



THE NEW GERMAN TIMES

A personal greeting from publisher Detlef Prinz

We were having breakfast at Berlin's Hotel Adlon when I said to Richard S. Lugar, "I need your help, Senator!"

That was back in 2003. At the time, the friendship between Germany and the United States had chilled considerably after the federal government had signaled its unwillingness to participate in the war against Iraq. I had come up with an idea as to how we could sustain the dialogue across the Atlantic in spite of the chill, and I presented my idea to Lugar, who was chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Senate at the time. I wanted to create a journalistic bridge between Germany and the United States.

"Great idea," he said. "What can I do for you?"

"What you can do is ensure that our newspaper is distributed to key decision-makers and multipliers in Washington, despite the stringent 9/11 security measures."

I had met Senator Lugar on many occasions and I was sure that he would support our project.

And he did. On Oct. 3, 2004, I had the opportunity to present him the first copy of our newspaper – **The Atlantic Times** – at the German Embassy in Washington. From that day on, the newspaper was a link between Berlin and Washington, between Germany and the United States. It reached all the major multipliers in the US and was on the desks of US senators, members of the House of Representatives, business leaders and creative minds for many years. It also contributed to the diversity of opinion and open political discourse in the context of 127 German-American city partnerships.

The current edition of our newspaper has been given the name **The German Times**. Even with this unified worldwide title, the paper remains a trans-Atlantic newspaper committed to keeping an eye on the key issues of global politics. We very much hope that our new title contributes to the creation of an even stronger German-American friendship and a deeper understanding between the two allies and friends.

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Enthusiasm, interest, friendship

Germany and the US need to talk. Why a new trans-Atlantic exchange offers a unique opportunity to do so. By Foreign Minister *Heiko Maas*

At first glance, everything seems pretty much the same. Hollywood movies still attract huge audiences in Germany, even in the smallest towns. American tourists continue to marvel at Heidelberg and Munich. And Germans' enthusiasm for US culture still seems to be just as strong as the pride with which every sixth US citizen declares they have German roots.

But if we look at the political arena, we have to admit that a great deal has changed, and this is not a recent phenomenon. The Cold War ended decades ago. Many experts predicted that this would lead to a shift in how the US sees Europe. By now, this shift is apparent to all. As foreign minister of Germany, I have to adapt to the idea that US priorities will converge less often with those of us Europeans than was the case in the past. And there is a good chance that this will stay the same under future US presidents, too.

But something else will also remain the same – the firmly held conviction, and one I share with

long, hard look at German-US relations. Our countries need an honest and balanced partnership. For us Europeans, that means, for example, investing more in the future in our own ability to act. Where the US withdraws, we in the European Union will have to step up. Our willingness to work with the US will not change. But if necessary, we will continue alone on paths that we initially embarked on together.

However, relations between the US and Europe are not the only thing that is changing. The speed with which conflicts on our planet, with its finite resources, are escalating allows us hardly any time to stop and think. Those who look around the whole world, and not merely across the Atlantic, realize that we will only be able to overcome today's threats by working together. The 21st century is not a time for anyone to go it alone.

In order to form international alliances, conferences are held, treaties are signed and hands are

shaken. But what really brings a partnership between two countries to life are the people in our societies who foster exchange through their enthusiasm, interest and friendship. The German government is taking exactly the same approach here, with the aim of making trans-Atlantic links stronger.

To this end, I am launching Deutschlandjahr USA 2018/19 in Washington on October 3. Our goal is to strike up a new conversation with people in the US. And when I say "people," I am not only talking about politicians and experts on Capitol Hill. We will hold over 1,000 events from coast to coast and in all 50 US states. We want to listen to people – students, artists, academics, business people and teachers – who shape relations between our countries in their day to day work.

The idea is not to celebrate trans-Atlantic relations by harking back to the past or focusing on the official level. Instead, our aim is to create new opportunities

for people to meet. We want to enable people to experience that it is worth talking and that we can enrich each other through our different views.

