such plans by the U.S. Congress and the Clinton administration at the end of the millennium has aroused similar European fears. See William Drozdiak, "Possible U.S. Missile Shield Alarms Europe," *Washington Post*, Nov. 6, 1999, A1; "Ausbau der amerikanischen Raketenabwehr: Fischer kritisiert US-Pläne," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Nov. 5, 1999, 8.

69 See the chapters by Manfred Görtemaker, Frank Ninkovich, Diethelm Prowe, and Manfred Knapp, vol. 1, Politics; by Wolfgang Krieger, Kori Schake, and Erhard Forndran, vol. 1, Security; and the chapters in vol. 2, Politics and Security.

from office; that Johnson's security policy brought about the downfall of Chancellor Ludwig Erhard; that Carter's and Reagan's policies played their part in undermining Helmut Schmidt's position within his own party; and that Chancellor Helmut Kohl had to play the political strongman to push through the NATO double-track decision against the wishes of a formidable German peace movement.

From its founding, the Federal Republic had no alternative to its total dependence on the United States for a credible nuclear deterrent against the Soviet Union. This deterrent could not be permitted to fail; the worst-case scenario—an attack by the Warsaw Pact—could not be permitted to occur. If it did, the Federal Republic, nearly incapable of resisting, would either have been immediately overrun, which would at least have ensured the physical survival of the West Germans (“better red than dead”), or it would have become a battlefield where conventional, nuclear, and possibly chemical and biological weapons would be used. For the Germans, the nightmarish aspect of the decades of bilateral and NATO planning for this worst-case scenario was that the Federal Republic had a say only about the form of its annihilation.⁷⁰ Even the “flexible-response” strategy, which was pushed through NATO with difficulty in the 1960s, did not alter the dilemma in which the Federal Republic found itself. Although it provided for a “pause” between the use of conventional and nuclear weapons in the event of an attack from the East, this strategy gave the American president alone the time to negotiate before triggering an intercontinental nuclear holocaust. “A ‘limited conflict’ from the U.S. standpoint would be a total war for the Federal Republic and would extinguish its national existence.”⁷¹ It was, therefore, logical under the circumstances that dissonance and conflict characterized the American–German security relationship. This was so from the time the Bundeswehr was established until shortly before reunification, even if the United States did occasionally accommodate German and European concerns, as with the NATO double-track decision in December 1979, in order to keep the NATO alliance together. Other notable examples of this accommodation included the flexible-response strategy; the poorly developed plan for a sea-based, multilateral nuclear force in Europe that the United States conceived as a placebo for the Germans; the exclusion of

70 This was apparent from the time of the first nuclear planning games in the mid-1950s. See the chapters by Kori Schake and Frederick Zilian Jr., vol. 1, Security.

71 Helga Haftendorn, *Security and Detente: Conflicting Priorities in German Foreign Policy* (New York, 1985), 105.

the constrained ally from possession of nuclear weapons; the NATO double-track decision; the stationing of short- and medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe; the neutron bomb; and the American SDI program.⁷²

The nuclear stalemate and the military, economic, political, spiritual, and emotional strain of the Vietnam War forced the United States into political detente in Europe and the West Germans into the largest change of course in their foreign policy since 1955: namely, the de facto but not de jure recognition of the division of Germany in the Moscow and Warsaw treaties of 1970 and 1973. With this “active adjustment to American detente policy,”⁷³ many Germans had to give up the illusion of the 1950s that European detente could be made dependent on progress toward German reunification. The great disillusionment occurred when construction of the Berlin Wall began on August 13, 1961, and the West accepted the barricading of the Eastern sector. The highest circulation German newspaper, *Bild*, was enraged on August 16: “The West is doing NOTHING! U.S. President Kennedy is silent...MacMillan has gone hunting...and Adenauer is cursing Brandt!”⁷⁴ While the arms-control policies of the superpowers were a brutally clear reminder to the Germans of their (in)security dilemma, the Wall symbolized a dead end in Western reunification policy.

The Federal Republic clearly had to adapt twice to new American policies between the time the Wall was built and the revolution in international relations initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s. Until the middle of Carter’s presidency, Germans had to adapt to the American policy of detente and thereafter to Reagan’s second Cold War. Again, the dog was wagging the tail and not vice versa. The reason that the second adaptation became so difficult was that the majority of West Germans had made their peace with detente after the Moscow and Warsaw treaties were signed and had put off any hope of reunification. The Germans had serious problems with the Woodrow Wilson of the nuclear age, Ronald Reagan. They considered his arms buildup and Manichaeian worldview dangerous. The “fear of our friends” (Oskar Lafontaine) grew and added fuel to the protest movement against the stationing of American Pershing and cruise missiles

72 See the chapters in vols. 1 and 2, Security.

73 See the chapter by Werner Link, as well as the chapters by Klaus Schwabe, Gottfried Niedhart, Richard Wiggers, and Christian Hacke, vol. 2, Politics.

74 Quoted in Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Die Ära Adenauer: Epochenwechsel 1957–1963* (Stuttgart, 1983), 146.

in Europe. Adapting left a deep, painful imprint on American-German relations, German society, and the German political parties.⁷⁵ Not until the process of German reunification began did we again see, as in the 1950s, a fundamental parallelism in values *and* interests between the Americans and Germans.⁷⁶

Arrival in the West: American Influence on Society and Culture in the Federal Republic of Germany

When we as historians look back from the perspective of German reunification at the history of American-German relations in the era of the Cold War, we may venture to say that the United States had a greater influence on society and culture in the Federal Republic than any other state or society in the world. As with foreign, security, and economic policy, virtually no area of German society and culture lacked an American dimension.

The Germans experienced the new Western superpower as an “exogenous revolutionary” after 1945, “as prosecutor, judge, and reeducator attempting to radically change the German government, society, and economy,”⁷⁷ and attempting to Westernize, democratize, and transform the political culture of the Germans with a targeted “Americanization from above.” The decade from 1955 to 1965 may be viewed as an incubation period for “Americanization from below,” which subsequently encompassed West German society as a whole.⁷⁸ This Americanization from below was not the result primarily of U.S. governmental policies, as had been the case from 1945 into the early 1950s, but rather of the influence of nongovernmental American players.

As plausible as these generalizations may sound, it must be conceded that historical research on the Americanization of Germany and the development of a civil society—particularly in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s—is in its infancy. In addition, researchers have a great deal of difficulty objectively recording and conceptually defining this influence.

75 See the chapter by Matthias Zimmer, vol. 2, Politics.

76 See the chapters by Stephen F. Szabo, vol. 2, Politics and Karl Kaiser, vol. 2, Security.

77 See the chapter by Knud Krakau, vol. 1, Society.

78 See the chapter by Axel Schildt, vol. 1, Society. See also Axel Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen: Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999).

The academic discussion of this influence on the mentality, society, and culture of West Germans—and to some extent even on East Germans behind the Iron Curtain—is centered around a few terms (“Americanization,” “democratization,” “Westernization,” “modernization,” and “technologization”) that are often used synonymously, but entail competing or overlapping meanings.⁷⁹ It is all the more difficult to clarify their meaning because they were not invented by historians but appeared in sources of the time as normative and often pejorative terms as, for instance, in the vocabulary of rigid anti-Americanism.⁸⁰

Moreover, it is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact breadth and depth of American influence and the chronological and substantive fluctuations in the relation of American influence versus German tradition, of imitation versus rejection, of active assimilation versus cultural self-assertion, of American mission versus German democratic disposition, of pro-Americanism versus anti-Americanism. A growing number of historians are wondering whether a one-way street can even exist in “intercultural transfer

79 See the chapters by Frank Trommler, vol. 1, Culture; Volker Berghahn, Axel Schildt, and Raimund Lammersdorf, vol. 1, Society; Frank Trommler and Klaus Milich, vol. 2, Culture; and Lily Gardner-Feldman and Stephen Kalberg, vol. 2, Society. See also Michael Ermarth, ed., *America and the Shaping of German Society, 1945–1955* (Providence, R.I., 1993); Konrad H. Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland 1955–1970* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997); Alf Lüdtke, Inge Marßolek, and Adelheid von Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1996); Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1999); Reiner Pommerin, ed., *The American Impact on Postwar Germany* (Providence, R.I., 1995); Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek, eds., *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre* (Bonn, 1998); Manfred Görtemaker, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Von der Gründung bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1999), 199–270; “The American Occupation of Germany in Cultural Perspective: A Roundtable,” *Diplomatic History* 23 (1999): 1–77; as well as the instructive bibliographies of Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, “Dimensionen von Amerikanisierung in der deutschen Gesellschaft,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 35 (1995): 1–34; Bernd Greiner, “‘Test the West’: Über die ‚Amerikanisierung‘ der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” *Mittelweg* 36 (1997): 4–40; Philipp Gassert, “Amerikanismus, Antiamerikanismus, Amerikanisierung: Neue Literatur zur Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturgeschichte des amerikanischen Einflusses in Deutschland und Europa,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 39 (1999): 531–61.

80 See the chapters by Knud Krakau and Philipp Gassert, vol. 1, Society; and by Claus Leggewie, David B. Morris, Rainer Schnoor, and Philipp Gassert, vol. 2, Society.

processes.”⁸¹ Even a superpower like the United States is not capable of exerting direct and unmediated influence and power in the cultural arena, if we understand cultural power to mean the capacity to force one’s own spirit (*Geist*), language, and lifestyle onto another. Inter-societal and intercultural transfer cannot be forced into such binary subject-object categories. Cultural appropriation always means a transformation and a merging into one’s own tradition. In the relationship between Germany and the United States, the “westernization,” “democratization,” and “modernization” of the Federal Republic should thus be interpreted not as “Americanization” but rather as a cultural and social synthesis that has both accepted and resisted American influence.⁸²

Finally, we must remember that the discussion of American influence on the society and culture of the Federal Republic is part of a larger debate in Europe and other regions of the planet over the “Americanization” of the world. The ascent of the United States to the position of global superpower in the twentieth century was accompanied by an equally global history of perceptions on the part of those nations and regions, societies and political systems affected by the American model and influence, by American hegemony and control in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and—to a lesser extent— Africa.⁸³

In Germany, too, the discussion about Americanization and modernization began before 1945. American influence on German society and culture had existed in the first half of the century.⁸⁴ Not until after

81 Johannes Paulmann, “Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer: Zwei Forschungsansätze zur europäischen Geschichte des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 267 (1998): 649–85.

82 For similar conclusions, see Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York, 1997). See also Berndt Ostendorf, “The Final Banal Idiocy of the Reversed Baseball Cap: Transatlantische Widersprüche in der Amerikanisierungsdebatte,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44 (1999): 25–47.

83 Michael J. Hogan, ed., *The Ambiguous Legacy: U.S. Foreign Policy in the American Century* (New York, 1999), provides an excellent introduction to this problem. See also Peter Duignan and Lewis H. Gann, *The Rebirth of the West: The Americanization of the Democratic World, 1945–1958*, 2d ed. (Lanham, Md., 1996); Rob Kroes, *If You’ve Seen One, You’ve Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture* (Urbana, Ill., 1996); Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, 2d ed. (Berkeley, Calif., 1996).

84 See Alexander Schmidt, *Reisen in die Moderne: Der Amerika-Diskurs des deutschen Bürgertums vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg im europäischen Vergleich* (Berlin, 1997); Egbert Klautke, “Amerika im Widerstreit: Vergleichende Untersuchungen zur Auseinandersetzung mit den Vereinigten Staaten in Deutschland und Frankreich während der ‚Klassischen Moderne‘, 1900–1933,” Ph.D. diss., University of

1945, however, did West Germany become part of a “Euroamerican” Western civilization in a social and cultural sense, a civilization under the umbrella of American hegemony and under the influence of the Cold War and unprecedented economic growth among the industrial nations on both sides of the Atlantic.

With some justification, the two decades from the early 1950s to the early 1970s have been called the “golden age” of the twentieth century.⁸⁵ In contrast to the period before 1945, a tight web of highly diverse German American interactions developed during the half century after the war. There was an expansion of American influence on mass consumption and mass culture—on popular culture, if popular culture is understood, as in the United States, as the forms and products of the entertainment and leisure industries. This influence rested on the triumphant ideology of the social market-capitalist system, which sought to solve the problem of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth through economic growth, and on the mass prosperity the *Wirtschaftswunder* brought West Germany in the 1950s.⁸⁶ The web of interactions was created by intensified transatlantic trade, increased reciprocal investment activity,⁸⁷ improved communications networks and communications technologies (film, radio, press, television), and the revolution in transatlantic travel and tourism brought about by the airplane. Increased professional collaboration of Americans and Germans in many areas reinforced these trends, as did the international communications of nongovernmental organizations such as churches,⁸⁸ business organizations,⁸⁹ unions,⁹⁰ sports clubs, universities, scientific

Heidelberg, 1999; Detlev J. K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York, 1992); Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford, 1994); Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1984); Gassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich*; Junker, “Continuity of Ambivalence”; Frank Trommler, “The Rise and Fall of Americanism in Germany,” in: Trommler and McVeigh, eds., *America and the Germans*, 333–42.

85 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York, 1994), 225–402.

86 Charles S. Maier, “The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American Economic Policy After World War II,” *International Organization* 31 (1977): 607–33.

87 See the chapters by Hans-Eckart Scharrer and Kerstin Müller-Neuhof, vol. 1, Economics, and by Hans-Eckart Scharrer and Christine Borrmann, vol. 2, Economics.

88 See the chapters by Mark E. Ruff, vol. 1, Society, and Robert Goeckel, vol. 2, Society.

89 See the chapter by Jonathan Wiesen, vol. 1, Society.

90 See the chapters by Michael Fichter, vol. 1 and vol. 2, Society.

organizations, and professional societies;⁹¹ of social movements such as the 1968 activists⁹² and the women's,⁹³ peace, and environmental movements;⁹⁴ of intelligence services;⁹⁵ of political foundations,⁹⁶ transatlantic elites, and institutions in general;⁹⁷ and even of right-wing extremists.⁹⁸

The history of the assimilation and rejection of America by the West German political, military, social, and cultural elite during the Cold War has yet to be written. Nevertheless, several building blocks are available for such a history. They touch upon the transfer, assimilation, or rejection of American ideas, mentality, institutions, and behavior patterns—the “American way of life”—by these elites, many of whom had made extended stays in the United States. Although attempts by the Americans to influence the German educational system in their occupation zone were largely unsuccessful,⁹⁹ the *Amerika-Häuser* (American cultural and information centers) and the American exchange programs of the early 1950s contributed significantly to the Westernization of a segment of West Germany's budding elite. In 1954, approximately half of all Germans had heard of the *Amerika-Häuser*, and of those familiar with them, 84 percent knew their programs well. Media sources such as publishers, newspapers, magazines, and radio stations, which the United States licensed and controlled, were to play a significant role in convincing Germans to open their minds toward the West.¹⁰⁰

While downplaying the negative sides of the United States—crime, poverty, racism, and the apartheid system in the American South—the Americans promoted the liberal and capitalist values of their polity, such as freedom, tolerance, independent initiative, individualism, the free market, and consumption. From 1950 to 1956, the United States developed an exchange program with West Germany more extensive

91 See the chapters by Mitchell G. Ash, vol. 1, Culture, and by Willi Paul Adams and John McCarthy, vol. 2, Culture.

92 See the chapter by Claus Leggewie, vol. 2, Society.

93 See the chapters by Hanna Schissler, vol. 1 and vol. 2, Society.

94 See the chapter by Carl Lankowski, vol. 2, Society.

95 See the chapters by Wesley Wark, vol. 1, Security, and by Loch Johnson and Annette Freyberg, vol. 2, Security.

96 See the chapter by Ann Phillips, vol. 2, Society.

97 See the chapters by Lily Gardner Feldman and Felix Philipp Lutz, vol. 2, Society.

98 See the chapter by Thomas Grumke, vol. 2, Society.

99 See the chapter by James F. Tent, vol. 1, Culture.

100 See the chapter by Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, vol. 1, Culture.

than any other similar program with another country. By 1956, 14,000 West Germans had visited the United States. The target group consisted of members of the younger generation who were expected to belong to the future elite of the Federal Republic. The fact that the U.S. State Department conducted fourteen studies between 1950 and 1960 to determine the effects of these programs on German participants illustrates how seriously the United States took this exchange program. In 1952, one extrapolation concluded that between 900,000 and 1.6 million Germans “had been exposed to the multiplier effect of the exchange program.”¹⁰¹

When the U.S. government programs ended in the mid-1950s, the re-established German exchange organizations and private organizations on both sides of the Atlantic stepped into the breach and managed to provide a firm foundation for the exchange of German and American elites up to the end of the Cold War—and beyond.

Alongside these governmental measures, other U.S.-inspired—and, in some cases, CIA funded—networks developed. They influenced the noncommunist Left in Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in the Federal Republic. The objective of these networks was to offer an anticommunist and antitotalitarian ideology on a high intellectual level. This ideology has often been described as “consensus liberalism.” It combined such classical American values as freedom, justice, property, and the “pursuit of happiness” with the American lesson of the 1930s (the New Deal) that the active state as an agent of reform is a necessary part of the free enterprise system. Business and labor unions, as entirely legitimate elements of this system, would negotiate collective bargaining agreements with each other without state intervention. The economic goal of consensus liberalism was neither class warfare nor unrestrained capitalist competition, but rather an increase in mass buying power through productivity and growth. Recent research has shown how strongly German elites were influenced by *Der Monat*, a periodical for intellectuals, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom (*Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit*), a network of intellectuals. The list of persons influenced by this network reads like a “Who’s Who” of the early Federal Republic: Willy Brandt, Max Brauer, Adolf Grimme, Eugen Kogon, Siegfried Lenz, Golo Mann, Alexander Mitscherlich, Richard Loewenthal, Marcel Reich-Ranicki, Ernst Reuter, Karl Schiller, Carlo Schmid, Theo Sommer, Dolf Sternberger, Otto Suhr,

101 See the chapter by Karl-Heinz Füssl, vol. 1, Culture.

and many others. Westernization also influenced the West German Protestants associated with the Kronberg circle as well as the most influential publishing house in the early Federal Republic, the Axel Springer Verlag.¹⁰²

These consensus-liberal elites were among the first to be attacked by the New Left and the 1968 movement as representatives of a bourgeois class society. One of the ironic twists in the Westernization of the Federal Republic is the fact that even the New Left critical of America drew some of its intellectual ammunition, primarily protest slogans and lifestyle models, from the United States.¹⁰³ No detailed studies have been done yet on American influence on German elites during the 1970s and 1980s. Given the intensified transatlantic communication in all spheres of life, however, American influence on governmental and nongovernmental figures in the Federal Republic probably increased during that period.

Another possible approach to the question of influence on German elites and German society in general consists of sectoral analyses that attempt to assess American influence on, for example, the German media,¹⁰⁴ sciences,¹⁰⁵ American studies,¹⁰⁶ German literature and German readers,¹⁰⁷ West German theater,¹⁰⁸ the German art scene,¹⁰⁹ architecture,¹¹⁰ urban and transportation planning,¹¹¹ and economic thought.¹¹² Here, too, influence was a matter of reciprocal interactions and processes of assimilation, but the dominant direction of influence ran from West to East. American influence on West German mass culture

102 Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich, 1998); Thomas Sauer, *Westorientierung im deutschen Protestantismus? Vorstellungen und Tätigkeit des Kronberger Kreises* (Munich, 1998); Gudrun Kruij, *Das "Welt"-Bild des Axel Springer Verlags: Journalismus zwischen westlichen Werten und deutschen Denktraditionen* (Munich, 1998); Axel Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika: Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich, 1999).

103 See the chapters by Claus Leggewie and Philipp Gassert, vol. 2, Society.

104 See the chapter by David Posner, vol. 1, Society.

105 See the chapter by Mitchell G. Ash, vol. 1, Culture.

106 See the chapter by Willi Paul Adams, vol. 2, Culture.

107 See the chapters by Martin Meyer, vol. 1 and vol. 2, Culture.

108 See the chapter by Andreas Hofele, vol. 1, Culture.

109 See the chapters by Sigrid Ruby, vol. 1, Culture; David Bathrick, vol. 2, Culture; and Stefan Germer and Julia Bernard, vol. 2, Culture.

110 See the chapters by Werner Durth, vol. 1 and vol. 2, Culture.

111 See the chapter by Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, vol. 1, Society; see also the chapter by Brian Ladd, vol. 2, Society.

112 See the chapter by Harald Hagemann, vol. 2, Economics.

and consumer society is another growing and still developing field of research. The monographic studies published so far have been limited in focus to the 1940s and 1950s or the protest movement of 1968.¹¹³ One thing that appears to be certain is that the initial resistance of traditional German elites to this influence and fears of a possible cultural collapse caused by rock 'n' roll, boogie-woogie, rowdies, hippies, jazz, and jeans had dwindled by the late 1950s. The products of the American leisure, entertainment, and consumer industries had largely become accepted parts of German society. Neither the 1968 movement—with its critical stance against the United States—nor the peace and protest movement against the NATO double-track decision in the early 1980s, nor the periodic jeremiads of German cultural critics have changed this long-term trend, a trend that continues unabated even after the end of the Cold War and that has become a fixture in the cultural “globalization” of the present.

Perhaps nothing illustrates the extent to which the Federal Republic had become part of the American-dominated West by the end of the Cold War as impressively as the Americanization of the German language, which has rightly been described as a “postwar variant of a growing Anglicization of the German language beginning in the eighteenth century.”¹¹⁴ Beginning with a conscious political and thus also linguistic orientation toward the United States in the early post-war period, the Americanization of the German language expanded to nearly all areas of life and nearly all segments of West German society. By the end of the Cold War, it had become a commonplace that American English was the lingua franca of the Western world and that the West Germans were taking part in this globalization by virtue of both their English language skills and the Americanization of their language.

Ironically, it appears in retrospect that the influence of American popular culture on the second German state, the German Democratic Republic, during the Cold War was in many ways the most threatening and least controllable aspect of the otherwise marginal East German-American relationship.¹¹⁵ From the time the GDR was founded in 1949

113 See note 80 and the chapters by Uta G. Poiger, vol. 1, Culture, and Michael Ermarth, vol. 2, Culture.

114 See the chapter by Heidrun Kämper, vol. 2, Culture.

115 See the chapters by Christian Ostermann, vol. 1 and vol. 2, Politics; Uta G. Poiger, vol. 1, Culture; Rainer Schnoor, vol. 1 and vol. 2, Society; and Heinrich Bortfeldt, vol. 2, Culture.

until the belated establishment of diplomatic relations a quarter century later, the United States pursued a strict policy of nonrecognition of the Soviet satellite. Even once recognition was granted, it largely remained a formality, with no political or economic and almost no cultural substance. The American embassy in East Berlin was merely an embassy “to the German Democratic Republic.” Neither trade nor cultural agreements were signed. The dependence of the GDR on the Soviet Union—its *raison d’être*—placed severe restrictions on foreign policy action undertaken by the East German state. Until the end of the Cold War and reunification, the focus of the United States was on the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union. Before the erection of the Berlin Wall, the United States undertook a few half-hearted attempts to destabilize the GDR as part of a poorly conceived “rollback” policy.¹¹⁶ Although possible recognition of the GDR became a central problem during the Berlin crisis of 1958–62, the United States held firm to its existing policy. When the Wall was built, the GDR became a symbol of a system with no respect for human rights. At the same time, however, the second German state, which had no domestic lobby in the United States, essentially disappeared behind the Wall as far as the American public was concerned.

The cultural contacts between the two states were sporadic before diplomatic recognition, and this did not change fundamentally after 1974 despite a few initiatives by individuals and organizations. The only exception, as indicated previously, was the boundary-breaking attraction of American popular culture and the products of American mass consumption, which the citizens of the GDR could examine themselves in West Berlin before the Wall went up and which the media, especially television, drummed into their consciousness after the erection of the Wall. For several decades, the governing Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, or SED) and East German authorities fought against these products and expressions of the “American way of life.” They attempted to disparage consumption of American pop culture—boogie-woogie, jazz, rock and pop, jeans and cowboy hats, Elvis, and *Dallas*—as cultural barbarism, as targeted infiltration and a threat to the stability of the farmers’ and workers’ state. Beginning in the 1970s, the SED took a new line. Instead of doing direct battle with the influence of American mass culture, the party attempted to neutralize it, harness it, and use it to

116 See the chapter by Bernd Stöver, vol.1, Politics.

stabilize the communist system. Nothing helped; the seductive power of American popular culture could not be stopped at the border with the Federal Republic. There was no remedy on either side of the Wall for the “global, American-style mass cultural ecumenical movements.”¹¹⁷ In this respect, even the East arrived in the West long before reunification.

¹¹⁷ See the chapter by Rainer Schnoor, vol. 2, *Society*.

10. International Relations after the Second World War.

A New Understanding of the Cold War? (1945–1990)

Journalists and scholars from all over the world, especially from the United States and other Western countries, have written thousands of books and essays in the last half century on the Cold War; on its causes, structure, and course; on its history-changing highlights and its main actors; on its missed alternatives and the catastrophes that were prevented by it. The historiographical situation is beginning to resemble the historical interpretation of older major world events, such as interpretations of the Fall of Rome, the Reformation, the American, French, or Russian Revolutions, World Wars I and II, and National Socialism. In these cases, anyone who makes a bold attempt to bring himself up to the so-called state of research on the basis of a representative reading list can easily resign himself: He is drawn into a bewildering plethora of interpretations, revisions, and revisions of revisions. He occasionally notices calm, very often old wine in new bottles, even an end of the debate due to exhaustion and disinterest, and, finally, the onward march of the caravan of interpreters. However, as with the Cold War, it is also the case that a revitalization of the discussion through new sources and new questions can occur.

Occasionally, the perplexed student finds an astute mind like the Berlin historian of antiquity, Alexander Demandt, who, at the end of his interpretation of the dissolution of the Roman Empire from Augustine to Mommsen and Jones, compiled an alphabetical list of 210 causal factors that have so far been held responsible for the decline of the Roman Empire. But, not to worry, we are not quite so far in the case of the Cold War. But, it must be noted that, already 15 years ago, together with my students, I effortlessly compiled a small selection of a good 50 factors, which in research up to that time had in some way been held responsible for the causes of the Cold War. 14 causal factors related to Stalin and the Soviet system, 26 to Roosevelt, Truman, and

First published in: Die internationalen Beziehungen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Ein neues Verständnis des Kalten Krieges?, in: Hans-Hermann Hertle/Konrad H. Jarausch/Christoph Kleßmann (eds.): Mauerbau und Mauerfall. Ursachen, Verlauf, Auswirkungen. Christoph Links Verlag. Potsdam 2002, pp. 19–31.

the American system, while 14 were more concerned with structural problems involving both sides, such as the dynamics of mutual perceptions and misperceptions, the escalating action-reaction mechanism, with the classic security dilemma, with power vacuums in Europe and Asia, the laws of political gravity and geopolitics, and the inevitable conflicts that must arise from a bipolar structure of international relations. I myself now tend to explain the Cold War primarily in terms of these structural factors. One consequence of this for me is the conclusion that neither side planned nor wanted the Cold War; it simply happened.

From this confusing abundance of interpretations, it is only a small step to epistemological relativism; namely, to the recognition that radical philosophical hermeneutics is right in its judgment of the fundamental historicity, lifeworld-bound locationality, and thus subjectivity of every historical statement. For such a skeptical position, Cold War historians themselves, it seems, provide the best arguments in three ways.

First, in all countries with some historiographical tradition, they publish contributions to the history of Cold War studies, reviewing successive directions, currents, schools, and interpretations. An analysis of the contributions of the journal *Diplomatic History* from 1977 to the present is particularly instructive in this regard. The standard division of U.S. historians on the Cold War is: orthodoxy of the 1950s, revisionism of the 1960s and 1970s, postrevisionism of the 1980s, a new, open, and confusing situation after the end of the Cold War and selective access to new sources from the former empires of Stalin and Mao. The second attempt by John Lewis Gaddis, for example, to state what “we know now” has met with criticism, as has his first attempt at a postrevisionist synthesis in the early eighties.¹

Secondly, the reasons given for the emergence of a new school or a new interpretation are very often not based on new sources, nor on neglected causal connections, but as the change in real history itself; that is, in the lifeworld and prejudice structure of the next generation of historians. For example, the standard division just mentioned is

1 Cf. John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, Oxford 1997; the same, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947*, New York 1972; the same, *The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War*, *Diplomatic History* 7 (Summer 1983), pp. 171–190. For discussion of the new synthesis, see Melvyn P. Leffler, *What Do “We Now Know”?* In: *The American Historical Review*, vol. 104, no. 2, April 1999, pp. 501–524.

constantly referred back to the early Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the civil rights movement, and the politics of *détente*. I do not even want to talk about the principle of partisanship in the totalitarian communist states, which forced historians, as administrators and interpreters of dogmatic world views, to constantly rewrite and falsify research, and punished deviations from the respective “party line” with sanctions.

Thirdly, the different interpretations by historians are not infrequently given political-ideological labels, as if the historians themselves, as Goethe said, wanted to leave no doubt that it is really the gentlemen’s, today also the ladies’, own spirit in which the times are reflected. Thus, a recent comprehensive history of the United States, under the title “Why Historians Disagree?” states laconically: “Social, racial, ethnic, and sexual differences among historians all contribute to the expression of different views.”²

So what were the wise planners of this volume thinking when they gave me the honorable task of reflecting on “a new understanding of the Cold War”—with a question mark? Hopefully, they did not expect me, in the grand sweep of a few pages, to summarize into a new synthesis the many individual results of the research that has been done the last ten years; for example, the exemplarily work carried out at the Cold War International History Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D. C. Even less could one be expected to contrast these with the interpretive endeavors of the preceding 40 years, and then to ask critically whether there really is such a thing as a new understanding of Cold War international relations. Such a new synthesis, such a “master narrative” does not exist, and, moreover, according to postmodern insight, cannot exist at all. In his argument with John Lewis Gaddis, for example, Melvin P. Leffler consulted more than 200 new publications for his attempt to propose such a synthesis only for the initial phase of the Cold War.³

By now the reader will expect the inevitable modesty topos of an overtaxed historian who must try to reduce the horizon of expectation. I cannot and do not want to offer a new synthesis, but rather to cut three paths through the jungle of possible interpretations of the Cold War, using the leitmotif of globalism.

2 Richard N. Current / T. Harry Williams / Frank Freidel / Alan Brinkley, *Why Historians Disagree*, in: *American History*, 7, New York 1987, p. 64.

3 Cf. Leffler, *What Do “We Now Know?”* pp. 501–524.

My first leitmotif is the question of the global reach, the global scope of activity of the two superpowers in the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union; the second asks about the importance of Asia, Africa, and Latin America for the intensification, prolongation, and globalization of the Cold War; and with my third leitmotif I would like to suggest that the year 1968 should also be accepted in international relations as a global turning point of the Cold War.

If there is such a thing as a *prima causa* in complex historical processes at all, then for me the—unintended—*prima causa* of the Cold War lies in the globalization of the USA's scope of activity in foreign policy, which in turn is rooted in the globalization of American interests and values. This globalization is the primary cause of the qualitative leap of the U.S. from being a world power among other world powers to being the superpower of the Cold War and the nuclear age. By globalization I mean that, in principle, the future of the entire world, especially the Eurasian double continent, including the Middle East, was of potentially vital importance to the United States. Not only the structural East-West conflict, but also its regressive and militant form, the Cold War, cannot be explained without this American globalism.

It has often been said that the partly covert, partly overt world civil war of the 20th century began already in 1917 when the two great revolutionaries, Lenin and Wilson, proclaimed antagonistic models for the whole world. But it took the challenge of the Axis powers and Japan in the 1930s and an almost Homeric struggle between the so-called isolationists and internationalists in U.S. domestic policy from 1937–1941 to anchor U.S. globalism permanently in the minds, institutions, foreign policy strategies, and maxims of the country. It was not the post-1945 disappointment with the collapse of universalist postwar planning during the war, but the eventual U.S. entry into World War II that resolved the fundamental contradiction of U.S. foreign policy in the interwar period: the contradiction between the U.S. economic, and to some extent cultural, presence in Europe and Asia on the one hand, and the absence of its military footprint and political alliances on the other.

President F. D. Roosevelt formulated, as it were, the leitmotif of 20th century Pax Americana on January 21, 1941, when he wrote to the U.S. ambassador to Japan: “I believe the fundamental task is to recognize that the struggles in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia are all parts of a single world conflict. We must therefore recognize that our interests are threatened in Europe and in Asia. We are committed to the task

of defending our way of life and our vital interests wherever they are seriously threatened. Our strategy of self-defense, taking into account every front and seizing every opportunity to contribute to our total security, must therefore be global.”⁴

Secretary of State Dean Rusk meant the same thing when he exclaimed in 1965, “We have to take care of everything, all the lands, waters, atmosphere, and space surrounding us.”⁵

It is clearly no coincidence that this globalism is the essence of all major U.S. strategic plans and security memoranda from 1941 to the present. This includes everything from “ABC-1,” “Rainbow-5,” and the “Victory Program” from 1941, which formulated a military concept of defense, war, and victory—a kind of global forward defense, in which the difference between defensive and offensive in the geographic sense was blurred beyond recognition—to Memorandum NSC 68 from 1950 and the National Intelligence Council’s global strategic situation assessment “Global Trends 2015” from that year.⁶

This globalization is rooted in the internal conditions of the USA, in the power and flexibility of its institutions, the growing economic and military strength of the country, but also in the Manichaeism of the American civil religion. On the one hand, this civil religion produced the necessary enemy images again and again; on the other hand, it is responsible for the delimitation and universalization of the American mission of freedom, for the mission of making the world safe for democracy.

But the globalization of the American foreign policy scope of activity also grew out of the increasing interdependence of world politics in the 20th century itself, as well as being a reaction to the foreign policies of enemies and allies of the United States, especially out of the, often exaggerated, threat perceptions that the deeds and ideologies of other states and societies evoked in the minds of Americans and their politicians. Thus, since the beginning of this century, there has been an almost unbroken continuity of exaggeration of the perceived security threat to the Western Hemisphere. Within this American globalism,

4 Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan. A Contemporary Record Drawn from the Diaries and Official Papers of J. C. Grew*, New York 1941, p. 359. See also: Detlef Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt. Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA, 1933–1941*, Stuttgart 1975.

5 Cited in: Paul M. Kennedy, *Aufstieg und Fall der großen Mächte. Ökonomischer Wandel und militärische Konflikte von 1500–2000*, Frankfurt / Main 1991, p. 136.

6 On strategic globalism, see Detlef Junker, *Von der Weltmacht zur Supermacht. American Foreign Policy in the 20th Century*, Mannheim 1995.

one can distinguish three major objectives, which, however, have not always stood side by side with equal weight: The indivisible, liberal-capitalist world market; indivisible security, that is, the maintenance of a pro-American balance in the world and the prevention of hostile hegemonic powers on the Eurasian double continent that might, in the long run, threaten the security of the Western Hemisphere, taken as the sanctuary of the United States; and indivisible freedom, that is, the global imperative to promote, demand, and support democracy and representative governments resulting from free elections.

As already indicated, these global objectives of the United States were dialectically connected with global threat scenarios; in the case of the Cold War, with the subjective certainty that communism, first in Europe and Asia, and after the globalization of Soviet foreign policy in the era of Khrushchev, also in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, would endanger all three indivisibilities.

Only in the early 1970s did Nixon and Kissinger once try to liberate Americans from Manichaeism and give them back, of all things, that concept of international relations from which President Wilson wanted to liberate the world, at least rhetorically: the concept of the balance of powers. The best that could be expected in the international world of states—namely, not eternal peace, but medium-term stability of the system—could be guaranteed, Kissinger argued, only if the existence of the main powers, regardless of their respective internal orders, was recognized as legitimate. The entire criticism of Nixon and Kissinger lives on the argument that these two men betrayed America's best tradition through naked realpolitik and through secret politics.

This U.S. globalism, it should be mentioned, has produced global methods and maxims of action. One need only recall the multilateral alliances (NATO, SEATO, ANZUS, CENTO, Rio Pact) and bilateral alliances, the worldwide bases, the ability of the US Air Force and Navy to project power globally, the global military and economic aid, the globally operating secret services, last but not least the global destructive power of US nuclear weapons; or the global Munich analogy (no Munich in Europe and Asia), the Truman Doctrine, or the domino theory as a global explanation of action.

Finally, one could easily integrate into this globalism many results of the new cultural history, as far as it deals with "Americanization," the global spread of the "American way of life" during the Cold War. In doing so, it seems useful to me to distinguish between two things: first, "Americanization from above," that is, the attempts by state and

state-directed actors to use Americanization and homogenization of the non-communist world as a weapon in the Cold War.⁷ This can then be contrasted with “Sovietization” on the other side. Konrad Jarausch and Hannes Sigrist, in an important anthology, have made this contrasting of Americanization and Sovietization their leitmotif.⁸ Second, “Americanization from below,” that is, the cross-border influence of non-state actors, especially in the field of mass and popular culture, against which, for example, even in the GDR there was no defense.

The non-communist world became, in varying densities, part of a security, value, production, consumption, information, leisure, travel, fun, and entertainment community under American hegemony, not American domination. Hegemony is to be understood here as tamed power, as predominant influence. As a result, the states and societies affected by American hegemony were left with considerable freedom and decision-making latitude. “Empire by Invitation” or “Empire by Integration,” as the Norwegian historian Geir Lundestad has called this state of affairs.⁹

This brings me to the problem of globalism in Soviet foreign policy, but with some hesitation, since, as I do not speak Russian, my analysis depends on the scholarly literature in Western languages, such as the books by Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Vojtech Mastny, Edvard Radzinsky, and Norman Naimark.¹⁰ So, in case of doubt, I cannot consult the primary sources myself. For this very reason, the

7 See Michael J. Hogan (ed.), *The Ambiguous Legacy: U.S. Foreign Policy in the American Century*, New York 1999; Peter Duignan / L. H. Gann, *The Rebirth of the West. The Americanization of the Democratic World, 1945–1958*, Lanham, Md. 1996; Rob Kroes, *If You’ve Seen One, You’ve Seen the Mall. Europeans and American Mass Culture*, Urbana 1996. On the cultural influence of the U.S. on Germany, see now Detlef Junker (ed.), *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges, Ein Handbuch*, vol. 1, 1945–1968; vol. 2, 1968–1990, Stuttgart / Munich 2001; therein especially the chapters on culture and society.

8 Konrad Jarausch / Hannes Sigrist (eds.), *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland, 1955–1970*, Frankfurt-Main / New York 1997.

9 Geir Lundestad, “Empire” by Integration. *The United States and European Integration, 1945–1997*, Oxford 1998; eds, *Empire by Integration? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952*, in: *Journal of Peace Research* 23, September 1986, pp. 263–277.

10 Vladislav Zubok / Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*, Cambridge, MA, 1996; Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years*, New York 1996; Edvard Radzinsky, *Stalin: The First In-Depth Biography Based on Explosive New Documents from Russia’s Secret Archives*, New York 1996; Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949*, Cambridge, MA 1995.

translations within the framework of the Cold War International Project are also of great importance to me. I also owe a lot to my Heidelberg colleague, the Eastern European historian Heinz-Dietrich Löwe. I have just reviewed his new biography of Stalin, which will be published in the fall of 2001, for the series “Persönlichkeit und Geschichte” (Personality and History), of which I am the editor. Through many conversations with the author I have, I hope, sharpened my judgment of the Soviet system under Stalin, or Stalinism.¹¹

In contrast to American hegemony, Stalin’s sphere of power was characterized not only by domination but by the rule of systematic terror. Since the end of the twenties, Stalin established as a principle, with enormous energy and manpower, a coolly calculated, carefully planned reign of terror, that precisely took into account the respective constellations of forces, was absolutely insensitive to any human suffering, and sadistically enjoyed the mass murders. If one takes the dignity of the individual and his physical integrity as the political-moral standard, then the terrorist mass murderer Stalin stands on a level with Hitler and Mao. Bukharin, alluding to Stalin, rightly spoke of a “Genghis Khan culture of the Central Committee” as early as 1928.¹² On a single day, December 12, 1938, Stalin and Molotov personally sanctioned the execution of 3167 people. Afterwards, they relaxed with American movies, which, of course, the common people were not allowed to watch.¹³ Terror and repression, permanent class struggle, and periodic purges were, when he had the opportunity, Stalin’s political “modus operandi,” both in domestic and foreign policy. The endlessly distrustful Stalin only accepted restrictions on his power, on his dictatorial despotism, when the constellations of forces at home or abroad, which he analyzed with great concentration, though often incorrectly, made it seem opportune to him. Where he suspected weakness and weakening resistance, he immediately reverted to his *modus operandi*.

In Stalin’s world view, there was no legitimate countervailing power, not even legitimate hegemony. The basic American position, within the framework of indivisible freedom on the western periphery of the Soviet Union, of supporting governments friendly to the Soviet Union, but which had at the same time resulted from free elections—i.e., of granting him hegemony and not domination—was for him a deceitful, capitalist conspiracy. The often-described gradualism

11 Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *Stalin. Terror als System*, Göttingen 2001.

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

of the Sovietization of the states and societies of Eastern and Central Europe from 1945–1948 was, from Stalin’s point of view, a tactical variant of a cautious Soviet foreign policy in Europe that analyzed the respective constellation of forces in terms of *realpolitik*, but was nevertheless expansive. Its most important goal was its influence on all of Germany. “The whole of Germany must become ours,” Stalin declared to the Yugoslav delegation in the spring of 1946, according to Milovan Djilas.¹⁴ The countervailing power formation of the West within the framework of the famous policy of double containment and the Westward integration of the Federal Republic were therefore a heavy blow for Stalin and his successors: also because all attempts by the Soviet Union to prevent precisely that ultimately failed.

In addition, Soviet expansionism, which manifested itself either only in demands or also in political-military actions, was directed at Tangier, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. An almost classic case of cautious expansionism was Stalin’s tactics on the straits issue (Dardanelles and Bosphorus). After initially demanding of the reluctant Foreign Minister Molotov, “Go ahead, apply pressure,” Stalin dropped his demand when Truman moved the U.S. fleet into the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁵ Cautious Soviet expansionism is also unmistakable in East Asia; one need only recall Korea, which I will discuss in another context.

What does all this mean for the question of Soviet globalism? Stalin’s Soviet Union did not see itself as a global power in actual policy, even if Stalin believed in the goal of world revolution and probably died as a “believer.” This statement holds true regardless of the endlessly debated question of whether Stalin’s cautious expansionism arose from Great Russian traditions, world revolutionary communist ideology, *realpolitik* considerations, or a combination of these motives. The expansionist ambitions of the latent Eurasian ruling power were limited to Eurasia, which American globalism could only accept *de facto*, never morally. Communist world revolution was not a part of operational policy under Stalin; Stalin did not want to risk a third world war either.

It was only under Khrushchev that the Soviet Union went from being a Eurasian power to one with global reach. This was particularly evident in the USSR’s increasing activity in the Middle East, in the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

developing countries of Asia and Africa, and finally even in the US's inner sanctum, Latin America. The only politician who ever attempted the policy of "roll back" on a grand scale after the Korean War was Khrushchev. The Berlin crisis was also intended to undermine the U.S. position in Western Europe, and the Cuban Missile Crisis was also intended to force strategic parity with the United States.¹⁶

Finally, I would venture the thesis that the end of the *détente* in the middle of Carter's term and the Second Cold War were due to the competing globalism of the two superpowers.

This brings me to my second global avenue, which is to ask, in line with new approaches, such as those of Odd Arne Westad, Tony Smith, and others, to what extent Third World leaders, elites, and ideologies in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, long considered objects of superpower politics, pawns in the Cold War, need not be seen as independent actors who globalized, intensified, and prolonged the Cold War for their own motives. This, it seems to me, is a new paradigm of the last decade that Tony Smith has recently articulated in an essay titled "New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War," and introduced with a popular American proverb: "In battle, it's not the size of the dog that matters, but his will to fight."¹⁷

Especially the long duration of the Cold War and the inability to end it after the policy of *détente* in Europe could only be understood if one made the Third World a causally significant aspect of the Cold War. In this respect, I would have to relativize my own thesis of the competing globalism of both superpowers as the cause for the end of the *détente*.

Mind you, this approach goes beyond the question, also increasingly explored in the recent history of Cold War international relations, of what influence and room for maneuver the junior partners actually possessed within the undisputed American hegemonic or Soviet sphere of domination. To personalize this question: To what degree, for

16 On the connection between the Cuban and Berlin Crises, see especially John C. Ausland, *Kennedy, Krushchev, and the Berlin-Cuba Crisis, 1961–1964*, Oslo / Boston 1996; Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars. Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam*, New York 2000; Ernest R. May / Philip D. Zelikow (eds.), *The Kennedy Tapes. Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Cambridge, Mass. 1997.

17 Tony Smith, *New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War*, in *Diplomatic History*, vol. 24, no. 4, Fall 2000, pp. 567–591. Cf. the Bernath Lecture by Odd Arne Westad in the same issue: *The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms*, pp. 551–565.

example, were the Briton Ernest Bevin, the French Charles de Gaulle, the Germans Konrad Adenauer, Willy Brandt, Walter Ulbricht, and Erich Honecker, the Pole Władysław Gomułka, the Romanian Nicolae Ceausescu, and the Czechoslovakian Alexander Dubček actors of the Cold War who at least helped to determine its course?

Take General Charles de Gaulle, for example: the French president, the self-proclaimed embodiment of “eternal France,” always envisioned a Europe under French leadership that would achieve parity vis-à-vis the two superpowers. When all de Gaulle’s plans to be included as an equal partner in a U.S.-France-U.K. nuclear directorate failed because of opposition from the “Anglo-Saxons,” France took the liberty in 1963 of denying Britain access to the European Economic Community, shocking the U.S. and its allies in NATO with the decision, to withdraw French forces from the integrated NATO alliance in 1966, to demand the withdrawal of all American troops from French soil, to undermine the American-dominated Bretton Woods monetary system, and to make a futile attempt to unilaterally bind the Federal Republic to France through the *Élysée Treaty*.¹⁸ These were options of which the West German politicians did not even dare to dream.

