



Remarks at the German Unity Day Reception

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

Washington, DC
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I am honored to be with you tonight to celebrate the seventeenth anniversary of German Unity, one of the historic milestones of the 20th century.

We have come a long way since October 1990, when after years of separation, East and West Germany finally became one, uniting people and values in a joint vision for a new, prosperous and cohesive Germany. I still find it remarkable that right now, in just this short amount of time, a new generation of Germans is growing up that knows only one, united Germany.

Germany and the United States have a shared history. Like Germany, the United States endured years of struggle before establishing itself as a unified nation. We appreciate Germany's struggle. The United States stood with Germany then, and the United States continues to stand with Germany to this day.

German-American relations are as strong as they have ever been: whether over two hundred years ago when Baron von Steuben turned raw American recruits into effective soldiers who won their independence; or sixty years ago when the United States General Curtis LeMay led the Berlin airlift; or seventeen years ago when Germany ended its division to become a united country.

Today Germany and the United States work together to solve common problems, or as Chancellor Merkel described it, we take up "our joint responsibility in order to master the major challenges facing our world."

Germany and the United States work closely to support peace in troubled regions of the world, to combat terrorism, to eliminate human trafficking and other international crimes, and to continue the work of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Together, we are also working diligently to control environmental pollution, to reduce energy consumption, and to address climate change.

Both of our countries cherish the hard-won values of democracy and freedom. And the United States looks forward to continued partnership with Germany to expand these values around the world and assist others who strive for them.

We also cooperate to ensure our mutual benefit and prosperity. A perfect example of this cooperation is the work of tonight's guest of honor, Minister for Transportation and Urban Development Wolfgang Tiefensee. Tonight I would particularly like to thank him on behalf of the United States for his help in concluding a successful US-EU Open Skies Agreement last March. The Open Skies Agreement brings a wide array of benefits to workers, investors, and consumers from the United States as well as the European Community.

Our commercial cooperation remains considerable. The United States is the largest single foreign investor in the east of Germany. The more than 15 billion Euros that our companies are investing is helping to provide over 35,000 jobs. Over 200 companies in the east of Germany are either wholly U.S. owned or joint ventures with U.S. participation.

Today, on this day of unity, we take pride in the fact that friendship between Germans and Americans is stronger than ever. I am certain that our continuing partnership will increase our mutual prosperity and our success in confronting the issues we face around the globe. Thank you for inviting me and best wishes to all for a happy "Day of German Unity."

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