The Germans and Americans who already foster exchange between our countries year after year are our greatest asset. I am not only referring to those who build networks in culture, business and politics. I am thinking of the tens of thousands of high school and university students who go to the US to study and bring a part of the US back with them to Germany, in the same way that towns like Wiesbaden and Kaiserslautern become a second home for countless companies of US soldiers every year.

Germany is far more than Heidelberg Palace and the US is far more than Hollywood movies. If we give Germans and Americans the chance to really get interested in each other again, it can point the way to a new partnership for us politicians. We have no time to lose.

BUT WHAT REALLY BRINGS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES TO LIFE ARE THE PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETIES

almost everyone who holds political responsibility in Germany, that the trans-Atlantic partnership is the gold standard of our foreign policy. The hand reached out by the US after World War II; the Marshall Plan; the life-saving Berlin Airlift; and, finally, the support for German reunification – politicians and people in Germany have not forgotten what the US did for our country. But if we want to maintain this special connection, we cannot act as if nothing has changed since then. We need to recalibrate our partnership.

Nostalgia alone will not help us here. Instead, we need to take a



Heiko Maas

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the US can no longer push Europe around by the exterritorial assertion of its sanctions policy, by weaponizing the dollar or by its *Liebesentzug* – withdrawal of affection – regarding international institutions. Maas wants Europe to act as a "counterweight" to America, capable of defending "red lines" crossed by Washington. Like Juncker, who finds it ridiculous that Europeans pay for their Airbus and 80 percent of energy imports in dollars, he wants to install independent payment channels outside the Swift system. Beyond that, forging an "alliance for multilateralism" is one of his principal projects.

Yet the minister also says: "We are still close to each other." To manifest this closeness and to rescue it into the future is the central purpose of Deutschlandjahr

USA. Maas was deeply touched when during one of his recent trips, a young GI pulled him aside and implored him: "Please, don't abandon America." Germany is not going to abandon America. But it devoutly wishes that America remain true to itself.

This paper was founded in 2004 at a time when German-American relations were at their lowest point after the end of conflict between East and West. The bone of contention was George W. Bush's Iraq war, started on the basis of lies and self-deception. We raised our voice in order to bridge the profound gap. It worked.

Today we raise our voice again. Our purpose is the same as then: to save the trans-Atlantic community. It remains a vital asset not only for Europe, its security and its prosperity, but also for America's influence in the world.

Denigrating allies, however troublesome they may be at times, is the shortest road to isolation. We should all remember Winston Churchill's dictum: "The only thing worse than having allies is not having allies." In the same vein, Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, implored Donald Trump: "Appreciate your allies, for you don't have many."

We are firmly convinced that we must not let our trans-Atlantic partnership erode and silently fade away. The reasons are obvious.

First: We face a host of problems that neither Europe nor the United States can hope to master alone. The challenges of our time require partnership as a response: in combatting terrorism; stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons; building peace in the Middle East; providing energy

security; fighting climate change; and solving the never-ending trade disputes in a non-antagonistic way.

Second: We have more in common with each other than with anyone else. If America and Europe are to thrive in the new era unfolding before us today, they should beware of letting their partnership languish. Only together can they hope to hold their own in a world of ever more and ever stronger competing powers.

Third: There is a very simple demographic reason for hanging together. By the year 2050, America and Europe will each comprise a population of 500 Million – between them, one billion people facing nine or ten billion in the rest of the world. One billion people in the West, nine or ten billion in the rest – that

prospect deserves sober contemplation.

The late Senator John S. McCain was a stalwart advocate of Western unity and an unwavering supporter of the world America has inspired, organized and led for three-quarters of a century. At last year's Munich Security Conference he made an appeal to the Europeans: "Make no mistake, my friends: These are dangerous times, but you should not count America out, and we should not count each other out." Heeding McCain's admonition would be the noblest way of honoring the memory of a great American and dedicated Atlanticist.

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The German Times.