On the other hand, it is worth remembering Walter Ulbricht, Erich Honecker, and the GDR, for example. “Moscow alone decided on the foreign and German policy of the SED leadership,” according to a recent summary by Martin Sabrow.¹⁹ Just imagine if John F. Kennedy had spoken to de Gaulle the way Leonid Brezhnev spoke to Honecker: “Erich, I tell you frankly, never forget this: the GDR cannot exist without us, without the Soviet Union, its power and strength. Without us, there is no GDR.”²⁰

As I said, the new approach goes beyond this and asks, how Josip Broz Tito, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, Nasser, and Ben Gurion; how the states, societies, and

18 Cf. e.g., Robert Paxton / Nicholas Wahl (eds.), *De Gaulle and the United States. A Centennial Reappraisal*, Oxford 1994; Georges-Henri Soutou, *L’alliance incertaine. Les rapports politico-stratégique franco-allemands, 1954–1996*, Paris 1996; Eckart Conze, *Dominanzanspruch und Partnerschaftsrhetorik: Die Bundesrepublik im Spannungsfeld von amerikanischer und französischer Politik 1945–1990*, in: Detlef Junker (ed.), *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges*, vol. 2, 1968–1990, pp. 88–99.

19 Martin Sabrow, *Die DDR im nationalen Gedächtnis*, in: Jörg Baberowski / Eckart Conze / Philipp Gassert / Martin Sabrow, *Geschichte ist immer Gegenwart*, Stuttgart / Munich 2001, p. 101.

20 Cited in: Peter Przybylski, *Tatort Politbüro*, Berlin 1991, p. 281.

ideologies they represented can be integrated in a new way into an overall interpretation of the Cold War. The question, then, is not how they can find their place in a general post-1945 world history or in the history of decolonization. What this new pericentric approach has in mind could be demonstrated by two examples, Kim Il Sung and Fidel Castro.

We all know the enormous significance of the Korean War for the Cold War. It expanded the conflict into East Asia, revolutionized U.S. foreign policy, and the “fall-out” from the Korean War was global. We now know that the driving force for the expansion southward beyond the 38th parallel was not Stalin, but Kim Il Sung. Forty-eight telegrams are said to have been sent by Kim Il Sung to the reluctant Stalin before the latter finally gave the green light for the invasion of South Korea in early 1950; but only after Stalin had also obtained Mao’s consent and after he had satisfied himself that the U.S. would not intervene. Thus, neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union nor China would have caused the spillover of the Cold War into East Asia, where it became the Hot War, but rather a charismatic, nationalist, and communist leader of a comparatively small country.²¹

According to the pericentric approach, the same is true for Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. The favorite idea of leftist, revisionist historiography, that American imperialism drove Fidel Castro into the arms of communism and the Soviet Union, is quite wrong. On the contrary, Castro’s ego had been big enough to see himself as an independent revolutionary force who wanted to revolutionize Latin America on his own initiative and then, with the help of his troops and advisers, parts of Africa as well. Finally, it was Castro who recommended to Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis that he launch a nuclear attack against the United States if that country attempted to invade Cuba again.

A precise analysis of Nasser’s policy or that of various Israeli statesmen comes to similar conclusions. They were not pawns of the superpowers, but used and intensified the Cold War for their own purposes. When the U.S. once again protested in vain that Tel Aviv had broken an agreement with the U.S., Menachem Begin replied: “No one will

21 Cf. The Cold War in Asia, in: Bulletin Cold War International History Project, Issues 6–7, Winter 1995/1996. Cf. also The Cold War in the Third World and the Collapse of Détente in the 1970s, in: *ibid*, Issues 8–9, Winter 1996/1997; Kathryn Weathersby, The Korean War Revisited, in: *The Wilsons Quarterly* 23 (Summer 1999), pp. 91–97.

bring Israel to its knees. You seem to have forgotten that the Jews kneel only before God.”²²

This brings me to my third global leitmotif, which does not focus on overarching structures but attempts to interpret 1968, the *annus mirabilis*, as a global turning point in the Cold War, and its main events as an interdependent context of effects: The Tet Offensive, the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, Mao’s first opening to the U.S., the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, the political reaction of the oil states to the Six-Day War, the U.S. payments, and gold crises. The year 1968 was, according to the hypothesis, a decisive upheaval in the history of world politics and the beginning of a crisis in the world economy at the same time.²³

On January 30, 1968, the year began with a bang, with the Tet Offensive by guerrilla fighters, Viet Cong terrorist commandos, and also regular units of the North Vietnamese against American troops and their South Vietnamese allies. This had dramatic consequences for the United States. The Tet Offensive shook the American home front, and a resigned President Johnson decided not to run again. More importantly, the Tet Offensive forced U.S. strategists to rethink not only their objectives in Vietnam, but their role in the Cold War and thus their role in world politics. The validity of two hallowed maxims of American world politics, the Truman Doctrine, and the Domino Theory, was, as “we now know,” at issue at the center of power itself. Ironically, it was the founding fathers of the Cold War—Dean Acheson, Clark Clifford, Paul Nitze, and Averell Harriman—who urged Johnson to change course. By March 1968, these so-called “wise men” saw no alternative to a phased withdrawal from Vietnam. They advised the president to confine himself to U.S. strategic interests in Europe, Japan, the Middle East, and Latin America. This *realpolitik* intrusion into the Manichean worldview of the Cold War prepared the subsequent reorientation of Nixon and Kissinger’s *détente* policy. Confronted with an unwinnable Vietnam War, Nixon and Kissinger, beginning in 1969, sought to overcome the containment ideology of the Cold War bipolar order and substitute in its place a new, pentagonal world order that would include the Soviet Union, China, Europe, and Japan.

22 Smith, *New Bottles for New Wine*, p. 587.

23 The following remarks are based on the first attempt to interpret 1968 as a global turning point in domestic and foreign policy terms: Carole Fink / Philipp Gassert / Detlef Junker (eds.), 1968. *The World Transformed*, New York 1998.

Johnson was not ready for this in March 1968; he himself continued to think in terms of the Munich analogy and did not want to go down in history as the “new Chamberlain.” Bitterly, he lamented the advice of wise men: “The establishment bastards have jumped ship.”²⁴

World economic constraints pointed in the same direction. For in the same year, 1968, U.S. imperial overextension became apparent. The country’s growing balance of payments deficit was undermining the stability of the Bretton Woods international monetary system. Johnson could not simultaneously finance the war in Vietnam and his war on poverty at home because Congress was unwilling to raise taxes. During the dramatic gold crisis of March 1968, the exchange rate mechanism could be provisionally restored (also with German help), but its end came in the wake of the oil crisis, whose origins went back to 1968, when the Arab states—in reaction to the Seven-Day War of 1967—began to develop a new strategy: oil as a weapon.

While the American domino theory lost its plausibility and legitimacy in Vietnam, the Soviet domino theory led the tanks and troops of the Eastern Bloc to Prague in August 1968. With the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Brezhnev Doctrine, which forbade the states of the socialist camp to go their own way in foreign and domestic policy, the Soviet Union sought to cement the status quo in Europe. The astonishingly quick acceptance by the West of this coup d’état and the treaty with the Soviet Union on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons signed earlier in 1968—perhaps the most important treaty of the Cold War—were important preconditions for the Soviet Union’s policy of détente in Europe and the treaties with the East. The West, as the Soviets saw it, had once again de facto recognized the territorial status quo in Central Europe and, with Soviet help, had finally made the Federal Republic a nuclear have-not.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of global interdependence in the watershed year of 1968, however, as we now know from Nancy Bernkopf Tucker’s research,²⁵ was Mao’s reaction to Tet and Prague. Mao feared that Brezhnev would apply his doctrine to East Asia and send Soviet troops into the disputed northern border regions against China, which had been weakened by the Cultural Revolution. According to Tucker, the Prague invasion was an important motive both to end the Great Proletarian Revolution and to look for a new ally. In

²⁴ Ibid, p. 4.

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 193–218.

accordance with the ancient Chinese wisdom that barbarians must be used to control barbarians, only a barbarian who could possibly neutralize the power of the Soviet Union was an option, namely the United States. China's invitation to the United States in November 1968 to resume talks in Warsaw was the beginning of the road that led to the revolution in U.S.-China relations, culminating in Nixon's sensational visit to China in 1972.

So 1968 should not only be seen as a cipher for a deep cut in the internal politics of many societies in the First, Second, and Third Worlds, but also for a turning point in what I would like to call the Cold World War. For that, in the first place, is the larger meaning of my brief contribution. We should replace the term "Cold War" with the term "Cold World War" to make more visible the globality and global interdependencies of this Third World War of the Twentieth Century. If that seems plausible, I could have given my paper a different title: From Cold War to Cold World War: A New Understanding of International Relations.

11. The End of Double Containment. The Revolution of German Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective, 1990

German unity is the result of a peaceful revolution of world politics within Europe. The collapse of communist rule and the revolutions of freedom of Eastern and Central Europe, the disintegration of the Soviet empire, the de facto end of the Warsaw Pact and NATO as we knew it, the policies of that radical innovator Gorbachev, and the decisive action of the present German government have profoundly changed Germany's foreign policy position and its room to maneuver in foreign policy. The Germans, defeated and divided in 1945, tamed and contained in 1955, are being given a third chance to play a productive role in Europe and the world as a united, free, democratic, and peaceable state.

This upheaval in German foreign policy can only be understood if one recalls German, European, and world politics from 1947 to 1955. During these years, the basic structures of international politics were created; the same ones which are now collapsing. This initial phase represents the antithesis, the historical contrast to the revolution of the present.

The German Reich was able to maintain its existence as a nation-state in the First World War and lost it in the Second World War as a result of the attempt by Hitler and National Socialist Germany to conquer Europe under National Socialist tyranny. Since the assumption of supreme governmental authority by the four victorious and occupying powers on July 5, 1945, there was no longer a German nation-state in the political sense—however international law scholars have interpreted this fact. The fate of the Germans was no longer decided by the Germans, but by the interests of the victorious powers and their neighbors. The Germans themselves had only plans, hopes, and illusions.

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Germany as an Object of World History

Germany became an object of world history; its unity fell victim to the dynamics of global East-West tension, especially the American-Soviet antagonism. Since the victorious powers could not agree on a common policy on Germany, each power integrated its part into its own sphere of power.

The initiative for the establishment of a German western state originated from the USA. When American politicians realized in 1946/47 that they could only have half of Germany, they decided to have half of Germany entirely. They wanted to ensure that the future West German state would have a federal, liberal, and free-market capitalist form, closely integrated economically, politically, and eventually militarily into the Western camp. The political foundations laid in 1949 had been preceded by the economic foundation that were laid in 1948. The inclusion of the three western occupation zones in the Marshall Plan, the currency reform in the western zones, and the basic economic policy decision in favor of a socially committed market economy ensured that the new western state would under no circumstances adopt a socialist, even communist economic system.

After North Korea's invasion of South Korea in July 1950, i.e., after the Far Eastern Cold War had turned into a hot war, first the American military, then the American politicians became convinced that the Federal Republic had to be rearmed. A few years after the defeat of Hitler's armies, they were the first to dare to say the, then, almost unspeakable: that Western Europe could not be defended without German soldiers.

This American policy toward Germany formed at the same time a central and integral part of American policy toward Western Europe. The following goals of American foreign policy were closely related: the political unification of Western Europe; the economic and political integration of the western half of Germany into a liberal-capitalist world economy; and a controlled, limited, and denationalized rearmament of the Federal Republic. German soldiers were to help improve the security and defense capability of Western Europe under the American nuclear guarantee; an independent German army was not to be created.

The Two Sides of U.S. Foreign Policy

American policy toward Germany was thus a subordinate function of the global containment policy toward the Soviet Union and international communism. The westward integration and rearmament of the Federal Republic served the purpose of containing the Soviet Union and the communist danger. At the same time, however, and this is often overlooked by Germans, they served to contain the German danger itself. From the perspective of the Americans and the Western Europeans, the economic, political, and eventually military integration of the Federal Republic into the European and Atlantic organizations was at the same time intended to prevent Germany from becoming a danger to the West again for all time to come. And finally, Western integration was to prevent the Federal Republic from attempting a neutralist policy between the blocs. This was the strategic purpose of the policy of double containment in Western Europe: To keep the Soviets out, the Americans in, the Germans down, and the Europeans happy.

The Americans found their most important ally for the policy of Western integration in the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer. Adenauer's goals were largely parallel to those of the United States. Adenauer wanted exactly that: the unification of Western Europe, the Westward integration and rearmament of the Federal Republic, Franco-German reconciliation, and security and economic welfare for the German Western state within the framework of the West and the Atlantic Alliance. The most important common precondition was the joint designation of the Soviet Union as the supreme enemy. In this, Truman and Acheson, Eisenhower and Dulles agreed with Adenauer. Moreover, as his electoral successes showed, Adenauer succeeded in convincing the majority of West Germans of the correctness of his foreign policy. Western integration and anti-communism were two sides of the same coin.

Adenauer's Grand Bargain

This convergence of interests with the U.S. made possible Adenauer's grand bargain of reciprocity in the years from 1950 to 1955. After the outbreak of the Korean War, Adenauer offered rearmament to the Western powers and demanded the lifting of the occupation statute, i.e., the sovereignty of the Federal Republic.

American policy toward Germany was broadly supported by Great Britain. British policy after World War II was under no illusions that economic recovery and the defense of Western Europe could succeed without American help. Therefore, tying the United States to Europe in perpetuity was an integral part of its policy after 1945. London supported the policy of containment and integration of West Germany; in the fall of 1950, the British government agreed in principle to German rearmament. However, like the Americans, the British assumed that German rearmament should not mean the rebirth of a national German army and an independent German general staff.

In the West, the greatest resistance to the establishment of a German western state, especially to a new German army, came from France. While the first phase of French policy toward Germany from 1945 to March 1947 was characterized by harsh thoroughgoing demands regarding French security policy, a second phase amounted to reluctant accommodation of Anglo-Saxon ideas. The Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in March 1947 marked the turning point, at which Paris had to recognize that neither the Anglo-Saxons nor Stalin were prepared to take French interests into account in the intensifying East-West conflict. Given its narrow power base and economic dependence on the U.S., France had no choice but to conform to Anglo-American policy toward Germany. So, if it could not be prevented, it was necessary for France to become active and to influence the founding of the Federal Republic, the form of its integration into the West, and its rearmament as far as possible.

This turn in French policy toward Germany could not be taken for granted, as it was exposed to the fluctuations of public opinion and changing party constellations within France. The French National Assembly approved the London recommendations for the establishment of a Western state only by a narrow majority, 297 votes to 289. One can construct an alternative course of history in which nine French votes prevented the founding of the Federal Republic. In contrast, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman's plan to place all Franco-German steel and coal production under a common supreme supervisory authority, which other European countries could join, received more support in France. This plan eventually led to the Treaty of April 18, 1951, that established the European Coal and Steel Community.

The acid test of the new French policy toward Germany, however, was the French reaction to the Anglo-American desire to rearm the Federal Republic. This project evoked all France's primal fears of

Germany. France was caught between the fear of the Soviet danger and the fear of new German soldiers. The French would have preferred to equip the Federal Republic with weapons that could only fire eastward.

French policy gradually provided three answers to this dilemma: First, the plan of French Defense Minister René Pleven from Oct. 24, 1950; second, the Treaty on the European Defense Community (EDC), concluded by France, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg on May 27, 1952, which failed in the French National Assembly on Aug. 30, 1954; and finally, French approval of the accession of the Federal Republic to the Western European Union (WEU) and NATO on Dec. 29, 1954.

The Pleven Plan discriminated so strongly against the Federal Republic and the German soldiers that were deemed necessary that it met with determined resistance not only from Konrad Adenauer but also from the Anglo-Saxons and thus failed. The EDC—the integrated European army with a European defense minister—failed because the majority of the French did not want to do without the symbol of their own greatness and independence, their own national army, the “Grande Armée.” The fact that the French National Assembly eventually agreed to the substitute solution to the EDC just a few months later, namely, the accession of the Federal Republic to the Western European Union and NATO, was due to the fact that the new construction left France’s national sovereign rights and its national army untouched.

From 1948 to 1955, the Soviet Union tried in vain to prevent the establishment of a Western state and German rearmament by bargain and intimidation, by carrot and stick. It did not want to resign itself to losing decisive influence over Germany as a whole. In addition to this expansionist objective, Stalin and his successors saw the security of the Soviet Union to be at stake. Especially the planned European defense community held threatening prospects from the Soviet point of view: A combination of NATO, American nuclear superiority, pan-European armed forces, German soldiers, and a Federal Republic that laid claim to a reunified Germany, and a revision of the Oder-Neisse border constituted a dangerous “imperialist and revisionist bloc” in Moscow’s view.

How could the Soviet Union stop the “express train to the West”? The Berlin blockade of 1948/49 had failed due to the determined resistance of the Americans and the airlift; a military invasion of the Federal Republic would certainly have led to World War III.

The Key to Unity Lays in Moscow

There was only one remedy: to offer the Federal Republic and the Germans what they could not achieve without the Soviet Union—German reunification. Even then, the key to German unity lay in Moscow. All of Stalin's diplomatic offers—especially his famous notes from 1952—and those of his successors were aimed at a neutralized reunified-Germany and at the same time at the Achilles' heel of Adenauer's foreign policy which was the basis for the passionate reproach from his domestic opponents, especially the SPD; namely, that western integration meant the division of Germany.

The Western powers and Adenauer were determined to reject Stalin's offer. They considered it a maneuver by the Soviets to stop Western integration, to decouple Germany from the United States, and to bring a neutralized Germany under Soviet control. The Western powers therefore built in their responses a maximum position that Stalin and his successors would not accept: A freely elected all-German government that would have the right to enter into defensive alliances, i.e., to join NATO of its own free will. The revolutionary nature of the current foreign policy was particularly evident in the fact that on July 15 and 16 of this year, in negotiations with Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher, Gorbachev ended 45 years of Soviet policy on Germany by agreeing to precisely this non-negotiable Western position. At that time, a Soviet politician would probably have been immediately shot at the Kremlin wall for such an act.

In 1955/56, the process of dividing Europe and Germany came to an end when the Federal Republic joined NATO and the GDR joined the Warsaw Pact. Until the revolution of the present, this appeared to be unalterable, because the attempt of a violent change would have meant the nuclear downfall of Europe, while a peaceful upheaval was not imaginable.

The foreign policy revolution of the present means the end of the double containment policy in Europe. Not only those who were contained until 1989, the Soviet Union and Germany, but all European states and the overseas guarantor of equilibrium in Europe, the USA, are faced with the enormous task of representing the national interests of their individual states, in a new pan-European order. So far, this order is only dimly visible, especially in the main area of security policy, where a new structure is not yet discernible.

The united Germany will have to find its foreign policy position in Europe and the world in view of the mortgage of the Third Reich and under the worried and suspicious eyes of its neighbors. In addition to the joy over the fall of the Wall and the triumph of freedom, since November, fear of a new great power in Europe has become visible in London, Paris, The Hague, Copenhagen, Oslo, Warsaw, Moscow, and Tel Aviv, not infrequently coupled with envy and jealousy of the Germans, who have been so successful. As in 1848, 1871, and 1919, it is only the Americans who have no problems with a united Germany in the center of Europe. Germany's neighbors, maltreated by the Nazi tyranny of Germany, hope that the united Germany will retain the foreign policy culture of the Federal Republic, which on the whole was characterized by a high degree of sobriety, a sense of proportion, a sense of what was possible in terms of power politics, the ability to cooperate and compromise, and, above all, a realistic consideration for the legitimate interests of other states.

They fear a new economic superpower that will eventually also throw off the security shackles it has put on itself by reducing its armed forces to 370,000 men and continuing to renounce nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. The fact that the German government did not inform and consult the Allies either before the Chancellor's historic speech on Nov. 28, 1989, or before the decisions on the Caucasus, alarmed Germany's allies. They therefore did everything to ensure that a united Germany would seek its welfare and security in Europe and with its neighbors, not against Europe and against its neighbors. The Germans have learned from history, for possible new German aggressions the objective possibilities and the domestic political preconditions are all missing.

Economic domination of Europe by the Germans is not in sight. A united Germany generates about 30 percent of the gross national product of the European Community expanded to include the GDR. That is a significant portion, but far from dominance. Within the framework of a free world economy, the way to the East is open not only to the Germans, but to all nations. Moreover, the reconstruction of the bankrupt economic, social, and educational system of the former GDR, the economic price that the Germans have to pay to the Soviet Union for unification, and the movement of poverty from the East flooding into Germany will become for the foreseeable future not only a source of new prosperity but also of great internal German conflicts and identity debates.

In the opinion of the author, everything speaks against the idea that the special economic burdens and sociopolitical conflicts will be of considerable magnitude. Before the unification yields profits, it will cost a great deal. The entrepreneurs already know that the prosperity of the Germans must continue to be earned essentially in the West and on the traditional markets.

A security threat to Europe by the Germans is completely without foundation. By recognizing the Oder-Neisse border, Germany ceased to be a revisionist power. It has found its geography and its borders after two world wars. Militarily, it will be a power capable on its own of neither defense nor offense. Germany's neighbors will do their utmost to keep the country at the center of Europe in this position, and in this sense will continue the policy of containment by other means.

No Particular German Security Problem

There is no particular German security problem for Europe in the foreseeable future. The present and future question is how Europe as a whole will organize its security after the end of the Cold War. The Warsaw Pact and NATO were military alliances whose purpose in life was tied to the historical era of the Cold War. With the loss of their enemy, they have lost their purpose. Soldiers and weapons require a new justification. Organizations such as the UN, a transformed NATO, the Western European Union (WEU), the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the European Community (EC) compete to assume security functions.

The cardinal problem lies in Europe's relationship with the United States. Europe will continue to depend on the USA as a global military power for protection against the nuclear potential of the Soviet Union, and as a guarantor of freedom of the seas and access to energy sources. Europe can only increase its influence within the Western community of security and values if it succeeds in a second attempt in what failed in 1954 at the French National Assembly: the establishment of a functioning European Defense Community as the second pillar of a transatlantic security structure. The chances of this, however, remain slim, with English and French nationalism in particular jealously guarding their own sovereign rights as an expression of national power and greatness.

Nationalist Narrowness no Longer Stands a Chance

After the loss of victors' rights in Germany, France and England will cling to the remaining two factors that symbolize their prominent place in the community of nations, nuclear power status and permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. A re-nationalized defense doctrine of France could, ironically, only create the problems in relation to Germany that our western neighbors fear so much.

However, the best protection against German-national unilateralism lies in the development of world history itself. The great tasks of the present cannot all be solved at the national level, many not even at the European level. The world has become irrevocably interdependent. The welfare and security of the Germans can only be guaranteed in the difficult, expensive, and strenuous business of international cooperation, which is always threatened by setbacks. A disengagement from America and a relapse into nationalistic narrowness, even ersatz religious chauvinism, could endanger both.

12. Germany in International Politics, 1990–2006

In history there is nothing for free; the revisions of history are, according to a word of Bismarck, more accurate than the revisions of the Prussian Court of Audit. Or, as the Americans are wont to say: *There is no such thing as a free ride in history.*¹

This also applies to the conditions under which the four victorious powers of World War II agreed to the reunification of Germany in the “Two-plus-Four Treaty” in 1990, 45 years after the unconditional surrender of the German Reich. Under this treaty, Germany is supposed to be incapable of ever again posing a military threat to its neighbors. Its armed forces were vastly reduced. Germany renounced the traditional attribute of a sovereign power, namely its own independent armed forces, and, of course, it renounced NBC weapons for all time. The victors ensured that a reunified Germany would pursue its national interests—if it was capable of articulating them—only peacefully, only

1 This only slightly updated lecture aims to offer some summarizing, thought-provoking reflections. For those who want a more detailed overview of the discussion on German foreign policy from 1990 to the present, the following publications are recommended reading: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, supplement to “Das Parlament” of March 8, 2004, with contributions by Werner Link, Gregor Schöllgen, Hanns W. Maull, Thomas Risse, Gunther Heilmann and Rolf Clement; Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, supplement to “Das Parlament” of August 8, 2005, with contributions by Gregor Schöllgen and Christian Hacke; Egon Bahr, *Der deutsche Weg. Selbstverständlich und normal*, Munich 2003; Stephan Böckenförde (ed.), *Chancen der deutschen Außenpolitik. Analysen, Perspektiven, Empfehlungen*, Dresden 2005; Joschka Fischer, *The Return of History. Die Welt nach dem 11. September 2001 und die Erneuerung des Westens*, Cologne 2005; Christian Hacke, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Von Konrad Adenauer bis Gerhard Schröder*, Frankfurt a. M. 2003; Helga Haftendorn, *Deutsche Außenpolitik zwischen Selbstbeschränkung und Selbstbehauptung*, Stuttgart 2001; Karl Kaiser/ Hanns W. Maull (eds.), *Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik*, vol. I–vol. IV, Munich 1994–1998; Werner Link, *Neuordnung der Weltpolitik. Basic Problems of Global Politics on the Threshold of the 21st Century*, Munich 1998; Lothar Rühl, *Germany as a European Power. Nationale Interessen und internationale Verantwortung*, Bonn 1996; Helmut Schmidt, *Die Mächte der Zukunft. Winners and Losers in Tomorrow’s World*, Munich 2004; Gregor Schöllgen, *Der Auftritt. Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne*, Munich 2003; Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Republik ohne Kompass. Notes on German Foreign Policy*, Berlin 2005.

multilaterally, cooperatively, and within the framework of European and Atlantic institutions.

The reunification of Germany on Western terms in 1990 constituted almost the best of all possible Germanys, especially from the American point of view: a peaceful, democratic, medium-sized state in Europe, of some political weight and world economic influence, but without any vital clashes of interest with America; despite the increasing Europeanization of German foreign policy, one of the most important allies of the United States on the European continent, and, through the American bases in the Federal Republic, a kind of land-based aircraft carrier for U.S. operations on the Eurasian continent, especially in the Middle East.

This foreign policy ideal of a European and transatlantic “civil and peace power,” which, drawn from their own insights, was shared by almost all Germans in 1990, is of course based on a negation of German history. After the experience of two world wars and after the experience of bloc politics in the Cold War, Germans know that Germany is too small for a policy of hegemony, or conquest, in Europe, and too big for its many neighbors to assert their interests unilaterally. In reunified Germany, there is no opposition to the preamble in the Basic Law, in which Germany declares its will “to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe”; nor to Article 26: “Acts tending to and undertaken with intent to disturb the peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for a war of aggression, shall be unconstitutional. They shall be criminalized.”

These legal foundations bind every German foreign policy *ex negativo*: they prescribe how a united Germany cannot conduct foreign policy, not unilaterally and not by warlike means. In contrast, Article 24 of the Constitution authorizes the German government to transfer sovereign rights by law to intergovernmental institutions and to join a system of collective security in order to preserve peace. While often forgotten, these provisions of federal law are of enormous significance; without them, the entire basis of German foreign and alliance policy would not be possible.

The Constitution, on the other hand, does not, of course, say how German foreign policy in a dramatically changed world is to do what is normally expected of a state’s foreign policy, namely, to promote the security, rights, and welfare of its citizens in and *vis-à-vis* the outside world. What Germany’s “national interests” are in the face of new developments and dramatic decision-making situations, however, is not

written in large letters across the skies of Berlin, but must be decided in each individual case through a battle of opinions.

After 1990, decisions on national foreign policy interests have to be made in a fundamentally changed environment, which I can only outline in a few words. This environment demands so many decisions in so many different fields from the various actors and institutions of the Federal Republic that it is no longer at all clear to the ordinary citizen what German foreign policy actually is today. You too can take a test that I made in the run-up to this lecture with otherwise well-informed citizens: When I asked them to systematically tell me the basics of German foreign policy, they generally shrugged their shoulders. Somehow Europe, the fight against terrorism, President Bush and the war in Iraq, as well as Turkey's possible accession to the EU all played a role. In response to my suggestive questioning, most could agree with the assertion that foreign policy gave the impression of being a bogged-down and aimless mess.

In addition to the difficult environment, things are not made any easier by the media's presentation of foreign policy nor the numerous professional spin doctors in government, in the opposition, and in the other parties. Systematic discussion of German foreign policy takes place only in the smallest circles, and public debate occurs only sporadically, for example, when German soldiers, whose trade, like that of all soldiers, is war, are to be sent on a "peace mission" somewhere in the world.

Moreover, it has become impossible to overlook the fact that the weight of reunified Germany's foreign policy has been diminished by its inability to implement structural reforms at home, to cope with the huge debt of the federal, state, and local governments, to restructure its social systems, to trim back its sprawling bureaucracy, and to achieve qualified immigration, i.e., to stop unregulated immigration into the burdened welfare system. The Federal Republic does not want to and should not, if at all possible, use soldiers to pursue its interests; the country's economic power, unlike during the Cold War and reunification, is only available to a very limited extent as a means of foreign policy; the effectiveness of non-power-based persuasion and willingness to engage in dialogue is limited in the world as it is today. Only a state that has put its house in order can pursue a powerful foreign policy.

What are, in a long-term historical perspective, the new conditions of world history that German foreign policy can hardly influence at all, but to which it must react? I would like to summarize these in five problem areas.

First, the collapse of the Soviet empire. If the Soviet Union is also to be counted as part of Europe, its collapse has rightly been seen as the endpoint of a development in world history; namely, the end of the European colonial empires. This development had begun with the breakup of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, continued with the breakup of German's Third Reich and Italy's colonial empire in World War II, and ended after World War II with the painful dissolution of the empires of Great Britain and France. In addition, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands had to part with the remnants of their empires.

What we all experienced and interpreted as liberation from dictatorship in the years from 1989 to 1991 also allows another interpretation: Only because the European nations—with strong American support—were trimmed back to their core countries and thus marginalized in world history, were they able to start the project of the European Union in the West and, after 1990/91, to push it forward to Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Southeastern Europe, thus carrying out the simultaneous widening and deepening of the European Union. The eternal struggle of European nations for influence, status, and prestige is now mostly played out by peaceful means within the European Union, because no single European country has sufficient power for world politics anymore. This is not to say that the memory of past greatness cannot obscure the view of this new reality. Great Britain still wants to use the best of two worlds, the European and the Atlantic, for its own interests through a special relationship with the “only remaining superpower of the present,” the United States; many French have not stopped dreaming of the “vocation européenne é mondiale de la France” in the tradition of de Gaulle. Even in the field of international politics, the common saying that “all of life is an exercise to strive for self-importance” continues to apply.

Secondly, because of the decolonization and de-imperialization of Europe, the project of the peaceful enlargement and deepening of the European Union has become the determining factor of German foreign policy and a central component of German domestic policy since 1990, in keeping with the preamble to the Basic Law, “to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe.” In the field of European policy, German foreign policy has supported secular decisions since 1990; in this field, it is trying to assert German interests in the European institutions and also bilaterally; but in this field, resentment and resistance are also growing among the German people, because the sum total of

European policy decisions is putting German society under pressure to adapt, spreading fear and insecurity. If you were to ask the German people today, they would reject the introduction of a new constitution for Europe, just like the French and the Dutch.

Let me remind you of some of these secular steps: In February 1992, the Treaty on European Union was signed in Maastricht. This second, comprehensive reform of European Community law also set the date and conditions for a common European currency, which was finally introduced on January 1, 2002. Even before that, on May 1, 1999, the Treaty of Amsterdam, the third reform of European Community law, came into force, intending to prepare it for enlargement to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. On May 1, 2004, the European Union was actually enlarged by 75 million people and ten states to 454 million Europeans and 25 states. If the ten new countries meet certain minimum economic requirements, the so-called convergence criteria, they are, unlike Denmark and Great Britain, in principle obliged to introduce the euro as well. Optimists reckon that this could be achieved by 2010; pessimists say we can wait until the cows come home.

Although the “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union” was solemnly proclaimed at the Nice Summit in December 2000 and Europe thus constituted itself legally as a community of values, the deepening of the Union is lagging far behind enlargement. No one knows exactly what the European Union actually is beyond the single market. Moreover, the enlargement of the EU to include Turkey is, in every respect, one of the most explosive problems of European politics. Furthermore, the European project is a huge opportunity for Germany’s world-interpreting classes and an enormous job creation program for philosophers, sociologists, and political scientists, for lawyers, historians, linguists, journalists, and politicians. All are trying to invent, imagine, and construct a European identity. As Cavour, the first Prime Minister of Italy, famously stated after the unification of Italy: “We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians.” We can observe something similar at present. After Europe was made, it is necessary to make Europeans. Those who want to be subsidized in their projects by the institutions of Europe must give them the impression that they are participating in the “identity business” of the new Europe.

The overdue reform of decision-making structures is making no progress, the draft of a European constitution has failed in two referenda, and there is no common foreign and security policy worthy of the name. Henry Kissinger’s mischievous *bon mot* still holds true:

“Who do I call if I want to call Europe?” It is also related to this lack of deepening that German foreign policy is de facto going it alone on existential issues, such as war and peace or national debt. So far, by the way, these German go-it-alones have benefited neither the Federal Republic nor Europe.

Third: I would say again that the third change in world history over which German foreign policy has no influence, but whose consequences affect it existentially, is the rise of the USA as the “world’s only remaining superpower.” It is particularly the consequences for Europe and Germany that have resulted from the new definition of U.S. foreign policy interest as envisioned in the writings of the neoconservative revolutionaries in the 1990s and made national doctrine by the Bush administration in the wake of September 11.²

In the Cold War, the U.S. played the role of the “benevolent hegemon,” i.e., within the framework of its leadership role, it took into account the interests of the dependent allies, it leveled out differences of interest through pragmatic compromises found through dialogue and, on this basis, won the voluntary allegiance of the Western Europeans. The basic prerequisite was, of course, the common enemy, communism,

2 From the literature on U.S. foreign policy after the inauguration of George W. Bush and especially since September 11, 2001, which is hard to survey even for specialists, I recommend the following books: Timothy Garton Ash, *Freie Welt. Europa, Amerika und die Chance der Krise*, Munich/Wien 2004; Peter Bender, *Weltmacht Amerika. Das Neue Rom*, Stuttgart 2003; Ivo H. Daalder / James M. Lindsey, *America Unbound. The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*, Washington 2003; Niall Ferguson, *Das verleugnete Imperium. Chancen und Risiken amerikanischer Macht*, Berlin 2004; Stefan Halper / Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone. The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*, Cambridge 2004; Detlef Junker, *Power and Mission. Was Amerika antreibt*, Freiburg 2003; Robert Kagan, *Macht und Ohnmacht. Amerika und Europa in der neuen Weltordnung*, Berlin 2003; Werner Kremp / Jürgen Wilzewski (eds.), *Die Bush-Administration und die US-Außenpolitik nach dem Angriff auf Amerika*, Trier 2003; Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath. How America Acts as the World’s Government in the 21st Century*, New York 2005; Ulrich Menzel, *Paradoxien der neuen Weltordnung*, Frankfurt a.M. 2004; Harald Müller, *Amerika schlägt zurück. Die Weltordnung nach dem 11. September*, Frankfurt a. M. 2003; Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege*, Hamburg 2002; Joseph S. Nye, *Das Paradox der amerikanischen Macht*, Hamburg 2003; Jeremy Rifkin, *Der europäische Traum. Die Vision einer leisen Supermacht*, Frankfurt a.M. 2004; Klaus Schwabe, *Weltmacht und Weltordnung. Amerikanische Außenpolitik von 1898 bis zur Gegenwart*, Paderborn / Munich / Wien / Zürich 2006; Ulrich Speck / Natan Sznaider (eds.), *Empire Amerika. Perspektiven einer neuen Ordnung*, Munich 2003; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power. The Global Response to U.S. Primacy*, New York 2005.

and thus the common image of the enemy and the feeling of belonging to a common, transatlantic community of values.³

This pragmatic basis of American-European relations has changed radically since George W. Bush came to power and after September 11, 2001, because his foreign policy is fundamentally different from that of his father. I would give a lot to be able to be there when both of them discuss world politics at the family table.

The mission-minded president, a born-again Christian who also draws on the Christian right and his country's fourth revival movement, believes deeply in his historic mission to bring freedom to the world in general, and the Middle East in particular.

According to Bush, only the USA can really lead the world. For, from his perspective, the world has become definitively unipolar and America-centric, in intellectual and in military-strategic terms. The Pentagon has divided the world into five command areas. The U.S. has 170 bases in the world, and U.S. military power grows daily. With its destructive power, U.S. forces can pulverize any point on earth in 15 minutes. Since there is no world army under the command of the UN, NATO has become de facto irrelevant – in the case of a major conflict, only the US could stabilize the world in a pro-American and pro-Western sense. De facto, U.S. forces are the world's army. Allies would have to be sought as needed, depending on the state of one's interests. NATO's offer of cooperation after September 11 was coolly rejected.

These allies are expected, almost as a matter of course, to share the American perception of danger and the enemy; only then are they considered friends. This sole remaining hyperpower strictly refuses to limit national sovereignty by international treaties, whether it be nuclear policy, environmental policy, human rights policy, economic policy, or whatever field. Gulliver could not be bound by the shackles of the many dwarfs. The UN is a single nuisance to conservative Republicans; they do much to further discredit the already discredited world organization and Kofi Annan. What Presidents Wilson and

3 On U.S.-German relations during the Cold War, cf. a two-volume handbook in which 132 authors from both sides of the Atlantic have analyzed and bibliographically recorded the multifaceted interactions between these two countries in 146 contributions: Detlef Junker (ed.), *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges*, vol. I, 1945–1968; vol. II, 1968–1990, Stuttgart / Munich 2001 (English translation 2004).

Roosevelt offered the world as a vision—first the League of Nations, then the UN as systems of collective security—has been a nuisance to George W. Bush, at least since Secretary of State Powell had to present a series of false statements to the UN General Assembly to justify the Iraq war, as we now know.

What is the goal of this global military power? It is exactly what the so-called neoconservatives envisioned in their publications and memoranda in the 1990s: The establishment of an unrivaled Pax Americana for the 21st century. This group does not want to establish American world domination, but world primacy, which will allow the USA to determine the structures of the world in a pro-American sense for an indefinite future. This also applies to the structures of Europe.

In essence, this attempt at world domination hopes, with the end of the Cold War, to achieve what neither the Post-First nor Second World War eras succeeded in doing: spreading the American model of democracy and free-market capitalism as far as possible throughout the world, while globalizing liberty and property.

Thus, embedded in the American missionary idea of freedom is, under President George W. Bush, the hard, power-political blueprint of U.S. world supremacy, the future of a state that, if necessary, acts alone, without regard for international law, “preemptively and preventively.”

Herfried Münkler, in his important new book *“Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten,”* characterizes this U.S. foreign policy as “imperial.”⁴ That is, of course, a wide field.

In the blueprint of this global world domination, Europe and Germany, apart from the economy, play only a marginal role. One should not be deceived by the president’s trip to Europe after his re-election. It was amicability due to wanting money and soldiers to support his policy in Iraq. On the merits, Bush did not soften any of his positions. On the contrary, after his re-election, he speaks not only in the name of God, but also of the American people. And it is Bush who drives the Europeans before him with ever new actions and announcements; the Europeans can only react, often helplessly and without any guiding concept.

Even with regard to his current domestic and foreign policy positions, which are very tarnished, he has not yet programmatically

4 Herfried Münkler, *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*, Berlin 2005. Cf. also the references under note 2.

softened any of his positions. More European and German support for the U.S. outside Europe would be useful, but marginal given Europe's lack of economic and military resources.

Regardless of Europe's loss of importance from the American perspective, however, there are two concrete historical developments that are more important than the status of the Old World in the design of a unilateral Pax Americana. This relativization of Europe follows from what I would like to call the "double globalization" or "external and internal globalization" of the USA. On the subject of external globalization, anyone who has lived in Washington for any length of time will immediately experience the meaning of the commonplace notion that the United States has a global scope of foreign policy interests. The entire Muslim-Arab problem zone, Asia, especially the rising world power China, but also Japan, India and Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, developments in Russia and Central Asia, occasionally also developments in Latin America and Africa, the problems of terrorism, asymmetric warfare, weapons of mass destruction and the global drug trade occupy the foreign policy decision-making elite and the U.S. media far more than comparatively pacified Europe. In the corridors of power in Washington, D.C., the question is asked almost reflexively: What can and will Europe, especially Germany, contribute to solving these problems and to creating stability in these regions? This question is often coupled with the accusation that comparatively rich Europe is incapable of action, buries its head in the sand, and has set itself up as a free rider in world history.

Regarding "internal globalization," I would point to the growing proportion of the country's total population that is of non-European origin, especially from Latin America and Asia, which was brought about by the changes to immigration laws in the 1960s. Of the approximately 705,000 legal immigrants in 2003, for example, 102,000 came from Europe, 236,000 from Asia, 45,000 from Africa, 5,000 from Oceania, 252,000 from North America (according to official statistics, that is Canada, Mexico, and Greenland) 53,000 from Central America, and 54,000 from South America. This internal globalization also relativizes the nation's European heritage.

The attempt to introduce a new global curriculum in schools and colleges, a world history that takes into account the history of all continents, their interconnections and interdependencies, is exceedingly significant. This global curriculum is to replace the perspective of an American invention, the history course on "Western Civilization"

introduced after World War I; ironically referred to in student jargon as “Western Civ from Plato to NATO” and criticized by minorities and women as a course dealing only with “dead white European males.”

Fourth: In regard to foreign policy, the reunified Federal Republic of Germany is a central player among 24 other players in Europe, but has hardly any influence on the only remaining superpower, the United States. Thus, there is a need for action within a third field that seems to be completely beyond the reach of nation-states, including the Federal Republic of Germany, although the consequences are having a massive impact on German citizens and often leave them with a feeling of terrified powerlessness; namely, the consequences of what we call “globalization. What is meant by “globalization” is the rapid increase, compression, and acceleration of cross-border interactions between social, non-national actors; what is meant is the interconnection of economies, companies, financial markets, knowledge, communication, transport and goods, but also the globalization of organized terror, organized crime, the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and human beings, population migrations, illegal immigration, and all this under the heading of the Internet and cyberspace. The opponents of globalization have also become globalized, as their loud and televised protests at international conferences show.

The consequential problems of globalization create a need for action that can be satisfied neither by a nation state nor by international organizations such as the WTO or the UN. Political scientists therefore call for “global governance” beyond the real existing world in order to “close the gap between global problem development and collective, global capacity to act” (D. Nohlen). In principle, others want to keep the nation state out of these processes; they trust in the “creative destruction” (Schumpeter) of the market, which in sum would bring about the greatest happiness for the greatest number. One of the central conflicts of the contemporary world in international relations, in transatlantic relations, and, indeed, in the last federal election campaign, can only be understood against the background of this globalization: What is to be negotiated and decided at the state level – at the levels of municipalities, cities, countries, nation-states – and associations of nation-states such as the EU, the WTO and NATO? What should be left to the market, to the initiative of individuals, to large corporations, and to interest groups? Everywhere there are conflicts and contradictions galore, but hardly any solutions. Here two examples will suffice. First, while the highly industrialized

countries, including Germany, have committed themselves in principle to free trade in the exchange of goods and services within the framework of the WTO and other agreements, the industrialized world subsidizes its agriculture to the tune of a billion dollars a day, thus denying developing countries the opportunity to acquire foreign currency to reduce their debts. Second, the intensified global competition, resulting in migration of industries to low-wage countries and the daily reduction of jobs subject to social security contributions within Germany, cannot be dealt with by the classical means of foreign policy, but it does increase domestic problems and the domestic pressure within our nation to cope with the social costs of globalization.

Here I would add a relevant personal anecdote: With the establishment of the Heidelberg Center for American Studies, we have entered the middle of a new global competition, “the brains business,” the market-oriented competition of universities for the best, or at least for good students from all over the world. The first two cohorts of our Master in American Studies program, for which we charge 5,000 euros in tuition, come from Romania, Poland, China, Hong Kong, the United States, Slovakia, Palestine, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Turkey, Germany, Georgia, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Japan, Belarus, the Maldives, Korea, and Japan.

Fifth, it has been said that the primary goal of a nation-state’s foreign policy is security; security from concrete or suspected dangers that might threaten the inviolability of its territory and the survival of its citizens. Domestic policy was therefore about the well-being of states, foreign policy about the existence of states. The security policy of reunified Germany, if it interests the citizens at all, can only be seen in a diffuse light determined by paradoxes. For example, on the one hand, since reunification, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the eastward expansion of NATO, it is repeatedly stated that we are surrounded only by friends, and that virtually all Germans have, as already mentioned, internalized the norm of Article 26 of the Basic Law, which makes a war of aggression a punishable offense. On the other hand, the Social Democratic Minister of Defense, Peter Struck—Minister of Defense, nota bene—kept fluctuating between two assertions: “Germany will also be defended in the Hindu Kush” and “The Bundeswehr’s operational area is the whole world.” These two assertions earned the defense minister and his chancellor Gerhard Schröder the reproach, not only from pacifists, that these sentences testify to a new diffuse

“Wilhelminism” that wants to be everywhere in the world. A second paradox is that, if it is true that the Federal Republic’s area of operations is the whole world, then the Bundeswehr is too small and hopelessly underfunded. At present, just over 6,000 German soldiers are doing humanitarian and peacekeeping work in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Georgia, the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. By 2010, the goal is for the Bundeswehr to include 35,000 so-called intervention forces, 70,000 stabilization forces, and 145,000 state-of-the-art support forces. However, in light of the budget situation and the massive federal debt, no one knows where the money will come from. Defense Minister Struck has never publicly complained about the size of the defense budget for reasons of coalition and party loyalty; it will be interesting to see if and when the new Defense Minister Jung abandons this line.

The astonishing proposition that the Bundeswehr’s area of operations is the whole world—meaning, of course, potentially the whole world—is justified by a radically changed security situation and security strategy compared to the Cold War. In this view, even outside NATO territory, i.e., “out of area,” it is necessary in a preventive and stabilizing manner to inhibit endangered countries and states from being dominated by terrorist organizations that might also try to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Without being stated openly, this line of thought is based on a kind of domino theory, which was decisively shaped by the politicians of the USA and the Soviet Union during the Cold War: if the domino Afghanistan falls, other dominoes “closer to home” may also fall.

Incidentally, clarity has been achieved on the hotly disputed question of whether these “out of area” deployments are constitutional. They are, according to a ruling by the 2nd Senate of the Federal Constitutional Court, chaired by Jutta Limbach, on July 12, 1994. With this legal clarification behind it, Parliament has since approved “out of area” measures 35 times to date, involving 100,000 soldiers. Second, the Federal Constitutional Court ensured that the Bundeswehr is a “parliamentary army,” meaning that before any deployment, the government must receive a majority vote of the Bundestag. In April 2005, 70 military observers were sent to the crisis regions of Dafur in Sudan for the first time under the new “Parliamentary Participation Act.”

Ladies and gentlemen, so far I have described five structural preconditions and problem situations of German foreign policy: the end of

the European colonial empires, the enlargement and deepening of the European Union, the new U.S. foreign policy as the world's only remaining superpower, the problems and consequences of globalization for German foreign policy, and, finally, the new security situation after the end of the Cold War in view of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Now I would like to briefly remind you of the day-to-day business of German diplomacy, of what the Federal Foreign Office actually does with its headquarters in Berlin and its network of 226 missions abroad. According to information on the homepage of the Federal Foreign Office, reunified Germany maintains diplomatic relations with 191 states. In addition, many host countries also have German consulates general or consular missions. Furthermore, Germany maintains twelve delegations to intergovernmental and supranational organizations such as the UN in New York, Geneva, or Vienna or the European Union in Brussels. The delegations of the German federal states have also established themselves in Brussels, some of them very comfortably. In addition, there is a cultural foreign policy of Germany (treated somewhat like a stepmother), in which, apart from the Foreign Office, the Goethe Institutes and the German Historical Institutes in Paris, London, Rome, Washington, Warsaw and, more recently, in Moscow participate. During my five years in Washington as director of the German Historical Institute, I myself, of course, worked closely with the German Embassy and was able to observe its activities very carefully. However, I never had the privilege of being invited into that most hallowed place, the bug-proof sanctuary.

To the eternal chagrin of the Foreign Minister and the Foreign Office, however, it is by no means the case that the Foreign Office has a monopoly on defining and representing German interests abroad. Every federal state has its own "foreign department"; the state of Baden-Württemberg, for example, also pursues its own "foreign policy." Above all, every chancellor of the Federal Republic, before or after reunification, has discovered that he / she can make his / her mark much more easily in the field of foreign policy than in domestic policy. You all know that Chancellor Schröder owed his re-election in 2002 in part to the instrumentalization of anti-Americanism. The sometimes open, sometimes subtly concealed conflict between Schröder and Fischer as each tried to make his mark in foreign policy was an example of the institutionally anchored competitive relationship between the chancellor's office and the foreign ministry.

All these foreign missions claim to represent and safeguard the economic, cultural, and security interests of Germany, including the legal interests of its citizens. What these are, however, as I have tried to make clear, is more difficult to define than is generally thought.

These foreign missions are also a visible expression of the fact that, despite all the proclaimed multilateralism and integration, the foreign policy of Germany has retained a bilateral, occasionally unilateral basis. In the run-up to the Iraq war, Chancellor Schröder was, in this respect, flesh from the flesh of President Bush. While Bush declared to the world that whatever the UN decided, the U.S. was going into war, Schröder replied: whatever the UN decides, we are staying out. This devaluation of the UN, however, did not prevent the Federal Republic from trying to get one of four new seats on the Security Council. Critics see a new prestige-conscious Wilhelminism at play here too, because Germany is neither militarily nor economically prepared to shoulder new obligations.

German foreign policy, including media coverage, focuses on certain aspects of this bilateral policy: for example, on exports and imports from China, on exports to Russia and the contractual expansion of the supply of oil and gas from it; on problems of memorial policy with Poland or the Czech Republic; on the secure existence of Israel; on the granting of visas to Ukrainians; or on the Dutch image of Germany.

I will attempt a conclusion: In view of the enormous, partly global challenges and the complex, diffuse and paradox-ridden foreign policy of the Federal Republic since 1990, it is difficult to make summary statements about German foreign policy of that period, yet I would like to try to do so in one respect.

Whereas in 1990 the containment of a reunified Germany by the Two-plus-Four Treaty was born out of the fear of an overly strong Germany dominating Europe, today Europe and the United States are driven by the opposite concern: about a Germany that is weak in domestic politics and hardly capable of acting abroad. Indeed, in my view, German foreign policy has lost its ability to act since 1990, and with it the ability to represent and protect German interests in and vis-à-vis foreign countries. Economic stagnation and high debt, the underfunding of the Bundeswehr, the general lack of interest in a structured, long-term foreign policy, and the vague definition of national interest are detrimental to a sustainable foreign policy.

As the supposed central power of Europe, Germany does not currently have the strength to help bring about a common foreign and

security policy for the old world, and that includes a common immigration policy. The Federal Republic is almost helpless in the face of possible blackmail attempts by energy-supplying states such as Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Nigeria. Although the unilateral blueprint for a Pax Americana is beginning to fail due to reasons of foreign and domestic policy, and although the style and tone of U.S.-German relations are beginning to change—coinciding with the change of administrations in Berlin—Germany at present has little of substance to offer in order to move from its current position of marginalization back to the center of American policy. Germany's eternal shuttle diplomacy to the Middle East and its ability to engage in dialogue with all sides have, in the end, done nothing to solve any concrete problem in this region or to halt the ever-approaching "clash of civilizations."

As far as the fight against terrorism is concerned, the uninformed public can only trust that the German secret services are doing good work in secret and are not, like the American secret services, stumbling from one failure to the next. The Germans do not even have the privilege, like the Americans, of being allowed to learn about the results of parliamentary investigative committees. As for the German soldiers deployed in exposed locations in Afghanistan, one can only hope that, in an emergency, they will be protected by Americans or at least flown home. The Federal Republic is defenseless against what is probably the greatest threat in the world, including to Germany: the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, and nuclear terror. As well-meaning representatives of a peaceful and civilian power, German politicians and diplomats are unarmed prophets.

13. The Americanization of the Holocaust. On the Possibility of Externalizing Evil and Perpetually Renewing One's Mission

Anyone who travels to the various regions of the United States in search of its current culture of remembrance and politics of its history would be well advised to pack Friedrich Nietzsche's essay "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" in their luggage. In it, Nietzsche had warned the Germans in 1872, and all energetic peoples in general, against exaggerating the scholarly approach to history, which supposedly aims at objectivity. For only the pre-scholarly approach, arising from the needs of the respective present, could serve life and, as one would say today, create identities. The anti-Enlightenment philosopher Nietzsche recommended three appropriations of history for use by groups who understand themselves as a people: first a monumental-heroic approach, second a critical approach, and third an antiquarian approach. Respectively, peoples and individuals reassure themselves of their great past as an incentive for the future; they indict the past and criticize it, also in order to gain strength for new deeds; or they cultivate a stewarding relationship towards the past in order to remember the roots of their own existence.

Although there are more historians in the United States than in the rest of the world combined, this energetic nation has a deep skepticism toward intellectuals and thus follows Nietzsche's suggestion. It simultaneously cultivates an antiquarian, a critical and, above all, a monumental-heroic-patriotic approach to history. This is in contrast to the Germans, for whom the third part of this triad, precisely the patriotic one, was largely lost through National Socialism and the Holocaust. For the majority of Americans, their history is steeped in victory and success. Anyone who seriously questions this American legend can still today be swept away by a storm of indignation.

Nietzsche can also provide the key to explaining one of the most astonishing phenomena of contemporary memorial culture in the United States: the ubiquity of the Holocaust in politics and culture,

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that is, its Americanization. Two phenomena in particular should be understood by this: first, the fact that the Holocaust has moved from the margins to the center of American culture in the past 30 years; second, the functionalization, trivialization, and marketing of the “Shoah business” that has accompanied it.

Embodiment of Absolute Evil and Manslaughter Argument

The confrontation with and commemoration of the genocide committed against the Jews in Europe have become deeply imprinted in the collective memory of Americans under the term “Holocaust.” At every turn, the foreign visitor encounters the products of a culture of research, education, and remembrance that has become institutionalized in museums, memorials, and research centers, at universities and schools, and that continues to grow through donations and fundraising and is designed to last. The greatest impact, however, is not achieved through words and serious research, but through images, through the marketing of the Holocaust in the mass media. Moreover, the Holocaust as the embodiment of absolute evil has become the all-around killer argument in current political and moral discourses in the United States. No symbol is ascribed such diverse meanings as the Holocaust; no analogy is more used and more abused than the Holocaust analogy.

Over the past 30 years, the Holocaust has not only penetrated the center of American culture, but has also become central to the identity of American Jews. According to a 1999 study by the American Jewish Committee, 98 percent of American Jews consider the memory of the Holocaust to be a significant or very significant part of their identity, but only 15 percent say they observe religious rules and maintain Jewish customs. That the Holocaust has taken on a whole new meaning in American society is in no small part due to the change in self-perception of American Jews – in many respects the most successful minority in the United States since 1945 as seen by their prominence in politics, business, culture, academia, the mass media, and among opinion-forming elites.

It was predictable that the tension between Americanization, on the one hand, and the significance of the Holocaust for the identity of American Jews, on the other, would eventually trigger a new wave of reflection and critique. This is precisely the trend that seems to be emerging at present among some American historians and intellectuals.

Even earlier, some Jewish writers had sporadically complained that the Americanization of the Holocaust amounted to a “de-Jewification” of the genocide, a theft of Judaism; or that anything evil that happened to anyone anywhere was labeled a “Holocaust.” But in recent years, the books and essay collections of Tim Cole, Hilene Flanzbaum, Edward Linenthal, Peter Novick, Jeffrey Alan Shandler, and James E. Young have given this critique an empirical basis. Norman Finkelstein’s recently headlined book radicalizes and overstates some aspects of this multi-layered process.

Examples may illustrate the various dimensions of the current Americanization of the Holocaust. Let us begin with one of the greatest museum successes in the history of the United States, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., which opened in 1993. It now attracts more than two million visitors a year. Despite the fact that the museum’s origin can be traced back to 1978, and was the result of the impact of *The Holocaust* television mini-series, as well as a gesture of appeasement toward American Jews because President Jimmy Carter needed a domestic political compensation for the delivery of F-15 fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, it has since become a national shrine. The museum shows Americans what it means to be an American by drastically demonstrating what it means not to be an American. To critics who doubted at the time that it made sense to document the greatest crime committed by a foreign people on another continent in the American capital, the advisory board responsible for the museum’s conception responded, “This museum belongs at the center of American life because America, as a democratic civilization, is the enemy of racism and its most radical expression, genocide. As an event of universal significance, the Holocaust is of special importance to Americans. The Nazis denied, in word and deed, the deepest beliefs of the American people.”

If this statement is meant to imply that Nazi ideology and rule negated the ideals and values of American democracy, it is undeniably true. Incidentally, this is true for all societies and states for which human dignity and physical integrity are inviolable. However, if this statement is to be understood as a statement of fact about the history of the United States, the assertion that the United States is the enemy of racism is a grotesque historical misrepresentation not only for the descendants of decimated Indians and for black Americans. For them, who have so far not seen the establishment of a national museum about the fate of Indians or slavery in Washington, D.C.—a place where slaves

were kept in cages and offered for sale—the Holocaust Museum is a privileging of Jews. This contributes to tensions between a segment of African Americans and American Jews.

Almost every major city in the United States now has a Holocaust memorial. There are more than a hundred Holocaust museums and research sites dealing with the genocide, for example in New York, Boston, Detroit, Los Angeles, Tampa Bay, Houston, and Dallas. The trend is upward. Americans have adopted, as it were, one of the greatest crimes – many believe the greatest crime – in European history.

Another example of the ubiquity of the Holocaust is the coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, the two most politically influential newspapers in the country. In 1996, for example, The *New York Times* published more than 500 Holocaust-related articles, The *Washington Post* more than 300, and the trend is upward. From 1996 to the present, the *New York Times* has published more than 3,500 Holocaust-related articles.

But the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* deal only in the printed word. Such impact, however, is far surpassed by images, film, television, comics, and the Internet. The outstanding example in recent years is, of course, Steven Spielberg’s feature film “Schindler’s List,” which was released in 1993, won seven Oscars, and was broadcast again in 1997 by one of the major television networks, this time with the explanation, unusual for the United States, that this film would not be interrupted by commercials. Several new major projects on the Holocaust are also in the pipeline. Spielberg will release a film about Anne Frank. In the American market, the Holocaust has become a profitable commodity.

Moreover, the Holocaust is an integral part of American “infotainment” and political soap operas. When O. J. Simpson’s black lawyer Johnny Cochran declared members of the white Los Angeles Police Department to be Nazis who had started a Holocaust against black youths, Simpson’s second defense lawyer, Jewish lawyer Robert Shapiro, professed on television to have been deeply offended by Cochran’s comparison. The chief prosecutor against President Clinton in the House of Representatives, Congressman Henry J. Hyde, warned the American nation on television of the slippery slope leading to the Holocaust if Clinton was not removed from office for lying publicly about his Monica Lewinsky affair.

Holocaust survivors tell their stories on the smarmy Jerry Springer show; opponents of abortion, supporters of the “pro-life movement”

compare aborting fetuses to the victims of Auschwitz. Animal lovers speak of the holocaust for animals. Even a cookbook with dishes from the concentration camp finds its buyers.

The current situation in America is radically different from the situation during World War II, when the genocide took place, and from the period up to the early 1960s, at the height of the Cold War. In the global threat scenarios that U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt laid out before the American people from 1937 to 1941¹, he did not refer publicly even once to the threatened situation of the Jews in the “Third Reich” and in Europe. He believed he could not afford to do so politically, in part because of the widespread anti-Semitism in his own country at the time. Therefore, the quota for immigrants was never increased to help threatened Jews. Even if President Roosevelt had fought for it, he would have had no chance in Congress to change the restrictive immigration laws of 1924 in light of the “Great Depression,” the country’s worst economic crisis since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. However, Roosevelt did all he could for the Jews within the existing laws. Even Jewish organizations in the United States remained comparatively passive. The feeling of resignation that little could be done anyway was widespread.

The *New York Times*, bought in 1896 by Adolphe S. Ochs, a son of poor German Jews, stuck to its maxim during World War II that it did not, under any circumstances, want to appear as a Jewish newspaper. It therefore barely mentioned the Holocaust during World War II. In its coverage of the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp on the front page of the paper, the word “Jew” was not mentioned. And despite the elemental disgust that the pictures of the liberation of the concentration camps aroused in 1945, not only in America, a not inconsiderable anti-Semitism initially continued to persist in the country.

As is often overlooked today, Americans’ attention during World War II was primarily focused on the global conflict itself, which was fought across five continents and seven oceans and cost the lives of 50 to 60 million people. The “Holocaust” as a singular event did not yet exist in the consciousness of contemporaries. During the war, few Americans had any idea of the magnitude of the genocide. In May 1945, a majority of Americans estimated that a total of one million people—Jews and non-Jews—had been killed in concentration camps by the Nazis.

1 See Chapter 8.

The approximately 100,000 survivors of the genocide of European Jews who came to the United States by the early 1950s remained invisible. In a culture of victors, war heroes, and optimism about progress, no one had any interest in their stories of suffering. The majority of American Jews during this period did not want to be seen as victims. Their ultimate goal was to be recognized as full American citizens. In the late 1940s, for example, leading Jewish organizations rejected the proposal to build a Holocaust memorial in New York: It was not in the interest of the Jews to present themselves forever as a weak and defenseless people.

The onset of the Cold War did not make the memory of the Holocaust more opportune. The theory of totalitarianism brought National Socialism and Communism into a common front against the free West. During the witch hunt against alleged and supposed communists at home in the era of Senator McCarthy, it turned out that quite a few “fellow travelers” were Jews. Especially in the Southern states, anti-communism, racism, and anti-Semitism combined. “Commies, Niggers, and Jews” were often mentioned in the same breath.

During this time, the genocide of the Jews was rarely mentioned in public debate. The term Holocaust had not yet become established, the idea of the “uniqueness” of the Holocaust had not yet been born. Moreover, in view of the possibility of nuclear war, Hiroshima was incomparably more important for contemporary thinking than the Holocaust.

The onset of the Cold War also made West Germany America’s most important ally. Although the memory of the Third Reich and the presence of the past played a paramount role in American policy toward Germany from 1945 to the present, the American government was forced to halt denazification, in large part due to the emergence of the Cold War. From 1949 to 1955, the Allied High Commission—the Oberregierung of West Germany—in general, the American High Commission and John J. McCloy in particular, gradually lost control over policy regarding German’s past because they wanted to retain control over the present, namely West Germany’s rearmament and integration into the West.

The Paramount Role of Television

Since the early 1960s, several events and developments have fundamentally changed this situation. It was during this period that what can now be called the “Americanization of the Holocaust” began. In the beginning was the image. Without television, one could say, there would have been no Americanization of the Holocaust. One of the most important events was the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961, which was broadcast extensively by American television stations. For the first time, the American nation heard the harrowing testimonies of the survivors, understood the dimension of the genocide. Probably equally important was the potential existential threat to Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973, which brought the two cornerstones of Jewish Americans’ “civil religion” closer together: Israel and the Holocaust. The fear of a possible new catastrophe of the Jewish people mobilized the memories of the Holocaust. Above all, it strengthened the resolve to never again remain silent and to stand idly by and watch the events unfold. It also gave many Jewish communities a new *raison d’être* and scared away the worries of Jewish organizations that the very ever-more-successful integration of Jews into American society and the waning of anti-Semitism were weakening their cohesion and organizational strength. The Holocaust created Jewish ecumenism.

In practical terms, the rekindled interest in the Holocaust proved to be an ideal vehicle for raising funds for Israel, increasing the membership of Jewish organizations, and demonstrating the need for Jewish organizations to take action. In the words of a spokesman for the Simon Wiesenthal Center in California, “The Holocaust works every time.”

A further breakthrough—many believe the decisive breakthrough—to Americanization was then brought about by the four-part television series *Holocaust*, which was seen by almost 100 million Americans in April 1978. Its broadcast was supported by advertising campaigns of Jewish organizations—incidentally, much to the horror of Elie Wiesel, perhaps the most famous Holocaust survivor, who condemned the “trivialization” of the Holocaust as an insult to the victims.

All this would probably not yet have led to the current Americanization of the Holocaust, had it not been for a cultural revolution in America in the 1960s. That, at any rate, is one of Peter Novick’s most thought-provoking theses. What was the content of this cultural revolution? It was the transformation from a dominant culture of victors

and heroes to a culture in which losers and victims also have their say. Since that time, there has been an increased tension in America between the heroic view of history and the critical view of history in the Nietzschean sense. Prompted by the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and the revolutionary change in immigration laws, the critical approach to one's own history now gained significance over the heroic-patriotic interpretation.

This critical view of American history has since clearly become the moral weapon of nonwhite minorities, as well as women, in the political struggle for social recognition, ownership, and rights. It began, to quote Peter Novick, as “an Olympic competition for the gold medal for the greatest tale of woe.” And in this contest, American Jews maintain an unassailable lead as long as they can convince Americans of the “uniqueness” and “incomparability” of the Holocaust. All other crimes, including those of American history, thus become secondary and tertiary.

Some African American spokesmen are displeased with the extent to which Jews have succeeded in anchoring the Holocaust in the American public consciousness. They are stepping up efforts to interpret the story of the suffering of African Americans as the “Black Holocaust.” Even John Hope Franklin, an extraordinarily respected black American historian and advisor to President Clinton on racial issues, refers to slavery as “America's own Holocaust.”

While this comparison with the Nazi genocide causes great discomfort among many Jews, more than ninety percent of the members of the House of Representatives have, until this year, refused to deal with a standing motion of the “Congressional Black Caucus,” the association of black members of Congress. Under it, a congressional commission of experts would be convened to “examine slavery, and its impact on African Americans and American society.” After all, possible apologies are also admissions of guilt, and these can be expensive thanks to the American legal system, which awards the unwary consumer several million dollars in pain and suffering for even one cup of coffee that is too hot. In some cases, calculations are in circulation about the reparation of 224 years of unpaid forced labor of 10 million slaves.

Other minorities also want to see “the other side of America” appreciated: The murderous consequences of the European conquest of the two Americas, recently dubbed the “American Holocaust” by a Hawaiian-born American scholar; the extermination and dispossession of Native Americans; slavery and the system of apartheid that ruled the Southern states until a generation ago; the contribution of Mexicans

and other Latin Americans to the history of the United States; the long history of immigration laws discriminating against Asians; in general, the racism deeply embedded in American society.

According to Peter Novick, this new victim culture contributed significantly to the Americanization of the Holocaust. Among other things, this change also made it easier for Holocaust survivors to open up and share their memories. While they almost went into hiding after the war, “survivors” are now sought-after speakers and eyewitnesses. The term “survivor” is now an honorary title. The fact that Hadassah Lieberman, the wife of the Democratic Party’s vice-presidential candidate, introduces herself to voters as the child of Holocaust survivors gives her persona a special aura of dignity and respect.

Savior of the World

While the cultural revolution of the 1960s reinforced the critical appropriation of history and the acceptance of victim culture, however, the most important reason for the popularity of the Holocaust among the 98 percent of the non-Jewish population of the United States seems to be precisely that Americans can confirm themselves in their old role as the savior of the world. The memory of the crime of a foreign people, the Germans, leads at the same time to an externalization of evil and a confirmation of one’s own heroic-patriotic view of history. The reason for the Americanization of the Holocaust lies precisely in the fact that the genocide of the European Jews opens up for Americans both a critical and a heroic approach to history.

Despite the increased popularity of the critical view of history and the new culture of victimhood, the vast majority of Americans continue to maintain a heroic-patriotic relationship with their own history. It is no coincidence that all the “history wars” of the past decades have taken place between the heroic and the critical appropriation of history.

This is consistent with recent polls showing that more than seventy percent of Americans feel “patriotic” or “very patriotic.” Despite discomfort with parts of their own history, this majority, with robust self-confidence, continues to celebrate their great past as a manifestation of their chosenness and uniqueness and as a mandate to the future to fulfill the American mission. American history is conceived as an unfolding process of freedom; the sense of mission has its origins in a secularized 18th-century teleology of history.

American history is encapsulated, as it were, in this ideology of mission; it is, in Nietzsche's view, surrounded by an "enveloping atmosphere" that protects it from too much criticism and leaves it the ability to contribute to the identity of the American nation and to assure itself of its own identity in demarcation from the "other" and the "foreign."

The American civil religion produces the necessary enemy images as needed. Following the pattern of the late antique religious leader Manichaeus, the Americans have interpreted their wars in particular as a radical juxtaposition of a good and an evil world principle. Every enemy was thus automatically caught in the Manichaean trap of the American sense of mission: first the Indians, then England and George III, then the Spanish and Mexicans, and in the 20th century primarily the Germans, Japanese, Russians, Chinese, North Vietnamese, and Iraqis.²

The Americanization of the Holocaust, the constant confrontation with absolute evil, gives the American nation the perpetual possibility of externalizing evil and at the same time renewing the necessity of its own mission, the liberal-democratic mission. In the face of the Holocaust, the American nation convinces itself every day anew that it is the only indispensable nation in the world, as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright put it. The Holocaust has become not only the center of the identity of American Jews, but also an important component of American civil religion. The two million visitors to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., experience this dialectic firsthand: after confronting the overwhelming scenes of inhumanity, they find themselves in the monumental center of Washington—amid monuments to freedom and the American mission. The name of the museum itself precisely captures this fact: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*.

² See Chapter 2.

14. On The Way to Becoming an Imperial Hyperpower? The Manichaeian Trap has Struck Again – U.S. Foreign Policy after September 11, 2001

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the symbol of capitalism and free trade in a globalized world, the World Trade Center in New York, and on the symbol of the global military power of the USA, the Pentagon, revealed, as every war does, the real balance of power. It was the moment of truth—about the all-superior position of the world's only remaining superpower, the insignificance of the UN and NATO and, connected to this, the marginalization of Europe in world politics. Nothing remained of the utopia that NATO would eventually be based on two pillars, one American and one European. The “new NATO” launched at the Prague conference in 2002 will either be functionless or a side project of the U.S. under its control: a side project because 90% of U.S. military potential is used outside of the NATO alliance. NATO Secretary General Robertson has rightly called Europe a “military pygmy.”¹

The U.S., on the other hand, with the exception of its Anglo-Saxon ally Great Britain and some rather token auxiliary nations, has practically single-handedly waged two blitzkriegs and won militarily. In Afghanistan, it took the U.S. a good hundred days, using advanced technology, bombs, about \$70 million in bribes, and only about 500 Americans on the ground, to bring down the Taliban regime and deprive the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda of a territorial base. Against Iraq and Saddam Hussein, the U.S. needed more ground troops in addition to advanced technology, bombs, and bribes, but there things went even faster.

This new military determination of the U.S. under its president George W. Bush and the support of this bellicose policy by the majority

1 “Europe’s Military Mirage,” Stratfor, <http://stratfor.com>, February 5, 2002, 2, quoted from: Walter LaFeber, *The Bush Doctrine*, in *Diplomatic History* ed. 26, no. 4, Fall 2002, p. 554.

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of the American people cannot be explained without September 11. The successful terrorist attack struck and shook the American nation on a scale that is difficult to comprehend by peoples who have experienced and survived bombings on a very different scale. Grief, anger, and fear of another attack, including the deep need for revenge, can only be explained by considering that the American people were deprived of a security that until then had been a natural part of the American way of life: territorial integrity. The nuclear threat in the Cold War era had remained largely abstract to the American people because of the successful policy of deterrence. Before that, the well-known joke about the incomparable American security situation applied: bordered to the north and south by weak neighbors, to the east and the west by fish. The terrorists endangered and continue to endanger the paramount goal of U.S. strategy in the 20th century, indeed since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, namely, the security of the continental United States. President Bush's repeated comparison that September 11 was the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century is an understatement. The Japanese attack was about an outpost in the Pacific; the terrorists' attack targeted the symbolic heart of the United States. September 11 therefore fundamentally changed Americans' attitude to life.

The new enemy created clarity. There was a new North Pole on the compass of American globalism. The confusion about the world situation and the associated partial perplexity of U.S. world policy during President Clinton's term evaporated. Now, the Manichean trap of America's sense of mission is filled once again, precisely by international terrorism. American globalism again rests on the triad of fear of an "evil empire," global interests, and the missionary idea of freedom.

The major difference between the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, therefore, is the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. While, in principle, the three global cornerstones of U.S. national interest—indivisible security, indivisible world market, and indivisible freedom—continues to apply, the military and the ideational components, security and freedom, have clearly gained in importance over the market. It is almost as if in Washington the warriors and priests have displaced the merchants at the top of the U.S. government.

Hand in hand with the militarization of U.S. foreign policy after September 11 goes its unilateralization, i.e., with the proud awareness, which has grown even more since September 11, that it is the world's only remaining superpower, and thereby can represent its interests

alone if necessary – seeking and using allies only if they do what the U.S. wants. In a war coalition, only those who fight on American terms are welcome (a coalition of the willing).

The world has become unipolar from the perspective of President George W. Bush and his influential advisors, predominantly a generation of hawks socialized before the '68 movement. There is no longer a rival power, and that is how the hawks want it to stay. Thus, in the event of conflict, the security of the USA and order in the various regions of the world could not be guaranteed by alliances of equal powers—which no longer exist—nor by international organizations such as the UN and multilateral procedures, but ultimately only by the military power of the USA. Gulliver cannot be bound by multilateral procedures and the shackles of the many dwarfs.

This worldview, developed by the hawks even before September 11, 2001, has been reinforced by terrorism. For only since September 11 have the hawks found the necessary support among the American people; only since September 11 has President George W. Bush been able to wage his two-front war against the actual and alleged terrorists at home and in the world. Only since September 11 has the special nature of his presidency become apparent, namely the permanent state of emergency. Bolstered by the fear and patriotism of the majority of Americans, the majority of the government-compliant mass media, the patriotic pressure to conform in American society, the flight of Congress from foreign policy responsibility, and the inability of Democrats to formulate a discernible alternative, Bush has sought to keep the nation on permanent alert. Politically, his presidency since September 11 has thrived on and through war.

Terrorism, especially in its possible combination with weapons of mass destruction, represents, in President Bush's view, a new kind of threat that can neither be contained nor deterred, but must be destroyed. The United States would have to find a new defensive symmetry in the face of this new threat. Terrorists did not respect borders, he said, so the United States could not either. Therefore, it would have to intervene, preemptively if necessary and alone, in the internal politics of other states. Firstly, he said, that the notion of sovereignty underlying classical international law, also protected dictatorships and secondly that it was a suicidal illusion in the face of this new threat.

The basic elements of the American response to September 11 emerged, as historians amazingly already know, within nine days, between the attack and September 20, 2001, when President Bush

formulated the response to the challenge of terrorism before both houses of Congress. His annual State of the Union address of January 29, 2002, contained no structural news. Even the Manichaeic division of the world into good and evil – symbolized in the “axis of evil” which, in Bush’s view was formed by the states of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea – tended to be present in his September 14 speech at the Washington Cathedral and the September 20, 2001, address to Congress.

Historians are so exquisitely informed about the White House decision-making processes of September 11–20 because two journalists, Dan Balz and famed Watergate veteran Bob Woodward, published a stunning insider’s story in eight installments in the “Washington Post” from January 27 to February 3, 2002, based on extensive interviews and conversations with all the key participants, including President Bush. Although journalists cautioned readers that this story was necessarily incomplete and that some items were not to be discussed by key participants in order not to jeopardize national security and the confidentiality of the deliberations, the central elements of the U.S. response and its motives can be reconstructed with great clarity. For this reconstruction, the historian uses his usual tools: internal and external source criticism, comparison of verbatim quotations from the center of power with public pronouncements and concrete actions, integration of the hypotheses obtained in the experiential, (i.e., rule knowledge) of the interpreter about his subject. Moreover, the insights and facts from the two journalists’ reporting are an excellent key to understanding President Bush’s public speeches. Bob Woodward has published a version in book form, shortened for the first days and supplemented in substance until the end of the war in Afghanistan, which has also been translated into German.²

There is the astute observation that in matters of politics and world history, politicians have the first word, journalists the second, political scientists the third, but historians the last. In this case, the word has passed surprisingly quickly to the historians.

The central political decisions that are still valid today began to be made by President Bush on that chaotic September 11, when he had difficulties returning to the White House from Florida by way of Nebraska. These decisions were spontaneous; they came, as it were, from his gut, or to put it more delicately, from the core of his being. There is a photograph of President Bush as he was handed the news of

2 Bob Woodward, *Amerika im Krieg*, Stuttgart / Munich 2003.

the attack on the second tower, the South Tower, of the World Trade Center shortly after 9 a.m. local time in an elementary school in Sarasota. Bush's gaze goes inward and into the distance at the same time. Later, he says of the situation: "It was at that moment that I realized we were going to war." The early decisions were not significantly modified by the deliberations of the next few days. In general, it must be said that Bush, to the surprise of many, was the driving force and, of course, by virtue of his office, decisive person on the American side and probably remains so to this day. What were the president's spontaneous insights and reactions on September 11?

The attack, Bush said, is not just an act of terrorism; the attack means war, and war with potentially worldwide dimensions. When CIA Director George J. Tenet pointed out to Bush on September 11 that he had a 60-country problem with regard to terrorism, Bush replied that he would "take on" one country at a time. September 11, Bush said, was a beacon, the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century. Already on that day, without even asking his Secretary of State Colin Powell, he also formulated that strategy, which then became known as the "Bush Doctrine." Like every self-respecting American president who wants to go down in history, Bush formulated a doctrine. Its content: The American government would make no distinction in the coming war between terrorists who commit the crimes and those who provide them with a safe haven. Moreover, he would force the whole world to take political and moral sides: Either you are for us, or you are for the terrorists.

Over the next few days, other elements of the American response became apparent. The nation and the world would have to be prepared for a long war. The response, he said, would have to be hard, spectacular, and really hit the terrorists. "The American people," Bush said, "want a Big Bang." Clinton's tactic of firing a few cruise missiles against suspected terrorists to calm U.S. public opinion was woefully inadequate, he said. The world and terrorists, Bush said, must be disabused of the impression that the U.S. is a materialistic and hedonistic country unwilling to fight for its security, its interests, and the world's freedom.

Bush agreed with his advisers – including Vice President "Dick" Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Chief of Staff Henry H. Shelton, Attorney General John D. Ashcroft, his Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card, CIA Director George Tenet, and the highly influential National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice – that the United States needed to forge a global

coalition against terrorism, but only on terms that would be set in Washington. Bush did speak in small circles about how the righteousness of the American cause would bring the world to the U.S. side, but at the same time he made clear that the American mission would have to define the coalition, not the other way around. Several times in these internal debates, Bush emphasized that the United States would fight alone if necessary.

On Sunday, Sept. 15, he conferred, as his father once did before the Gulf War decision, with his closest advisers at the presidential country estate in Maryland, at Camp David. To them, the president said of the coming war on terrorism, “We may be the only ones left at some point. I don’t mind that. We are America.” This statement troubled Secretary of State Powell, who was responsible for implementing the Bush administration’s decision to forge an international coalition in the war on terrorism and to maintain at least the appearance of multilateralism. However, to the general amusement of those at the Cabinet meeting the day before, Powell reported on the phone calls he had already made to 35 governments in the morning. So much multilateralism, Powell said, had almost made him seasick.

The operational and strategic decisions were also made in the discussions in those first days – this fact being a renewed proof of the ability of the American political system to make decisions even, and especially, in times of crisis. One must not think about what would have happened if the attack had targeted London, Paris, Rome, or Berlin. This included the decision to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan in order to destroy Bin Laden and the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda. Only after several days of controversial deliberations was a simultaneous attack on Iraq postponed. Chief of Staff General Shelton was particularly opposed to an attack on Iraq, saying there was no evidence to date that Iraq was responsible for terrorism. Powell, too, was troubled that Cheney, Rumsfeld, and his deputy, Wolfowitz, continued to raise the issue of Iraq for debate over the next several months.

To achieve the war objective in Afghanistan, the toughest war plan proposed by Shelton was put into effect by President Bush, namely, to intervene in Afghanistan with cruise missiles, with bombers, and also with special forces on the ground. At the same time, Bush signed an executive order authorizing the CIA to expand and intensify its clandestine activities in 80 states on an unprecedented scale. The massive increase in the amount of money for bribes was the most peaceful measure. CIA Director Tenet had brought with him to Camp David a

master plan, titled “World Wide Attack Matrix,” outlining the secret strategies in those 80 countries. Bush was so enthusiastic after his CIA chief’s presentation that he exclaimed, “Great job!”

Finally, it is clear from the analysis of this internal deliberation that President Bush’s deep-seated Manichaeism, the dividing of the world into good and evil, is not an imposed public gesture, but belongs to the core of his political worldview. The war, Bush told his closest advisers, is a monumental struggle between good and evil, a crusade that will define his presidency and his image in history. Bush’s chief speechwriter, Michael Gerson, testified that he had never seen the president so full of passion as when he was preparing his Sept. 20 speech, which he and his colleagues had to rewrite a few times at Bush’s suggestion and which Bush himself corrected line by line. Emphasizing his excitement, Bush told Gerson two days before the speech, “This will define my presidency.” After the speech, which was watched live on screen by 80 million of the 281 million Americans, Bush told Gerson, “I’ve never felt so at peace with myself in my life.”

Bush has found his mission, which is far from over: the destruction of evil, if necessary, in a long war; ensuring the future security of the U.S. through preventive operations – if necessary, anywhere in the world – and through the strictest security measures at home. This war can last a long time, if necessary, as long as World War II or the Cold War. For Bush, September 11 must not be repeated. That is why Bush told Congress on September 20, “This is not, however, just America’s fight. And what is at stake is not just America’s freedom. This is the world’s fight. This is civilization’s fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance, and freedom. ... The civilized world is rallying to America’s side. They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. ... The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them. Fellow citizens, we’ll meet violence with patient justice—assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America.”³

3 George W. Bush, Address to the joint session of the 107th Congress, United States capitol, Washington, D.C. September 20, 2001.

There is now a well-founded suspicion that September 11 became an opportunity within world history for a highly influential group of public officials and political strategists, who in an unprecedented act of power grabbing “kidnapped” the White House, as it were, and reached the heart and mind of the President, to do what they had envisioned in their publications and memoranda in the 1990s: establish an unrivaled Pax Americana for the 21st century. This group does not want to establish an American hegemony, but a world primacy that will allow the U.S. to determine the structures of the world in a pro-American sense for the indefinite future.

Their special position in terms of power politics is also reflected in the fact that, in the event of conflict, these revolutionaries are prepared to intervene militarily, if necessary, in the internal politics of other states, but they themselves would never dream of renouncing the central element of the modern state as it has evolved since the 17th century: national sovereignty. They insist on autonomy from outside forces, self-determination in politics, and the ability to act unilaterally. These revolutionaries are unwilling to allow U.S. freedom of choice to be constrained by international law and international agreement if it contradicts what they believe to be the U.S. national interest.

The refusal to let the U.S. be bound by the Kyoto Protocols for the protection of the environment or by an international court in the prosecution of war crimes and human rights violations are prominent examples. In this respect, an ocean separates the conservative revolutionaries from the political class and culture of Germany, which is sworn wholeheartedly to peace, multilateralism, the juridification of international relations, and self-containment. For the representatives of the chosen people, on the other hand, morality comes first, then legality.

World dominance is to be based on global military dominance at sea, in the air, and in space, including military bases that have now spread around the world. This new dominance also makes it possible to satisfy the paramount principle of American warfare and the expectation of the American people to use as few of their own troops as possible in land warfare and to risk as few American lives as possible. At the same time, this new dominance reduces dependence on military confederates as in World War II, when Russian soldiers decimated German divisions and were expected to destroy Japanese armies in mainland China in the final phase of the war. In addition, development of the missile defense programs begun by President Reagan continues.

Further, the United States, barely noticed by the public, retracted its pledge in the spring of 2002 not to attack non-nuclear powers with nuclear weapons. The primary goal of this strategy is to make the U.S. secure against any attack, if possible, while at the same time keeping every part of the world open to American intervention. In doing so, they produce a classic security dilemma: the more absolute security for the U.S. becomes, the more absolute is the insecurity for the rest of the world.

For the conservative revolutionaries, the unassailable military advantage is the basis of future American world supremacy. They also count on the weight of the American economy, the influence of American popular culture, shifting alliances, and the appeal of the American promise of freedom.

The term “world supremacy” can be used to adequately describe this new utopia because it allows us to distinguish it, on the one hand, from the goal of “world domination” and, on the other hand, from the hegemonic role as the leading power of the Western world in the Cold War. In the self-concept of the world supremacy ideologues, the collapse of the Soviet Union, removed the need for the U.S. to play the role of the “benevolent hegemon” as it did during the Cold War, that is, to take into account the interests of the dependent allies within the framework of its leadership role, to use dialogue to level out differences of interest through pragmatic compromises, and to achieve voluntary allegiance on this basis. It is not without reason that during the Cold War American foreign policy toward Western Europe in general, and Germany in particular, could be described as “empire by invitation” or “empire by integration.”⁴ World supremacy is no longer hegemony and not yet world domination, it lies somewhere in between, the exact position changing due to the changing framework of world politics.

If the U.S. succeeded in doing so in the next few decades, it would become—in the sense of world supremacy—an imperial hyperpower with global reach. By comparison, the Roman Empire was a regional power centered around the Mediterranean and, even at the height of its influence, only one among several empires that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean across all of Eurasia to the Pacific Ocean, such as the empire of the Parthians and Kushana.⁵

4 Cf. Geir Lundestad, *The American “Empire,”* Oxford 1990.

5 Nevertheless, it may be useful to compare the structures of the Roman Empire with those of the New Rome. Cf. Peter Bender, *Weltmacht Amerika – Das Neue Rom,* Stuttgart 2003.

The inner circle of leaders around Bush reads like a “Who’s Who?” of these ideologues of American world supremacy.⁶ It includes what many consider the most influential politicians after the president, his vice president Dick Cheney, his chief of staff I. Lewis Libby, and his national security adviser, Eric Edelman; Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, and his adviser, Richard Perle; Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and State Department Undersecretary of Defense John Bolton; and, of course, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, who has more than anyone else the scarcest commodity in an imperial presidency: constant access to the president, not only at the White House but also at Camp David and in Texas. As early as the 2000 campaign, Bush, then inexperienced in foreign policy, confessed that no one could explain foreign policy to him better than Condoleezza Rice.

Before the start of the presidential campaign in 2000 which was focused entirely on domestic politics, George W. Bush was a blank slate with regard to foreign policy and had traveled around the world less than many Heidelberg history students. If one measures the president himself, based on his public statements and deeds, then he has largely adopted the world view of the world supremacist ideologues. Much the same can be said of his security adviser Condoleezza Rice. Given the missionary zeal with which this group pursues its goals, one may assume that almost all leadership positions in the White House and the crucial departments have now been purged of Clinton’s people. There are said to still be islands of resistance in the State Department, whose head Colin Powell, despite the most serious differences with these unilateralist hawks, as a loyal soldier, patriotic American, and ambitious politician, has so far failed to do what the president considers a primal political sin: expose the strife within the government to the outside world. The president does not allow domestic critics into the White House, and he reacts to public criticism with insult and resentment, especially when his moral integrity and the legitimacy of his mission are called into question.

Exchanging views with the Bush administration and moving within its sphere of influence, a circle of historians, strategists, commentators, and analysts, spread the new world view through their books and think tanks: besides William Kristol, Eliot A. Cohen, Lawrence F. Kaplan,

6 A good overview is provided by Stefan Fröhlich, *Hegemonialer Internationalismus*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10.4.2003, no. 85, p. 8.

Victor Davis Hanson, Bernard Lewis, there is also Robert Kagan, who surprised the world with the insight that the Americans are from Mars (warlike and capable of action), while the Europeans are from Venus (peaceable and incapable of action).⁷ There is also Francis Fukuyama, a former “Hegel in the State Department,” who announced as early as 1992 that world history had come to its end because there was no longer any possible and morally justified alternative to the Western-American model of the market and freedom for the entire world.⁸

These ideologues of American world supremacy are literate and historically aware. They ponder the rise and fall of previous world empires, looking for analogies, lessons, and instructions for action from history in order to avoid, if possible, the future fall of the new American empire. Power politicians plunder classics such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes; military strategists wonder how the U.S. might avoid a new Pearl Harbor or a second September 11 under modern conditions of asymmetric warfare,⁹ and natural law scholars discover philosophers such as Leo Strauss to place America’s libertarian mission on a moral footing.

Around the world, this group has come to be called “neoconservatives” (neocons). It would be more appropriate to call them “conservative revolutionaries.” They are “conservative” in the sense that they want to “preserve” exactly what has been described and explained in this book: the special, global position of political power of the USA as a result of the history of the 20th century—and the American missionary idea of freedom, the civil religion of America as it has developed since the 18th century, i.e., America’s power and mission.

Anyone who reads the self-reflections of the ideologues of American world supremacy or the official interpretation of the world from the White House in September 2002 immediately discovers that it would be quite wrong to quote only the passages dealing with the political power aspects of the new American unilateralism and to interpret the civil religion of freedom merely as rhetoric or false consciousness – as is the custom in secularized Europe and Germany. The reality of the US’s political power is also understood by the Bush administration as a vision and an idea.

7 Robert Kagan, *Macht und Ohnmacht. Amerika und Europa in der neuen Weltordnung*, Berlin 2003.

8 Francis Fukuyama, *Das Ende der Geschichte: Wo stehen wir?*, Munich 1992.

9 Cf. Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege*, Hamburg 2002.

These conservatives are “revolutionary” in the sense that, after the end of the bipolar world of the Cold War, they want to abolish the core principle of their own constitution, the separation and intertwining of powers (checks and balances), in international politics and establish the USA permanently as the only remaining and unrivaled superpower. This is indeed a revolutionary utopia, conceived in the face of all experience and probability. This utopia is at the same time driven by deep fear, fear of chaos, of the confusion and plurality of the world, indeed of the devil and the forces of evil. Lurking in the depths of these seemingly cold power politicians is the fear of the end of the American dream. And it is no coincidence that there are signs that the principle of separation of powers could also be eroded in domestic politics with the creeping erosion of civil liberties.

Anyone who wants to understand these “conservative revolutionaries” need only take the trouble to read a good hundred pages of text that are publicly available and accessible via the Internet: first, a summary strategy paper of the world’s supremacist thinkers published during and for the 2000 election campaign; a paper for a future Pax Americana that leaves nothing to be desired in terms of—brutal—explicitness and clarity.¹⁰ And second, the official National Security Memorandum published by the White House on September 17, 2002.¹¹

The conservative strategists’ electoral starting point in 2000 was a critique of what they saw as Clinton’s disjointed and clueless foreign policy after the end of the Cold War. The time for experimentation and fumbling around was over, they said. In their view, Clinton had no vision for America’s future role in the world. The tragedies of the 20th century, they claimed, had amply demonstrated what happens when the U.S. lets things drift and does not take the lead in the world—a clear allusion to U.S. policy in the period between the two world wars. The U.S. had a vital role to play in maintaining peace and security in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

The political consequence of this new definition of America’s place was the demand for a massive rearmament and modernization of the

10 Rebuilding America’s Defenses. Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century. A Report of The Project for the New American Century, September 2000, 76 pages, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>.

11 The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, the White House, Washington D.C., 31 pages, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/200211001-6.html. For an abridged German translation, see: *Internationale Politik* 12 (2002), pp. 113–138. Citations after this translation.

American armed forces, including a reorganization of the Pentagon. This opportunity could also be seized because, for the first time in forty years, there would be a running surplus in the federal budget. While President Clinton had announced that this surplus would be used in the future to expand social security systems, the new strategists saw this as a golden opportunity to finance military spending in the future.

President Bush has followed precisely this master plan in his actual policies. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's public pronouncements, insofar as they do not refer to current situations, are variations on this basic tune, often hymns to the new quality and future global significance of American forces. From the perspective of conservative revolutionaries, the lightning-fast victories against Afghanistan and Iraq are triumphant confirmations of the new strategy.

Another leitmotif of the conservative revolutionaries, even in the early 1990s, was a sharp criticism of the Middle East policies of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. They considered it a strategic mistake of the highest degree not to have toppled Saddam Hussein and his regime when the opportunity to do so had presented itself in 1991 during the first Gulf War. For, in their view, the entire region must be reshaped from the ground up if the U.S. was to secure its strategic interests in the long term, and if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was to be resolved after more than fifty years of unsuccessful crisis diplomacy.

Based on this strategy, which was already formulated in the 1990s, there are good reasons to suspect that the official justification presented to the UN and the world for the attack against Iraq, a threat to the U.S. from weapons of mass destruction, was only a pretext and that the attack must be interpreted as part of an overall strategic plan for a reorganization of the Middle East. The threat analysis concocted by the intelligence agencies had, it seems, the same purpose as Roosevelt's assertions in 1941 that the Nazis wanted to bring Latin America under their control and ultimately attack the United States itself. Once again, the threats to U.S. security and the Western Hemisphere were exaggerated in order to scare the American people (zooming in the enemy).

However, the U.S.' worldwide loss of reputation associated with this possible deception and breach of international law comes up against an administration that not only has the sole power to act, but also feels morally in the right. For while the basic strategic document of 2000 speaks more of power than of mission, President George W. Bush opens the preface to the national security strategy of September 17, 2002, with a manifesto of the natural law-based, civil-religious mission

of freedom, with a motif that runs through the entire document: “The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity. People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children—male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.”¹²

Elsewhere in the document, it says, “Finally, the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe.” “Freedom is the non-negotiable demand of human dignity; the birthright of every person—in every civilization.” “The United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere.”¹³

As is well known, the vast majority of America’s attempts to establish democratic regimes through or after military intervention and to consolidate them in the long term have failed. According to a new study,¹⁴ out of 16 attempts of this kind in the 20th century, only four have been successful, namely in West Germany and Japan, with some cutbacks in the small states of Grenada and Panama. Successful means that ten years after the withdrawal of U.S. troops, democracy still existed. From this perspective, too, the democratization of the old German Federal Republic is one of the greatest success stories of U.S. foreign policy in the 20th century. It is no coincidence that President Bush constantly made comparisons with Germany and Japan in the run-up to the Iraq War. This comparison will almost certainly prove to be false. Iraq, and probably Afghanistan, will add to the long list of failed American attempts to bring freedom to peoples and states by force: Haiti, Cambodia, South Vietnam, the Dominican Republic,

12 Ibid, p. 113.

13 Ibid., p. 114 ff.

14 Minxin Pei/Sara Kasper, *Lessons from the Past. The American Record on Nation Building*, in: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief, 24 May 2003.

Cuba, Nicaragua, and Panama from 1903 to 1996. This assessment is true whether the United States leaves the authority and cost of such an attempt to the UN or goes it alone in “nation building.”

But that will not prevent the USA from trying again and again. For it is in the nature of secular utopia that, like religion, it does not allow its utopian surplus, its core of hope, to be destroyed by bad reality and unpleasant facts. This is also true for America’s civil-religious missionary idea of freedom. The hope for a better future, the belief in a new chance, progress, and the improvement of the human race characterize this sense of mission. Bush, too, belongs to the generations of Americans who interpret the history of their own chosen people as a success story toward ever greater freedom. The Security Memorandum states, “Our own history is a long struggle to live up to our ideals. But even in our worst moments, the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence were there to guide us. As a result, America is not just a stronger, but is a freer and more just society.”

President Bush is obviously deeply convinced that his mission is to universalize these American values. In the memorandum’s programmatic aspiration to expand the zones of free and market states, there is a large, common intersection with the policies of his predecessors, from Woodrow Wilson to Bill Clinton. Unlike his more pragmatic father, who had major problems with “*the vision thing*,” Bush confided to journalist Bob Woodward in a conversation at his ranch in Texas that his greatest desire was to fight for “world peace.” Every person, he said, has the ability to leave the earth better than he found it.¹⁵ Like President Woodrow Wilson or Franklin D. Roosevelt, he would have no trouble applying one of Abraham Lincoln’s famous sayings to a global scale: the world could not be half free and half enslaved. Asked about the discrepancy between ideal and reality, he could, like Roosevelt in 1943, counter his critics who thought the ideals of his “four freedoms” and the Atlantic Charter were nonsensical because unrealizable: If these people had lived 150 years ago, they would have scoffed at the Declaration of Independence, almost a thousand years earlier they would have laughed at the Magna Carta, and several thousand years earlier they would have poured out their derision on Moses when he came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments.¹⁶

15 Bob Woodward, *Bush at War. America at War*, Stuttgart / Munich 2003, p. 374 ff.

16 Detlef Junker, *Franklin D. Roosevelt. Macht und Vision. Präsident in Kriegszeiten*. Göttingen, second Ed. 1989, p. 133 f.

Indeed, George W. Bush has responded similarly to his opponents: “Today, these ideals are a lifeline for the lonely defenders of freedom. When it comes to opening up a society, we can support the changes, as we did in Central and Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991 or in Belgrade in 2000. When we see democratic processes taking root among our friends in Taiwan or the Republic of Korea, and elected politicians replacing generals in Latin America and Africa, we see examples of where authoritarian systems can go when a country’s history and tradition combine with the principles we hold so dear.”¹⁷

It is therefore exceedingly significant how the president wants to unite power and vision in a better future. The goal of his foreign policy, the security memorandum states several times, is “a balance of power that favors freedom.” It is the goal of this strategy, it says, to make the world not just safer but better. Even the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be resolved only on the basis of freedom, he said: “There can be no peace for either side in the Middle East without freedom on both sides.”¹⁸

Embedded in this vision of freedom is the hard political power blueprint of U.S. world supremacy, the future of a state that will act alone, if necessary, without regard to international law, and “preemptively.” “The United States will act preemptively, if necessary, to thwart or forestall such hostile acts by our adversaries.”¹⁹

However, this missionary idea of freedom only gains its power from the fact that Bush not only wants to advance the inner-worldly progress towards more and more freedom, but also proclaims this progress in the name of God. Only this connection makes the idea of freedom a civil-religious mission, makes Bush a freedom warrior in the name of God or God warrior in the name of freedom. He thus stands, as shown in this book, in America’s oldest tradition.²⁰

17 Cf. note 11, p. 117.

18 Ibid, p. 120.

19 Ibid, p. 125.

20 From the endless literature on this subject, see especially: Mark A. Noll, *America’s God. From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, Oxford 2002; Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny. American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*, New York 1995; Michael Adas, *From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon: Interpreting the Exceptionalist Narrative of the American Experience into World History*, in: *American Historical Review* (Dec. 2001), pp. 1692–1720. For further reading, see Knud Krakau, *Exzeptionalismus – Verantwortung – Auftrag. Atlantische Wurzeln und politische Grenzen der demokratischen Mission Amerikas*, in: Alois Mosser (ed.) »Gottes auserwählte Völker«. *Erwählungsvorstellungen und kollektive Selbstfindung in der Geschichte*, Frankfurt / M. 2001, pp. 89–116.

It is by no means, as the German President Johannes Rau suspects, a “grandiose misunderstanding” when President Bush speaks of America’s divine mission, but a core element of American identity. Despite the separation of church and state, the USA is a religious country with an infinite variety of churches and concepts of God.

Depending on one’s perspective, one can consider the civil-religious missionary idea of freedom a particularly successful combination of Christianity and the Enlightenment, deplore it as a sign that the U.S.’ process of secularization is stuck, or, like the pope, countless representatives of Protestant churches, and millions of Christians around the world, condemn the divine justification of American wars as a theological scandal – but the historian’s task is not to judge, but to describe and explain.

For centuries, European visitors to the United States in particular have been continually amazed and struck by the country’s public religion of virtue, a blend of common sense, Protestant theology, and Christian republicanism. At the beginning of the 19th century, for example, a liberal Catholic nobleman from France, Alexis de Tocqueville, marveled: “Protestantism is a democratic doctrine that precedes and facilitates the establishment of social and political equality. Men have, as it were, passed democracy through heaven before they established it on earth.”²¹ A century later, the English writer G. K. Chesterton called America a “nation with the soul of a church.”

President George W. Bush differs from many of his predecessors, including his father, only in the forcefulness with which he speaks the name of God while using it for his political purposes. Bush had a Pauline-like conversion experience in 1986, at the age of 40.²² Since then, he has studied the Bible among his friends and never tires of giving public testimony of his rebirth, which he experienced through the shaking of his soul. This freed him from alcohol and probably saved his marriage. Since this rebirth, he has led a godly, disciplined, healthy, and purposeful life. The son of a prominent father with only moderate success in his studies and career, who could always rely on the financial protection of his influential father’s rich friends in times of crisis, became a successful governor of Texas, then managed to

21 Alexis de Tocqueville, quoted in: Otto Kallscheuer, *Erwachen. Ein nötiger Blick auf die amerikanische Zivilreligion*, in: *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 12.04.2003.

22 A good summary report on this problem is the cover story of *Newsweek* from 10.3.2003: “Bush & God. How Faith Changed His Life and Shapes His Agenda,” pp. 14–21.

become president of the United States and thereby the most powerful man in the world. Bush certainly seems to associate this success with his rebirth.

It can be assumed that President Bush experienced a second, political rebirth on and through September 11. Bush, who came into office semi-legitimately through electoral sloppiness and vote rigging, whose presidency before September 11 remained without impressive contours, suffered from declining approval ratings and—through a defector—from the loss of the Republican majority in the Senate, has now, through the historical fight against terrorism, found his new mission of freedom in the name of God.

His rebirth also proved extraordinarily opportune in terms of domestic politics. It gave him access to the Christian right and to the evangelical revivalist movement, which, starting from the U.S. South, has become a political power in the last 30 years, with its members occupying more and more key positions in Washington. This revival movement can be considered the fourth of its kind in the history of the colonies and the United States. “Awakening and conversion” never remained confined to the private sphere, but each time influenced the American polity and generated a spiritually shaped public sphere. The first revival movement in the 18th century was among the preconditions of the American Revolution; the second revival movement in the early 19th century fed the general democratization of the United States and the energies of the abolitionists, a largely Christian freedom movement against slavery. The third movement proclaimed a “social gospel” that found particular expression in the social policy programs of the New Deal under President Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s.

What the outcome of this fourth revival movement will be is still difficult to predict. What is certain is that soon after his revival, President Bush discovered how politically useful it was for consolidating and broadening his power base and that of the Republicans, first in Texas and then in the United States. In this sense, too, Bush embodies the symbiosis of power and mission. His speeches are peppered with biblical quotations, and there is much prayer in the White House and Cabinet. He supports political demands of faith-based organizations; for example, financial aid for denominational schools. Such a policy is extremely controversial politically and constitutionally, given the separation of church and state.

Methodist George W. Bush, however, does not seem to be among the millions of Americans who, in light of September 11, 2001, are once

again living with an expectation of the end of the world and calling on everyone to repent before it is too late. Nor did he get involved in the debate between the “pre-Millenarians” and the “post-Millenarians” who are fiercely arguing over whether the Millennial Kingdom will be established before or after the Second Coming of Christ. He did, however, stir up a small storm of indignation in 1993 when he told a—Jewish—reporter that only those who believed in Jesus would go to heaven.

What is significant for the world outside the U.S. is that George W. Bush derives strength, determination, a sense of mission, and a certain measure of destiny from his faith. He means what he says when he proclaimed in his January 28, 2003, State of the Union (and the World): “The liberty we prize is not America’s gift to the world; it is God’s gift to humanity.”²³ President Bush, neither a theologian nor an intellectual, neither particularly educated nor particularly proficient in extemporaneous speech in the American language, is a popular president in his country. He is popular with the majority of Americans not only because he acts, shows leadership, and perfectly orchestrates his presidency with the help of media advisors and mass media, but also because he credibly represents the trinity of America: God, country, and freedom. How long this support of the American president by the American people will last and whether he will actually succeed in establishing an American world supremacy for a long time, nobody can predict. For predictions about the future could only be made if there were no more future...

23 The President’s State of the Union Address, Jan. 28, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/20030128-19.html>.

15. Is the USA an Imperial Power?

I

Six months ago, when I had the honor of speaking at Tutzing's other academy about U.S. foreign policy since the First World War, I began my remarks with an insight that I would like to repeat by way of introduction today:

After spending a good eight years in the U.S., five of them at the center of the New Rome, in Washington, D.C., and after several decades of research and teaching on various aspects of the history of the United States, I have come to the conclusion that all substantial books on the U.S. should have at least the same subtitle: *A People of Paradox*.

Let me mention some of these paradoxes that you may have also noticed when thinking about the United States:

- The USA sees itself as the *sweet land of liberty*. Americans are deeply imbued with their missionary idea of freedom; the USA is at the same time the land of slavery, apartheid, and deeply seated racism. Today, racism is politically incorrect, but it persists. It is embedded in the mentality and social structure of the country.
- This paradox had become institutionalized over centuries: The U.S. was and is a constitutional state, but since its founding it also codified slavery and apartheid in law, from *slave codes in the* early days, to discriminatory laws in the southern states of the U.S. that were not abolished until the 1960s by the civil rights movement and Congress.
- Most Americans are convinced that their *land of opportunity* is not a class society. Americans hate socialism like the devil, but of course the country is characterized by social antagonisms and classes.
- The USA is a country that practices a strict, constitutionally enshrined separation of church and state, but at the same time has a society

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that is deeply religious. America's path to modernity has not led to a far-reaching secularization of the country, as it has in several European countries.

- Americans believe in a hard, competitive individualism, which for several decades has been built to a large extent on pump-priming and credit; on the other hand, they own the largest foundations in the world, *charity* and *philanthropy* are part of good manners in society. Simply celebrating festivals without a good cause, especially carnival events or Oktoberfests, is considered completely immoral. I have twice initiated social events as director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C., in cooperation with the German Embassy, but of course only for charitable purposes.
- In the American population, one finds an infinite amount of stupidity and inward-looking provincialism; 60% of Americans, for example, cannot find Mexico on a map. When I drove through the country for the first time in 1970/71 with an imported Volkswagen and, outside of legality, with a customs' license plate, I was asked three times at campsites how long it had taken me to drive the car from Germany. On the other hand, and this paradox already brings us closer to our topic, there is an extraordinarily well-informed and globally thinking elite (in government, in Congress, among lobbyists, in financial institutions, in law firms, in elite universities, and in think tanks) that, since World War II, thinks in global categories as a matter of course and defines the American interest as well as the American missionary idea globally.
- The majority of Americans believe that their country has never waged a war of aggression. They hold on to their missionary idea of peace and freedom and point to having brought the League of Nations and the UN to the world. On the other hand, the U.S. is a warfare state par excellence, a warfare state with unparalleled military resources and weapons systems on land, sea, air, and space—with weapons of a range unprecedented in the entire history of the world.

II

These paradoxes, and this brings me to my second argument, also pervade domestic American controversies about whether the U.S. is, should be, or should not be an imperial power. It began with the first great imperialism debate in 1898, when, after the victory over Spain, a paradox was at stake, namely, whether the U.S., which had just driven the last European colonial power out of the Western hemisphere, should now itself acquire an empire in the Caribbean, the Pacific (Hawaii), and East Asia (the Philippines). It continues with the controversial debate that has been passionately and fiercely waged since 2002, as to whether the openly proclaimed draft of a *Pax Americana* during George W. Bush's first term in office represented the draft of a hegemonic power, a world *primacy*, or even a world domination, a global empire, or, possibly, to use Herfried Münkler's central term of interpretation, the "logic of action" of an empire.

The extent to which this debate on American imperialism is permeated with paradoxes can be seen from the fact that almost no author answers the question about American empire with an unqualified "yes," but rather limits the term "empire" with qualifiers. Something, one might conclude, seems to be different about American imperialism, if it exists, in comparison to the other empires we have known.

In recent years, this topic has become a playground for theorists of empire or imperialism, who investigate the question of whether and in what sense the foreign policy of the "New Rome" can be described as imperial. I have brought you a small list of publications on this topic, including the long subtitles, so that you can already recognize a basic direction of interpretation.

In addition to the rising empire, there is the empire doomed to world power; in the literature there is the overtaxed empire, the decaying empire, and the declining empire; there is the irresistible empire, the indispensable empire, the denied empire, and the informal empire, the empire by invitation, the empire on trial, even the imperial temptation. We read of an impotent empire, an empire of human rights, a democratic empire, or an empire unsure of itself. However, there are also authors who unabashedly consider the United States an empire and simply speak of the *American Empire*.

In the third part of my talk, therefore, I would like to present what I consider to be some typical patterns of argumentation by several authors in order to give you an idea of the heterogeneity and scope of

the American imperialism debate. In the last part of my lecture, I will then not shirk from presenting my own position.

III

I begin with the father of the “New Left,” who remains extraordinarily influential to this day. I begin with William Appleman Williams, whose works¹ present an almost archetypal economic interpretation of the American empire. His interpretation is centered around the market and around society, not the state. It speaks to the importance and the historical impact of Williams that he has just been honored by a special tribute in the latest issue of *Diplomatic History*.

At the center of the New Left’s interpretation are the concepts of economy, expansion, and empire. Williams has formulated their basic pattern in numerous books, essays, and source editions. According to him, the U.S. has been an expansive and imperial power since its founding and still is. Until the Civil War, this expansion meant land grabs at the expense of the three old European colonial powers on the North American continent, namely England, France, and Spain, and at the expense of Mexico and the Native Americans. After the Civil War, the Industrial Revolution, and the official end of the open frontier on the North American continent, this expansion underwent a change in form and meaning. In this interpretation, American foreign policy has, since then, been and still is essentially a reflex of the liberal-capitalist economic system of the USA, which is based on external expansion out of internal economic necessity; a necessity that has always been congenially recognized by the country’s decision-making elite in foreign policy.

This systemic compulsion is expressed in the incessant attempt to establish a global *Pax Americana* adapted to the trade and capital needs of this economy and to preserve it against all revolutionary movements, if necessary, by force. “*Empire is as American as apple pie*,” as Williams once put it. In this interpretation, the liberal demands of the U.S. for unhindered access to world markets, for the Open Door, for equal opportunities and equal treatment in foreign markets are formal postulates that were intended to serve, and have served, the

1 The best known is William Appleman Williams: *Die Tragödie der amerikanischen Diplomatie* (The Tragedy of American Diplomacy), Frankfurt a. M. 1973.

construction of an “*informal empire*” under the pretense of equality and justice, with the U.S. ruling de facto on the basis of its superior economic power. *Cuius oeconomia, eius regio*.

The trade policy tools of this strategy are, on the one hand, the permanent fight against protective tariffs and regional preferential tariff systems (with others), against trade policy bilateralism, autarkism, and protectionism, against bilateral clearing agreements and exchange controls, and, since 1923, also against, to a certain extent, the most-favored-nation clause in trade agreements, and, on the other hand, the constant demand for free exchange of goods and commodities, for free access to the world’s raw materials, and for freedom of investment.

A not inconsiderable number of historians who follow Williams’ explanatory pattern and/or see it confirmed by their own research have taken up the theme of counterrevolutionary and imperial America with deliberately system-critical intent and have rewritten the entire American foreign policy in this sense, *turning the Great American Success Story upside down*. Anyone who takes enough time to read revisionist authors can see this imperial America, thus defined, at work throughout the country’s history.

The transition from this economic imperialism thesis to other imperialist critics, who argue more politically and morally, is fluid. The essence of these critiques usually boils down to a twofold finding: the American empire is destroying its own republic at home and the reputation of the United States throughout the world. One of the most significant critics along these lines is Chalmers Johnson in his book *The Suicide of American Democracy*.²

Johnson is a political scientist born in 1931 who completed his book “in the Ides of March 2003.” For him, George W. Bush’s administration is only the culmination of a long history of American decay. Parallel to the rise of the United States as a superpower in the 20th century, he says, there has been a perversion of American democracy, which is now heading for its “*suicide*.” The “*boy emperor*” Bush is driving his country into imperialism and militarism through his preemptive wars, true to the motto of the Roman emperor Caligula: “*Let them hate me, as long as they fear me*”; also in accordance with a literal interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew: “*He who is not with me; is against me.*” Among the woes of American society under Bush, according to Johnson, are

2 Chalmers Johnson: Der Selbstmord der amerikanischen Demokratie. (Aus d. Amerik. v. Hans Freundl u. Thomas Pfeiffer), Munich 2003.

the abdication of Congress, propaganda and disinformation, the loss of civil liberties, and the impending financial bankruptcy of the country. Johnson, in the good American tradition, concludes his jeremiad with a last-minute call to repentance.

The list of books criticizing Bush's imperial policies on the grounds of foreign policy is very long. I consider Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke's book *America Alone, to be a* particularly successful, fundamental critique of the neoconservative re-establishment of a *Pax Americana*.³

If, according to the two authors, the neoconservatives had neither a Cardinal Ratzinger nor a Marshal Suslow, neither a Curia nor a Politburo, neither a Bible nor a Koran nor a Torah, there were nevertheless common basic ideological assumptions of the neoconservative movement. The overriding goal of the neoconservatives, who might better be called "conservative revolutionaries," was to establish an unrivaled *Pax Americana* for the 21st century, with the aim of systematically expanding the zones of liberal and free-market capitalist systems in the world. The United States, the neoconservatives argued, must therefore indefinitely determine the structures of the world in a pro-American sense. The primary goal of this strategy in the military sense, they said, was to make the United States as secure as possible against any attack, while at the same time leaving any part of the world open to American intervention.

Hand in hand with this militarization, according to another leitmotif of the two authors, goes the unilateralization of Washington's global policy. In the eyes of the neoconservatives, America is strong enough on its own ("*America Alone*"). They would not dream of renouncing the central element of the modern state as it has evolved since the 17th century: national sovereignty, embodied in autonomy from outside forces, political self-determination, and the ability to act unilaterally.

A very different strategy of argumentation is chosen by a slightly eccentric but extraordinarily productive and stimulating Briton, namely Niall Ferguson in his book *The Denied Empire*.⁴

His main thesis is threefold—relating to the past, present, and future of the American empire – and is as pointed as it is British: Contrary to their self-assessment, Americans have been imperialist since the

3 Stefan Halper, Jonathan Clarke: *America Alone. The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*, Cambridge 2004.

4 Niall Ferguson: *Das verleugnete Imperium. Chancen und Risiken amerikanischer Macht.* (Aus d. Engl. v. Klaus D. Schmidt), Berlin 2004.

founding of the Union in 1776; it is pointless to try to deny this (thesis 1). But if Americans wanted to be successful imperialists in the long run, they would have to make an ego change and become like the British were at the height of their world dominance (thesis 2). Otherwise, the American empire could soon prove to have feet of clay (thesis 3).

The book is thus backward-looking prophecy in its purest form. One could even imagine British Prime Minister Blair filling President Bush's head with similar ideas at the White House before the attack on Iraq. Ferguson is not lacking in self-awareness in other ways either. In the book's nearly 450 pages, he says he wants to compare the American empire with earlier empires, *considering "other conceivable courses of history as well as possible future developments."*

What did the British imperialists have, according to Ferguson, that the Americans did not have? Despite the incomparable military and economic strength of the—by Ferguson's count—68th empire in the history of the world, the Americans lacked the necessary self-confidence for an imperial policy; they lacked the "imperial mindset." They would finally have to stop denying what they have always been. Moreover, the U.S. political system is too fixated on the moment and the next election campaign; Americans basically act within a "narrow time horizon." As a result, he said, they have repeatedly squandered opportunities to stabilize foreign policy successes.

Moreover, unfortunately, and Ferguson shares this view with the terrorists, Americans were too afraid of death. They hoped for long life and feared early death on the battlefield. Finally, the clay foot of the "*disavowed empire*" was Washington's health and welfare system facing financial death. This book was written before 09/15, before September 15, 2008, the beginning of the global financial crisis, otherwise he would most certainly have brought the dwindling economic foundation of the American empire into the field as well.

Ferguson's action-oriented book is intended to help Americans become better imperialists, but the kind of imperialists that the British were at the height of their world dominance, namely "*liberal imperialists*" who brought to the world such vital "*public goods*" as freedom, a liberal world market, and functioning institutions in the colonies with responsible indigenous elites under British control. Ferguson leaves no doubt that he is fundamentally favorable to such liberal imperialism on the part of the United States. The contemporary world, he argues, also needs these public goods. Only the Americans, if they wanted to, would have the power to provide them for the world.

Fourthly, and finally, I would like to mention a German, the editor of *Die Zeit*, Josef Joffe, who in his book *Überpower. The Imperial Temptation*⁵ basically agrees with Ferguson that the current world needs the U.S. as a stabilizing “linchpin.”

The core analysis of this text, in which analysis and instructions for action, is and ought, flow together, is clear and unambiguous: Despite all criticism of the imperial temptation and the monumental mistakes of the George W. Bush administration, for Joffe, the United States alone is capable of creating a minimum of stability and order for a free-market world. Washington is the “linchpin” of the world. No other power or combination of states had the potential to provide this added value for the world system. Europe is in every respect out of its depth for such a task. All it has to offer is the arrogance of impotence and an anti-Americanism that creates identity.

But in order to actually generate this added value of “public goods” in the coming decades, the Americans, according to Joffe, would have to distance themselves from the illusion of unipolar *superpower*, their imperial temptation, and regain the legitimacy gambled away worldwide by the Bush administration. While they did not need the world’s permission to act, they did need its support to succeed. Joffe advises Washington to return to the benevolent hegemon policy of the Cold War era, to enlightened self-interest that is enlightened because it takes into account, as far as it can, the interests of others and the world at large. From the perspective of Joffe and others, President Obama is rhetorically and programmatically doing just that. The big question, of course, is whether he can carry through this vision of a benevolent hegemon in the face of enormous domestic and foreign policy opposition.

IV

This brings me to the fourth part of my talk, my own position on whether the U.S. is an imperial power.

Yes, the U.S. can be called an imperial power with good reason, despite the paradoxes in the imperialism debate and against the self-image of the American people. For almost all Americans rebel against such a self-designation. For political, cultural, and socio-psychological

5 Josef Joffe: *Überpower. The Imperial Temptation of America*, New York 2006.

reasons, no U.S. government can openly profess “imperialism.” The will to shape the world is almost always described by the term *leadership*.

Even George W. Bush told American war veterans in 2002 that the U.S. was not seeking to build an empire, that it was committed solely to freedom “for ourselves and for others.” And President Obama, in a brilliant speech to the UN a few days ago, deliberately echoed the American founding father of the UN, President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He tied the U.S. national interest into the collective action logic of the UN. Let me quote: “[...] *like all of you, my responsibility is to act in the interest of my nation and my people and I will never apologize for defending these interests. But it is my deeply held belief that in the year 2009—more than at any point in human history—the interests of nations and peoples are shared.*”⁶

His speech was a call for the world to work together to meet the four great challenges of the present: nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, peace and security, saving our planet through the wise use of resources, and mastering the economic and financial crisis. At the same time, however, and here we have another American paradox, at one point in his speech he broke out of the rhetoric of equal rights and equal responsibility by referring to American leadership: “Every nation must know: America will live its values and will lead by example.”⁷

In his speech in Cairo, on June 4, 2009, Obama had become even more passionate in his rejection of the imperialism accusation: “*America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire. The United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known. We were born out of a revolution against an empire. We were founded upon the ideal that all are created equal and we have shed blood and struggled for centuries to give meaning to those words—within our borders and around the world.*”⁸

So why is the USA—from my perspective—still an imperial power? I would like to name two main reasons for this; we can discuss possible further causes later.

6 Barack Obama, Obama’s Speech to the United Nations General Assembly. September 23, 2009. Transcript. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/24/us/politics/24prexy.text.html>.

7 Ibid.

8 Barack Obama, Obama’s Speech in Cairo. in: The New York Times, June 4th, 2009. Transcript. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/us/politics/04obama.text.html?page>.

The Global Expansion of U.S. National Interest

Let me expand a little on the history of this. Since the Age of Discoveries, the rival great European powers have extended their influence over the whole world, exercising hegemony and domination. This Eurocentric world system gradually disintegrated at the beginning of the 20th century, essentially because the New World took the place of the Old. Through the expulsion of the last European colonial power from the Western Hemisphere in the Spanish-American War of 1898, through the victories in World War I, World War II, and the Cold War, the liberal, capitalist, and free-market social model of the United States has prevailed in the industrialized world of the West.

In this sense, we can call the 20th century the American century. For this has been the overriding but only apparently self-evident feature of U.S. foreign policy since its entry into World War II: the globalization of the U.S. foreign policy scope of activity, which in turn is rooted in the globalization of American interests and values. This globalization is the most important cause of the qualitative leap of the U.S. from a world power among other world powers to the superpower of the Cold War and the nuclear age. Globalization means that, for the USA, in principle, the future of the whole world, especially of the Eurasian double continent, including the Middle East, was and is of potentially vital importance; and for their vital interests the Americans will go to war if necessary. Not only the Second World War, not only the Cold World War, but also the present fight of the USA against terrorism cannot be explained without this American globalism. One can say that this globalism is America's unique selling point compared to all other empires in world history. Never before has there been a global power in the literal sense.

President F. D. Roosevelt formulated, as it were, the leitmotif of the 20th century *Pax Americana* on January 21, 1941, when he wrote to U.S. Ambassador Grew in Japan: *"I believe the fundamental task is to recognize that the struggles in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia are all parts of a single world conflict. We must therefore recognize that our interests are threatened in Europe and in Asia. We are committed to the task of defending our way of life and our vital interests wherever they are seriously threatened. Our strategy of self-defense, taking into account every front and seizing every opportunity to contribute to our total security, must therefore be global."*⁹

9 Joseph C. Grew: *Ten Years in Japan*, New York 1941, p. 354 f.

In substance, President George W. Bush has said the same thing over and over again since he took office in 2000. It is precisely no coincidence that this globalism is the essence of all U.S. strategic plans and security memoranda from 1941 to the present: From *ABC 1*, *Rainbow 5*, and the *Victory Program of 1941*, which formulated a military concept of defense, war, and victory, a kind of global forward defense in which the distinction between defensive and offensive in the *geographic* sense was blurred beyond recognition, to Memorandum *NSC 68 of 1950*, the founding strategic document of the Cold War, to the National Intelligence Council's Global Strategic Situation Assessment "*Global Trends 2015*" of 2000. This globalization is rooted in the internal conditions of the United States, the strength and flexibility of its institutions, the economic, cultural, and military importance of the country, but also in the Manichaeism of American civil religion. I will talk about this in a moment.

But this globalization of the scope of U.S. foreign policy activity also grew out of the increasing interdependence of world politics itself, including as a reaction to the foreign policies of U.S. enemies and allies, especially out of the, often exaggerated, threat perceptions that the deeds and ideologies of other states and societies evoked in the minds of Americans and their policymakers.

Within this American globalism, one can distinguish three major objectives, which, however, were not always equally balanced: First, the indivisible, liberal-capitalist world market. Second, indivisible security, that is, the maintenance of a pro-American balance in the world and the prevention of hostile hegemonic powers on the Eurasian double continent that could endanger the long-term security of the Western Hemisphere, the sanctuary of the United States. The attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon also caused a deep shock because it undermined the supreme goal of American security policy since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. Third, and *last but not least*, indivisible freedom, that is, the worldwide imperative to promote, demand, and support democracy and representative governments resulting from free elections whenever possible.

As already indicated, these global objectives of the United States were dialectically connected with global threat scenarios: in the case of National Socialism, with the assumption that Hitler and Germany wanted to conquer the whole world; in the case of the Cold War, with the subjective certainty that communism, first in Europe and Asia, and after the globalization of Soviet foreign policy in the Khrushchev

era, also in the Middle East, in Africa, and in Latin America, would endanger all three indivisibilities. International terrorism is perceived as a new global threat.

Moreover, this imperial power has the ability to forge global coalitions of different governments and systems when necessary. “*One war at a time*,” President Lincoln had already proclaimed when the possibility of conflict with England loomed in the midst of the Civil War. Against Italian fascism, German National Socialism, and Japanese imperialism, the Americans brought together a *strange alliance*. They cooperated with the National Chinese dictator Chiang-Kai-shek and the Soviet dictator Stalin, whose rule was built on the principle of terror.

After 1945, there was a stunning reversal of American “demonology”: the evil Germans, good Russians, evil Japanese, and good Chinese of World War II became the good West Germans, evil Russians, good Japanese, and evil Chinese of the Cold War. As the Cold War globalized, the U.S. supported Third World regimes and dictators when they only pretended to be anti-communist and pro-American, including Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein, and the Taliban.

After September 11, 2001, the U.S. had again succeeded in forming a global coalition, but it split after the attack on Iraq. From a European perspective, however, something crucial has changed. While the first two grand coalitions were also formed to preserve Europe’s freedom, the pacified, European nation-states now come to the aid of the U.S. as marginalized auxiliary nations within the framework of a marginalized NATO. There is much to be said for the American interpretation of the 20th century: from their perspective, they saved Europe’s freedom, liberated the Old World from the evils of Wilhelmism, fascism, Nazism, and communism in World War I, World War II, and the Cold War.

They were directly or indirectly involved in the downfall of European colonial empires or expansive empires in Europe. The collapse of the Soviet empire is seen by many strategists as the endpoint of a development in world history that began with the breakup of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, continued with the breakup of German’s Third Reich and Italy’s colonial empire in World War II, and ended after World War II with the painful dissolution of the empires of Great Britain and France. In addition, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands also had to part with the remnants of their empires.

One may venture the thesis: Only because the classical European nations—with strong American support—were trimmed back to their

core countries and thus marginalized in world history, were they able to start the project of the European Union in the West and, after 1990/91, to push it forward to Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Southeastern Europe, thus carrying out the simultaneous widening and deepening of the European Union. The eternal struggle of European nations for influence, status, and prestige is now played out by peaceful means within the European Union. The Americans are the midwife of Europe.

This U.S. globalism, as already indicated, has produced a global American military power since World War II – a power that today devours over 45% of the world's military spending; is protected domestically by an alliance of the military, the defense industry, and Congress; has over a thousand (a thousand!), partly-secret bases around the globe; can pulverize any point on earth in 20 minutes. It was given the mission after the Cold War to defend a *Pax Americana* against any combination of possible opponents for the foreseeable future and to prevent a regional hegemon in any continent from endangering this global leadership role.

The visible armed forces of the USA at sea, on land, in the air, and in space are supplemented by an invisible secret service empire, which collects information everywhere in the world with almost all means, everywhere sees, listens, and reads, possibly also here in Tutzing (*Hi there!*). A jokester has suggested to add to the state motto: "*In God we trust—all others we monitor.*"

I will not talk today about America's cultural influence in the world, its *soft power*, nor about its economic influence, the decline of which is once again predicted, as it so often has been in the past. I would just like to remind you that in 2009 the share of the USA in the world gross domestic product is 23.5%, Japan's 8.1%, China's 7.3%, Germany's 6.0%, and Russia's 2.8%.

Only an effective and united Europe could become a serious competitor. The European Union accounts for 30.3 % of the world's gross domestic product. There will be no Asian Union in the foreseeable future.

This brings me to my second main argument, my second rationale for why I think the U.S. is an imperial power.

The Civil-Religious, Divinely Legitimized Missionary Idea of Freedom

The piety deeply rooted in the history and structure of American society is also the reason why God is a central element of the national, American civil religion. At the core of this civil religion is the American trinity of God, country, and freedom. This sense-making and community-building creed, this *American creed*, holds together a fragmented and disparate society. Since the American Revolution, a fusion of Christianity and the Enlightenment, of Christianity and the democratic liberal mission, has produced America's distinctive civil religion, a distinctive blend of Christian republicanism and democratic liberal faith. America, it has been said, is a nation with the soul of a church. The American nation had no ideology; it was one.

The American culture of remembrance and the politics of its history, its national holidays and rituals, and especially presidential speeches are centered around the world of ideas and symbols of the American civil religion with a general, non-specific concept of God. The American national motto, *In God we trust*, which also embosses the back of every dollar bill, or the wording in the Pledge of Allegiance, *A nation under God*, represent almost all Americans. Terms such as *divine plan*, *providence*, *creator*, *almighty God*, or *heavenly Father* are an integral part of civil religious rhetoric.

During my time in Washington, I once managed to get a place on the Capitol steps for the 4th of July. I wanted to witness several hundred thousand Americans of European, African, Asian, and Latin American descent celebrate their National Day of Independence. I was impressed by a peculiar mixture of love of country, Hollywood, Coca-Cola, and popcorn; of praise for America's great past and the hopeful certainty that the world's only remaining superpower would continue to have a special mission to fulfill in the next millennium. I wanted to learn how these hundreds of thousands, surrounded by patriotic shrines such as the Washington Monument, the Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt Memorials, honor in song and hymn the American trinity of God, country, and freedom; how this nation of immigrants, all of whom had emigrated to the New World from somewhere at some time, always reconstitutes itself on such feast days, giving permanence and a future to its founding myth of the "*sweet land of liberty*."

The debate about America's special mission of freedom, its relationship to God, providence and history has been going on since the

first settlers arrived around 400 years ago. This ongoing discourse, as we would say today, about the special mission of the United States, its uniqueness and chosenness, is itself part of the core of American identity. That is why it has been said that if you scratch an American long enough, the *redeemer* will emerge.

This civil-religious missionary idea of freedom has enabled Americans to justify all wars and military interventions in their history, from the Indian Wars to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as just war, as *bellum iustum*. This is exactly what President Obama did again during the speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. There is evil in the world that must be fought if necessary.

Herfried Münkler has rightly recalled an old insight that all empires have an ideology of peace, and in the case of the United States, an ideology of freedom.

Setbacks and defeats have never prevented Americans from bidding farewell to this missionary idea. As is well known, the vast majority of American attempts to establish democratic regimes through or after military interventions and to consolidate them in the long term have failed. According to one study of 16 such attempts in the 20th century, only four to five, in West Germany, Japan, and South Korea, with some prototypes in the small states of Grenada and Panama, have been successful. Successful means that ten years after the withdrawal of U.S. troops, democracy still existed. From this perspective, too, the democratization of the old Federal Republic is one of the greatest success stories of U.S. foreign policy in the 20th century. It is no coincidence that President Bush constantly made comparisons with Germany and Japan in the run-up to the Iraq War.

This comparison will almost certainly prove false. Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, will add to the long list of failed American attempts to bring freedom to peoples and states by force: South Vietnam, Cambodia, Haiti, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

But that will not prevent the USA from trying again and again. For it is part of the essence of secular utopia that, like religion, it does not allow its utopian surplus, its core of hope, to be destroyed by bad reality and sorry facts.

This also applies to America's civil-religious missionary idea of freedom. The hope for a better future, the belief in a new chance, progress, and the improvement of the human race characterize this sense of mission. George W. Bush also belongs to the generations of Americans who interpret the history of their own chosen people as a success story

toward ever more freedom. He by no means is outside of the American historical tradition in this respect; there are large, common intersections with his predecessors, from Woodrow Wilson to Bill Clinton and to his successor, Barack Obama. President Obama again faces the great American paradox of how to combine America's global interests and claim to global American leadership with America's missionary idea of freedom and with its multilateral rhetoric of global cooperation.

16. Obama, Trump, the Decline of an Imperial Democracy and U.S.-German Relations 2009–2021. An Essay

Pride comes before a fall. This proverbial wisdom applies in everyday life as well as in world history. A hybrid loss of reality therefore plays a decisive role in the fall of great empires. Usually, this loss of reality is causally intertwined with the internal crises of an empire and its growing number of enemies. Climate change and epidemics can accelerate this decline. The *locus classicus* in Western history is the fall of the Roman Empire; the well-educated founding fathers of the United States already knew this. Therefore, the construction of the Constitution was to be a negation of the past. Under no circumstances should the future American empire meet the fate of the Roman Republic; a new “Caesarism” should be prevented by the system of *checks and balances*.¹

Today we are contemporaries of the decline of the leading Western power, the United States of America. The whole world is looking spellbound at the crisis of the imperial Pax Americana, which President George W. Bush wanted to establish in response to the Islamist terrorist attack on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001.² The U.S. remains probably the most influential nation-state in the increasingly multipolar world of today, but it is no longer a world leader, far removed from Bush’s vision of world domination.

1 On the history of interpretation of the fall of the Roman Empire from Augustine to the present, cf. Alexander Demandt, *Zur Interpretationsgeschichte des Untergangs des Römischen Reiches von Augustinus bis zur Gegenwart* cf. Alexander Demandt, *Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt*, München 2014. On climate change, cf. Kyle Harper, *Fatum. Das Klima und der Untergang des Römischen Reiches*, München 2017. On the perception of the Constitutional Fathers, cf. Thomas E. Ricks, *First Principles. What America’s Founders Learned from the Greeks and Romans and How That Shaped Our Country*, 202; Alexander Demandt, *Die klassische Antike in Amerika*, in: Philipp Gassert, Detlef Junker, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Thunert (eds.), *Was Amerika ausmacht. Multidisziplinäre Perspektiven*, Stuttgart 2009, pp. 33–46. On the crisis of the Pax Americana, cf. Heinrich August Winkler, *Zerbricht Der Westen? Über die gegenwärtige Krise in Europa und Amerika*, München 2017. On the prehistory of the crisis and Germany’s “long march west,” cf. his *Geschichte des Westens*. vol. 1, *Von den Anfängen in der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, München 2016. vol. 2, *Die Zeit der Weltkriege*, München 2016.

2 See chapters 14 and 15 in this volume.

This historical decline, which already began during the term of George W. Bush, could not be stopped by the great hope-inspiring figure of President Barack Obama and accelerated with breathtaking speed under the presidency of the “great disrupter” Donald Trump. Whether the election winner Joe Biden can at least partially reverse this historical trend is an open question.

In parallel and in causal connection with the loss of the world leadership role and an American population weary of world-politics, the political and social system of this liberal republic is gradually breaking down, as America falls apart under the increasing pressure of a race, class, and caste society. More importantly, the American idea of freedom, which has given the American people a sense of themselves, i.e., an identity for more than 200 years, is increasingly losing credibility and persuasiveness in the USA and the world. The victory in the competition between the systems of the Cold War has faded, and the old joke about the difference between socialism and capitalism is visibly gaining in reality: “What is the difference between socialism and capitalism? In Socialism you socialize the economy and then you ruin it. In Capitalism you ruin the economy and then you socialize it.”

The decline of the leading power of the transatlantic West poses existential problems for Europe and Germany. In the global reach of U.S. interests, Germany played only a minor role even before Trump’s term in office. It is an open question whether the Federal Republic will be able to maintain its interests and its political way of life—representative democracy, the rule of law, and the social market economy—without military, economic, and spiritual support from the New World.

President Barack Obama (2009–2017)

This outlook for the future is fundamentally different from the hopes at the beginning of President Barack Obama’s time in office ... twelve years ago. The young, charismatic, educated, and astute black president with washboard abs, whose speeches enchanted not only Americans but especially Germans, promised the American people new hope and profound change (*hope and change*). “Yes, we can” Obama assured the American people, who were deeply dissatisfied with the policies of outgoing President George W. Bush. Bush’s approval ratings had fallen to 25 percent, the lowest ever recorded for an American president. When a “redneck,” a poor white farm worker, declared on camera, “this

time I am going to vote for the nigger,” there was even hope that the black president would, if not eliminate, at least significantly reduce the deep-seated racism in the United States, the country’s original sin.

The 48-year-old president had an unusual educational and professional history, which he himself considered so significant that he spent long nights writing his own autobiography at the age of 34.³

This first autobiography initially sold very poorly. That changed overnight when Barack Obama, then an Illinois state senator at the Capitol in Washington, was invited by presidential candidate John Kerry to deliver the “keynote address” at the Democratic convention in Boston on July 27, 2004. He had prepared for this good 20 minutes for weeks. He presented it by heart and with great rhetorical persuasiveness.⁴ The reactions of the audience and television viewers were enthusiastic. A media superstar was born. Rumors that people had just witnessed the next president spread like wildfire. Circulation of the autobiography exploded. The sales success dispelled the financial worries of the couple Michelle and Barack Obama. They were able to pay off their student debt and afford a condo for the first time. In the meantime, the Obama couple earned triple digit millions from their memoirs and paid speeches. They have entered show business and cater to the mass market.

At the latest with this speech at the party convention, Obama had an experience that shaped his politics, namely that he was able to inspire people from all social and educational backgrounds with his speeches. He always prepared his speeches himself in collaboration with his speechwriters.⁵ He combined political substance and hopeful rhetoric (“Yes, we can!”) in a way that was as elegant as it was sophisticated; he made confident use of the idealistic and value-laden commonplaces of the American tradition, which for him had universal validity. On the other hand, he did not shy away from accusingly describing the brutal reality of his country. When the “magic” of the beginning led to the “disenchantment”⁶ of Obama due to the president’s enormous,

3 Cf. Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father. A Story of Race and Inheritance*, New York 1994, here quoted from the 2004 edition [dt. *Ein amerikanischer Traum. Die Geschichte meiner Familie*, München 2008].

4 Cf. Michelle Obama, *Becoming*, New York 2019, pp. 214–216.

5 Cf. Ben Rhodes, *Im Weißen Haus. Die Jahre mit Barack Obama*, München 2019.

6 Cf. Tobias Endler, Martin Thunert, *Disenchantment. Skizzen und Anmerkungen zu der USA in der Ära Obama*, Opladen, Berlin, Toronto 2016. An early testimony to the enchantment is an anthology of the weekly newspaper “Die ZEIT”: Patrick Schwarz, *Obamas Amerika. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, Hamburg 2011.

but still limited power in the U.S. constitutional system, as well as the realities of U.S. domestic and world politics, the accusation was made that he was naive and too idealistic in believing that he could change the U.S. and the world with his speeches (“speechifying the world”).

How had he said it in his autobiography? “If I could only find the right words—almost everything could change: South Africa, the lives of children in the ghettos just a few miles from here, my own fragile position in the world.”⁷ The 48-year-old president had undergone not only an inner educational path, but an extraordinary formal educational path, driven by a search for his own identity as a person of color, as a black and white American, and a renewed mission for the United States that recommitted itself to the promises of the Founding Fathers. The son of a black Kenyan and a white American, he grew up in Hawaii and Indonesia. Then he won a scholarship to a college in California, studied political science in New York at Columbia University, worked a year for a consulting firm and three years as a community outreach director in a black ghetto of Chicago. He experienced more misery and decay there than in Indonesia or Hawaii. He became a devout Christian in a black and white church. In 1988, he received a scholarship to Harvard Law School, became the first black to serve as president of the prestigious student-published *Harvard Law Review*. This is a position of high national prestige that usually opens all doors. He graduated magna cum laude, went back to the black South Side of Chicago as a social worker (*community advisor*) despite tempting offers from law firms, married lawyer Michelle Robinson in 1992, became a civil rights lawyer in Chicago for three years, as well as a lecturer in constitutional law at the University of Chicago from 1993 to 2004.

Eventually, the ambitious and mission-minded Obama plunged into politics against his wife’s continued opposition; beginning in 1996, he won a seat for Chicago in the Illinois Senate, which he held until 2004. His attempt to move into the U.S. House of Representatives in 2000 failed. But in 2004, he moved into the Senate in Washington as an Illinois representative, then the only person of color. During those years, he learned one thing above all: You have to be able to compromise in politics. Because of this history, the great existential tension of his personal existence and his presidency, the tension between ideal and reality, between theory and practice, between what is and what ought to be, was inherent in his long journey to himself. That he was

7 Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, p. 106.

able to endure these tensions made him a “political wunderkind” in the eyes of his wife.⁸

Obama’s speeches are interpreted a little more precisely because in them the core of his democratic mission for the world is revealed; because the contradiction between ideal and reality became a main argument for the “disenchantment” with him; and, last but not least, because the “late love” between Obama and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel grew out of the ideals they shared, despite all the conflicts on economic and security issues. Equipped with the lawyer’s passion for the precise concept and the right word, in possession of an excellent memory and concentrated creative power, in good physical shape through playing basketball and morning fitness training, Obama studied the history and current state of world interpretations, especially the history of the United States.

His search for a vision for a better world was in the best American tradition, for example, of President Abraham Lincoln or civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. He traced his vision for a better America back to the founding of the nation itself. For Obama, it also came down to finally making good on the promises, whose origins were in 18th-century, of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that had been canonized in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. His rise, founded on his mother’s painstaking attention to his education, his extraordinary diligence, great talent, and multiple scholarships, meant that Obama’s own “dream” stood out to the American people as a shining example of the American dream, even to those who never had such an opportunity.⁹

Three traditions in particular shaped him: the history of American democracy, the philosophical tradition of American pragmatism, and the deep and hard controversies during the 1970s and 1980s at the country’s universities.¹⁰ Major European classics were also on his reading list, including Augustine, Pierre Bourdieu, Edmund Burke, Emil Durkheim, Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Friedrich Hayek, Thomas Hobbes, Karl Marx, Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville, and

8 Michelle Obama, *Becoming*, p. 284.

9 It is possible that he thereby embodies the “tyranny of meritocracy” and drove ordinary people into Trump’s populist camp. Cf. Michael J. Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit. What’s Become of the Common Good*, New York 2020.

10 On his intellectual biography, see James T. Kloppenberg, *Reading Obama. Dreams, Hope, and the American Political Tradition*, Princeton 2011. See also David Remnick, *The Bridge. The Life and Rise of Barack Obama*, New York 2010.

Max Weber.¹¹ Obama was strongly impressed by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who came from a American-German pastorate. His book, *The Irony of American History*, is one of the most influential books for Christian realists in the United States. Niebuhr affirmed Obama's belief in Martin Luther King's sacred formula: "Love without power is a sentimentality. Power without love is dangerous. Love plus power is justice."¹²

Especially in his speech to 215,000 enthusiastic people in Berlin on July 24, 2008, and his inaugural address to the U.S. Congress on January 21, 2009, he formulated his visions to the U.S. and the world for a new beginning in global politics. He confronted the main foreign policy problem of his presidency, the age-old dialectic of war and peace, in an unusual way in Oslo on December 10, 2009. Having unexpectedly been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize—as an advance for future peace initiatives, as it were—his acceptance speech addressed an equally old problem, the problem of just war. After all, he had inherited from President Bush two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the global war on terrorism, and the loss of prestige of the United States due to the torture practices of the U.S. intelligence services.

Berlin was the Democratic presidential candidate's first stop on a global campaign tour that also took him to Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Israel, the West Bank, France, and Great Britain. America, he asserted, had no better partner than Europe.¹³ The new bridges for the world should be reminiscent of the bridges across the Atlantic. The joint struggle for freedom of Berlin and the Federal Republic was an example of decades of transatlantic cooperation. In our time, all problems were so intertwined that no nation could solve them alone. Then came a long list of the problems he wanted to tackle during his presidency: Terror had to be stopped and the sources of extremism had to be dried up. It was therefore necessary to ensure that NATO's first mission outside Europe in Afghanistan was a success. One must also stick to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, secure unprotected nuclear material, prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and reduce the nuclear material of a bygone age. Europe must seek its own security and welfare, while at the same time cooperating with Russia. Iran must

11 Kloppenberg, pp. 1–85.

12 Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History*, Chicago 1952; reprinted 2008 with an introduction by Andrew J. Bacevich.

13 *The New York Times*, Obama's Speech in Berlin, July 24, 2008. Transcript, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/us/politics/24text-obama.html> (Dec. 7, 2020).

give up its nuclear ambitions, Lebanon must be helped; Israel and the Palestinians must be supported in finding a lasting and social peace. Once the war in Iraq had come to an end and a new Iraqi government had taken over, life would have to be rebuilt for millions of Iraqis. He also commented on global problems. The time had come to work together to save the planet by reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Since we lived in a globalized world, we must also think about the forgotten corners of the planet where people lacked food and shelter and were denied human rights.

In preparing the Berlin speech, his speechwriters had come up with a German term to crown his message of world interdependence: *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*. But they found out on the eve of the speech that Hitler had used the word “*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*” prominently in a Berlin speech. Obama then reworked the ending himself at the last minute, as he could already imagine the headline in front of him: “Obama links to Hitler in Berlin speech.”¹⁴

Obama, who had promised hope and change during the campaign, began his inaugural address on Jan. 21, 2009,¹⁵ with the classic overture of any newly elected president: The nation, he said, was in the midst of a crisis. It was at war against a far-flung network (of terrorists) of hate and violence. The economy was badly damaged (by the great banking and financial crisis), a consequence of the greed of some, but also of a collective failure to make tough decisions and prepare the nation for a new era: Homes had been lost, jobs destroyed, and businesses closed. Moreover, every day proved that America was using energy in ways that empowered its enemies and endangered the planet. The country was suffering from an undermining of self-confidence, from a gnawing fear that the decline of the United States was inevitable, and that the next generation would have to roll back its expectations.

But America would rise to the challenge; America must be renewed. Then followed a list of the problems that the country must tackle. Obama was particularly forceful in addressing the fundamental problems of the American economy and society, which has been a concern of all countries in the world since the technical-industrial revolution: What should be regulated by the state, what should be regulated by the market? He attacked the basic convictions of the Republicans, who had

14 Rhodes, *In the White House*, p. 56.

15 See Barack Obama, *Inaugural Address*, Jan. 21, 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address> (July 21, 2021).

systematically tried to destroy the legacy of Roosevelt and the state-interventionist New Deal since the time of President Ronald Reagan.¹⁶

The question, Obama said, was not whether government was too big or too small, but whether it worked: whether it helped families find jobs at a decent wage, a health care system they could afford, and retirement plans that preserved their dignity. Only then could the fundamental trust between the people and the government be restored.

The question at hand, was not whether the market was a force for evil or good. But the current crisis had reminded Americans that the market can spiral out of control without a watchful eye. The nation could not be prosperous if the market favored only the rich. The success of an economy depended not simply on the size of its gross domestic product, but on the scope of its prosperity, on its ability to give every willing heart a chance, not out of charity, but because that was the surest path to the common good of the American people.

The passages on foreign policy and the role of the USA in the world were characterized by particular rhetorical finesse. The nation learned nothing of the U.S.'s global military and economic interests in Obama's inaugural address. He focused on America's missionary idea of freedom and resisted making a false choice between security and ideals in the cause of "common defense." Presenting a "false" choice that is to be avoided is Obama's favorite rhetorical device, serving to set the stage for his own rational and correct decision.

Obama expressed his belief that the ideals of the Founding Fathers still enlightened the world, and that the U.S. would not sacrifice them for utility. "We are ready once again to lead the world." Fascism and communism, he said, were defeated not only with missiles and tanks, but also through robust alliances and deeply held convictions. The world's security had grown out of the righteousness of its cause. Currently the U.S. was the custodian of that heritage. Therefore, applying this principle to the two wars he had inherited from President Bush, Iraq would be left to the Iraqi people in a "responsible manner" and progress would be made toward peace in Afghanistan.

Then Obama reminded the American nation of its multicultural heritage, of its own patchwork. The United States was a nation of Christians and Muslims, of Jews, of Hindus and non-believers. America was shaped by every language and culture in the world, from every corner of the globe. As America had tasted the bitter, dirty water of

16 Cf. chapter 5 in this volume.

civil war and segregation, there was nothing to be done but to believe that the old hatreds would eventually end. America must play its role in bringing about a new age of peace.

Obama made an offer of cooperation to the Islamic world, borne of mutual interest and respect. All corrupt systems, Obama continued, were on the wrong side of history. He offered development aid to the poor peoples of the world.

There followed a tribute to the American military, the most respected group in American society. He thanked the American soldiers who served the nation in faraway deserts and mountains as “guardians of freedom.”

He offered the world a new age of “accountability.” That was the price and promise of citizenship. The meaning of freedom could be seen in the fact that women, men, and children of all races and creeds could attend his inauguration ceremony. And that was why a man like him, whose father would not even have been served in a restaurant 60 years earlier, could now stand before the American nation to swear the sacred oath.

President Obama gave what he considered his most important speech on foreign policy on Dec. 10, 2009, in Oslo,¹⁷ when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He had just had to give in to the urging of his military leaders and promised them what all militaries in world history demand in a tight situation, namely more troops and resources. To him, the memory of the Vietnam fiasco was very present. At the same time, military officials were spreading rumors that they worried about Obama’s “resolve.” Indignantly, Obama asked confidants in the Oval Office, “Why is this whole thing being framed around whether I have any balls?”¹⁸ Just prior to the Oslo speech he had decided to send 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan, with NATO providing 10,000 more. With the help of the new troops, the situation in Afghanistan was to be stabilized. After 18 months, the withdrawal was to begin.

Obama began his speech in Oslo—after the usual formulas of modesty—in an unusual way. He would not fail to mention that the awarding of the prize had generated considerable controversy because his “work on the world stage” was only beginning, not ending. Above all, he was the commander-in-chief of a nation engaged in two wars.

17 See Barack Obama, Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, Dec. 10, 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-acceptance-nobel-peace-prize> (Dec. 7, 2020).

18 Rhodes, *In the White House*, p. 119.

He could also have added that he was the commander-in-chief of the greatest military machine of all time, on land, sea, air, and space.

Obama used his speech for reflections on world history, on the nature of man, on just peace and just war. He used the term war 43 times, the term peace 28 times, and proper nouns such as “World War II” a few times.

Wars have existed from the beginning of time, he said. For a long time, it was simply a fact of life, like droughts or epidemics. Then a law of *nations* developed. Philosophers, theologians, and statesmen have tried to regulate the destructive power of war, for the most part, in vain. War between armies had become war between nations. He recalled the two world wars, not the Korean War, nor the Vietnam War. He could not imagine a more just war than the war against the Third Reich and the Axis powers.

He could have won a “Nobel War Prize” for this part of the speech.

The dialectic of his speech moved between the reality of just and unjust wars on the one hand, and the hopes for and conditions of a just peace on the other. He was also aware of the deep gap between aspiration and reality, between what is and what ought to be, which had already been thought about in antiquity. He resisted the idea that the condition of present humanity made it impossible to strive for the ideal: “I refuse to accept the idea that the ‘isness’ of man’s present condition makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal ‘oughtness’ that forever confronts him.”¹⁹

In his time, he saw new dangers. The greatest threat was not a war between nuclear superpowers, but the proliferation of nuclear weapons and modern technologies. This was another reason why he could not bring a final resolution to the problem of war today. One must face the hard truth. Mankind would not be able to eradicate violent conflict in the near future. There were times when nations, alone or in alliance with others, found the use of force not only necessary but morally justified. He made that statement consciously, and despite the insights Martin Luther King Jr. professed when he was awarded the

19 About the problem of is and ought and the legitimacy of value judgments the author of this volume had a lively controversy 50 years ago with the Dutch historian Herman von der Dunk, cf. Detlef Junker, *Über die Legitimität von Werturteilen in den Sozialwissenschaften und der Geschichtswissenschaft*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 211, 1, August 1970, pp. 1–33. Obama probably never understood that from all descriptive and explanatory sentences about the world it cannot be logically concluded what should be done.

Nobel Prize: “Violence can never bring lasting peace, it does not solve any social problem, it only brings new and more complex problems.” Obama noted that his statement was made in full awareness that he was standing before his audience as a direct consequence of Dr. King Jr.’s life’s work, adding that the moral force of nonviolence was not something weak, not passive, not naive.

But then Obama restated the contradiction between reality and ideal, between reality and utopia, between is and ought, that he worked himself up to and that shaped his actual actions as president. He had sworn an oath to protect and defend his nation. He had to take the world as it was. Faced with the dangers to the American people, he could not stand idly by. Let there be no mistake: Evil existed in the world. And then, in front of a global audience, there followed the end-all moral argument for wars since the middle of the 20th century. Nonviolence would not have stopped Hitler’s army. Negotiations could not convince Al Qaeda to lay down its arms. Following in the footsteps of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, Obama declared, “To say that violence is occasionally necessary is not a call to cynicism; it’s an acknowledgment of history, of man’s imperfection, and of the limits of reason.” He wanted to speak this truth because there was great ambivalence in many countries about military action, combined with a reflexive distrust of the United States, the world’s only military superpower.

It was also important to remember that it was not only international institutions, treaties, and declarations of intent that brought stability to the world after World War II. Whatever mistakes the U.S. made, the simple fact remained that for six decades the U.S. guaranteed global security through the blood of its citizens and the strength of its weapons. Americans in uniform had brought peace and prosperity from Germany to Korea and ensured that democracy took root in places like the Balkans.

Obama then assured the world that America, as a global power, would use the full range of its influence and power to work toward a just world order. America would not waver in its commitment to global security. But America also needs allies, like NATO soldiers in Afghanistan. Merely believing that peace was inevitable was rarely enough to achieve it. But in the use of power, there was also a need to limit it. That was why he had banned torture and ordered the Guantanamo prison closed.

Obama then cited a long list of tasks to be accomplished in world politics, such as the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. He reported

that he was working with Russian President Medvedev to reduce the U.S. and Russian arsenals. In addition, Iran and North Korea must be prevented from manipulating the system. The threat of an arms race in the Middle East and East Asia should not be ignored. Nor should the genocide in Darfur, the systematic rape in Congo, and the repressions in Biafra be left without consequences.

In conclusion, Obama spoke about the nature and criteria of a peace to strive for, especially universal human rights, which were by no means only Western principles. He praised President Nixon for negotiating with Mao despite the horror of the Cultural Revolution. Pope John Paul II's initiative had created space not only for the Catholic Church in Poland but also for labor leaders like Lech Walesa.

Finally, Obama reflected in Oslo on religious wars in history. He recalled that a holy war can never be a just war.

America had borne the burden of responsibility, not because the country wanted to impose its will on anyone, but out of *enlightened* self-interest. Yes, that is how it is: The instruments of war had to play a role in the preservation of peace. Like any head of state, he too must reserve the right to act unilaterally to defend "my nation." And while America had an obligation to global security, America could not keep the peace alone.

*

The world naturally wonders what Obama has achieved after eight years of "working on the world stage." In terms of foreign policy, has he been able to halt the decline of U.S. power and prestige in the world, with the legacy of his predecessor George W. Bush? Domestically, has he been able to make fundamental changes to the nation's deep divisions, which had become increasingly entrenched since President Reagan?²⁰

20 For an overall account of his presidency, see Julian E. Zelizer (ed.), *The Presidency of Barack Obama*, Princeton 2018; Winand Gellner, Patrick Horst (eds.), *Die USA am Ende der Präsidentschaft Obamas. Eine erste Bilanz*, Wiesbaden 2016; Stefan Hagemann, Wolfgang Tönnies, Jürgen Wilzewski (eds.), *Weltmacht vor neuen Herausforderungen. Die Außenpolitik der USA in der Ära Obama*, Trier 2014; Florian Böller, Jürgen Wilzewski (eds.), *Weltmacht im Wandel. Die USA in der Ära Obama*, Trier 2012; Gordon M. Friedrichs, *US Global Leadership Role and Domestic Polarization: A Role Theory Approach*, New York 2021. See also Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson, *Barack Obama (2009–2017). Der erste afroamerikanische Präsident: A Dream Come True?*, in Christoph Mauch (ed.), *Die Präsidenten der USA. 45 historische Porträts von George Washington bis Donald Trump*, Munich

After all, these were precisely the two hopes associated with Obama's election. Obama's ambition and self-image also went far beyond the hoped-for symbolic effect of a colored president in the White House. All of his memoirs and autobiographies make that unmistakably clear, now already running to over 1500 pages. An end is not yet in sight.²¹

The starting point for judging President Obama on the "world stage" is the measure of whether he has helped to affirm and defend U.S. global interests and values. After all, since the country's entry into World War II, the U.S. had—this is a leitmotif of this volume—defined its national interests globally. Since Roosevelt, the country's own claim had been to shape the structure of the international order over a long period of time and over large areas according to its own interests and values, and to at least neutralize enemies of the system. It is no coincidence that this globalism is the essence of all U.S. strategic plans and security memoranda from 1941 up to the tenure of George W. Bush. The high point and at the same time the turning point of this globalism was the equally famous and infamous security memorandum of September 17, 2002, on national security, when President Bush, influenced by neoconservative ideologues, wanted to take advantage of the moment after 9/11 to transform American globalism beyond a world leadership role into U.S. world *primacy*. It was only logical that this new U.S. claim led to a fundamental discussion of "American imperialism" under George W. Bush.²²

This strategic discussion was also heated because the majority of Americans, then as now, rebel against the term "imperialism" as a self-designation for the country's global policy. The U.S.'s global claim to power and influence is almost always described in terms of "global leadership" or "global responsibility." In connection with the American idea of freedom and its global mission, American politicians and strategists like to speak of the "*indispensable nation*." At best, the term

2018. See also "Obama's World. Judging His Foreign Policy Record," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 5, September-October 2015. "Inequality. What Causes It. Why It Matters. What Can Be Done," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 1, January-February 2016.

21 In addition to "Dreams from My Father" (see note 3), "The Audacity of Hope. Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream," New York 2006, and the first part of his memoir for the period of his presidency, "Barack Obama. A Promised Land," New York 2020, German version "Ein verheißenes Land." The memoir covers only the first three years of his term. For the next five years, we can certainly expect another 1000 pages.

22 Cf. chapters 14 and 15 in this volume.

“*empire of liberty*,” coined by Thomas Jefferson, meets with approval. Imperialists? Those were the Europeans or other empires in world history.

Obama felt the same way. In his famous speech in Cairo on June 4, 2009, in which he invoked a new beginning in the relationship between the United States and the Islamic world, he passionately rejected the accusation of imperialism. “America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire. The United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known. We were born out of the revolution against an empire. We were founded upon the ideal that all are created equal, and we have shed blood and struggled for centuries to give meaning to those words—within our borders and around the world.”²³ This globalization of the scope of American foreign policy activity also grew out of the increasing interdependence of world politics itself, including as a reaction to the foreign policies of enemies and allies of the United States, especially the often exaggerated threat perceptions that the actions and ideologies of other states and societies evoked in the minds of Americans and their politicians.

Within this American globalism, three major objectives can be distinguished since the United States’ entry into World War II: indivisible security, the indivisible world market, and indivisible freedom. These three indivisibilities will be sketched out in an ideal-typical shorthand, because they form the yardstick for classifying Obama’s and Trump’s foreign policy.

The Indivisible Security

Indivisible security means maintaining a pro-American balance in the world and blocking hostile hegemonic powers on the Eurasian double continent that could endanger the long-term security of the Western Hemisphere, the sanctuary of the United States. This security of the Western Hemisphere, at the center, of course, the security of the continental United States, has been the supreme goal of American security policy since the famous Monroe Doctrine of 1823. Whenever this appears threatened, the nation is put on high alert. A bon mot about the problem of American security reflects a reality deeply embedded in

23 The White House, Remarks by the President at Cairo University, Apr. 6, 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-cairo-university-6-04-09> (June 21, 2021).

the collective consciousness of Americans: bordered to the north and south by weak neighbors, to the east and the west by fish.

Despite the nuclear balance of terror with the Soviet Union, now with Russia, any real or perceived threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere forces the U.S. government to act. One need only recall the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 or the responses to 9/11. At present, there is again an incendiary situation. The U.S. will not tolerate nuclear-tipped long-range missiles from North Korea that could threaten the continental United States. It is no coincidence that during President-elect Donald Trump's courtesy visit to the White House, Obama spoke almost exclusively about the biggest problem facing American security: North Korea.

These global objectives of the U.S. were dialectically linked with global threat scenarios: In the case of National Socialism with the assumption that Hitler and Germany wanted to conquer the whole world; in the case of the Cold War with the subjective certainty that communism, first in Europe and Asia, and after the globalization of Soviet foreign policy in the Khrushchev era, also in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, was endangering all three indivisibilities. International terrorism is perceived as a new global threat.

Moreover, part of the capacity of this imperial power was to forge together global coalitions of different governments and systems when needed. This U.S. globalism has produced a global American military power since World War II, with alliances around the world; its power gobbled up 38 percent of all military spending in 2019 (by comparison: China 14 percent and Russia 3.4 percent); it is protected domestically by an alliance of the military, the defense industry, and Congress (the military budget has not been vetoed once in the last 60 years); it has a thousand bases around the globe, some of which are secret; if the political decision was made, it can pulverize any point on Earth in 20 minutes; and, during George W. Bush's tenure, as already indicated, it was given the mission of defending a Pax Americana for the foreseeable future against any combination of possible adversaries and preventing any regional hegemon in any continent from threatening this global leadership role.

The centerpiece of U.S. security policy continues to be the nuclear triad, that is, the ability to launch nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles from submarines, from reinforced silos, and from bombers. However, the U.S. has reduced its deployable nuclear warheads from over 31,000 in 1967 to 5,800 at present, Russia to 6,375. France currently has 290 nuclear warheads deployable, while China

has 320, the U.K. 215, Pakistan 160, India 150, and Israel 90. The North Korean dictator's dangerousness lies in the fact that he wants to be the second nuclear power after Russia that could threaten the U.S. itself with intercontinental missiles.

The visible armed forces of the USA at sea, on land, in the air, and in space are supplemented by an invisible intelligence empire, which collects information everywhere in the world by almost any means, thus seeing, listening, and reading everything. It has therefore been suggested to add to the American national motto: "In God we trust—all others we monitor."

For Obama, however, this vast military apparatus was merely an instrument of deterrence. Although the president acknowledged in principle the legitimacy of a "just war" in his Nobel Prize speech, he was determined not to involve U.S. troops in new land wars and thus reduce the U.S. global "footprint" in the world. He knew that the vast majority of the American people was war-weary—with the exception of the mission-minded "hawks" in the national security apparatus, in Congress, in think tanks, and those in the role of public intellectuals. Since world history knows no vacuums, Obama thus opened up opportunities for other powers to occupy new spaces in Eurasia and other parts of the globe, which they did during his tenure. Instead of soldiers on the ground, Obama favored drones, aerial bombing, targeted killings, intelligence, sanctions, and negotiations as means of national security policy. The targeted killing of bin Laden on May 2, 2011, was the most popular act of his tenure.

He was also skeptical that the U.S. could or should solve the domestic problems of other states by force. Obama was far removed from the Bush administration's global, military-backed missionary idea after 9/11, despite all the global rhetoric of freedom that manifested itself in his public speeches. This drove the president into paradoxical decision-making situations, for example, in Afghanistan. In order to be able to withdraw American soldiers there in the long term without endangering the country's reconstruction, he wanted to stabilize the situation there by temporarily increasing the number of U.S. combat troops. However, the country was not stabilized during his term in office. As is well known, that goal has not been reached to this day. Despite the continued presence of American troops, the Taliban are steadily gaining ground. President Biden has now decided to withdraw the troops. However, Obama was able to withdraw troops from Iraq during his term in office even though the country had not been stabilized.

De facto, the U.S. has lost both wars, and both countries are in chaos and civil war. Iraq and probably Afghanistan will add to the long list of failed attempts to bring freedom to peoples and states by force: Haiti, Cambodia, South Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Nicaragua, and at times Panama. The U.S. and NATO have great difficulty acknowledging the failure of the “peacekeeping mission” in Afghanistan.

Whatever Obama attempted militarily ended in costly disaster. In Iraq, the US intervened militarily and occupied the country, and the result was a costly disaster. In Libya, the U.S. did intervene from the air but did not occupy the country, and the result was also a costly disaster. In Syria, Obama did neither intervene nor put American boots on the ground, and the result was a costly disaster. In Yemen, he relied on drones and active diplomacy, but again the result was a costly disaster.

In his relations with Israel, President Obama also made no progress toward an Israeli-Palestinian two-state solution. Before his scheduled speech in Cairo on June 4, 2009, he visited Saudi King Abdullah ibn Abd al-Aziz, the guardian of the two holy mosques of Mecca and Medina and a strict protector of the Wahhabis, a particularly radical variant of Islam. As the meeting took place in a relaxed atmosphere and the king recalled favorably a meeting his father ibn Saud had with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Obama asked the king if his kingdom and other Arab League members might consider making a gesture toward Israel that might initiate peace negotiations with the Palestinians. The king ignored the question.²⁴

It is not known whether the king knew that his father ibn Saud had unequivocally declared to Roosevelt on February 14, 1945, aboard the “USS Quincy” in the Great Bitter Lake, and to Prime Minister Winston Churchill a day later, that the Arab world would never tolerate a free state for the Jews in Palestine. Support for Zionism, from whatever quarter, would undoubtedly bring the greatest bloodshed and disorder to the Arab lands.²⁵ This is how it has remained until today: an absolute friend-enemy relationship, that is also based on conflicting doctrines of salvation. This friend-enemy relationship has not changed significantly from Roosevelt to Obama and Trump.

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24 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, p. 362.

25 David B. Woolner, *The Last 100 Days. FDR at War and at Peace*, New York 2016, pp. 162–165.

Europe, including the security of Europe and Germany, was not at the center of Barack Obama's global agenda. The Old Continent, unlike the Middle East and the entire Islamic world, seemed to be a pacified region in terms of security policy; safe under the protection of NATO and the U.S. nuclear security guarantee. No one during Obama's tenure thought to question Article 5 of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, according to which an attack on one country would mean an attack on all allies.

Moreover, even before Obama's tenure, NATO had expanded eastward, not primarily at the urging of the United States but of countries that did not trust Russia even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and feared Russia's imperial power revisionism, which indeed developed. In 1999, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined, followed in 2004 by Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and the Baltic states. NATO's expansion eastward is a complicated and contentious story.²⁶ At the opening of the Holocaust Museum in Washington on April 22, 1992, Czech President Václav Havel and Poland's Lech Wałęsa had said that nothing like this should ever be allowed again, thus pressuring President Bill Clinton, who was hesitant on the accession issue but visibly moved.²⁷ Moreover, after many personal telephone conversations, President Obama and Russia's President Medvedev had agreed in Prague on April 8, 2010, to sign the most comprehensive nuclear disarmament treaty in two decades (START = Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), which actually led to substantial reductions on both sides. For those in Prague, it seemed as if Obama had taken a decisive step closer to the promise he had made in a rousing speech to tens of thousands a year earlier, namely, to make a world without nuclear weapons possible.

As early as September 2009, Obama had decided to halt the deployment of missiles in the Czech Republic and Poland in order to enable a "reset" of U.S.-Russian relations. However, Putin cancelled this "reset."

Vladimir Putin, Russia's dominant, visibly dictatorial force since 2000—as president, in the interim as prime minister in an exchange of roles with Medvedev, now president for "life"—considered and still considers the disintegration of the Soviet Union to be the greatest catastrophe in Russian history. Obama's judgment that Russia was only a "regional power" was an unforgivable humiliation for Putin. Obama's assessment of Russia was very close to German Chancellor

26 Oxana Schmies, *NATO's Enlargement and Russia. A Strategic Challenge in the Past and Future*, Stuttgart 2021.

27 Detlef Junker, *Power and Mission. Was Amerika antreibt*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2003, p. 149. Cf. chapter 13 in this volume.

Helmut Schmidt's judgment of the Soviet Union: "Upper Volta with missiles." At Obama's first face-to-face meeting with Putin in Moscow in July 2009, the Russian delivered an "endless monologue" about every injustice, betrayal, and slight the Russian people had experienced, especially during George W. Bush's tenure. Through U.S. nuclear policy, the inclusion of former Warsaw Pact countries in NATO, and support for "color revolutions," he said, the United States has encroached on Russia's "legitimate sphere of influence."²⁸ On Putin's initiative, the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, Michael McFaul, became the object of a hate campaign in the media that broke all diplomatic customs. He was said to be a specialist in "color revolutions" and sent by President Obama to orchestrate a change of government.²⁹

What did Putin mean by a "legitimate sphere of influence" for Russia? The undisturbed establishment of a dictatorship at home and undisturbed expansion to the West. The longer his term lasts, the more he falls back on this classic pattern of all dictators in world history. What happened under Stalin in the name of international communism is now to become a "Russian world," a Russian-dominated Eurasia. That is why Putin is haunted by two primal fears: liberation movements at home and, in foreign policy, countervailing powers on Russia's western frontier that could stop the construction of a "Russian world."

Domestically, Putin's dictatorship relies on the military, violence, police, prisons, and secret services, on a bogus constitutional façade, on corruption, terror, propaganda, lies, and fake news. However, it can rely on the Orthodox Church and a deep Russian nationalism. There are protest movements, but the majority of the population follows the centuries-old wisdom of Russian peasants: as long as you don't raise your head, it won't be cut off. The population is grateful that Putin ended the chaos during President Yeltsin's term.

At the same time, Putin has modernized the armed forces, increased their clout and operational readiness, and above all perfected cyber-weapons. He has long since begun to try destabilize Europe and the USA, that Western world he hates.

In the spring of 2014, during the crisis in Ukraine, he saw an opportunity to annex Crimea and destabilize eastern Ukraine militarily. The move was reminiscent of the 2008 invasion of Georgia by Russian troops and the recognition of the "independence" of South Ossetia and

28 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, p. 467f.

29 See Michael McFaul, *From Cold War to Hot Peace. An American Ambassador in Putin's Russia*, Boston 2018.

Abkhazia. Russia had recognized Ukraine's independence in several international agreements, most notably, in the Budapest Agreement of December 3, 1994, in which the Russian Federation, the United States, and the United Kingdom had committed themselves under international law to respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and existing borders as the price for the destruction of nuclear weapons stationed on Ukrainian territory. Despite this, Putin was highly alarmed by developments in Ukraine at the beginning of 2014. He saw his two primary goals, internal stability and external expansion, at risk: from the spillover of the liberation movement into Russian domestic politics and from Ukraine's possible admission into the EU and NATO. He probably also had a domino theory in mind like Leonid Brezhnev, the general secretary of the KPDSU, in 1968 when Eastern Bloc troops invaded Czechoslovakia. In the event of a victory for the "Prague Spring," he feared that the freedom movement would spill over into Ukraine.³⁰

Therefore, Putin's Russia first militarily occupied Crimea and then annexed it in March 2014. Through employing Russian guerilla fighters, it has, since February 2014, supported pro-Russian forces in their infiltration and destabilization of eastern Ukraine. The pro-Russian forces fought for the secession of two so-called People's Republics: Donetsk and Luhansk. It is indisputable that Putin was the driving force in destabilizing Ukraine, although his various motives remain unclear to this day.³¹

How did Obama respond to this attack by one state on another in Europe for the first time since the end of the Cold War? With sharp rhetoric and by announcing economic sanctions. He did, however, deny the Ukrainians "lethal weapons." He de facto accepted the annexation of Crimea and the expansion of the Sevastopol naval base, but denied Putin the "stamp of legitimacy." At least the U.S. called a spade a spade, while German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier avoided direct criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Steinmeier invoked the "Great Interdependence" that should never be disregarded. In the face of Putin's aggressions, he

30 Cf. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, Detlef Junker (eds.), 1968. *The World Transformed*, Washington D.C. 1998, pp. 111–172.

31 A good analysis of the various "conjectures" about Putin is in: "Putin's Russia," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 3, May–June 2016, pp. 2–55. No Western politician has spoken and negotiated with Putin more often and for longer than German Chancellor Angela Merkel. It would contribute significantly to the political education and enlightenment of the German people if Angela Merkel, after the end of her chancellorship, were to publish a detailed memoir on this topic as well.

concluded, “Security in Europe is not possible without Russia, security for Russia not without Europe.”³² To more than a few Americans, this sounded a lot like “equidistance” between Putin’s Russia and the West. However, Obama was grateful that under Angela Merkel’s leadership the Ukraine conflict was at least frozen under the “Normandy format” (Minsk Agreement). In contrast to the peace agreements after the Balkan wars, Obama was not willing to bring the U.S. into the Ukraine crisis as a peace broker; a signal that Putin certainly understood.

On the Ukraine issue, there remained a deep tension between the Federal Republic and the United States, shaped by geography, history, and differing military potential. The tone of the Americans was much harsher. In no uncertain terms, Obama declared the annexation of Crimea and occupation of eastern Ukraine to be Russian aggression. He assured the Baltic states that Article 5 of NATO applied without restriction.

The protests of the West did not change the strategic shift of power. Putin’s Russia annexed Crimea, did not give up eastern Ukraine, and has since been waiting for a chance to destabilize other states on its own western border through infiltration and annexation. Belarus or Ukraine may become the next cases.

The naval base in Crimea also became a factor in Putin’s successful attempt in early January 2017, during the chaotic transition from Obama to Trump, to achieve what the Tsarist Empire had unsuccessfully attempted, and President Truman had prevented with the U.S. fleet: a strategic penetration of the Mediterranean by Russia and the Soviet Union. Presumably, he will also try to make the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea a strategic sphere of influence for Russia.

Putin’s air force, together with planes and helicopters of the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, bombed eastern Aleppo to the ground. A few days later, Assad agreed with rebel groups on a ceasefire that would apply to all of Syria. The guarantor powers would be Russia, NATO member Turkey, and the theocratic state of Iran, all of which met for a conference in Moscow. Neither UN representatives nor U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry were invited, and the United States was not even consulted. Since then, there has been a Russian “footprint” in Syria, including a small port for the Russian fleet. The New York

32 Cf. Robin Lucke, Bernhard Stahl, *Die transatlantischen Beziehungen am Beispiel der NSA-Affäre und des Ukraine-Konflikts: Im Westen nichts Neues*, in: Winand Gelter, Patrick Horst (eds.), *Die USA am Ende der Präsidentschaft Barack Obama. Eine erste Bilanz*, Wiesbaden 2016, pp. 385–404.

Times commented bitterly, “Amid a difficult transition of power in Washington, Mr. Putin has effectively marginalized the United States.”³³

The Indivisible World Market

For Obama, it was a matter of course that the world’s most powerful and influential economic nation would pursue its interests in a global world market that was as indivisible as possible. He knew that America’s real economy and the U.S. financial sector had become increasingly important in the 20th and 21st centuries. The U.S. had also entered World War II to prevent aggressive states that were aiming at autarky and a command economy—Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan—from dominating the Eurasian double continent and thus destroying the indivisible world market.³⁴ The systemic antagonism between capitalism and communism had also shaped the Cold War.³⁵ With the end of the Cold War, the hope of an “end of history” germinated, because it seemed that all alternatives to liberal capitalism had been exhausted and history had reached its end goal as Hegel had understood it.³⁶

In 1945, an undestroyed U.S. economy of extraordinary productivity and great competitive advantages faced an impoverished Eurasian double continent. From Vladivostok to London, there was no economic region that could compete with the U.S. Even the markets of Latin America were further penetrated by the U.S. With a share of over half of all world production of industrial goods, the U.S. exceeded even the years from 1925 to 1929. This indivisible world market is also the basis for what is generally associated in the world with the term “Americanization,” namely, the enormous influence of the American knowledge and culture industries, especially the American entertainment industry and its global pop culture. The messages conveyed by U.S. pop culture—freedom, independence, expansiveness, consumption, violence, and sexuality—seem to simultaneously represent and justify

33 Quoted from Matthias Naß: Frieden schaffen mit Putins Waffen?, in: ZEIT online, 4.1.2017, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-01/krieg-syrien-russland-iran-tuerkei-waffenruhe-5vor8?> (21.7.2021).

34 Cf. Detlef Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt*, Stuttgart 1975. Cf. his, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933–1945): Visionär und Machtpolitiker, in: Mauch (ed.), *Die Präsidenten der USA*, pp. 328–343.

35 Cf. chapter 9 in this volume.

36 Cf. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York 1992.

global pipe dreams. American English has become the international lingua franca. Today, no maître can get by without good English.

Already during the war, at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, the U.S. managed to establish the dollar, together with gold, as the international leading, reserve, and transaction currency. Until the Nixon shock in 1971, when the Americans removed the gold peg because they could not finance “guns and butter” at the same time, the Bretton Woods system prevented bubbles from forming on the capital markets by restricting short-term international capital movements (*hot money*) and thus also ensured a high degree of stability on the international capital markets and a low risk of contagion in the event of national financial crises. The Americans dominated the new International Monetary Fund and the new World Bank. The 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and later the WTO, embodied basic American ideas of free trade and an “open door” through their goal of reducing tariffs and other trade barriers.

The dramatic and worldwide reduction of tariffs in the postwar period to just a few percent is without precedent in history. Unlike after World War I, Americans behaved in a systemic and exemplary manner after 1945 because they too gradually reduced U.S. tariffs. Driven by the memory of not having assumed international responsibility in the 1920s and of the Great Depression and its global political consequences in the 1930s, the U.S. was now determined to replace England as the guarantor of a liberal world economic order and an indivisible world market. Through all the periodic crises of market-based capitalism—the U.S. has weathered twenty-one recessions since 1900 and the Great Depression of 1929—the country held fast to the principle of open, rules-based markets even under President Obama; in part because the U.S. had been the hegemon in that system for decades. To this day, they alone are able to print the world’s reserve currency, as the dollar continues to hold its special place around the globe. 90 percent of bank-financed transactions take place in dollars, which is also the most dangerous weapon for economic sanctions.

The pursuit of its own interests was integrated into multilateral, regional, and global organizations and agreements, such as the UN and its specialized agencies like the WHO, or NATO, in which the interests of other states were also represented. This system is also called “liberal internationalism” in the USA. Since the turn of the millennium at the latest, this world market has been increasingly shaped by the digital revolution, the interdependence and globalization of

the real, capital, and media markets, the destruction of the environment, and the foreseeable climate catastrophe. Nation states, which are always the starting point for all actions in international relations, and international organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfill their functions—being driven by lobby groups, administered by legal-bureaucratic monsters, and riddled with the power calculations of elected or appointed representatives.

President Obama was involved in projects to save the open world market or at least improve its operating logic in three crucial phases: during the great economic and financial crisis of 2007 to 2010, in attempts to strengthen the cooperation of the U.S. economy with Europe through the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and with Asia through the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement (TPP). He also thought of stabilizing agreements with the Arab world during the “Arabellion.”

Already in the final phase of the election campaign in the fall of 2008, President Bush had invited Obama and his Republican opponent John McCain to the White House for an emergency meeting to confront both of them with the threatening financial and economic developments in the U.S. and the world, which held the potential of a new Great Depression like the one in the late 1920s. While Obama was exquisitely prepared for the meeting through his study of the Great Depression of 1929 to 1932 and the response to it by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) known as the New Deal,³⁷ McCain could not think of a single word to contribute.³⁸ Obama had already declared during the campaign that he was in the tradition of FDR, who had “saved capitalism from itself.”³⁹

Indeed, the causes of the Great Depression of 1929 and the financial and banking crisis of 2007 to 2010 were very similar and comparable. It had become apparent that the U.S. financial system had not learned enough, despite generations of award-winning economists who had labored to analyze the Great Depression. Even in the 1920s, the causes included massive income inequality, structural underconsumption, and high unemployment. Above all, a speculative boom had developed in the 1920s, as it had before 2007, out of all proportion to the real economy and turned into a dazzling soap bubble that burst in the New York stock market crash of 1929, dragging the whole world into

37 Cf. chapter 5 in this volume.

38 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, p. 273.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 257.

the abyss. Branches of New York stockbrokers and investment trusts had sprung up all over the United States like chain stores. Americans were buying stocks like crazy, and securities were being manufactured like soap, because there was quick money to be made in making and selling them. All over the world, potential debtors were persuaded by American bankers, using all the tricks of sales promotion, to issue bonds on the U.S. capital market. A village in Bavaria, for example, was persuaded in the 1920s to borrow \$3 million rather than \$125,000.⁴⁰

In a sense, the situation was even more threatening in 2007: “The equity of some of the very large financial institutions (represented) only two to three percent of their assets worldwide.”⁴¹ New, often globally networked financial products established a global casino with a high risk of contagion, which could lead to a collapse of the entire system overnight through domino effects. This could only be prevented by the casino’s croupiers fetching new chips from the taxpayer and by ensuring that the lavish liquidity and financial injections from the U.S. Federal Reserve and from abroad, especially from China, continued to flow unabated. The blackmail potential of the financial industry was so high in both crises because the limits on this perpetual motion machine—such as massively increasing the capital requirements of lenders or by strictly monitoring ever new financial innovations and other measures—had not been put in place soon enough.

Financial products that were not easy to see through, even for financial experts, included subprime mortgages with high debt and little equity; bank debt consisting of money market loans, especially money market funds; and mortgage securitizations, especially credit default swaps (CDS), which were a subsystem of the notorious financial derivatives to enable exchange and redistribution of risks. These derivatives are an ideal tool for gamblers and speculators, which is why investor Warren Buffett has called them “financial weapons of mass destruction.” As in the 1920s, these financial products found brisk sales not only in the U.S. but around the world—with far-reaching

40 Detlef Junker, *Der unteilbare Weltmarkt*, 236–242; cf. his *Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933–1945): Visionär und Machtpolitiker*, in: Mauch (Hrsg.), *Die Präsidenten der USA*, pp. 328–343.

41 Anat Admati, Martin Hellwig, *Des Bankers neue Kleider. Was bei Banken wirklich schief läuft und was sich ändern muss*, Munich 2014, p. 256. See also Carmen M. Reinhart, Kenneth Rogoff, *This Time Is Different. Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*. Princeton 2009. German edition: *Dieses Mal ist alles anders. Acht Jahrhunderte Finanzkrisen*. Jesus Huerta de Soto, *Geld, Bankkredit und Konjunkturzyklen*, Stuttgart 2011.

consequences when the bubble burst. The real estate boom was particularly dangerous for the bubble of the little man, because home loans were often granted without checking the creditworthiness of the homebuyers, and not infrequently after only a telephone call. Loans were even made to people with no income, no job, and no assets—the infamous “NINJA loans” (No Income, No Job, No Assets). I myself was able to witness the consequences of this policy firsthand in Florida. In addition to the market failure, there was also a massive regulatory failure.⁴² The famous economist Joseph Schumpeter once said, the genius rides atop debt to success. What he did not say is that this debt has to remain manageable and must actually be repaid at some point.

On the structure of the finance-driven global economy at the end of Obama’s term, let us just mention two figures: World financial assets had grown from \$119 trillion in 2000 to \$267 trillion in 2015. This gap between the real and financial economies has been widening every year since. Global financial transactions accounted for nearly four times the value of goods markets during Obama’s tenure. Bonds, stocks, and loans of nearly \$270 trillion were set against a more or less stagnant real economy of \$73 trillion. This difference does not even include the so-called derivatives, i.e., speculative future transactions, the *weapons of mass destruction*.

Creatio ex nihilo, the creation out of nothing, has been haunting the history of theology as an attribute of God since the second century. Today, central banks and commercial banks have taken the place of God. They give loans and print money out of nothing, while always being advised by real economists.

President Obama faced a difficult inheritance as a result of the financial crisis and excessive borrowing by his predecessor, George W. Bush. In the last quarter of Bush’s term, gross domestic product (GDP) had fallen by 8.9 percent, unemployment had risen to nearly 10 percent, debt to nearly 5 percent of GDP, and the budget deficit to nearly 9 percent. Again, a Democrat had to deal with a Republican’s disastrous policies. President Ronald Reagan had handed a massive deficit to President Clinton. The latter had managed, after 8 years in office, to hand over a balanced and debt-free budget to his successor, George W. Bush. The latter, in turn, again left his successor with high

42 Cf. Stormy-Annika Mildner, Hannah Petersen, Managing the Economic Crisis? Die Finanz- und Wirtschaftspolitik Obamas, in: Florian Böller, Jürgen Wilzewski (eds.), *Weltmacht im Wandel. Die USA in der Ära Obama*, Trier 2012, pp. 115–148.

debt, especially due to tax cuts for the rich and the financial industry as well as expenditures for the global *war on terror*.

Obama was therefore confronted with three tasks that he could not possibly manage at the same time: in the short term, to provide emergency aid in order to alleviate the economic consequences of the financial crisis for the unemployed and for those Americans thrown out of their homes; in the long term, to regulate and reform the financial markets in order to prevent a bubble from forming again and thereby at least partially shut down the casino; in the long term, to visibly improve the social situation and upward mobility of the lower 70 percent of the population with domestic policy reforms. All this had to be pushed through against massive resistance from the financial industry, with its huge lobby in governments, parliaments, and law firms, not to mention the Republicans.

Indeed, on Feb. 17, 2009, Obama succeeded in pushing through a package to stimulate the economy worth nearly \$800 billion in the face of united opposition from Republicans in Congress (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA)—for health care, education, infrastructure measures, and energy efficiency. Other stimulus measures followed, notably the Tax Relief, Unemployment, Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act in December 2010 and a bill to rescue the U.S. auto industry. A bank bailout bill, the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), had already been signed by President Bush on October 3, 2008.

As usual, a Homeric battle developed between Democrats and Republicans over the question of at whose expense the budget could be consolidated in the long term and whether they could agree to raise the debt ceiling which is set by law. It was in this context that the Tea Party movement was founded and began its passionate fight for tax cuts (for the middle and upper classes) and against the theories of economist John Maynard Keynes, who advised fighting economic crises by government borrowing and spending. The Tea Party called for tax cuts, cuts in social spending, and a balanced budget. The road to Donald Trump and Trumpism was mapped out.

Like FDR before him, Obama wanted not only to provide emergency aid, but also to structurally regulate the financial casino, to build a firewall against the next crisis, and to steer “innovations” in the financial sector in responsible directions. FDR had tried to do this with the second Glass-Steagall Act, especially by strictly separating retail lending from investment banking to better secure deposits. This law

was already a legal-bureaucratic monster, it was often undermined in practice by the financial lobby, and it was repealed under President Bill Clinton in 1999 as a result of the neoliberal zeitgeist. For many analysts, this, together with other deregulation measures, is an important cause of the outbreak of the new financial crisis starting in 2007.

Obama attempted to stabilize the U.S. financial market through a modified new edition of Glass-Steagall, through the Dodd-Frank Act of July 21, 2010. Congress passed a law with 541 articles on 849 pages, whose legal, organizational, and substantive provisions were only understood by a few specialists. It is fair to doubt whether the law achieved much in the real world, even though the heads of state translated elements of this law into global principles at the G20 meeting in London in April 2009 and in Pittsburgh in September 2009. After all, capital requirements were raised significantly, *living wills*, i.e., resolution plans, were imposed on financial institutions, and a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was set up along the lines of Elizabeth Warren's ideas. Meanwhile, not only the financial world has become part of the casino, but also the highly indebted states. The newest honorary member of the casino is the European Union. It prints the money with which it goes into debt—a perfect *creatio ex nihilo*.

The discrepancy between the financial markets and the real markets has become even greater during both Obama's and Donald Trump's terms in office. Any day the bubble can burst again as Obama was not able to achieve a long-term stabilization of the indivisible world market. Under President Trump, restrictions of the Dodd-Frank Act have even been lifted for many banks. They have more leeway for speculative activities again.

Obama achieved his greatest success in U.S. domestic politics, namely in the fight for healthcare reform, which he was able to push through in the face of united opposition from Republicans and the Tea Party. On March 23, 2010, he signed what was probably the most important domestic policy law of his term in office, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. In this case, it was not the world market that was under scrutiny, but the relationship between the state and the market in the U.S. capitalist system. Obama's health care reform was also about saving capitalism from itself in the name of social justice. Although his opponents declared him a socialist and communist, his basic idea was closer to the European concept of the social market economy.

The contrast between wealth and poverty manifested itself during his tenure in an oft-cited ratio: one percent at the top versus the remaining 99 percent. Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz caricatured a proud leitmotif of American democracy “of the people, for the people, by the people”: “Of the 1 %, for the 1 %, by the 1 %.”⁴³

Reforming the health insurance system was Obama’s most important legislative initiative of his first term to alleviate this massive health insurance inequity.

Since President Roosevelt and his New Deal in the 1930s, several presidents had tried in vain to introduce a fairer and more cost-effective system with the help of Congress, because that is what it has always been about at its core: more justice and lower costs. That is why the law was, not without reason, called the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.” The many failed attempts resulted in books with titles like: “The Road to Nowhere,” “One Nation Uninsured,” or “Dead on Arrival.” Prior to Obama’s tenure, there were over 50 million uninsured Americans; costs had skyrocketed; the U.S. spent more money in the health care system than any other developed nation. It gobbled up over 17 percent of the gross national product. The core of Obamacare, therefore, is universal insurance, but on a free-market basis, either through employers or private contracts that can be purchased on online marketplaces. Patients could not, in principle, be excluded from insurance because of pre-existing conditions.

There also has been and continues to be the explosive problem of underfunding. According to surveys, 45 percent of Americans said they have great difficulty paying their medical bills, even if they have insurance coverage. Medical costs have been and continue to be one of the most significant factors in why people fall below the poverty line. 66 percent of personal bankruptcies are caused by high medical costs.

Although the U.S. health care system is based in part on universal and government programs, it is primarily a variety of market-based providers that compete to protect Americans from the risk of “sickness.” Government health insurance coverage for retirees (Medicare) and the poor (Medicaid) was introduced under Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidency in the 1960s. From the beginning, the profiteers of this system—doctors, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and insurance companies—fought tooth and nail against changing it. Today, Karl

43 Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Great Divide. Unequal Societies and What We Can Do About Them*, New York 2015. [dt. Ausgabe: *Reich und Arm. Die wachsende Ungleichheit in unserer Gesellschaft*, Munich 2015].

Marx would not count industrialists, but doctors and lawyers among the worst exploiters. Although the problems result in large part from a glaring market failure, the profiteers of this system keep successfully invoking the American creed that the best government is no government, and that the federal government should not under any circumstances interfere with the “rights of citizens and individual states.”

Moreover, a system had developed that tied health insurance to the employment relationship. In times of good economic activity and high job security, this system works reasonably well; in times of economic crisis and unemployment, an American family quickly falls into a bottomless financial pit, because the market-based players charge horrendous prices. Just one example: In Heidelberg, a prostate operation costs about 5,500 euros; in New York, at Sloan-Kettering Hospital, it costs about \$75,000, and the patient is discharged after one day.

Back to foreign policy and the global market: The attempt during the Obama presidency—in the power triangle between the White House, Congress, and lobby groups—to put economic relations with Europe on a new footing through the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) has also failed, although it must be added that TTIP failed primarily because of the Europeans (keyword: chlorine chicken). The goal was to give more weight to the transatlantic economic area by improving market access, reducing non-tariff barriers, and supplementing rules for the global trading system.

In the words of an economic historian: “The project is apparently intended to define a transatlantic economic area that lays down rules and procedures that bind the two partners more closely together, despite occasional strategic differences, but that will have global effects in the medium term and thus respond to fundamental shifts in the world economy, such as the rise of the emerging economies. This means that TTIP has a global claim, even if it is not openly expressed. In this respect, it can be seen as an extremely ambitious project politically, not just in terms of trade policy.”⁴⁴

For four years, the TTIP project has been negotiated behind closed doors in the United States, in Brussels, and within the European nation-states, amid sharp public criticism. In Germany in particular, the

44 Andreas Falke, Pooling Economic Power? Die Transatlantische Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft (TTIP) als Gegengewicht zum Aufstieg neuer Wirtschaftsmächte und die Zukunft amerikanischer Weltführungspolitik, in: Stefan Hagemann, Wolfgang Tönnesmann, Jürgen Wilzewski (eds.), *Weltmacht vor neuen Herausforderungen. Die Außenpolitik der USA in der Ära Obama*, Trier 2014, p. 434.

TTIP negotiations were a major cause of growing anti-Americanism in particular and capitalism in general. The agreement was buried—and this was no fault of Obama’s—when President Donald Trump ended further discussion of the TTIP agreement as part of his new “America First” strategy of bilateral mercantilism.

A similar fate befell the planned Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, which was to become an important pillar of the “pivot” of U.S. foreign policy to Asia (*Pivot to Asia*) announced with enthusiasm by Obama and his Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Intended as a multipurpose weapon, the agreement was meant to curb Beijing’s ever-growing influence in the Pacific. For Obama, who had grown up in Asia, his upbringing and youth played a not insignificant role in this “pivot.” He was even able to push Congress to deal with this planned agreement quickly (*fast track authority*); although even in this case, massive criticism was leveled at the secret negotiations and every senator or congressman paid close attention to ensure that their own voter base did not suffer the slightest disadvantage. The planned agreement fell victim to U.S. domestic politics. Even Hillary Clinton had to revoke her support because she feared criticism from Senator Bernie Sanders’ supporters during the election campaign. Donald Trump revoked the cooperation by means of an “executive order” three days after taking office.

The Indivisible Freedom

President Obama, like all his predecessors in office, was also convinced of the American mission of freedom. He, too, never doubted the American trinity of *God, Country, and Freedom*. He knew, as a historically conscious American, that this community-building doctrine of faith had held American society together, especially in times of crisis. He knew that American commemorative culture and the politics of its history, national holidays and rituals, especially presidential speeches, centered around the ideas and symbols of American civil religion. He knew that the American national motto, “In God We Trust,” which also embosses the back of every dollar bill, and the wording in the Pledge of Allegiance, “One Nation Under God,” are meant to represent all Americans.

The history-conscious Barack Obama also knew that the debate over America’s special mission of freedom, and its relationship to

God, providence, and history had been going on for over 400 years. He had studied, probably more than any president before him, American history. He also knew that this ongoing discourse, as we would say today, about the special mission of the United States, its uniqueness and chosenness, is itself at the core of American identity. That is why, in his Cairo speech, he had so passionately rejected the charge of American “imperialism.” He also knew that it was this idea of mission that enabled the majority of Americans—despite the fact that there were always dissidents—to justify all wars and military interventions as just wars; from the wars against the Indians to those in Afghanistan and Iraq, but especially World War II and the Cold War.

Setbacks and defeats have not caused Americans to bid farewell to this missionary idea until Trump’s tenure. As is well known, the vast majority of American attempts to establish and consolidate democratic regimes in the long term through or after military intervention have failed. On the other hand, Iraq and also Afghanistan extend the long list of failed American attempts to bring freedom to peoples and states by force. Nevertheless, it is extraordinarily difficult for Americans to say goodbye to their idea of mission. For it is part of the essence of secular utopia that, like religion, it does not allow its utopian surplus, its core of hope, to be destroyed by bad reality and painful facts.

The American self-image as the guardian of freedom and law led to the founding of the League of Nations in 1919 and the United Nations in 1945. It legitimized the fight against National Socialism and Communism. It was also responsible for the USA becoming the midwife of Western Europe after 1945 and making German reunification in peace and freedom possible. Without the U.S., reunification would have failed because of the Europeans. That is why the transformations of Germany and Japan into living democracies are considered shining examples of the power of freedom in U.S. public discourse.⁴⁵

The weight of this tradition and his own fundamental convictions presented President Obama with a dilemma, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, when the uprisings in almost all the countries of the Arab world, the so-called “Arabellion,” captivated the world. He had witnessed his predecessor, George W. Bush, fail in the elections also because of the war weariness of the American people. He himself had great difficulty ending the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Therefore, he

45 Cf. Detlef Junker, *The Chosen People. Geschichte und nationale Identität der USA*, in: Gassert, Junker, Mausbach, Thunert (eds.), *Was Amerika ausmacht*, pp. 19–32.

was determined not to lead the U.S. into a new war against a Muslim country under any circumstances. On the other hand, in his speeches all over the world, he maintained the American missionary idea of freedom and the protection of human rights; for him, the U.S. continued to be a “city upon a hill,” and a beacon of freedom. In this sense, as announced in his Nobel Prize speech, he wanted to continue his “work on the world stage.” During his term in office and in his retrospective reminiscences, programmatic speeches were among the highlights of his life. After all, his speech at the Democratic National Convention had propelled him onto the national stage. Wherever he spoke, he sparked enthusiasm. One could almost say that he joined his listeners in a kind of *unio mystica*.

When a young Tunisian merchant publicly burned himself to death in December 2011 because he could no longer see any prospects in life, this self-immolation became the beacon of protest and uprising movements in the Arab world of the Middle East and North Africa, for the “Arabellion” or “Arab Spring”—in Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. The whole world watched as these protest movements were brutally suppressed and shot down by the powers of the status quo: by rulers, militaries, and corrupt elites. The Arabellion therefore posed a fundamental problem for President Obama, the American mission idea of freedom, and the president’s human rights rhetoric. In keeping with his ideals, should he effectively and sustainably support the Arab Spring?

While polls showed there was never a majority of the American population in favor of military intervention, the Obama administration and the State Department were deeply divided. Among the “hawks” were three women: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice, and especially Samantha Power, the National Security Council’s human rights envoy. Obama had brought Samantha Power onto his team because he was deeply impressed by her book on the Rwandan genocide.⁴⁶ She and other hawks tended

46 Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell. America and the Age of Genocide*, New York 2003. On the problem, see: Marc Lynch, *Obama and the Middle East. Rightsizing the U.S. Role*, in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 5, September-October 2015, pp. 15–36; Fred Kaplan, *Obama’s Way. The President in Practice*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 1, January-February 2016, pp. 46–63; Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprisings Never Ended. The Enduring Struggle to Remake the Middle East*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 100, no. 1, January-February 2021, pp. 111–121. See also Dennis Jonathan Mann, Angelika Wahlen, *Just “Cheap Talk”? Die USA, humanitäre Interventionen und die Zukunft der amerikanischen Weltführungspolitik*, in:

to intervene for the protection and security of oppressed people and therefore to relativize Article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter, which guarantees the territorial integrity and political independence of every state. All dictators in the world invoke this constitutive article of the UN Charter to declare as illegitimate any intervention to protect human rights. This is especially true when a possible intervention by foreign powers arouses even a suspicion of initiating regime change. This issue deeply moved all U.S. State Department officials. That is why, on May 19, 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton invited President Obama to deliver a keynote address to top U.S. diplomats on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and North Africa.⁴⁷ It is one of Obama's most important speeches because he forcefully and unstintingly adhered to "indivisible freedom" as the foundation of American foreign policy before his diplomats.

In this case, too, he began with a time loop through the past. The resistance in Tunisia reminded him of the Boston Tea Party in 1773, when the colonists refused to pay taxes to the British king. Or of Rosa Parks refusing to follow segregation on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Today, he said, there is a similar situation in the Middle East and North Africa. The states of this region had long since won independence, but the peoples had not. They lacked political and economic self-determination. The leaders of these states would falsely blame the West for this plight. But these strategies of oppression would no longer work. The big question, he said, is what role America should play in this story. For decades, the United States had pursued the central issues of this region: combating terrorism, ending nuclear proliferation, the free movement of goods, security in the region, especially the security of Israel, and the Arab-Israeli peace process. Now, he said, America must realize that this limited way of pursuing its own interests neither fills stomachs nor allows freedom of speech. He had already stated in his Cairo speech that the U.S. had an interest not only in the stability of nations but also in the self-determination of individuals.

Then followed a typical Obama argument: after decades of accepting the world in this region as it is, the U.S. now has a chance to

Stefan Hagemann, Wolfgang Tönnesmann, Jürgen Wilzewski (eds.), *Weltmacht vor neuen Herausforderungen. Die Außenpolitik der USA in der Ära Obama*, Trier 2004, pp. 399–433.

47 Barack Obama, *On American Diplomacy in Middle East and Northern Africa*, May 19, 2011. Transcript, <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamamiddleeastpolicy.htm> (May 21, 2021).

shape it as it should be. Obama then enumerated nearly all the values that have been associated with the goal of “indivisible freedom” in the American tradition to date: the end of violence and repression against peoples, universal human rights, equality between men and women (in the Arab world), religious freedom, economic reform, and the transition to democracy. Obama also advocated economic reconstruction, debt relief for this region, and an idea he pursued at the same time in Europe and Asia: a trade and investment partnership. This is also necessary, he said, because this entire region of 400 million people exports only as much as Switzerland, if one disregards oil.

Posterity knows that this vision of Obama remained a dream. Although he supported individual measures, for example the resignation of the Egyptian dictator Muhammad Husni Mubarak or the bombing of Libya and the killing of the mass murderer Gaddafi, whom the UN once appointed to the Committee on Human Rights, the “Arab Spring” failed across the board. Today, ten years later, people rightly speak of “zombies in ruins,” with Tunisia as a hopeful exception.⁴⁸

Nowhere else in the world has the U.S. been able to transform a country into a peaceful democracy, even to enforce respect for human rights. This was also true of Obama’s human rights policy toward China in the context of the much-discussed “*pivot to Asia*,” the conception of which had been prepared by Obama’s Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during his first term.⁴⁹ Following its entanglement in the Arab world, Clinton and President Obama wanted to position the United States more forcefully as a counterweight against China’s rapid economic rise and its growing claim to power beyond Asia. From the outset, critics have considered this pivot to Asia to be window-dressing, because the U.S. had never withdrawn from Asia since 1945 and

48 Cf. Christoph Ehrhardt, Rainer Hermann, *Zombies in Ruinen*, in: F.A.Z., 17.12.2020.

49 The literature on the rise of China and the American response is boundless. However, it has been the subject of intense debate even as it has unfolded in the United States itself. To cite just a few examples: Andrew J. Nathan, Andrew Scobell, *How China Sees America. The Sum of Beijing’s Fears*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 91, no. 5, September–October 2012, pp. 33–47; Aaron L. Friedberg, *Bucking Beijing. An Alternative U.S.-China Policy*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 91, no. 5, September–October 2012, pp. 49–58; Kevin Rudd, *Beyond the Pivot. A New Road Map for U.S.-Chinese Relations*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2, March–April 2013, pp. 9–15; Thomas J. Christensen, *Obama and Asia. Confronting the China Challenge*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 5, September–October 2015, pp. 28–36; Fred Kaplan, *Obama’s Way. The President in: Practice*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 1, January–February 2016, pp. 46–63.

because it never became clear whether this reorientation was aimed at *engaging* China or *containing* it as in the Cold War era.

Strategically, economically, ideologically, and alliance-wise, all U.S. administrations had always maintained a presence in the Pacific and Asia during the era of the Cold War and global anti-communism. The United States fought two hot wars in Asia, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. To name just one dimension of that presence: When Obama took office, the Pacific Command (US Pacific Command—PACOM) was the largest of the world's six command areas in terms of firepower and geopolitical reach—with 325,000 military and civilian personnel, 180 warships, and nearly 2,000 aircraft. The nuclear triad also applied to Asia. The U.S. presence was embedded in bilateral alliances with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, and South Korea, and a security guarantee for Taiwan. As the latter has democratized over the decades, it is visibly becoming a liberal and law-based alternative to authoritarian China, which is becoming an Asian despotism under the rule of Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CCP and president of the People's Republic of China.

On the other hand, since 1972, when President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited China and initiated a sensational turnaround in Sino-American relations that seemingly broke the logic of the Cold War, every U.S. administration has asserted that China's welfare and security were in the U.S. interest. Moreover, no country in the world has contributed more to China's modernization than the United States. It has given China access to the world economy through the WTO, including to the market, capital, and technology in the United States itself. It has trained China's scientists, technicians, even lawyers in the U.S., whether the Chinese respect the intellectual property of others or steal like ravens. But a major problem in U.S.-China relations has always remained China's interior conditions, i.e., the failure of the country to gradually democratize. The West's great hope that the dynamics of the market economy would eventually be followed by political liberalization and respect for human rights proved to be an illusion of world historical dimension. Communist state capitalists did not become liberal democrats. This was a fact that Obama, at least at the beginning of his term, refused to accept. In his second term, as in many other fields of his politics, he had to submit to the inevitable. But Barack Obama was no Henry Kissinger; he never once asked the ex-Secretary of State for advice. For Obama, the demand for freedom and human rights in China was also part of his swing to Asia.

Ironically, Cold Warrior Richard Nixon was the only post-1945 American president who, under pressure from the Vietnam War, developed and partially implemented a foreign policy alternative to the policy of containment. He was inspired and supported by his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, who had already subjected all models of progress based on a philosophy of history to critical scrutiny in his master's thesis and had trained his thinking on great European conservatives and "realists," especially Richelieu and Metternich, Castlereagh and Bismarck. Kissinger wanted to liberate the Americans from their idea of mission and give them back, of all things, that concept of international relations from which the moralist and missionary Wilson had wanted to redeem the world: the concept of the balance of powers. For Kissinger, even relative stability in international relations—the best that could be expected in view of the *human condition*—could only be achieved if the existence of the main powers, regardless of their respective internal order, was recognized as legitimate, i.e., not called into question.

The relationship of states to each other, he argued, should not be made dependent on their domestic political structure, but on their foreign policy behavior. Just as the statesmen at the Congress of Vienna in 1814/15 had succeeded in preserving peace in Europe for a century by recognizing this principle, so the United States was called upon to establish a stable tripolar, or rather pentagonal, order of the main powers: the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and Europe. American foreign policy, Kissinger said, should therefore see itself neither as a "subdivision of theology" nor as a "subdivision of psychiatry." The policy of the hawks, the theologians, who in missionary zeal wanted to bring down the communist systems in the Soviet Union, in China or in Vietnam, missed the realistic middle just as much as the policy of the doves, the psychiatrists, who again and again proceeded from the illusion that they could support the supposedly peaceful factions within hostile states by incentives.

Legitimacy and stability were for Nixon and Kissinger the highest maxims of a responsible foreign policy, because in the age of nuclear weapons the worst possible accident, a nuclear holocaust, had to be prevented at all costs. Kissinger, who "served" Nixon as Metternich once served Emperor Franz I, sought to disengage Americans from their one-sided fixation on the "lessons of Munich" and to focus their attention on the "lessons of Versailles"—on the need for a viable international order. The world, Nixon said in 1971, would be safer if there were five healthy and stable centers that kept each other in balance. Not

communism, but international anarchy, was the greatest danger. Such a new world order would also allow the U.S. to shift some of its burden to other shoulders (Nixon Doctrine), as it became increasingly clear that the U.S. had overstretched itself economically with the Vietnam War.

Thus, in February 1972, through their negotiations with Mao and Zhou Enlai, Nixon and Kissinger succeeded in putting relations with China on a new footing. Although the two sides could not agree on the thorniest problem to date, the future of National China (Taiwan), they declared that normalization of their relations was not only in the interests of both states but would also help reduce tensions in Asia and the world. And both sides assured that they did not want to establish hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region.⁵⁰

Obama did not want to come to terms with this logic of the power and equilibrium politics of a Nixon and Kissinger in Asia either. Here, too, he promised “hope and change,” at least at the beginning of his term in office, being convinced that he could provide it. His reaction to an event on his first trip to China, when he gave a major speech to selected students in Shanghai, is significant. He expressed disappointment at their tame and meaningless questions, which had obviously been pre-selected. While he did not think their patriotism was feigned, he said they were too young to remember the horrors of the Cultural Revolution and the violent suppression of the Tian’anmen Square protests in Beijing from April to June 1989. After that meeting, it became clear to him that he “had to show that America’s democratic, rule-of-law, pluralistic system could still deliver on the promise of a better life if I were to convince this new generation.” In Beijing, he reminded a faltering President Hu Jintao that “dealing with Chinese dissidents” remained one of the “priorities” of American policy toward China.⁵¹ During his time in office, Obama repeatedly raised the fate of the Tibetans and Uyghurs with China. To the great chagrin of the Chinese, he met with the Dalai Lama at the White House four times during his presidency; for the last time on June 15, 2016, despite explicit warnings from Beijing that this meeting would damage diplomatic relations. Several times, Obama has promised the Dalai Lama “strong support” for Tibetans’ human rights.

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50 Cf. Junker, *Power and Mission*, pp. 106–111.

51 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, pp. 480 ff..

What can be said of Obama's foreign policy from a historical perspective? In answering this question, it is also wise to recall once again Bismarck's insight that history is more accurate in its revisions than the Prussian High Audit Office. During Obama's presidency, the United States no longer possessed the power to transform any country in the world into a liberal democracy under the rule of law or to enforce respect for human rights. Nor would he have received a mandate from a war-weary American people to do so. In this respect, the decline of American leadership began under Obama, not just his successor Donald Trump. The declining global political influence of the U.S. was also the consequence of Obama's fundamental decision not to engage the U.S. in war anywhere in the world, despite the fact that as commander-in-chief he commanded the strongest military force of all time on land, at sea, in the air, and in space, and despite the fact that he did not deny the legitimacy of a "just war" in his Nobel Peace Prize speech. He was the only post-1945 U.S. president to break the close link between American foreign policy and war. However, he did not question the U.S. nuclear umbrella or American alliances in Europe or Asia. But that was not enough to prevent the massive gains in influence by authoritarian and potentially totalitarian states on the Eurasian double continent and other parts of the world.

In security terms, his most dangerous legacy was his inability to force North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un to give up building a nuclear bomb and developing long-range international missiles that could threaten the security of the continental United States. Consequently, this was the only message he left on the presidential desk in the Oval Office for his successor, Donald Trump. In contrast, the nuclear agreement with Iran negotiated by Security Council members and Germany was among his successes. However, this was nullified by Trump when he terminated the agreement, as he did with the Paris climate agreement. In both cases, Obama had not dared to have these agreements ratified by the Senate.

After the great financial crisis of 2008/2009, Obama, in cooperation with other states and international organizations, has been able to stabilize to some extent the "indivisible world market." However, the possibility of another bursting of a money and credit bubble remains dangerously immanent in the system. In a global economy where money and credit no longer have a price, the bursting of the next bubble is possible again at any time. The starting point could again be the U.S., as in the Great Depressions of 1929 and 2008, but it could be in another

country and another region of the world due to the ever-increasing interconnectedness of the capital markets. We are all sailing on the “Titanic” toward the next iceberg, but in the event of a collision, we no longer have any lifeboats, because the global economy, the states, and international organizations are already up to their necks in debt.

President Donald Trump (2017–2021)

The contemporary is not the best connoisseur of the time in which he stands. He has a fragmented sense of his present and his future and cannot grasp the entire complexity of the present, even if he is highly competent in his field.

Hillary Clinton herself had to learn this in a dramatic way when she tried to explain why Donald Trump won the presidential election on November 8, 2016. Overall, slightly more than one in four of the 232 million eligible voters voted for Trump, nearly 63 million or 27 percent. If just 40,000 more voters from Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania had cast their ballots for Hillary Clinton, she would have become the first woman in U.S. history to be elected the 45th president. Based on the electors from the states won by each of the candidates (or districts in Maine and Nebraska), Trump should have received 306 electoral college votes, Clinton 232. But there were breakaway votes on both sides, so Trump ultimately received 304, and Clinton 227.

What had happened? Why could this happen? These were the overriding questions that incessantly occupied Clinton every day in the period after her defeat. These are also the central questions that dominate her recollections of the period after November 8, 2016. “What Happened?”⁵² Her book is an attempt at personal justification and explanation for an event she could barely grasp; not, of course, an impartial book. Her account is the remarkable admission of a woman who knew, as no American woman before her, the structure of American politics and society, including especially the electoral system, the management of voter expectations, and the rules of the game of American politics; a woman who had experienced and suffered a series of successes and defeats.

52 Hillary Rodham Clinton, *What Happened*, London 2017, cited here from the paperback edition London 2018.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, married to the 42nd President William J. “Bill” Clinton since 1975; a “First Lady” in the White House from 1993 to 2001; a politician in her own right as a New York State Senator since November 2000; a failed presidential candidate in 2008, who after long conversations was persuaded by the winner of the election, President Obama, to become his Secretary of State, and, after equally long talks, urged by Obama to run once again as the Democratic Party’s presidential candidate to secure his legacy. As secretary of state from 2009 to 2013, she had traveled the globe 123 times to countries around the world.

Dozens of books have been written about her over the decades, mostly sensational and sales-boosting “tell all” stories; but also solid biographies like that of Carl Bernstein, who himself acquired early fame when he uncovered Nixon’s Watergate break-in with Bob Woodward.⁵³ Bernstein sketched out her key character traits: her Methodist religiosity and missionary self-confidence and her almost self-destructive love for Bill Clinton—she hated the sin and loved the sinner (it was Hillary who saved her husband’s presidency after his affairs with Jennifer Flowers and Monica Lewinsky). Bernstein delved into her revolutionary interpretation of the role, not provided for in the Constitution, of the president’s wife, the First Lady; her high intelligence, passion, and iron discipline; her ability, discovered early on, to speak publicly on any subject in a polished style; her combativeness, ruthlessness, self-righteousness, and the absence of any self-irony. Her religiosity was also the source of her lifelong struggle for women’s rights, and, in general, for the downtrodden and overburdened in society. Throughout her life she had a Methodist confessor and counselor at her side. She admired Barack Obama, as well as President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt. It was no coincidence that she announced her presidential candidacy in 2015 on “Roosevelt Island” in New York’s East River.

On the other hand, Hillary Clinton was never a darling of the media. Her persona and the way she announced and then filled her role as first lady itself became a heavy burden on her husband’s presidency. Twice, in the 1992 and 1996 campaigns, the Clinton administration’s campaign advisers and spin doctors pulled the emergency brake and tried to change her image—an attempt partially seen through by the

53 Cf. the review of Carl Bernstein, *Hillary Clinton. Die Macht einer Frau*, Munich 2007, in: Detlef Junker, *Schlaglichter auf die USA im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*. 30 Rezensionen in der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung*, Heidelberg 2013, pp. 67–70.

media. Far beyond the scathing and bigoted attacks of the Republicans, the Christian Right, and the so-called Moral Majority, Hillary was attacked by the media with such aggressive hostility that she could rightly speak of a “conspiracy of the Right” against the Clintons. Her active intervention and failure in health care reform, her state-interventionist ideas, her dislike of the press and the Washington establishment, and the never-ending series of trivial scandals reinforced the image of a power-hungry, scheming “Lady Macbeth”; an ice-cold, constantly manipulating, and truth-hiding demonic force in the White House. A columnist for the “New York Times” called her a “born liar.” Her numerous image changes led to accusations that she lacked authenticity and was, at her core, a woman without a genuine character. She changes her roles as often as her hairstyles.

In the election campaign summer of 2016, she was again involved in an affair, the so-called “email affair.” The FBI had begun an investigation into whether her private email addresses had been misused for official purposes. The FBI’s conclusion was that she had acted negligently, but that there was no evidence of a crime.

In her search for an answer to the question of what had led to her defeat, Hillary Clinton made an important distinction that, until Trump’s defeat on Nov. 3, 2020, was on the minds of not just the active political class, publicists, and academics but people all over the world. Of less importance, she said, was the question of why she lost crucial votes in the final days of the campaign. The overriding question, she said, was why Trump was able to garner so many votes in the first place.

At the end of Trump’s term, the question becomes even more acute. Why, after four years of Donald Trump being in office, during which he had driven the U.S. into a pre-civil war situation and destroyed its world leadership role, did even more Americans vote for Donald Trump in 2020 than in 2016, 74 million instead of 63 million? Why did he improve his share of the vote among white women from 52 percent to 55 percent? Why would he have won the election without his complete failure in the Corona crisis? Why did the world escape a global political Chernobyl by a hair’s breadth?

Clinton can answer the short-term problem of why she lost votes in the final weeks of the campaign with good arguments. A few days before the election, the vain and naive head of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), James Comey, had dropped a political bombshell. His agency was investigating new emails that could be related to Clinton’s email affair. When he then declared two days

before the election that there were no incriminating findings about Hillary Clinton, nothing could be saved. In the crucial week before the election, the press reported almost exclusively on the Democratic presidential candidate's e-mail affair.

One of the most important structural causes for her defeat and the success of Donald Trump, on the other hand, was, according to Hillary Clinton, the unrestrained false propaganda and agitation by Donald Trump, supported by the well-filled coffers of the Republican Party and above all by the Fox News television station. Fox's majority shareholder, Robert Murdoch, now undermines three Anglo-Saxon democracies through his media empire: his native Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Moreover, Trump's increasingly scandalous statements attracted almost all of the media's attention. Therefore, he hardly needed to spend any funds on his own election advertising. However, he also saved the financially struggling CNN network, which was able to broadcast nonstop "breaking news" thanks to Trump. Circulation of the New York Times and Washington Post also increased dramatically.

One of those propaganda lies, Hillary said, cost her the election victory. It was simply not true, but rather a dirty lie, that she did not care about the fate of the coal mines and the unemployed miners in the "rust belt" of the USA. In fact, she said, their fate was one of her most important issues in the campaign. However, in retrospect, she regretted having made a serious tactical error in early September 2016 when she assumed—probably correctly—that half of Trump's supporters were in the basket of *deplorables*, calling them "racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic."⁵⁴ But then, she said, she became the victim of a campaign of lies and slander. In a panel discussion, she had spoken about the fact that the coal region only had a chance in the long term if coal could be replaced by green, renewable energy. In that context, she had said a phrase that probably cost her crucial votes in the Rust Belt: "Because we are going to put a lot of coal mines out of business."⁵⁵ That phrase was a gobstopper for Donald Trump, the Republican Party and Fox News. For months, that one sentence was repeated—out of context—on every television channel and radio

54 Cf. Aaron Blake, Voters strongly reject Hillary Clinton's "basket of deplorables" approach, in: Washington Post, September 26, 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/26/voters-strongly-reject-hillary-clintons-basket-of-deplorables-approach>.

55 Hillary Clinton, *What Happened*, p. 263.

station. None of Clinton's attempts at a correction were aired. The entire Appalachian region was saturated with that phrase. There were consequences. At an attempted campaign appearance in the small West Virginia town of Williamson, Hillary Clinton faced hundreds of angry and fanatical protesters holding up signs, "We want Trump," "Go home Hillary."⁵⁶

From the outset, this campaign of lies by Trump was of a different order of magnitude than traditional populism in American election campaigns. In this respect, too, the comparison with President Andrew Jackson (1829–1837) does not lead anywhere. Trump's campaign of lies and disinformation aimed at destroying the foundations of democracy, namely the exclusion of the real world and the denial of reality. This campaign of lies therefore logically ended up destroying democratic structures and driving the country into a pre-civil war situation,⁵⁷ using violence to prevent the legitimate outcome of the elections, and condoning a coup d'état. The "Big Lie" about the 2020 presidential election resulted in the storming of the Capitol. A global audience watched as Vice President Mike Pence was prevented from certifying the election results. A gallows had already been erected. Even the attempt at a coup, however, could not persuade the—democratically and ethically deflated—Republican Party to impeach President Trump. Already in the 2016 election campaign, Trump had preemptively claimed that a Hillary Clinton election victory could only be fraud.

This disinformation and lying strategy of Trump's goes far beyond what Americans already knew from the marketed election campaigns before Trump.⁵⁸ For even before Trump, election campaigns had become a pure market phenomenon. Standing between the candidates and the voters there was not only the traditional media—print, television and, more recently, social networks—but also a mobilization and marketing industry of demographers, campaign strategists, and spin doctors. This industry has relied and continues to rely on ever more sophisticated polling techniques, focus groups, the detection of new target audiences, electronic mail, and telephone surveys. In the a-social media of the

56 Ibid. p. 277.

57 The author of this text asserted this early on, cf. e.g., Detlef Junker, *Die Krise des Westens*, in: ifo Schnelldienst 23, 2016, 8.12.2016; Junker., *The Crisis of the American Empire. Farewell Lecture 8.2.2018*, in: Annual Report 2017–18, Heidelberg Center for American Studies 2018, pp. 184–203; Idem, *Donald Trump und die Zerstörung einer Demokratie*, in: Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, 3.3.2020, p. 12.

58 Cf. Detlef Junker, *Die vermarktete Politik. Der Kampf um das Weiße Haus*, in: Óscar Loureda (ed.), *Manipulation. Studium Generale, Heidelberg 2016*, pp. 51–66.

digital age, the remaining reality-based content is evaporating. Anyone can launch a disinformation campaign. There is a fear that democracy will not survive the digital age.

This industry often produces “banana peel words,” slick phrases designed to make an attack from a political opponent impossible. They often do not sell real politicians or political programs, but market-tested artificial products that rely on the impact of emotions, fictions, images, slogans, conspiracy theories and, increasingly, denigration and personal attacks (*negative campaigning*). The development has paralleled the rise of television. Election campaigns are less and less about content and more about meaningless slogans that are therefore difficult to attack, and increasingly about scandalous personal attacks on one’s opponent. One could say with a certain amount of exaggeration that, due to the marketing industry, the election campaign is no longer a contest between politicians, but between their coaches. The starting point is the market-tested hypothesis that voters are fundamentally lazy in their thinking. They must be entertained with emotionality, competition, and spectacle. Very often this has nothing to do with reality. In one of Warren Beatty’s political comedies, a senator decides to commit suicide after watching the TV commercials for his re-election.

The influence of the marketing industry is not without consequences. Under President Reagan, for example, a single image consultant almost single-handedly managed to discredit the word “liberal” among the majority of the American population. Contrary to the literal sense of the word, “liberal” in contemporary America means something like leftist state interventionism. Newt Gingrich’s famous 1994 “Contract for America,” which was intended to usher in a conservative revolution, had been pre-tested sentence by sentence in focus groups. Al Gore was strictly forbidden by his advisors in the 2000 election campaign against George W. Bush to talk at all about his life’s mission, saving the planet. And George W. Bush’s advisors succeeded in discrediting his opposing candidates John McCain and John Kerry with nasty negative campaigns.

Critics see this development as the end of the Enlightenment in the U.S.—at least of the Enlightenment hope that elections would be fought with ideas and passion, but also with arguments that were close to reality. One example of the decline of Enlightenment culture in America can be readily described. Before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, future President Abraham Lincoln and his opponent Stephan A. Douglas had held ten debates in Illinois before thousands of people.

Voters traveled for hours by horse and buggy, listened to a three-hour speech by Lincoln in elaborate English, took a half-hour break, and then followed Douglas' arguments for another three hours. Today, the average commercial on television has shrunk to just a few seconds, partly because commercials have become increasingly expensive.

The question of who pays for election campaigns is also tied into the tension between the state and the market. Since the founding of the United States in the 18th century, all election campaigns have been paid for by the private sector. In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt once made the futile proposal that federal elections be financed by public money and that all private money be banned. Since World War II, there have been several laws and federal Supreme Court decisions to legislate public campaign reimbursement for primaries, the general elections, and nominating conventions. The result is either a victory for the market or a political disaster, depending on your point of view. In fact, the market has won across the board. All present-day candidates are foregoing public funds because the associated restrictions imposed by law are so severe that the increased costs of modern campaigning can no longer be borne. The numbers make this clear. Add in the parallel costs of House and one-third Senate elections, and the 2016 campaign is estimated to have spent about \$8 billion. Acceptance of the 20 million reimbursement per candidate, which is tiny in comparison, would come with such strings attached that the campaigns could no longer be financed. Adding to the costs is the fact that candidates and marketing strategists often have to communicate new strategies and, in some cases, new messages after the midterms. While the primaries target voters in one's own party or potential party-affiliated voters, the general election is about the people as a whole. As in soccer, new players are often brought in. As in soccer, an own goal in the first half often cannot be made up for.

In this context, a 2010 Supreme Court decision cut deeply into the structure of election campaigns (*Citizen United v. Federal Election Commission*). In a narrow 5–4 vote, the Supreme Court held that the First Amendment to the Constitution of November 3, 1791, prohibited the U.S. government from limiting “independent political expenditures” by “nonprofit organizations.” Among other things, the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech. The ruling is an endorsement of the marketplace. The First Amendment, the justices said, prohibits interfering with the marketplace of *ideas* and “rationing” of free speech. “There is no such thing as too much speech.”

Allegations of possible corruption or the appearance of corruption by these private donors do not withstand strict scrutiny, they said.

The ruling does not mean, however, that this leaves the present marketplace of ideas to the super-rich alone, even though the Republicans benefit most through millionaires and billionaires that radically support the market. Billionaire brothers David and Charles Koch, for example, have been systematically undermining almost all government functions since the 1970s; they ensured, through the influence of the “Federalist Society,” that Donald Trump nominated only jurists to members of the Supreme Court that were radical supporters of the market: Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett.⁵⁹ Casino capitalist and billionaire Sheldon Adelson pledged \$100 million to Trump for the 2016 campaign, then became Trump’s biggest supporter with significantly less, \$25 million. For Trump’s inauguration festivities, Adelson also made the largest single donation of \$5 million. In the 2012 campaign, he had announced that he would spend \$100 million to prevent an Obama victory.⁶⁰

But the iPhone and swarm intelligence in social networks have also unleashed a revolution from the bottom up, according to the motto: Every little bit helps. Millions of Americans transfer small amounts of money to candidates. They have become the second major source of income, so, one could also say: the market works.

Donald Trump and the Self-Destruction of a Democracy

As already indicated, despite Americans’ habituation to market-tested slogans, propaganda, and spectacles, neither Hillary Clinton nor the American people were prepared for the fact that Donald Trump would corrupt and dominate the public sphere through lies, propaganda, conspiracy theories, and calls to violence; that he would further divide an already divided nation and drive it into a pre-civil war situation, undermine the legal system and government institutions, and call on

59 Cf. Christopher Leonard, *The Secret History of Koch Industries and Corporate Power in America*, New York 2019. Cf. his, Charles Koch’s Big Bet on Barrett, in: *New York Times*, October 12, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/opinion/charles-koch-amy-coney-barrett.html>.

60 Cf. Robert D. McFadden, Sheldon Adelson, Billionaire Donor to G.O.P. and Israel, Is Dead at 87, in: *New York Times*, January 12, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/12/business/sheldon-adelson-dead.html>.

his supporters to storm the Capitol with his “Big Lie” about the 2020 elections.⁶¹

The moral and intellectual gap with his predecessor, Barack Obama, is so great that historians quickly run out of yardsticks when making comparisons. Trump, from the first day of his term, which began with several lies, had neither the character nor the judgment to fill the presidency responsibly. With an extraordinary destructive energy, Trump has been an arsonist and an accelerant in the self-destruction of an imperial democracy.

He was able to attempt this because the American president today has an extraordinarily large amount of power—more than in other Western, legally constituted systems. Trump, like every president, was at once head of state, head of government, and the power center of the executive branch. He commanded military forces, foreign policy, intelligence agencies, and the civil service. No Supreme Court justice could be appointed without his approval. Moreover, he was part of the legislative process; he had an incredible number of opportunities for office patronage. He dominated the media, created the images of enemies and fake news, and tweeted at the world before breakfast. This permanent presence in the media was a core element of his power.

De facto, he was depriving Congress of the right to declare war because, by invoking the “clear and present danger” clause, he claimed that right for himself. Trump ordered a military strike against Iranian General Soleimani, without ever having consulted Congress before or after his decision—something he would have been legally obligated to do. Why was he able to commit this breach of law? Because, as the world witnessed in two impeachment proceedings, Trump corrupted the Republicans. Trump simply blocked the proceedings with the help of the Republicans. He not only prevented witnesses from testifying, but removed them from their posts afterwards. He simply took revenge like an autocrat.

Trump’s tendency to justify his monopoly on power through a permanent state of emergency was also meant to preempt a possible existential crisis, namely ending up in prison after leaving the White House. Several deferred criminal proceedings await him. To be on the safe side, he had already announced that yes, he could pardon himself. Trump put into practice the insight of the infamous German

61 Ezra Klein, *Der tiefe Graben. Die Geschichte der gespaltenen Staaten von Amerika*, Hamburg 2020, (from the American).

constitutional law scholar Carl Schmitt: “The true sovereign is the one who decides on the state of emergency.” To prevent just such an abuse of power, the American Founding Fathers had designed a special system of separation of powers and overlapping powers (*checks and balances*). The Constitution was intended to preclude precisely what Trump had his lawyer Rudolph Giuliani publicly proclaim: that he was above the law.

He fired Cabinet members and high-ranking military officers at an increasingly rapid rate like no other president before him. The most important positions in his immediate environment within the White House changed several times. He surrounded himself only with sycophants who somehow survived his tantrums. Everyone feared the “one-man firing squad.” The eulogies of himself became more and more grotesque, as did the staging of small successes. Like a godfather of the mafia, he demanded not fidelity to the law but “loyalty” from his cabinet members and staff. He had no relationship to the rule of law, the free press, or free science. His press conferences became empty agitprop events with attacks on the media before he stopped them altogether. After that, journalists were only allowed to ask questions on the way to his helicopter. He answered only what he wanted, almost always with lies.

By now, the whole world knows his character; those interested in politics also know his life story.⁶² He is a pathological, malicious, and brutal narcissist; a notorious gambler and cheat, a racist and sexist. This is what he was raised to be in his family. His father had taught him early on: “Be a killer.” Therefore, as president, he applied daily the

62 In the four years of his presidency, English-language publishers alone have published more than 1000 books about Trump. Cf. Martin Thunert, Donald Trump 2017–2021. Die beispiellose Präsidentschaft, in Christof Mauch (ed.), Die Präsidenten der USA. 46 historische Porträts von George Washington bis Joseph R. Biden, Munich 2021, pp. 498–521, 594–599.

From the growing German-language literature on Trump, see Stephan Bierling, *America First. Donald Trump im Weißen Haus. Eine Bilanz*, Munich 2020; Elmar Thevessen, *Die Zerstörung Amerikas. Wie Donald Trump sein Land und die Welt für immer veränderte*, Munich 2020; Florian Böller, Christoph M. Haas, Steffen Hagemann, David Sirakov, Sarah Wagner (eds.), *Donald Trump und die Politik in den USA. Eine Zwischenbilanz*, Baden-Baden 2020; Tobias Endler, *Game Over. Warum es den Westen nicht mehr gibt*, Zurich 2020; Michael D’Antonio, *Die Wahrheit über Donald Trump*, Berlin 2016. Josef Braml, *Trumps Amerika – auf Kosten der Freiheit. Der Ausverkauf der amerikanischen Demokratie und die Folgen für Europa*, Berlin 2016; Torben Lütjen, *Amerika im kalten Bürgerkrieg. Wie ein Land seine Mitte verliert*, Darmstadt 2020.

tactics he had learned in a brutal segment of the New York real estate market: in addition to excessive tax avoidance, probably tax evasion (that will come out in civil suits after the end of his term), he pursued a highly speculative investment policy that led him several times to the brink of bankruptcy, and engaged in nepotism, corruption, and collaboration with the Mafia and speculative bankers. In recent years, he was supported only by Deutsche Bank; U.S. bankers no longer even wanted to touch him with a ten-foot pole. Trump also had contacts with the mafia because Anthony Salerno, known as “Fat Tony,” the boss of the Genovese clan, controlled and supplied the cement market in New York, including the material used for the “Trump Tower” on Fifth Avenue and other projects.

Russian oligarchs and kleptocrats helped keep Donald Trump, who was more than four billion dollars in debt, afloat in the late 1990s. At least that’s what historian Timothy Snyder of Yale University has found out.⁶³ They gave Trump loans and used his real estate for organized money laundering. His Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue was just one of two buildings in New York that allowed the anonymous sale of apartments. Trump’s survival depended on money from Russian oligarchs. After signing a memorandum of understanding for a “Trump Tower” in Moscow, he tweeted in July 2015, “Putin likes Donald Trump.” As president of the United States Trump was susceptible to blackmail by Putin on many fronts: the multiple business ties from Trump and his family to Russian oligarchs that continued during his presidency; Russian influence on the 2016 election campaign in favor of Trump and with the goal of undermining Hillary Clinton’s position; and, finally—possibly—recordings of Trump with prostitutes in Moscow. These conflicts of interest are the only way to explain the fact that Trump never once publicly criticized Putin, but always showed understanding for the position of the Russian dictator, far more than, for example, for the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Angela Merkel. Trump kept minutes of confidential talks with Putin to himself or had them destroyed.

Trump’s mentor was a notorious lawyer named Roy Cohn, who from the 1950s through the 1980s legally represented anyone who could pay him. Cohn had begun his career as a Communist hunter during the McCarthy era. He was indicted several times as a lawyer on charges

63 Cf. Timothy Snyder, *Der Weg in die Unfreiheit. Russland, Europa, Amerika*, Munich 2018, pp. 223–234.

including extortion, bribery, stock fraud, and perjury. Because he was always able to maneuver his way out of seemingly hopeless situations, Trump thought his lawyer was vicious but a “genius.” Trump could accurately observe how to extricate himself from hard-pressed situations. Trump pre-existing belief in Social Darwinism was reinforced by Cohn’s tactics: never give up, never admit to anything, immediately go on the public and legal counterattack; sue those who sue you for double the amount; create headlines, especially television images; speak emotionally and hatefully, and appeal to people’s baser instincts. That’s part of the reason Trump blocked the two impeachment hearings and immediately responded with political counterattacks. Cohn, however, had to recognize that Trump dropped him, his mentor, stone cold when he fell ill. Before his death in 1992, he said of Trump: “Donald pisses ice water.”

Donald Trump, who didn’t take office until he was 70, had over his long life developed into a genius of self-promotion, in the real estate market and as a star on television shows, especially “The Apprentice,” where his favorite line was: “You are fired.” He realized that the more he violated minimum standards of interpersonal decency, the greater the public impact. He dominated and manipulated the market-based public sphere in the U.S. and then in the world like no politician before him; he also imposed his agenda on the critical and hostile media. The more deceitfully and violently he appealed to the emotions and hatreds of his audience, the more frenetic the applause and the more radical the criticism. He did not care as long as HE was the center of attention.

The extent to which the system of lies destroyed American society and the public sphere cannot be underestimated.⁶⁴ He began his lies as an office holder as soon as he was sworn in. He never intended to fulfill his oath of office, which was to execute the office of President of the United States to the best of his ability and to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. Against all appearances, he claimed that never before had so many people watched the inauguration of a president. His craving for recognition was so great that he did not mind that the whole world could see his lie on the screen. His press secretary spoke of “alternative facts.” The White House website has a long list of his alleged accomplishments—almost all spun or deceitful statements. According to a Washington Post lie counter, he made

64 See Philip N. Howard, *Lie Machines. How to Save Democracy from Troll Armies, Deceitful Robots, Junk News Operations, and Political Operatives*, New Haven and London 2020.

13,455 false or misleading statements in his first 1,000 days in office. That is why, in a letter to New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, the writer of this essay suggested putting up a ticking presidential lie clock next to the national debt clock on 44th Street—unfortunately to no avail.

The public use of the presidential lie as the dominant form of communication, the systematic denigration of his opponents and of all institutions of American politics and society, and the promise of salvation by President Donald J. Trump who would lead the (white) American people to new greatness against internal and external enemies—“to make America great (and white) again”—all this exacerbated the already existing divisions and conflicts in American politics, economy, and culture. Even President Obama had only been able to marginally change these problems:

- The partisan divide between Republicans and Democrats that had spilled over into society and families.
- The deficiencies of the U.S. political system: the antiquated, unrepresentative electoral system, open to manipulation and abuse; the dysfunctional legislative process in Congress, accessible only to specialists; and the Supreme Court, whose conservative majority believes it must interpret jurisprudence in the 21st century according to the intentions of the Founding Fathers and the social constitution of the 13 colonies in the 18th century (*original intent*). The Land of Liberty lacks a basic philosophical foundation of law drawn from a philosophy of freedom in the sense of Kant: Only in a constitutional state can the freedom of the individual be guaranteed by the freedom of others, without the antagonistic freedom claims of individuals canceling each other out. Because this philosophical cornerstone is missing, the American constitutional state is, in many areas, only a state of “legal redress.” The slave laws in the individual states and the endless stream of repressive measures after the Civil War were not laws at all in the philosophical sense of liberty, but acts of arbitrariness.
- The country’s inability to come to terms with its original sin of racism, to deliver on the promise of a multicultural society, and to accept its internal globalization.⁶⁵

65 On the problem of racism, see the work of Manfred Berg, “No, he couldn’t!”, in: in: *Die Zeit*, August 11, 2016. <https://www.zeit.de/2016/34/barack-obama-kampf-gegen-rassismus>. Was ist aus Martin Luther Kings Traum geworden? Amerikas

- The deep and profoundly divisive opposition over what should be provided by the market and what should be provided by the state in the 21st century, combined with enormous economic, social, and cultural inequality;⁶⁶ also with massive inequality of opportunities for advancement, leading not only to a class society but also to a caste society.⁶⁷
- The increasing destruction of the environment, the decay of public infrastructure, and the rapidly increasing number of environmental disasters that affect the population in very different ways.
- The wide gap between life experiences and realities on the ground in rural and urban regions of the U.S. and the ensuing culture clash between rural and urban populations.
- The inability of the U.S. to consolidate the monopoly of legitimate violence reserved to the state and to stop the endemic proliferation of privately owned firearms (approximately 400 million), which, if possible, would mean the disarming of a potential army in the case of a civil war.

Schwarze Minderheit seit der Bürgerrechtsbewegung, in: Michael Butter, Astrid Franke, Horst Tonn (eds.), *Von Selma bis Ferguson. Rasse und Rassismus in den USA*. Bielefeld 2016, pp. 73–92; *Von Barack Obama zu Donald Trump. Martin Luther Kings Traum vor dem Ende?*, in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 67, 18, 2017, 22–28; *Begrenzter Handlungsspielraum: Obama und das Problem des Rassismus*, in: *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* 10, 2, 2017, pp. 97–109, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12399-017-0621-5>.

66 See Welf Werner, Winfried Fluck (eds.), *Wie viel Ungleichheit verträgt die Demokratie? Armut und Reichtum in den USA*, Frankfurt 2003. Welf Werner, *The Trump Phenomenon: Economic Causes and Remedies*, in: Heidelberg Center for American Studies (ed.), *Annual Report 2018–2019*, pp. 170–188; Christian Lammert, *The Broken Social Contract: The Domestic Roots of U.S. Hegemonic Decline in the World*, in: Florian Böller, Welf Werner (eds.), *Hegemonic Transition. Global Economic and Security Orders in the Age of Trump*, Basingstoke 2021. See also Emmanuel Saez, Gabriel Zucman, *Der Triumph der Ungerechtigkeit. Steuern und Ungleichheit im 21. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2020 (from the American). On urban inequality, see Ulrike Gerhard, *Die Bedeutung von „Rasse“ und „Klasse“ im US-amerikanischen Ghetto*, in: *Geographische Rundschau* 66, 5, 2014, pp. 18–24; idem, *Strukturwandel und wachsende urbane Ungleichheiten im US-amerikanischen Rustbelt*, in: *Geographische Rundschau* 67, 3, 2015, pp. 20–27.

67 Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste. The Origins of Our Discontents*, New York 2020.

- The Republican political counter-revolution, which has systematically subverted the courts, legislatures, and governments in the interests of its party since President Ronald Reagan was in office (1981–1989). It is no coincidence that the House of Representatives’ desperate attempt in March 2021 to use a reform bill (H.R.1) to change election law, stop partisan and grotesque *gerrymandering*, curb the influence of big money on election campaigns, and establish minimum ethical requirements (!) for Supreme Court justices, the president, and the executive branch has met with massive Republican resistance. Anyone who wants a sober picture of the state of American democracy should delve into this bill.⁶⁸ However, this bill will fail because of another procedural blockade, the obstruction of a Senate decision by continuous speakers (*filibusters*); i.e., where a speaker can spend days reading from the Bible to block a decision. The only purpose of the filibuster is to increase the approval rate in the Senate from 51 to 60 votes (a two-thirds majority).
- The left wing of the Democratic party, which is increasingly dominated by identity politics, purification fantasies, and ahistorical moralism.
- The fragmentation into more than a thousand religious communities, which dissolves the unifying bond of American civil religion—the trinity of “God, Country, and Freedom”—from within.

The big million-dollar question, of course, is why Trump was elected in 2016 and why he lost by a very narrow margin in 2020. In 2016, only slightly more than one in four of the 232 million eligible voters voted for Trump, nearly 63 million or 27 percent, and in 2020, by contrast, about 74 million of the eligible voters, or about 32 percent.

To get closer to answering this question, let’s start with Trump’s election strategy: Who was targeted by his emotions, lies, and fake news? Trump catered to the partly open, partly hidden racism of his voters, their fears of alienation and loss of status, their bitterness about the traditional elites and what they see as a corrupt political system. He catered to their penchant for simple and, if need be, violent solutions. He offered himself as a leader who would bang the table on domestic and foreign policy, understand the “real” interests of the people and

68 117th Congress, H.R. 1. For the People Act of 2021, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1/text> (Mar. 15, 2021).

lead them to the Promised Land. At a campaign event, a Trump supporter was asked why he supported this president. His simple answer: "Because he talks like us."

If three ideal-typical groups of voters are singled out, 1. the faithful, 2. the poor, underprivileged, and disenfranchised, and 3. the rich, it must at the same time be noted that parts of these groups can also be found among Democrats or non-voters.

The first group is the evangelicals. More than a third of Americans, i.e., more than 100 million people, are counted among the Protestant evangelicals, who are increasingly taking over from the old Protestant churches. Evangelicals are fundamentalists in the sense that they base their faith solely on the literal interpretation of the Bible as the Word of God. They cannot share the conviction of many Protestants, involving 2000 years of interpretive history, that the Bible is God's word in man's word. They are at war with America's liberal tradition; they literally demonize divorce, adultery, abortion, and homosexuality; and they fight against the legal separation of church and state, a cornerstone of the American Constitution. All initiatives promoted by the fundamentalists in judicial, social, family, and economic policy are subordinated to these goals. As Christian Zionists, they also unconditionally support Israel on theological grounds.

During the campaign, Trump discovered evangelicals mostly by accident. He was stunned that his Republican competitors always knew God was on their side. Therefore, he invited the leaders of the main evangelical religious communities to Trump Tower in New York and promised to fulfill all their wishes, including concerns about personnel. For the sake of these promises, they ignored the president's not very Christian character traits. In fact, he appointed Mike Pence, a fanatical evangelical, as vice president; and, as desired by the evangelicals, he held on tenaciously to the choice of a conservative federal judge, namely Brett Kavanaugh. Secretary of State Pompeo and Attorney General Barr were also evangelicals. Of course, when they tried to test his Christian credibility, he lied about his supposedly regular church attendance. When they asked him about communion, he recalled "drinking my little wine and having my little cracker."⁶⁹

The second large group is the white underclass and lower middle class, although it should be added that a quarter of Trump's voters

69 John Fea, *Believe Me. The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump*, Grand Rapids 2018, p. 3; cf. Philip Gorski, *Am Scheideweg. Amerikas Christen und die Demokratie vor und nach Trump*, Freiburg in Breisgau, 2020 (from the American).

were not white.⁷⁰ They are victims of the enormous social and political inequality in the country. 33 percent of so-called “blue collar workers,” that is, people without college degrees, are white. This class often lives in extremely precarious conditions, always on the verge of catastrophe. Sixty percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. A single failure to receive a monthly payment can plunge them into social disaster. The statistics are also of little value in terms of the employment rate, and the same is true of the average income. The latter is statistically \$75,000 annually. But the 122 million Americans at the bottom of the income pyramid (the bottom 40 percent) earn an average of only \$18,500 annually. They do not hold the American economic and cultural system primarily responsible for the blatant inequality in the U.S. and their own precarious situation, as left-wing Democrats do; rather, they feel they are victims of globalization and sinister, foreign powers.

Income inequality is exacerbated by a regressive tax system. The bottom 40 percent of the population still have to pay 25 percent tax despite being on the edge of subsistence level income; while the lower middle class pays 28 percent, and the rich only very slightly more. For the richest 400 billionaires, the tax rate then drops again to 23 percent. The net result is that the “Trumps” “Zuckerbergs” and “Buffets” have a lower tax rate than their secretaries. For the first time in over a century, there is this disparity between billionaires and their secretaries.⁷¹

Their children have no chance to pay for a good education. American students have more debt than any homeowner. Health insurance, if they have any at all, is rapidly becoming Swiss cheese. The epidemic drug and opium use in the U.S. is also related to the fact that this underclass, discharged from the legally required emergency room, is only given pain-relieving pills for a few days, then they have to find other ways of getting these drugs. They are therefore always looking for scapegoats and a “leader” who will finally put them out of their misery. And that is what Trump promised them. Trump delivered them the scapegoats in brutal language and miserable English: The nations that make their unfair trade profits at the expense of the U.S.; the immigrants and refugees who take away the jobs. His speeches, as noted, are peppered with racial innuendo, especially, but not only,

70 Cf. Charles M. Blow, *The Devil You Know. A Black Power Manifesto*, New York 2021, p. 212.

71 See Emmanuel Saez, Gabriel Zucman, *The Triumph of Injustice. How the Rich Dodge Taxes and How to Make Them Pay*, New York 2019.

against African Americans. He skillfully instrumentalizes America's original sin, racism.

The third group of Trump supporters are rich Americans who benefit from the money and credit glut, as well as from the Republicans' tax policy. They continue to follow their interests first and foremost; they had filled Trump's campaign coffers for the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections to the brim. The reality of life for the 24.8 million golfers in the U.S. in 2020 (including 6 million women) at 14,100 golf courses, for example, is fundamentally different from the reality of the rural and urban poor. In these Republican bastions, most golfers are rock solidly convinced that by virtue of their own efforts and hard work, they have earned their prosperity themselves. Their only constant complaint is taxes being too high. They have all forgotten that in 1960 they still paid almost 60 percent in taxes. It is only in this milieu that Trump spends his—extraordinarily ample—free time. They do not want to make their contribution to the common good through an active state and taxes, but through voluntary *charity*. Among the great American patrons, a gain in distinction is in any case no longer achieved by the size of the money earned alone, but also by the money donated. For many religious Republicans, charity is an obligation of worldly success, which can still be interpreted as a sign of being chosen by divine grace (Max Weber). As one of the greatest philanthropists of all times, Andrew Carnegie, famously said, he wanted to avoid the shame of dying rich.

In many ways, American patrons are in the tradition of the greatest philanthropist of the early modern era, Jakob Fugger, a banker and entrepreneur from Augsburg, a global player of his time who saw eye-to-eye with the pope and emperor and, at the height of his European influence in 1519, founded with his brothers an entirely new, middle-class institution for the poor, the "Fuggerei," which still exists today. The Fuggers, like Americans today, were always on the lookout for "their industrious but poor fellow citizens." Under no circumstances was charity allowed to end up with idlers, drunkards, thieves, and violent criminals. This civic spirit of voluntary charity between the market and the state is also the basis for the worldwide "service clubs" (*We Serve*) founded by the USA, such as Lions and Rotary, the Soroptimists and Zontas. On average, Americans donate seven times as much per person as Germans.⁷² Meanwhile, thanks to the bubbles

72 Statista Research Department, Comparison of the volume of donations in Germany and the USA (in euros per inhabitant per year), Statista 2009, <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/37177/umfrage/spenden---vergleich-des->

in the financial and capital markets, so much economic power has accumulated among the major donors that they themselves want to solve humanity's problems, which the indebted states and international aid organizations cannot handle. A prominent example is Bill and Melinda Gates, who are fighting poverty, disease, and inequality in the world.

Democrats, on the other hand, have had more trouble filling their coffers for the primaries and elections. There are comparatively few wealthy Americans who traditionally support the Democratic Party. Many of them were deeply concerned that the party might nominate as its presidential candidate a leftist man or woman whom they all consider to be a socialist or a communist. After all, a social market economy in the European sense is inconceivable even to wealthy Democrats. They, too, are imbued with the quintessentially American conviction that the best government is no government.

If one compares the lower class, which lives on the edge of the subsistence level and often drifts into illegality, with those rich, who are fixated on tax avoidance, Hegel's insight that the "poor" and the "rich" rabble are the greatest structural threat to bourgeois society in the New World, seems to deserve more thought and credit. Among the poor and the rich rabble there would be a problematic understanding of law.⁷³

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Rebellious Republicans are largely in Trump's pocket. He threatened and continues to threaten congressmen and senators that he can mobilize his supporters against them in their districts. That is why the Republican Party has become a shadow of itself. The big question is what actions of Trump it will take to lose the loyalty of Republicans. Obviously not by impeachment proceedings and a storming of the Capitol.

Trump harbors an almost bottomless hatred for his predecessor Barack Obama. The intelligent and charismatic Obama is a living provocation for the racist Trump. After Obama's election, Trump helped to spread a conspiracy theory that Obama was not born in the USA and therefore not a legitimate president (*birtherism*). Obama initially

spendenvolumens-in-deutschland-und-den-usa/ (March 29, 2021). Cf. Detlef Junker, *Stiftung und Mäzene in historischer Perspektive – eine nichtgehaltene Laudatio auf Manfred Lautenschläger*, in: Dr. h. c. Manfred Lautenschläger. *Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag*, Heidelberg, n.d., pp. 68–72.

73 Cf. Klaus Vieweg, *Hegel. Der Philosoph der Freiheit*, Munich 2nd ed. 2020, pp. 513, 768; cf. Jürgen Kaube, *Hegels Welt*, Berlin 2020.

considered this conspiracy theory too absurd to take a stand on it. Only when this theory became more and more popular did he have a confirmation of his birth (*Certification of Live Birth*) published, according to which he was born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

But then, on May 1, 2011, Obama used a major social event in Washington, D.C., to humiliate Trump and expose him to ridicule, something Trump could never get over. Every year—until the end of Obama’s term—journalists accredited to the White House invited the respective president and a select public of up to 2,000 people to a dinner to ridicule each other with criticism, wit, satire, and humor. Like all such associations, this dinner was a collective affirmation of self-importance—one belongs to the club. Donald Trump and his wife Melania had been invited to the Washington Post table. President Obama fulfilled his role dazzlingly, with self-mockery, wit, subtle allusions, and selected eulogies (while at the same time preparations were underway to kill Bin Laden the next day). Obama announced that the state would now publish his birth certificate in long form, while he himself would release the official video of his own birth. Then he hailed one of the founding fathers of the conspiracy theory, Donald Trump. Obama said that there must be no one happier than Trump, as he could now put the birth certificate story to rest in order to devote himself to a new task, namely proving that the moon landing had been “fake news.” The hall shook with laughter, the deeply humiliated Trump left the event, never to appear there again.

However, he will have been told that Obama lashed out at him again at his last correspondents’ dinner on May 1, 2016, in the midst of the election campaign. He said he absolutely had to talk about Trump again, even though he felt hurt because he had not shown up. What do you think Trump is doing these days? Eating a Trump steak or insulting Angela Merkel on Twitter? The establishment of the Republican Party is shocked, Obama said, because Trump has no experience in foreign policy. But to that, Obama added, in all fairness, Trump has met with world leaders: Miss Sweden, Miss Argentina, and Miss Azerbaijan. In one field, however, Trump’s experience is invaluable, closing Guantanamo (the U.S. maximum security prison for terrorists in Cuba). After all, Trump has experience in bankrupting maritime properties.⁷⁴

74 Barack Obama, The President’s Speech, White House Correspondents’ Dinner, May 1, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/05/01/president-s-speech-white-house-correspondents-dinner> (Mar. 25, 2021); *idem.*, The President’s

Trump's hatred of Obama, a constant throughout his tenure, also has a root in Obama's humiliations before Washington's social elite, which despised him anyway because it looked down on this vulgar, pompous, and lying *nouveau riche*. Trump never arrived in New York and Washington society, which, along with tax avoidance, was an important reason for his retreat to Florida, where he is preparing to return to power, as Napoleon once did on Elba.

Donald Trump and the Destruction of America's World Leadership Role

While Donald Trump drove the U.S. into a pre-civil war situation in domestic politics and deepened the divisions within its society, he ruined the U.S. position in world politics with breathtaking speed. He could not even think of the global reach of U.S. national interests, the great constant of U.S. foreign policy since entering World War II, indivisible security, indivisible world market, and indivisible freedom. The U.S. maintained a military and economic presence in the world during his presidency, but Trump was incapable of any kind of "world policy." For four years, Trump produced chaos in American foreign policy under the slogan "America First."

This was not only due to his narcissism, but also to his complete inability to perceive the outside world, such as other states, societies, and international organizations, as individual entities. He transferred his experiences from the real estate business and show business to the world and always encountered only himself. At the same time, his personnel policy deprived the departments and institutions of U.S. global power of their knowledge of the world. This applied to the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce, to the National Security Council, to U.S. embassies and consulates, and even to U.S. representation in global organizations. Trump's entry into the White House also meant a hostile takeover of U.S. foreign policy by the "Trump Enterprises."

In foreign policy, Trump said, he doesn't need to be lectured by anyone except his gut. Disillusioned staffers complained that even in foreign policy he only had the attention span of a 13-year-old. His much-described "America First" strategy was nothing more than the

Speech, White House Correspondents' Dinner May 1, 2016, Transcript. <https://time.com/4313618/white-house-correspondents-dinner-2016-president-obama-jokes-transcript-full/> (Mar. 25, 2021).

transfer of his Social Darwinist experiences in the merciless New York real estate scene to world politics. He was never about “America First,” but about “Trump First.” Because he did not know the world, he perceived it as a hostile outside entity that, if he wasn’t careful, would continue to cheat and ruin Americans. “My job is not to represent the world, my job is to represent the United States,” he proclaimed in his first message to Congress on March 1, 2017.⁷⁵ The first has never been claimed by any U.S. president; the second is a given, namely the execution of his duties. The intent of this meaningless juxtaposition was to insinuate that his predecessor Obama did not represent the interests of the United States and was unpatriotic. The second part of his message to Congress was a brutal reckoning with his predecessor’s policies.

A new chapter of American greatness, Trump said, will begin; the mistakes of the past decades should not define the country’s future. The U.S., he said, had embarked on one global project after another but ignored the fate of children in the inner cities of Chicago, Baltimore, and Detroit; the U.S. had protected the borders of other countries but opened its own borders wide to anyone; the U.S. had spent billions overseas while infrastructure collapsed at home. But then, in 2016 (with his election) the earth had moved beneath Americans’ feet. Millions of Americans had awakened, united in the very simple but crucial demand that America put its own citizens first. Only then could America truly be led to new greatness (“Truly Make America Great Again”). Trump grouped his domestic and foreign policy demands around this leitmotif. In domestic policy, he presented a grab bag, the contents of which would make the USA great again in order to let the country shine in new splendor in nine years—at its 250th anniversary in 2026.

His main domestic policy demands included repealing Obama’s health care reform (Obamacare), reducing violence and crime, ending corruption, lowering taxes, partially privatizing the school system, strengthening the police, ending many unnecessary environmental regulations and building new oil pipelines. He promised to stop the “export of jobs and American wealth” to foreign countries, to cancel the Trans-Pacific Free Trade Agreement (TPP) negotiated by Obama, to build a wall on the border with Mexico to stop immigrants and terrorists, especially from Muslim countries. He said the decision to admit China to the WTO in 2001 cost the U.S. 60,000 factories. He

75 Donald Trump, Remarks by President Trump, in: Joint Address to Congress, February 28, 2017, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-joint-address-congress/> (Mar. 29, 2021).

also attached a price tag to future foreign policy in general. The U.S. would only engage in the world “directly, robustly, and sustainably” if partners in NATO, the Middle East, and the Pacific paid their “fair share of the costs.” Trump’s decades-old obsession with the rest of the world freeloading at U.S. expense was a leitmotif of his first message to Congress.

What was missing from Donald Trump from day one was a knowledge of and understanding for the American mission of freedom, not to mention support for human rights anywhere in the world. This aspect of “liberal internationalism” was not part of his Social Darwinist view of humanity. Relative to the rhetoric of his predecessor Barack Obama, indeed of almost all presidents in the 20th and 21st centuries, Trump’s foreign policy had no idealistic dimension of freedom. The American idea of mission was no longer present anywhere in the world during his presidency.

Trump also had no idea about global American security policy, indivisible security, as Defense Secretary James Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and many others inside and outside the Cabinet were horrified to discover during his first months in office. Trump had no knowledge of history and had major problems with the world map. He knew little about the basics of American global politics after 1945, U.S. alliance systems, and the global military presence of U.S. forces. He also had only “gut feelings” about world politics; when his spontaneous “ideas” were criticized, he went into fits of rage. Obviously, for him, the worldwide military presence, bases, and alliances were a waste of money; also, because the allies paid too little, being free riders of American generosity. If alliances were to be kept at all, he said, everyone should pay more for them in order to stop cheating the United States. While he was quick to try to build good relations with dictators and authoritarian regimes to broker a leader-to-leader “deal,” he not only questioned the purpose of NATO but was also inclined to withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea and Afghanistan.

Being highly alarmed at the situation, military leaders and secretaries had a saving idea. They decided to try impress Trump by inviting him to the Pentagon’s inner sanctum, the legendary room 2E924, called “The Tank,” where senior generals and admirals develop and visualize strategies for war and peace. Defense Secretary James Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, as well as Gary Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, and others hoped to win over the president with presentations, maps, diagrams, and speeches. To get his attention, many

documents simply had Donald Trump's name written into them. This meeting turned out to be a disaster in every respect.⁷⁶ The very first sentence on the screen proclaimed exactly what Trump deeply hated: "The rule-based postwar world order is the greatest gift of the greatest generation." The "greatest generation" in the U.S. is fondly understood to mean the victors of World War II. General Mattis also lectured on NATO's significant role in stabilizing Europe, which in turn serves U.S. security. Steve Bannon, at that time still an important advisor to Trump, a whisperer, Lenin admirer, and also a "great disruptor," was already worried about disaster after the first sentences. This would go wrong. Trump would not even be able to say the phrase "rule-based postwar world order" if his life depended on it. He simply does not think that way.

For an hour and a half, Trump was briefed not only on the global security situation but also on the benefits of free trade. Trump, as always plagued by a short attention span, reacted visibly annoyed, interrupting whenever it occurred to him and putting on record his worldview, according to which he actually acted during his presidency. The world's statesmen and politicians would have been spared many disappointments if the minutes of this meeting had been made available to them at the beginning of Trump's term.

To name just a few of Trump's key positions: South Korea should pay for the U.S.-developed missile defense system itself, he said, even though it was designed to shoot down ballistic missiles from North Korea to protect South Korea *and* U.S. forces. Moreover, he said, he could easily eliminate the threat of North Korean nuclear missiles by making a deal with dictator Kim Jong-un: "This is just leader against leader. Man against man. Me against Kim." NATO is also worthless, he said. NATO countries owe the United States heaps of money. This, he said, was simply "back payment" that the U.S. was not collecting. If a company were run that way, it would have gone bankrupt long ago. In response, General Mattis even dared to contradict his president. NATO partners do not owe the U.S. "rent." The circumstances, he said, were complicated. Above all, he said, the president must see the big picture, because NATO protects not only Western Europe, but also the United States.

76 The meeting, which has been documented several times, is most fully described in: Philip Rucker and Carol Leonnig's, *Trump gegen die Demokratie*. "A Very Stable Genius," Frankfurt 2020 (from the American), chapter 9; see also Bob Woodward, *Furcht: Trump im Weißen Haus*, Reinbek 2018 (from the American); idem, *Rage*, London 2020.

Cohn then tried to explain to President Trump the value of trade agreements. Trump disputed all of Cohn's arguments, stating that he should not even try to convince him of free trade. That's going totally wrong, he said. "They're screwing us. All the jobs are gone. They're screwing us." Trump also repeated the threat to withdraw from the Iran nuclear agreement. That, he said, is the worst deal ever. The Iranians would cheat and build nuclear bombs. Finally, Trump also attacked the military personally. He demanded an explanation why the U.S. still hasn't won the war in Afghanistan after 16 years, he said. This, he said, was a "loser's war." He talked himself into a rage, telling the military officers present, "You're all losers. You don't even know how to win anymore." He yelled at the assembled military and went on to hurl an outrageous insult at everyone in the room: "You're nothing but pussies and babies." That's what the military men, who had put their lives on the line several times in their long careers, had to take from a draft dodger who had been certified by a doctor friend as having bone spurs in both heels and therefore unable to do military service in Vietnam.

None of the military leaders present had the courage to directly contradict Trump, not even Vice President Mike Pence, who looked white as chalk and frozen, like a "deer in the headlights." Only Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, the longtime CEO of ExxonMobil, dared to criticize Trump, ushering in the end of his short tenure as U.S. secretary of state. What the president is saying is not right, he said; he is dead wrong. "The men and women who choose to become soldiers do not do so to become mercenaries. That's not why they put on uniforms and risk their lives ... They do it to defend our freedom." When President Donald Trump disappeared with his motorcade, Tillerson did not hide his disdain: "He's a fucking moron."

This "fucking moron" intervened in U.S. security policy "leader to leader" all over the world, although he probably never read a single memorandum on security policy. Occasionally, scraps of these memoranda were smuggled into his speeches by his apparatus. But one could never know how far these elements reflected his own fleeting views. This was true, for example, of his speech to the United Nations on September 9, 2017, when he declared North Korea's brutal and terrorist regime a gang of criminals and a scourge on humanity.⁷⁷ He said he may have no choice but to completely destroy North Korea. Of dictator

77 See Politico, Full text: Trump's 2017 U.N. speech transcript, Sept. 19, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/19/trump-un-speech-2017-full-text-transcript-242879> (Apr. 6, 2021).

Kim Jong-un, he said, “Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime.” Denuclearization of North Korea, he said, is the only viable way out. He said he faces similar choices not only in North Korea, but also vis-à-vis Iran, the many terrorist organizations, and the criminal regime of Bashar Hafiz al-Assad.

Trump was convinced that he could solve most of these problems “leader to leader,” with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, Russian president and dictator Putin, Chinese dictator Xi Jinping, and Turkish autocrat Erdogan. One of Trump’s key problems with NATO was that he could not find a NATO “leader”—that would actually be himself—and therefore he had to insult different heads of state depending on the occasion, such as Emmanuel Macron or Angela Merkel. NATO’s diplomatic Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg could always inject a little moderation into Trump’s vain blood stream. A particular example of his dealings with other “leaders” was his relationship with Kim Jong-un. Despite his frontal attack on North Korea at the United Nations, Trump was convinced that he could defuse the overriding U.S. security problem in the Pacific, North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs, through face-to-face talks. By making a “deal” with Kim, he wanted to outdo Obama and win a Nobel Peace Prize—one that was truly deserved.

North Korea had begun developing a nuclear program as early as the mid-1960s. Although the country had joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985, it had continued to work continuously on improving its nuclear program, and in 2003 it withdrew from the NPT again.⁷⁸ The nuclear program was intended to ensure the survival of the Kim dynasty. Only those capable of a retaliatory nuclear strike would not be attacked by the United States. The fates of Syria’s Bashar Hafiz al-Assad and Libya’s Muammar al-Gaddafi were cautionary examples from Kim’s perspective. Moreover, nuclear power status increases North Korea’s prestige and policy options, particularly its blackmail potential against U.S. allies Japan and South Korea. China’s strategic interests are also existentially affected by this program.

No president before Trump had succeeded in solving the problem of North Korea becoming a nuclear power. Trump now wanted to do it spectacularly in face-to-face talks. In doing so, he gave one of the most bloodthirsty dictators a place on the world stage that his father

78 Cf. Oliver Thränertm, *Des Kaisers neue Kleider: Trump und Nordkorea*, in: Florian Böller, Christoph M. Haas, Steffen Hagemann, David Sirakov, Sarah Wagner (eds.), *Donald Trump und die Politik in den USA. Eine Zwischenbilanz*, pp. 291–306.

and grandfather had not even dared to dream of. Trump did not deny that Kim was violent and evil. But, Trump told journalist and historian Bob Woodward, Kim tells him everything, he knows everything about him. Kim, he said, killed his uncle and chopped off his head. Then he had posted his dead body where the North Korean “senators” had to pass. The chopped-off head had been on his chest, he said, which was hard. “You know, they think politics in this country is tough.”⁷⁹

To prepare for his meetings with Kim in Singapore, Hanoi, and on the demarcation line between North and South Korea, the president and dictator wrote many letters to each other: Kim alone wrote 27 letters to Trump, which the president described as “love letters” full of turgid flattery about their unique, world-historical greatness. That did not stop Trump from reminding Kim about the fate of Gaddafi, which nearly derailed the negotiations before they even began. But neither carrots nor sticks helped, and the global media hype that Trump enjoyed also came to naught. Kim did not deviate one millimeter from his maximum position. Trump, however, lied, as he always does, in a tweet on June 13, 2018, saying there was no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea. Obama had said that North Korea was the biggest and most dangerous problem facing the U.S. “No longer, sleep well tonight,” he assured Americans. Again, a presidential lie dominated the headlines. Then, when Trump announced that he would personally guarantee North Korea’s security and end joint maneuvers with the South Koreans, to the great dismay of the South Koreans and the American military, General Mattis tried to water down this order of Trump’s with many tricks. Once again, a typical discussion ensued between Mattis and Trump. He, Trump, wondered why the U.S. is fighting terrorists all over the world. So that the terrorists, Mattis replied, would not attack the U.S. again. That means, Trump said, that we would have to fight terrorists “all over the world.” No, Mattis said, that is not what it means.⁸⁰

This pattern of lie-driven and reality-deprived “security policy” was evident in Trump’s interactions with all world “leaders.” He has not solved a single U.S. security problem in the world. Apart from his basic belief that the U.S. would be betrayed everywhere, there was no discernible and sustained definition of U.S. foreign policy interest during his tenure, although he constantly bandied about the empty phrase

79 Bob Woodward, *Rage*, 2020, p. 184.

80 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 106–111.

of “true interests.” Even the word “isolationism” had no geopolitical meaning during his tenure—quite the opposite to the isolationists in the 1930s, who wanted to limit the vital interest of the United States to the Western Hemisphere, half the Atlantic, and half the Pacific.⁸¹ Trump, on the other hand, intervened wherever it occurred to him. It is pointless to attribute to him the “grand strategy” of isolationism; he moved on the world stage like an elephant in a china shop.

Trump alienated traditional allies in Europe and Asia; destroyed the most important currency in international politics, i.e., trust; withdrew the U.S. from international agreements and organizations and thus undermining the foundation of America’s world leadership role; vengefully cancelled government agreements Obama had signed or advanced, such as, the Paris climate agreement, the nuclear deal with Iran, and the transatlantic and transpacific trade agreements. He crippled the WTO from within, threatened to cancel NATO’s Article 5, the collective defense obligation, and withdraw troops from Germany. He handed over the Kurds to Turkey and encouraged his Jewish son-in-law, Jared Kushner, saying that by moving the American embassy to Jerusalem and other measures they could finally destroy any hope for a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict. He supported an agreement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Sudan, and Morocco, called the “Abraham Agreement.” To this end, all three states were bribed: the Emirates with an arms deal; Morocco with a promise to support the annexation of the Western Sahara; while Sudan was taken off the list of “state terrorists.” Kushner, in the tradition of his father-in-law, considered the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians a “pure” real estate issue.⁸² The confrontation with Iran could have ended in war. Nor did a constant strategy ever develop toward China and Russia. Putin and Xi must have considered it a stroke of luck in world history to know this “complete idiot” was in the White House.

The old adage also applies to Trump: Only those who think the possible can recognize the real. NATO and other international organizations would probably not have survived a second Trump term: the U.S. would have failed as the military and economic anchor of the world, while the influence of dictators in Eurasia would have risen even faster. It is conceivable that Trump would have used nuclear weapons in

81 Cf. chapters 6 to 8 in this volume.

82 See Michelle Goldberg, Kushner’s Absurd Peace Plan Has Failed, *New York Times* May 17, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/17/opinion/us-israel-palestine-jared-kushner.html> (May 21, 2021).

a situation of assumed weakness, while Europe would have fallen into a deep crisis without military protection and open markets. Nor would Trump have addressed in his second term the major issues confronting humanity: nuclear proliferation, overpopulation, corruption, the threat to democracy posed by digitalization and fake news, pandemics, and, last but not least, climate change.

If anyone deserved a Nobel Prize for World Survival, it is the U.S. voters who narrowly prevented a second election for Donald Trump.

Donald Trump and the Indivisible World Market

Trump was proudest of what he had accomplished for the American economy. Despite the roller coaster of his professional life, he felt he was an expert in this area. He had, after all, set out first and foremost to prevent the world from continuing to “screw over” America.

Indeed, there was one area where no one could fool him, a cornerstone of his business model: tax avoidance and evasion. Besides the wall facing Mexico and stopping immigration, there was no other policy area where the Republican Party and he were more in agreement than in the resolve to cut taxes. He personally benefited from the 2017 tax reform, which cut middle incomes by as much as \$800, but the top 1 percent by 64 times.⁸³

When it came to self-promotion of his economic genius, Trump liked to be measured by rising stock prices, although one may doubt that these prices are a gauge of the overall economy and the general prosperity of citizens. After all, in the U.S., only half of American families own stocks at all, while the richest quarter own 90 percent. That is why most of the relief provided by tax reform has not gone into developing the real economy or improving the ailing infrastructure, but has encouraged the purchase of more shares by those who are already wealthy.

Trump also comes last in another ranking, although it is highly debatable among economists whether a president’s impact on the growth of the U.S. economy can even be measured. In a new, comparative study by The New York Times of the annual growth in gross national product and nonfarm employment of 14 presidents from Roosevelt in

83 Cf. Anabelle Körbel, Das Präsidentenduell, in: brand eins, February 26, 2021. <https://www.brandeins.de/magazine/brand-eins-wirtschaftsmagazin/2021/frei-arbeiten/das-praesidentenduell> (13.4.2021).

1933 to the present, Trump lands in last place everywhere, with Obama in 10th and 9th place, respectively. The study also showed that growth has increased an average of 4.6 percent under Democratic presidents since 1933, and 2.4 percent under Republican presidents.⁸⁴

In another area, Trump's record is mixed at best: on trade deals and tariffs. During the campaign and as president, he used bold rhetoric to present himself as a mercantilist. He would eliminate the U.S. trade deficit, especially with China and Germany, oppose currency manipulation by other countries with punitive tariffs if necessary, and cancel all "unfair" trade agreements, all of which—*nota bene*—had been concluded by American governments and presidents in the well-understood interests of the United States. Trump found for his "Voodoo Economics" a previously unknown economist who had long shared Trump's anger about the alleged exploitation of the United States, Peter Navarro. He had published a book, "Death by China," in 2011 and was convinced that the U.S. should stop sacrificing its interests "on the altar of global trade." Navarro became one of Trump's chief whisperers. The president made Navarro the White House director of a newly created Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy (OTMP). Navarro was never fired throughout Trump's tenure.

Most dramatically, however, the toxic combination of an excessive amount of money and credit in the capital markets on the one hand and exploding government debt on the other hand developed during the term of President Donald Trump, including the simultaneous tax cuts pushed by Trump and the Republicans for the rich and super-rich, who used the tax giveaways to increase their portfolio of stocks, bonds, and speculative financial products. The central banks of the U.S., Japan, the U.K., and the European Union, the "glorious four," have pumped more than \$13 trillion into the economy since the great financial crisis of 2008, not to mention the "normal" banks.⁸⁵ When it comes to financial injections, they will not run out of ammunition, proclaimed Jerome Powell, the chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve. He had presumably taken a cue from Mario Draghi, president of the European Central Bank, who was much-admired in the U.S., as he had already

84 See David Leonhardt, Yaryna Serkez, A better U.S. economy under Democrats. Annual growth rate from highest to lowest, *New York Times*, Feb. 10, 2021, pp. 8–10.

85 See Sebastian Mallaby, *The Age of Magic Money*, July-August 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-05-29/pandemic-financial-crisis> (May 21, 2021).

promised in 2012 to finance as much debt as was necessary (“whatever it takes”). The age of “magic money” has begun. Finance ministers can also amass new debts in their countries if they are authorized by national parliaments. For politicians who want to be re-elected, the temptation to do so is almost irresistible, as they are tempted to do so again and again by the fundamental transactional dynamic of any democracy—election promises for votes.

Institutions in Germany such as the Federal Audit Office and the Federal Constitutional Court, which want to curb this debt frenzy with economic and legal arguments, are regarded in the Anglo-Saxon financial world as hopelessly old-fashioned, not up to date, and barely familiar with the latest financial products. When the author of this essay expressed similar doubts to a banker in New York, he smiled mildly and said: “Detlef, please, remember we are living in a monied economy.” The share prices of all companies have only marginally to do with their actual productivity. They are driven by the expectations of investors who live off the financial bubble. The ten largest asset managers all come from the USA, with Blackrock and Vanguard at the top.⁸⁶

The U.S. national debt has continued to explode during Donald Trump’s time in office, from 104 percent of GDP at the beginning of his term to 131 percent by the end of his term. To combat the Corona epidemic and its economic consequences, U.S. government debt will increase dramatically once again, as will the European Central Bank and European countries. The U.S. central bank has long since lost its political independence, it has become the lender of last resort not only for “Wall Street” but also for “Main Street.” The next big crash is pre-programmed. The financial bubble may burst sometime and somewhere ... and the “analysts” will still be arguing the night before about why interest rates are not rising or wondering why the stock markets are panicking when the key interest rate rises by 1 percent. Even renowned economists warn: “The vicious circle of interdependencies between banks and states continues to spin merrily ten years after the start of the euro crisis. Banks are about to lose their essential role in the distribution of capital.”⁸⁷

86 Cf. Markus Frühauf, Furcht vor der Macht von Blackrock, in: F.A.Z., <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/finanzen/gerhard-schick-warnt-vor-marktmacht-von-etf-anbieter-blackrock-17291483.html>.

87 Oliver Bäte, Lars Feld, Was die EZB jetzt tun muss, in: F.A.Z. <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/neue-strategie-was-die-ebb-jetzt-tun-muss-17396467/oliver-baete-ist-vorstandschef-17396464.html>

In parallel with rising debt, American influence in the global financial economy has also increased under Trump. Almost two-thirds of the foreign exchange reserves of all central banks are held in dollars, while the Chinese yuan only accounts for 2 percent. The dollar remains the global reserve currency. Savers around the world want the dollar for the same reason that students around the world learn the English language: both are needed everywhere. The U.S. ability to borrow money safely and cheaply is a reflection of the dollar's strength as the world's reserve currency. Next to war or the threat of war, therefore, the dollar is the toughest weapon of U.S. foreign policy. Today, the American financial system has more power over countries and peoples than ever before. Moreover, the world's digital services are dominated by U.S. economic infrastructure superpowers: Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Apple, and Amazon. China, Russia, and, to a modest extent, Europe, are trying to shorten this lead.

U.S.-German Relations 2009–2021

U.S.-German relations from 2009 to 2021, during the terms of Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump on one side of the Atlantic, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the other, were to a large extent preformed and postformed by a series of historical events in the world and developments *prior to* their terms in office: by the end of the Cold War, the reunification of Germany, the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989 to 1991, by a revolution in Europe; and by the U.S. response to the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 which was a semi-revolution in U.S. world politics, namely the attempt to grow out of the West's world leadership role in the Cold War into a global world supremacy role (*primacy*).⁸⁸

The result of both revolutions was that for the USA, after two world wars and the Cold War, the German question was resolved. The Two Plus Four Treaty of 1990 created the kind of Germany that the U.S. had always wanted since the founding of the German Empire in 1871.⁸⁹ It was no accident that President George H. Walker Bush's administration made possible German reunification from the Western side—a project

88 Cf. chapters 11, 12, 14, 15 in this volume; cf. Till Karmann, Simon Wendt, Tobias Endler, Martin Thunert (eds.), *Zeitenwende 9/11? Eine transatlantische Bilanz*, Opladen 2010; Philipp Gassert, *September 11, 2001*, Stuttgart 2021.

89 Cf. chapter 2 in this volume.

that would have failed if left to the Europeans. Since then, Germany has played a special role in the memorial culture of the Americans—along with Japan—as a prime example of the world-historical significance of the American missionary idea of freedom.

On the other hand, since reunification, especially after 9/11, the U.S. has expected Germany, as a “new partner,” to broadly follow the interests and values of the world’s only remaining superpower. The U.S. also defined its interests vis-à-vis Germany in terms of indivisible security, an indivisible world market, and indivisible freedom. Even in the 1990s, when the author of this essay lived in Washington, D.C., the recurring question was what the reunified Germans would now do for the common cause of the West. From the American point of view, however, George H. Walker Bush’s soothing mantra that the two states should cooperate in the future as “partners in leadership” did not mean that two states would face each other at “eye level,” but that Germany as a whole would support American interests and values in Europe and the world. Despite all the rhetoric of friendship and cooperation that U.S. diplomacy, especially during Obama’s presidency, mastered on all continents, from the American perspective there was no “eye level” in realpolitik with Germany. The U.S. world leadership role was never in question in Washington’s corridors of power. It was precisely this power imbalance that German Chancellor Angela Merkel, herself extremely power-conscious, was able to react to very sensitively. She also demanded of the U.S. what she could not have: equality and an “encounter at eye level.” The German chancellor very often perceived the behavior of the global power USA—and rightly so—as “domination diplomacy.”⁹⁰

The futile exhortation to “see eye to eye” with the United States has been a tradition at least since Gerhard Schröder, the chancellor of a red-green coalition, delivered his inaugural address on November 10, 1998. He spoke of the “self-confidence of an adult nation that feels superior to no one, but also inferior to no one”⁹¹—a beautiful projection of the social democratic idea of equality onto the hierarchy of international power politics. In the context of the legal construction of a European “Security and Defense Policy” (ESDP), which to this day de facto does not exist, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer declared in December 2000 that an alliance with Europe would give the U.S. the

90 Cf. Stefan Kornelius, *Angela Merkel. Die Kanzlerin und ihre Welt*, Hamburg 2013, pp. 121–151.

91 Quoted from: Stephan Bierling, *Vormacht wider Willen. Deutsche Außenpolitik von der Wiedervereinigung bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich 2014, p. 79.

chance for a “genuine global partnership.”⁹² He was formulating the old hope of a transatlantic alliance on two pillars that had accompanied the Cold War like a shadow. In the hot election campaign of 2002, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder led the Federal Republic into the most serious crisis in U.S.-German relations since reunification when he declared that Germany would not join the “coalition of the willing” to wage war against Iraq.⁹³ A serious conflict with President George W. Bush ensued. Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer complained in May 2002: “Alliance partnerships among free democracies should not be reduced to allegiance; allies are not satellites.”⁹⁴

The fall of 2002 and the spring of 2003 were part of Angela Merkel’s foreign policy formative phase,⁹⁵ when war and peace were at stake and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in a campaign speech on the Opernplatz in Hanover lobbed a rhetorical grenade at President George W. Bush, saying that Germany would not be available for “adventures” in Iraq under his leadership, although “we” were ready for solidarity. In Goslar, Schröder once again sharpened the tone: Germany would not speak out in favor of intervention, even if the UN voted for it. Schröder, as mentioned earlier, was of the same mind as President Bush. While Bush declared that whatever the UN decides, we go in, Schröder declared that whatever the UN recommends, we stay out. Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer let U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld know in a famous session of the Munich Security Conference, “Mr. Secretary, we are not convinced.”⁹⁶

As the leader of the CDU and its fraction in the German parliament, Angela Merkel had a decidedly different view at the time. In an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* on Feb. 20, 2003, she assured Americans that Chancellor Schröder did not speak for all Germans.⁹⁷ She justified the U.S. war against Iraq with a clarity never heard again once she became chancellor. In view of the hostility and contempt for President George W. Bush among the German public, especially among the left and the Greens, Angela Merkel positioned herself in

92 Ibid. p. 92.

93 Ibid. p. 97.

94 Ibid.

95 Kornelius, *Angela Merkel*, p. 131.

96 Ibid, pp. 130–132.

97 Angela Merkel, *Schroeder Doesn’t Speak for All Germans*, *Washington Post*, Feb. 20, 2003, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2003/02/20/schroederdoesnt-speak-for-all-germans/1e88b69d-ac42-48e2-a4ab-21f62c413505/> (May 21, 2021).

the pro-American camp, at the same time criticizing the French government and President Jacques Chirac.

Rarely, Angela Merkel said, could one experience the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. The fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11 were the two revolutionary events that forced Europe and the United States to redefine the foundations of their domestic, foreign, and security policies. On the one hand, Europe is assuming new obligations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. On the other hand, Europe is divided on many issues; possibly even deeply divided. The most important principle for German policy must be: Germany should never again act alone. This lesson, she said, had been pushed aside by the German government ... for electoral purposes. This indictment was almost tantamount to a stab in the back of the Berlin government, having been carried out at the headquarters of the leading Western power. Possibly she remembered how successful the stab in the back against her foster father, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, had been with an article in the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.”

The danger from Iraq, Angela Merkel said, was firstly not fictional but real. Second, she said, Europe, together with the United States, must assume greater responsibility for maintaining international pressure against Saddam Hussein. That meant advocating military force as a last resort to carry out the decisions of the United Nations. It is true, she said, that war should not become a normal means to resolve political conflicts. But the history of Germany and Europe in the 20th century holds one lesson in particular: even if military force is not the—normal—continuation of politics by other means, it should never be ruled out or questioned (as the German government has done) as a last resort to deal with a dictator. Anyone who rules out military force as a last resort, she said, weakens the pressure that must be maintained against dictators, or else you make war more likely, not less likely.

Angela Merkel ended by praising the common security of Europe and the United States. The U.S., she said, is the only remaining superpower; yet it depends on a common security alliance. Germany also needs friendship with France, she said, but the benefits of that friendship can only be realized with its old and new partners (in the East) and within the transatlantic alliance with the United States. She fired another broadside against the French government and President Jacques Chirac, an agile politician with no deep European convictions who had invoked U.S. boycott measures against France in

the diplomatic turmoil before the attack on Iraq.⁹⁸ The Japanophile Chirac, who had flown to Japan 45 times in his political career and felt a passion for the Arab world, had major problems finding his way in the transatlantic relationship. At one point, he had proposed to the Americans that NATO's command in the Mediterranean be placed under the French. "When Chirac, who knows the region better and was once friends with Saddam, threatened a veto in the UN Security Council, the U.S. decided to punish France, but to forgive Germany under Schröder thanks to the influence of Condoleezza Rice (the U.S. National Security Advisor)." ⁹⁹

Germany and Indivisible Security

The contribution of Germany's "peace and civil power" to the common defense within the NATO alliance, a cornerstone of U.S. global, indivisible security, has been and continues to be an explosive problem in American-German relations. This problem feeds not only on the logic of international security relations, but also on a *clash of expectations*. The Americans expect the Germans to make a substantial contribution to defense. For many Germans, on the other hand, eternal peace had broken out with the end of the Cold War, at least in Europe. Germany seemed to be surrounded only by friends in Europe. If a German military contribution had to be made outside Europe at all, it would only be as a peacekeeping stability measure. Like the devil shies away from holy water, the German parliament shied and still shies away from the word "war" when it comes to sending German troops. The American troop withdrawal and the parallel development of the Bundeswehr continue to cause great tension in U.S.-German relations to this day.

According to data collected at great expense, approximately 22 million members of the U.S. Armed Forces were stationed in Germany from 1945 to 2000: soldiers, civilian support personnel (*servicemen*), and family members. This presence was the largest peacekeeping and security-giving mission in all of world history.¹⁰⁰ In 2019, during Trump's threat to withdraw troops from Germany, 38,000 U.S. troops were

98 Cf. Albrecht Rothacher, *Das Unglück der Macht. Frankreichs Präsidenten von de Gaulle bis Macron*, Berlin 2020, pp. 441–475.

99 *Ibid.* p. 471.

100 See Dewey A. Browder, *Population Statistics for U.S. Military in Germany, 1945–2000*, in: Thomas W. Maulucci Jr., Detlef Junker (eds.), *GIs in Germany*.

still stationed in Germany, more than in any other European country. The U.S. European Command (EUCOM) in the south of Stuttgart coordinates forces in 51 countries. There are also several U.S. bases in Germany, some for missions that extend beyond Europe. For decades, the returned GIs were special ambassadors of the Federal Republic in their homeland. In the remotest corners of the U.S., you could meet former soldiers at a bar who had come from Ramstein, Heidelberg, Rothenburg o. d. Tauber, Lake Chiemsee, and the Munich Oktoberfest.

A special group were the three million African-American GIs who had experienced a “breath of freedom” in the Federal Republic. After returning to the United States, a not inconsiderable number of them therefore became involved in the civil rights movement and the fight against structural racism in the United States.¹⁰¹ The center of U.S. global military strategy for Eurasian security, international trade, and keeping sea lanes open remains the nuclear triad. The United States has by far the highest military spending in the world (\$778 billion in 2020), followed by China, India, Russia, and the United Kingdom.¹⁰²

The personnel strength of the Bundeswehr, on the other hand, has been reduced from almost 480,000 in 1991 to 183,969 in 2020, of which a maximum of 10,000 soldiers can be made available for missions at any given time. After the fall of communism, the remnants of the GDR’s National People’s Army that had not disbanded also had to be integrated, some 90,000 servicemen and women and 50,000 civilian personnel.¹⁰³ This Bundeswehr was downsized several times and always reorganized because it was an army without a clear military mission.

The Social, Economic, Cultural, and Political History of the American Military Presence, New York 2013, pp. 351f.

101 See Maria Höhn, Martin Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom. The Civil Rights Struggle, African American GIs, and Germany*, New York 2010.

102 World military spending rises to nearly \$2 trillion in 2020, in SIPRI, Apr. 26, 2020, <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/world-military-spending-rises-almost-2-trillion-2020> (May 21, 2021).

103 There is a separate branch of research on the development of the Bundeswehr. Cf. Wilfried von Bredow, *Armee ohne Auftrag. Die Bundeswehr und die deutsche Sicherheitspolitik*, Zurich 2020; Sönke Neitzel, *Deutsche Krieger. Vom Kaiserreich zur Berliner Republik – eine Militärgeschichte*, Berlin 2020; Klaus Naumann, *Einsatz ohne Ziel? Von der Politikbedürftigkeit des Militärischen*, Hamburg 2008; Hans-Peter Bartels, *Deutschland und das Europa der Verteidigung. Globale Mitverantwortung erfordert das Ende militärischer Kleinstaaterei*, Bonn 2020; Volker Stanzel, *Die ratlose Außenpolitik und warum sie den Rückhalt der Gesellschaft braucht*, Bonn 2019; Constantin Wißmann, *Bedingt einsatzbereit. Wie die Bundeswehr zur Schrottarmerie wurde*, Munich 2019.

Since reunification, it has lost seven male ministers of defense and two female ministers of defense. At the suggestion of a charismatic impostor and plagiarist from Bavaria, Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg, compulsory military service was also abolished, becoming law under his successor Thomas de Maizière on June 1, 2011. Chancellor Angela Merkel also considered the abolition of compulsory military service to be an appropriate contribution to the “debt brake” in the financial and banking crisis. After all, zu Guttenberg had been the first minister to dare to speak of “war-like conditions” in Afghanistan; a courageous act in view of the dominant pacifism in the German population and the fact that in August 2010, 64 percent of Germans advocated withdrawal from Afghanistan. Now, ten years later, the withdrawal has begun. After a completely failed “police mission,” police officers have already left the country.¹⁰⁴ The democratization of the country has completely failed. This was already predictable in 2001.¹⁰⁵

The Bundeswehr has strategically vacillated between a strategy of national and alliance defense in Europe (Ukraine, Crimea, Lithuania, Kosovo, Mediterranean) on the one hand; potentially global out-of-area missions in West Africa (Western Sahara, Mali), East Africa (Sudan, Somalia, Horn of Africa), the Middle East (Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait) and Asia (Afghanistan) on the other hand. Defense Minister Peter Struck’s phrase has become legendary: “Germany will also be defended in the Hindu Kush”—and not just in Hindelang.

The German armed forces were constantly plagued by personnel shortages, severe deficiencies in equipment and chronic problems with the defense industry on the one hand and procurement administration on the other; they had to contend with bureaucratic idleness, competence disputes, promotion freezes and a lack of resources, but above all with a lack of support from the population. Procurement management and scandalous equipment deficiencies in particular were tarnishing the reputation of the German armed forces. While the 2016 annual report of Hans-Peter Bartels, the Federal Commissioner for the Armed Forces, ruthlessly exposed the weaknesses of the Bundeswehr

104 Cf. Peter Carstens, Das abrupte Ende einer Polizeimission, in: F.A.Z., 4.5.2021, p. 4. <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/afghanistan-abruptes-ende-der-deutschen-polizeimission-17323785.html> (21.5.2021).

105 Cf. chapter 14 in this volume.

in his report to the Bundestag, that same year the federal government produced a “white paper,” basically general niceties on a “networked security.”¹⁰⁶

President Barack Obama, who, as reported, had decided to increase U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan by 30,000 servicemen and women the day before he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, while promising the American people that the other NATO countries would also make their contribution of 10,000 troops, was increasingly disillusioned with the lack of support from other NATO members, especially Germany under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel. He finally let his Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, off the leash, launching a harsh attack on NATO allies at a NATO meeting in Brussels on June 10, 2011. Gates sharply criticized NATO’s weaknesses in Afghanistan and in the air campaign in Libya, in which Germany had refused to participate at the last minute. He stressed the need to improve political and military capabilities if NATO is to survive at all, and warned of the growing difficulty of maintaining current U.S. support for NATO if American taxpayers continue to bear the brunt. In both Libya and Afghanistan, he said, the Europeans failed by providing too little support to their own forces. Although NATO has two million troops in uniform—not including U.S. soldiers—the alliance has struggled at times to assemble a force of 25,000 to 40,000 troops, he said. Despite the pressure on budgets, President Obama and he—Gates—thought it would be a big mistake for the U.S. to withdraw from its global responsibilities, and that applied to Asia and Europe. But that’s not the way to go, he said. During the Cold War, the U.S. bore about 50 percent of NATO’s costs, but two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it bears 75 percent. Only five allies—the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, Greece, and Albania—would spend the agreed-upon 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense.

Since Gates’ speech, the 2 percent figure has created a mine field in U.S.-German security relations. President Donald Trump threatened several times to cancel Article 5, the automatic collective defense obligation and thus the military-political core of NATO. This encouraged French President Emmanuel Macron to declare NATO’s “brain death” and offer the old mirage of a European nuclear power—under French

106 Cf. Hans-Peter Bartels, Drucksache 18/10900, Deutscher Bundestag, 18. Wahlperiode, pp. 4–51; Weißbuch 2016 zur Sicherheit und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr, Berlin 2016. <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/13708/015be272f8c0098f1537a491676bfc31/weissbuch2016-barrierefrei-data.pdf>.

hegemony. His ambitions were steered in more modest directions by the German chancellor with promises of joint arms projects. But it is more likely that a camel will pass through the eye of a needle than that Macron will abandon the Gaullist temptation.

Europe and Germany were not at the center of either President Obama's or President Trump's global security policy vision, if one can speak of a "vision" at all with Trump. This also applied to U.S. anti-terrorism policy, which was sharply criticized by the German public, but also to some extent by the European public, especially the brutal treatment of prisoners and the establishment of the Guantanamo detention camp in Cuba. Even the so-called NSA affair did not change this when Edward Snowden, who had been employed for years by the U.S. intelligence service through a temporary agency, revealed in sensational documents that an alliance of Anglo-Saxon intelligence services from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the U.S. (*Five Eyes*) spied on the entire world, including NATO allies such as the Federal Republic, without regard for the privacy of those concerned. That is why these services are called secret services.

The majority of Americans considered Snowden a traitor. The Obama administration justified the program in the U.S. Congress with national security and especially with terrorist attacks "prevented" by U.S. intelligence agencies. The head of the NSA, General Keith Alexander, apparently kept accurate records. He claimed in his congressional hearing that the program had prevented 50 attacks, 20 of them in the United States. From the confidential intelligence reports, the German public also learned what the U.S. Embassy in Berlin thought of the German chancellor. "Persistent under pressure, but avoids risk and is rarely creative." When "Der Spiegel" revealed in October 2013 that the chancellor's cell phone—which was poorly secured—had been tapped, Merkel complained to Obama by phone, saying she found the tapping "completely unacceptable." In Brussels, she declared, "Spying among friends, that's not acceptable at all." Now it has become known that the Americans, with the help of the Danes, also spied on other German politicians, namely then-Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and SPD candidate for chancellor Peer Steinbrück. Of course, the Chancellor also finds this unacceptable.

Under the roof of the American Embassy in Berlin, the U.S. intelligence service had established a listening post, almost within sight of the Chancellor's Office. This was not how the chancellor had envisioned cooperation at "eye level," but she accepted the situation because

the Germans themselves benefited from the information provided by the U.S. intelligence services.¹⁰⁷

Germany and the Indivisible World Market

Power, according to Max Weber, is the ability to impose one's will on another. There are three means of exercising this power in international relations: talk and persuasion (diplomacy), exchange (trade and economics), and force, or at least the threat of force (military). A state that has nothing to offer on all three levels plays no role in international politics. It becomes the object of other powers. This is also true of international organizations such as the former League of Nations, the UN, and the unique institution (*sui generis*), known as the European Union. The legal constitution of international institutions says nothing about their actual influence.

The Federal Republic of Germany, a state roughly the size of the U.S. state of Montana, has a very limited and collectively integrated military presence. This was also, as shown, a condition of reunification.¹⁰⁸ Germany's most important foreign policy resource is therefore its economy. Since reunification, Germany has become the most important economic power in Europe; the country is present throughout the world with its goods and services, and to a modest extent with its banking and financial services. Outside Europe, the latter is particularly difficult; the crash landing of Deutsche Bank in New York being a good example.

All German governments have tried to support the status of German business around the world. For example, when Chancellor Angela Merkel flew to China, in addition to her chancellor's plane, she needed other planes for CEOs to accompany her. German business is the largest German lobbying organization for trade with Russia. For the German government, this also meant representing its own country's interests in bilateral and regional negotiations and institutions, despite a fundamentally open, liberal world market. This is also necessary

107 Cf. Robert Lucke, Bernhard Stahl, Die transatlantischen Beziehungen am Beispiel der NSA-Affäre und des Ukraine-Konflikts. Im Westen nichts Neues, in: Winand Gellner, Patrick Horst (eds.), Die USA am Ende der Präsidentschaft Barack Obamas. Eine erste Bilanz, Wiesbaden 2016, pp. 285–404; Bierling, Vormacht wider Willen, pp. 238–265.

108 Cf. chapter 11 in this volume.

because even a rule-based world market constantly produces winners and losers. Losers, such as the American coal industry, are by no means reassured by Adam Smith's wisdom that the market produces the greatest happiness of the greatest number; instead, workers are taking to the barricades. They are demanding that Congress impose "fair" protective tariffs against foreign competition. Fair is what benefits them. That is why the world market does not function according to the principles of the WTO alone, but is characterized by countless trade conflicts that must always be renegotiated.

In addition, foreign trade relations are becoming increasingly complex in the face of ever greater interconnectedness. Capital flight, taxes, plant, animal, consumer, and health protection are now also at stake. Genetically modified foods are to be included in these trade agreements, and different legal systems and national preferences are to be taken into account. In transatlantic relations, cooperation is also particularly difficult because on the European side, first among 28, now 27 states, a result must be negotiated that can be ratified in individual states.

Even before the Obama and Trump terms, therefore, there were a number of failed attempts to achieve what was strongly supported by Chancellor Angela Merkel: a trade and investment agreement to promote transatlantic cooperation, at least in this area, while developing a counterweight to the emerging trans-Pacific agreement, which was given high priority by the U.S. Congress.

When Barack Obama was finally allowed to give his speech on the east side of the Brandenburg Gate on June 19, 2013, he spoke of "our trade and our economy" as the engine of the global economy.¹⁰⁹ The attempts by the chancellor and president to take the initiative in transatlantic economic relations may also be related to dramatic memories, namely the brutal pressure that Obama, along with his Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, exerted on the chancellor and Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble during the Greek and euro crises, which Obama lays out in unflattering detail in his memoirs. Geithner, a very competent alpha male from the financial industry whom Obama had made into a shepherd in the banking and financial crisis, tried with all his might to impose the U.S. model of excessive debt financing on

109 The White House, Remarks by President Obama at the Brandenburg Gate – Berlin, Germany, June 19, 2013. Transcript, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/19/remarks-president-obama-brandenburg-gate-berlin-germany> (26.4.2021).

the Europeans, especially Germany, as a solution to the crisis. Merkel's slightly malicious allusion to the failure of the Lehman investment bank, that "we don't do Lehman," did not reassure Obama. He considered the reluctance of Germans, Dutch, and other eurozone citizens to keep throwing good money after bad money an "act of Old Testament justice" to prevent "moral wrongdoing" by the Greeks. He was pleased when, in his interpretation, the Europeans agreed on a "firewall" of a magnitude proposed by his Treasury secretary. Generously, Obama stated: "Since we didn't have the leverage to make sure Europe's fundamental problems were permanently fixed, Tim and I had to be satisfied with having helped defuse another bomb for the time being."¹¹⁰

On the day of Obama's speech, the chancellor and the president had spoken at length about the future economic relationship at a joint press conference in Berlin. The chancellor was pleased that they had decided to start negotiations on a free trade agreement. The economies on both sides of the Atlantic would profit from such an agreement. Obama rejected the suggestion that the transatlantic alliance was no longer so important for the U.S. and that the U.S. was looking more to Asia. Thus, at least rhetorically, he put the famous "pivot to Asia" into perspective. In the talks with the German Chancellor and also with the German President, he had reminded them that, from the U.S. perspective, the relationship with Europe continued to be the cornerstone of American security and freedom. The talks on economic issues that had begun at the G8 summit continued. Germany, he said, is America's most important trading partner in the European Union. Obama reminded the Germans that the U.S. had gone through one of the worst recessions in years. But there had been progress, he said, and the U.S. had implemented banking reform. The U.S. banking system is much stronger now, he said.¹¹¹

Merkel's and Obama's hopes of revitalizing the transatlantic alliance, at least in the economic sphere, of launching, as it were, an "economic NATO" under the title "Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership" (TTIP), failed on both sides of the Atlantic: in Brussels, due to endless conferences, massive public criticism, the U.S.-European

110 Cf. Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, pp. 731–741.

111 Die Bundesregierung, Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel und US-Präsident Obama, June 19, 2013. Mitschrift Pressekonferenz <https://archiv.bundesregierung.de/archiv-de/dokumente/pressekonferenz-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-und-us-praesident-obama-844776> (May 14, 2021); on the actual "success" of the transformation of the banking system, see pp. 262–268.

secret negotiations, and a particularly pronounced anti-Americanism in Germany. Many Germans distrusted U.S. consumer protection and the business practices of American entrepreneurs and financial service providers. They trusted European Union protection standards more than American standards. “Many feared that as a result of TTIP in Europe, workers’ rights, consumer, environmental and health protection and public services would suffer, as would culture, animal welfare, or food safety.”¹¹² Until the end of Obama’s term, the trade and investment agreement with Europe never received as much attention in Congress as the Trans-Pacific Agreement, which was planned at the same time. When the Democrats lost the 2016 elections, only 17 of the planned 27 chapters had even been formulated, and ratification in Congress or in Europe was a long way off on both sides of the Atlantic.

With President Donald Trump, who, as explained, could not even think the word “rules-based world order,” the planned agreements were off the table. Trump embodied the “economic warrior” who wanted to defend his country’s “true” interests through pressure, threats, blackmail, and retaliatory tariffs. He accused China and the EU of undermining the U.S. trade balance with “unfair” trade practices and exchange rate manipulation.¹¹³ Trump’s accusations were extraordinarily popular at home. Just before the 2016 presidential election, 85 percent of Republican voters and 54 percent of Democratic voters agreed with the claim that free trade had cost America more jobs than it had created. In 2018, Trump tweeted, “When a country loses many billions in trade with almost every country, trade wars are good and easy to win.”¹¹⁴

Trump was part of a long tradition of “economic warfare” that has always existed in parallel with the emergence of international free trade. Free trade never existed in pure form. Today, Chinese foreign trade policy, for example, is also based on the strategies of Chinese war theorists. In addition to China, Trump particularly attacked the EU as an “enemy,” and within the EU, especially Germany. The Germans, he said, are “bad, very bad.” “Look at the millions of cars they sell to the United States. Bad. We will stop that.” Regarding France, he repeated an old demand that has been continuously made of the country from

112 Stormy-Annika Milder, *Ziemlich beste Freunde – meistens*, in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 68, vol. 4, October 2020, p. 624.

113 On the type of “economic warrior” in history since antiquity, see Ulrich Blum, *Wirtschaftskrieg. Rivalität ökonomisch zu Ende denken*, Wiesbaden 2020.

114 Bierling, *America First*, p. 100f.

other parts of the world: The French must abandon their agricultural protectionism and open their market, he said.

The dangerous spiral of tariffs and counter-tariffs was set in motion in the American-European relationship, but was not developing into a full “trade war.” On the one hand, this was due to EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, who in July 2018 persuaded Trump to start negotiations to reduce industrial tariffs and (non-)tariff barriers to trade. While these negotiations did not produce any results, they did prevent new punitive measures by the Trump administration. On the other hand, Trump seems to have realized in lighter moments that U.S. consumers had to foot the bill, because the billions of dollars the U.S. government collected in additional punitive tariffs were nothing more than special taxes on imported goods that U.S. citizens had to pay. It was not so easy after all to escape the promise of prosperity through foreign trade and the international division of labor.

Another aspect of unilateral U.S. “domination diplomacy” strains relations with the U.S., especially with regard to Angela Merkel: the U.S. sanctions policy that is combined with the attitude of an imperial power to enforce sanctions and export controls outside the U.S., even when interests of allies were affected. For these sanctions affected not only Iran or Russia, but also Germany. However, when President Trump announced punitive measures against the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project at the end of 2019, he could not make the German government compliant. These sanctions are also explosive because they are justified not only with economic but also with strategic arguments: The pipeline would bring the EU into a dangerous dependence on Russian energy, destabilize Ukraine, and finance the system of oligarchs around the dictator Vladimir Putin, including the German ex-chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Similar criticism can be found in Germany and the European Union.

Germany and the Indivisible Freedom

It was indeed a “late love” between Angela Merkel and Barack Obama. He was the type of charismatic, telegenic man, not plagued by any self-doubt, with a universal mission idea, who could also enchant his audience emotionally with dazzling rhetoric. Therefore, even before his election, he had expected to give a speech at a global symbol of freedom, the Brandenburg Gate, which Merkel refused. He had not yet

achieved anything and would first have to prove himself. But masses of people also flocked to him at the Victory Column; he “enchanted” more than 200,000 Germans in Berlin and millions on TV.

In principle, the chancellor has a deep aversion to male self-promoters, whom, within her own sphere of power, she politically disposes of quickly, coldly, and single-mindedly if necessary. Of course, she could not do that with an U.S. president, even though Obama was by no means dealing with her on “eye level” as the chancellor would have liked. She also had to note that Obama made no official visit to Berlin during his first term and declined an invitation to the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall because he had more important things to do in Asia, a clear sign of his “pivot to Asia.” Nor had he made a single trip to Europe during his time as a senator in the U.S. Congress and a member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

He set foot on German soil twice during his first term: once on the occasion of a NATO summit in Baden-Baden, and a second time for a visit to the Frauenkirche in Dresden and the Buchenwald concentration camp on June 5, 2009. “My visit was a purposeful gesture of respect to a now stalwart ally.”¹¹⁵ Obama was en route from Cairo to Paris because President Nicolas Sarkozy had asked him to speak on the 75th anniversary of the Allied landings in Normandy. He was accompanied in Dresden and in Buchenwald by the chancellor, and in Buchenwald also by his friend, Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel. Obama was struck by how the chancellor spoke to the press “in words as clear as they were humbling, of the need for Germans to remember the past, to face the agonizing question of how their

115 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, p.368. On the relationship between Obama and Merkel, see Kornelius, *Angela Merkel*, pp. 143ff; Bierling, *Vormacht wider Willen*, pp. 238ff; Matthew Rhodes, *Germany and the United States. Whither ‘Partners in Leadership’?*, in: *German Politics and Society*, vol. 36, no. 3, Autumn 2018, pp. 23–40; Constanze Stelzenmüller, *The Singular Chancellor. The Merkel Model and its Limits*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 100, no. 3, May-June 2021, pp. 161–172; Katharina Schuler, *Merkel und Obama. Späte Liebe*, in: *ZEIT online*, Nov. 17, 2016, https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2016-11/angela-merkel-barack-obama-usa-deutschland?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F (May-26-2021); Klaus Larres, *Angela Merkel and Donald Trump. Values, Interests, and the Future of the West*, in: *German Politics*, vol. 27, 2, 2018, pp. 193–213, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2018.1428309> (21.6.2021); in general, see also Podium *Zeitgeschichte. Jenseits von Donald Trump*. Authors: Philipp Gassert, Andreas Etges, Stormy-Annika Mildner, Michael Hochgeschwender, Reinhild Kreis, and Jan Logemann, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 68, issue 4 (October), 2020, pp. 575–656.

homeland could have committed such atrocities, and to recognize that they now had a special responsibility to stand up against fanaticism of any kind.” Obama felt that, as he said later, the chancellor was “on the right side of history” and that he had an ally for his missionary idea of freedom and human rights. Elie Wiesel confessed that he was no longer sure of his original “optimism” that the world had learned from the crimes of the Nazis, in view of the “Killing Fields of Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur, and Bosnia.”¹¹⁶

Obama also came to appreciate another quality of Angela Merkel’s: her almost inexhaustible energy, her hunger for information and arguments, her analytical expertise and critical rationality, her effortless ability to absorb data and facts, to carefully relate the means and ends of decisions, and to think about things “from the end result.” During the euro crisis, they had often talked on the phone. Listeners to their conversations were sometimes reminded of a “senior seminar.” A close aide to Merkel sighed at a security conference in Munich, “It’s like working next to a nuclear power plant: it just runs, and runs, and runs.”¹¹⁷ In his memoirs, Obama contrasts the chancellor, in a slightly ironic tone, with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who was “quite the epitome of emotional outbursts and exaggerated rhetoric,” a man like something out of a Toulouse-Lautrec painting, driven by vanity for headlines, by the urge “to be at the center of the action and take credit for everything that was worth taking credit for.”¹¹⁸

Despite the differences in their political systems, Obama and Merkel also practiced similar techniques of governance. They both relied on an inner circle of discrete collaborators, and they both secured their decisions through opinion polls. The most important thing for Obama, however, remained that the German chancellor shared his ideals, that she was on the right side of history. That’s why he gave her a big stage in Washington, while at the same time subtly tying her to her “dreamland of freedom.” She received the extraordinary honor of being the first German head of government—after Adenauer in 1957—to address both houses of Congress on November 3, 2009.

This speech is an undisguised expression of her political values. “Nothing stands for this Federal Republic of Germany more than its constitution, its Basic Law. It was passed exactly 60 years ago. Article 1 of this Basic Law states: “Human dignity is inviolable.” That short,

116 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, p. 369.

117 Stelzenmüller, p. 161.

118 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*, p. 335.

simple sentence—“Human dignity is inviolable”—was the answer to the catastrophe of World War II, to the murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust, to the hatred, devastation, and destruction that Germany brought upon Europe and the world.” She thanked the U.S. soldiers who were stationed in Germany and secured the freedom of Germans. She included Presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan in her thanks, and was especially indebted to George H. Walker Bush, who had offered the Germans something priceless: “Partners in Leadership.” Twenty years had passed since that overwhelming gift of freedom, she said, “but still there is nothing that excites me more, nothing that spurs me on more, nothing that fills me more strongly with positive feelings than the power of freedom.” Europe and America are held together not only by a shared history and by common interests and challenges, she said. “The thing that brings Europeans and Americans together and keeps them together is our common foundation of values. It is a common image of humans and their inalienable dignity. It is a common understanding of freedom with responsibility. This is what we stand for in the unique transatlantic partnership and in the community of values that is NATO. This is how ‘Partners in Leadership’ is brought to life, ladies and gentlemen. It was this foundation of values that brought the Cold War to an end. It is this foundation with which we can and must now pass the tests of our time.”¹¹⁹ She concluded with a *tour d’horizon* of all the security and economic problems of the present that could be solved together in the spirit of freedom. She directed the attention of the Congress to the protection of future generations, the protection of natural resources and the climate. Global warming must not exceed two degrees Celsius, she said.

Two years later, on June 7, 2011, the German Chancellor received an even greater honor in the name of freedom. President Obama presented her with the highest civilian award in the USA, “The Presidential Medal of Freedom,” in a magnificent ceremony at the White House. Even her husband Joachim Sauer, whom the German public only sees as the “Phantom of the Opera” when he visits Bayreuth, came to the ceremony. Merkel’s place card stated succinctly, “Dr. Angela Merkel symbolizes the triumph of freedom because she was the first East German to succeed in the office of chancellor of a united Federal Republic of Germany.” Merkel took up this leitmotif and said in her

119 Angela Merkel’s Speech in U.S. Congress, in: Die Welt, May 26, 2021. <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article5079678/Angela-Merkels-Rede-im-US-Kongress-im-Wortlaut.html> (May 26, 2021).

address, “What power the longing for freedom can unleash has often been shown by the history of society. It moved people to overcome fears and openly oppose dictatorships. (...) No chain of dictatorship, no shackle of oppression can resist the power of freedom in the long run (...).”¹²⁰

When Obama was finally able to deliver his speech at the Brandenburg Gate on June 19, 2013, he too, made the history, present and future of freedom his leitmotif. It was an ode to freedom, to the world as it should be. He traced the historical arc from the Reformation to the Enlightenment and Kant’s concept of freedom as an inalienable human right to the Berlin Airlift of 1948/49, the Marshall Plan, the founding of NATO, the uprising of East Germans on June 17, 1953, and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The history of Berlin, he said, boils down to a simple question: “Do we want to live in freedom or in chains, in an open society or a closed one that suffocates souls?” The American Declaration of Independence and Germany’s Basic Law, with its first sentence, “Human dignity is inviolable,” spring from the same fundamental conviction, he said. All over the world, nations had committed themselves to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was exactly what had been at stake all those years in Berlin. But two decades after the triumph of freedom in Berlin it had to be acknowledged that a certain complacency had taken hold in Western democracies. And although they often came together in places like Berlin to remember the past, they did not make history themselves. There is a tendency, he said, to turn inward to one’s own desires, but not to follow the sweep of history.

Then, as in many speeches in all parts of the world, he addressed the great threats to the survival of humanity: overpopulation, social antagonisms, proliferation of nuclear weapons and, above all, the climate crisis that endangers humankind. Finally, he recalled the globalization of U.S. national interests, the indivisible security, the indivisible world market, and indivisible solidarity (in freedom) that bind Europe and the United States. “Our alliance is the foundation of our global security. Our trade is the engine of our global economy. Our values are a commitment to care for the lives of people we will never meet. When Europe and America lead through their confidence, not their fear, we can do deeds that other nations are neither able nor willing to do.”¹²¹

120 Cf. Kornelius, Angela Merkel, p. 150f.

121 The White House, Remarks by President Obama at the Brandenburg Gate – Berlin, Germany, June 19, 2013, Transcript, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>

The ideals of freedom and emancipation had led to an unusual message of greeting from President Obama to the Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA), which was founded by the author of this essay, and Heidelberg University in June 2011. To mark the 625th anniversary of Ruperto Carola, the HCA and the Faculty of Theology had established the James W. C. Pennington Award. With this award, the university commemorated the runaway slave, pastor, historian, fighter against slavery and for peace, who had been awarded an honorary doctorate in Latin by Heidelberg University's Faculty of Theology in 1849.

He was—as far as is known—the first African American ever to receive such an award. The Heidelberg theologian Friedrich Wilhelm Carové had met Pennington at the Paris World Peace Congress in 1849. He was extremely impressed by Pennington's theology, rhetoric, and appearance and immediately suggested that he be honored at Heidelberg. He had, according to the certificate, “not only set himself at liberty over body and soul, but had also repeatedly labored assiduously to dispel the spiritual blindness of his countrymen and to purify their depraved minds.”¹²²

In his message, President Obama conveyed his greetings and appreciation for the James W. C. Pennington Award. The President thanked the HCA for this initiative, which reflects the strong alliance and enduring friendship between the United States and Germany. It is particularly appropriate, President Obama said, that this award gives scholars the opportunity to conduct research on topics that were important to Pennington: Slavery and Emancipation, Peace, Education, Religion, and Intellectual Understanding. The president also expressed his belief that by honoring James W. C. Pennington's achievements, Heidelberg University would inspire future generations of Americans and Germans.

Merkel's reliable policies and their shared values and ideals made the German chancellor Obama's most important ally in Europe in the final years of his term, despite all the conflicts over security and economic issues. That is why there was an emotional meeting between the president and the chancellor in Berlin on November 16, 2016, eight days after Donald Trump was elected president of the United States.

[the-press-office/2013/06/19/remarks-president-obama-brandenburg-gate-berlin-germany](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/19/remarks-president-obama-brandenburg-gate-berlin-germany) (4/26/2021).

122 Jan Stievermann (ed.), *The Pennington Lectures 2011–2015*, Heidelberg 2016, p. 16. The Pennington Lectures have been supported by Dr. h. c. Manfred Lautenschläger since 2011.

Both were under a certain amount of shock, both had expected Hillary Clinton to win the election; American and German politics were not prepared for the election of the “great disruptor” Trump. Both saw the danger that the Western alliance as a community of security and values could fall apart if Trump tried to realize his statements in the election campaign. They spoke for more than three hours over dinner at the Adlon Hotel. It was the longest time Obama had ever spent one-on-one with a world leader.

Obama also presumably encouraged the chancellor to run for a fourth term, given the precarious state of the world. His speechwriter and adviser Benjamin Rhodes offered a toast to the “female leader of the free world” in an adjoining room.

*

Trump indeed developed into a nightmare for German politics; conversely, the reputation of the U.S. in Germany sank to an unprecedented low. According to a poll conducted in September 2019 and released in March 2020, 75 percent of Americans and 34 percent of Germans thought American-German relations were good, while 17 percent of Americans and 64 percent of Germans thought they were bad.¹²³

Even before his election, Germany and the chancellor had become the number one bogeyman. When Trump criticized Europe’s trade surpluses, he was referring primarily to the Germans. They could finance their sprawling welfare state at the expense of the United States because they contributed nothing to the common defense. Already in 2015 and then increasingly during the election campaign, Trump criticized the German chancellor’s refugee policy, especially for her decision to allow a million refugees into the country. “What Merkel did to Germany, is a sad, sad, sad shame.”¹²⁴ To this day, people ponder Trump’s deep-seated hatred of Germany. Did Merkel remind him of

123 See Survey by Jacob Poushter and Mara Mordecai, Americans and Germans Differ in Their Views of Each Other and the World, Mar. 9, 2020, at: Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes & Trends, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/03/09/americans-and-germans-differ-in-their-views-of-each-other-and-the-world/> (June 3, 2021).

124 Cf. Susan B. Glasser, How Trump Made War on Angela Merkel and Europe. The German Chancellor and other European leaders have run out of patience with the President, Dec. 17, 2018, in *The New Yorker*, Dec. 24 & 31, 2018, p. 3, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/12/24/how-trump-made-war-on-angela-merkel-and-europe>. (5/26/2021); cf. Bierling, *America First*, pp. 151–165.

Hillary Clinton, also an assertive woman whom he deeply despised? Was it because his father, Fred Trump, denied his German heritage after World War II and claimed his ancestors were Swedish? Or was Merkel, like Obama, a representative of the multilateral, free-market globalism he abhorred?

Angela Merkel, who had already outlasted two U.S. presidents, did not know what to do at first. She was advised to establish personal contact with Trump or to invite his daughter Ivanka to Berlin, which she did without visible success. She had prepared for her first meeting with Trump more intensively than for any other inaugural visit. She had read a famous 1990 “Playboy” interview with Trump, watched episodes of his television appearances on “The Apprentice” and read his 1987 book, “The Art of the Deal.” The Protestant pastor’s daughter, however, did not manage to woo him untruthfully with flattery, court his favor with spectacular honors or a golden golf club, or, like German industrialists, talk down to him.

Thus, even the first meeting with Trump in Washington was a personal and diplomatic disaster, followed by similar meetings at World Economic Forums and NATO summits. When Merkel wanted to greet Trump with a handshake in front of the cameras in the Oval Office, he refused. When the photographers had left the room, he immediately addressed the leitmotif of his next years: “Angela, you owe me one trillion dollars.” When the chancellor wanted to talk about Putin and showed him a map of the Soviet Union from 1982, overlaid with Putin’s territorial ambitions, Trump didn’t want to talk about that, but about his poll numbers with Americans.

Trump also repeatedly attacked Germany and the chancellor at international meetings. What has become famous is an extremely contentious summit of the G7 countries on June 8 and 9, 2018 in La Malbaie in Canada, especially a photo published by the German side.¹²⁵ It shows the chancellor at the center of the group in vigorous attack on Trump, who remains defiant, scowling and sitting with his arms folded. At the end of the meeting, Trump reportedly threw two red candies on the table: “Here, Angela. Don’t say I never gave you anything.”¹²⁶

During his tenure, NATO in its existing form, Europe, and especially Germany, as outlined, topped Trump’s enemy list. He ceaselessly tweeted at the American people with his criticism; he put the fear of

125 Cf. the cover image of this volume.

126 Glasser, *How Trump Made War on Angela Merkel and Europe*, p. 3.

the Lord in NATO allies with continued threats to terminate Article 5 of the NATO treaty and to lay the axe to Europe's security. He seems to have at least partly repressed his defense secretary's criticism in the memorable Pentagon meeting that NATO also guaranteed U.S. security.

Trump's threats endangered the very core of the transatlantic community of security and values in whose name both Barack Obama and Angela Merkel had conducted policy. Desperate rhetorical lunges by the chancellor and parts of the German public, saying that the European Defense Community (EDC) should play a larger role, remained dreams without the hint of a chance of realization. This alternative was already buried in 1954, when the French National Assembly rejected a version of the EDC and NATO was made the core of Western European defense instead.¹²⁷

You cannot get into the same river twice. A new European fighter aircraft that has just been decided on will create jobs in Europe, but it is not expected to be operational until 2040 at the earliest. By then, the next global financial crisis may have halted the project, or it may not be able to take off because climate catastrophe makes it impossible for aircraft to take off and land, even for fighter jets.

At the same time, Trump could not even imagine the American missionary idea of freedom and thus the ideal core of NATO as a community of values. Merkel's speech before both houses of Congress and her speech when awarded the Medal of Freedom by Obama, as well as Obama's two speeches in Berlin would not have been possible under Trump. In the worldview of the "trade warrior" Donald Trump, values as the transatlantic glue holding the West together did not exist. Indeed, he had attached a "price tag" to the entire U.S. global policy.

Trump also destroyed the domestic political room to maneuver of future American presidents because he catalyzed the divisions within the country, which is tired of world politics, into a potential civil war situation.¹²⁸ One can use other images for this process and declare the U.S. the land of "tribal warriors" and of "tribalism" but what is undoubtedly true is that the foreign policy room for maneuver of the new, 78-year-old President Joe Biden is very limited for domestic political reasons. It is an open question whether he can revitalize the transatlantic West.¹²⁹

127 Cf. chapter 10 in this volume.

128 Cf. this chapter, pp. 40–51.

129 Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, Land der Stammeskriege, in: F.A.Z., 5/31/2021, p. 8, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/gespaltenes-amerika-land-der-stammeskriege-17365619.html> (6/3/2021).

Thus, after 150 years of American-German relations, the Federal Republic of Germany is caught in an existential paradox. There is no security, prosperity, or freedom for Europe and Germany outside the transatlantic alliance. At the same time, it can no longer be taken for granted that the United States can continue to fulfill its role as the leading power of the West and that the Germans will cling to their ties to the West. The U.S.-German relationship is thus approaching the basic human condition as described by Kant: In view of the unsociable sociability of human beings, they could not suffer one another, but neither could they let one another go.¹³⁰

130 Immanuel Kant, *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, 4th movement, Berlin 1784.

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About the Author

Detlef Junker was born near Hamburg, Germany. He was trained as a Journalist in 1961/62. Then, he studied history, political science, philosophy, and German philology in Innsbruck and Kiel, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1967. In 1970/71, he was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Yale University. In 1974, he was appointed Associate Professor at the University of Stuttgart.

He taught modern history at Heidelberg University from 1975 to 1994 and held the Curt Engelhorn Chair for American History there from 1999 to 2004. From 1994 to 1999, Professor Junker served as the Director of the German Historical Institute (GHI) in Washington, D.C. After his official retirement in 2004 he dedicated himself to founding and building the Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA).

The foci of his research have been U.S. Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century, German History, International Relations, and the Theory of History. His most important publications are: “Die Deutsche Zentrumspartei und Hitler 1932/33. Ein Beitrag zur Problematik des politischen Katholizismus in Deutschland” (1969), „Der unteilbare Weltmarkt. Das ökonomische Interesse in der Außenpolitik der USA 1933–1941” (1975), “Kampf um die Weltmacht. Die USA und das Dritte Reich” (1988), “Power and Mission. Was Amerika antreibt” (2003), the two-volume handbook “The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War 1945–1990” (2004), which he edited, and “Deutschland und die USA 1871–2021” (2021).

In 2005, Professor Junker was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of the University of Maryland University College—Europe/Heidelberg, recognizing his commitment to fostering German-American dialogue and cross-cultural understanding. In 2007, he was appointed Distinguished Senior Professor of Heidelberg University. From 2009 to 2013, Professor Junker served as President of the American Studies Network Association (ASN) Europe. In 2010, he received the Federal Cross of Merit for his exceptional support of American Studies as a discipline, his academic teaching, and his entrepreneurial abilities. In 2014, he was named Honorary Roosevelt Fellow of the Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg / Netherlands.

"This rich collection of scholarly essays on German–American relations offers the first-ever assessment of this crucial transatlantic partnership over the long term, since the founding of the German nation in 1871, through the turbulent 20th century, and into the Biden Administration. Preeminent historian, Dr. Detlef Junker, draws on decades of deep study to bring us, in lively and lucid prose, his analysis of the changing political relationship that shaped both countries as well as the world. With his signature wit and insight, and delivered in the style of an accomplished journalist, Junker has created a must-read for anyone who wishes to understand the changing relationship of Germany and the United States."

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