

More Freedom, please!

Red-Green foreign policy is too strongly geared towards the status quo –
a plea for a new, more Liberal foreign policy
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- unauthorized Translation -

Countries which live in freedom have a particular obligation to help others towards freedom. Fifteen years after reunification, Germany bears greater international responsibility. We must not shirk from this responsibility – but equally, we must not swing from a culture of restraint to a culture of self-importance. German policy must be guided by European integration, transatlantic cooperation, human rights and effective multilateralism.

Over decades, Germany has worked to achieve that which is necessary for peaceful coexistence: the trust of others. Clear objectives, combined with reliability and an unassuming manner, confidential discussions rather than short-lived dramatic appearances, concern for relations with smaller countries, and not just meetings with statesmen from the major powers – these are the things which have always characterised German, and in particular Liberal, foreign policy.

Liberal foreign policy has been and will continue to be shaped by the same constitutional principles that determine our political actions generally. In other words, it is liberal and unambiguous on human-rights issues, clearly espouses market-economy principles, and is based on free trade and helping people to help themselves. In this way, trust was built up over decades of work under the ministers Walter Scheel, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Klaus Kinkel. Liberal foreign policy continues to be based on trust, alliances and multilateralism – and thus on organisations like the EU, NATO, the OSCE and the United Nations, rather than going it alone.

The Atlantic partnership and incorporation into Europe have, for good reason, become the Federal Republic's *raison d'état*. President Theodor Heuss memorably described this as the German political elite's reconciliation with the West's parliamentary systems. A willingness to learn and to work built up the international standing on which the then fledgling second German democracy was so dependent. We should recall this successful period in the Federal Republic of Germany's history. In some areas, the Red-Green government has stuck to traditional lines – as is good practice following a change of government, and as our foreign-policy interests demand, since a degree of continuity forms part of the *raison d'état* of foreign policy. More than any other policy field, foreign policy must be reliable; it lends itself less than others to being moulded along party-political or ideological lines. But in some cases, traditional positions were abandoned. After seven years, the Red-Green record on foreign policy is poor; substance has taken a back seat to media events. The transatlantic friendship has been damaged, European integration is undergoing a severe crisis, small and medium-sized EU partners have been irritated by clumsy talk of forming new "axes", plans to reform the UN risk coming to nothing, the Bundeswehr is involved in many missions abroad without sufficient sign of promising political solutions, and Germany's credibility on human-rights issues has been shattered. We must address these questions, refocusing on our old strengths and revising tried and tested principles and we must make some corrections.

The process of European integration cannot be taken for granted

Of primary importance to us as Germans is our country's integration in Europe and this will remain the case. The EU must be led out of its current crisis. We need European cooperation, since it guarantees peace and friendship among the peoples of Europe. However, we also need integration because we, as an export nation, benefit most from the internal market and also from enlargement, and so our

prosperity depends on it. European integration is, not least, our response to globalisation, including competition with strong emerging markets such as India and China.

Nevertheless, simply carrying on as usual is today no longer an option— as has been demonstrated by the initial failure of the constitutional project, the growing scepticism towards future enlargement, the financial dispute, and also the wanton damaging of the stability pact. Many of Europe's citizens no longer accept the integration process as self-evident. New efforts must be made to win them over. Summits alone are not enough. The political elites have quite simply not succeeded in persuading the citizens of Europe's benefits. They have dealt with people's concerns at national level and lost sight of the bigger picture, which offers more opportunities than risks. Europe is a very ambitious project, and requires a European perspective. Those who only ever talk about Europe from the perspective of national egoism will have difficulty in bringing Europe closer to the citizens.

The European constitutional project, despite all its shortcomings, is a step in the right direction, a step towards making the EU more democratic and bringing it closer to its citizens. This is why it is particularly tragic that this project has been put on hold for the time being due to lack of support from the citizens, of all things. It will not be possible to relaunch the text in its present form – even after the much-cited “pause for reflection”, which is undoubtedly necessary. A new approach is needed. Most importantly, the text must be stripped of all aspects which do not really need to be enshrined in a constitution. We need a constitution worthy of its title, laying down fundamental rights and dealing with the most important structural issues.

The initial failure of the constitutional project also has some advantages: discussions have begun in Europe once again about the sense and the goals of the integration project. The “European social model” which has become the mantra of the SPD and Greens, is today facing the challenges of achieving increasing labour-market flexibility, promoting science and research and further opening up the single market to competition. There is no alternative to competition and cutting ourselves off from the rest of the world is not an option. Tony Blair is correct in saying that the credibility of integration should be measured by success in the fight for growth and jobs, as well as in the fight against organised crime and by capabilities in the area of foreign policy crisis management. Ultimately, public support will only be won if social opportunities are created in Europe through jobs and new employment growth; this is a task which is clearly dealt with successfully, or less successfully, in the nation-states in the first instance. The oft-cited German-French tandem in particular is wobbling dangerously. We need this tandem and the Liberals are committed to it, yet it must become more dynamic. Leadership is not about handing out orders, coordination with others, such as the UK, must be improved.

It is high time that difficult decisions were tackled with vigour. Almost 50% of the EU's budget is spent on agriculture – a sector which employs a mere 5% of Europe's population. It is therefore difficult to persuade the citizens that Europe is forward-looking. The farmers must not be left out in the cold. Pledges made must be honoured. Yet we should find the courage to make a renewed attempt to move towards a system of co-financing, where nation-states would once again cover a proportion of the costs for their farmers themselves. It has to be possible to use EU resources for joint forward-looking tasks which can be communicated to the citizens – for science and research, in other words for innovation.

The enlargement of the European Union is, and will remain, both an opportunity and a responsibility for the citizens of Europe. The transition states of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe belong to Europe in historical and cultural terms. Without them, the integration project would be incomplete. These countries need the European perspective as light at the end of the tunnel, in order to help them overcome nationalistic or ethnic tensions and initiate the difficult processes of reform, some of which have yet to come. Yet the EU must not overstretch itself. It is not a club open to all. It must not deny

people their identity. This means that its stabilising function must not remain focused on full membership alone. Other forms of ties to the EU must be considered. The principle of “pacta sunt servanda” should be applied with regard to accession negotiations with Turkey. But the negotiations must truly be an open-ended process. There is no sense in pretending. Nobody today can predict the EU’s capacity to take in new members in 10 years time, nor indeed evaluate in advance Turkey’s future political and social situation. Considering alternatives in good time is the responsible approach to take.

Following the accession of a large number of new members, it has become even more important that Germany again becomes the advocate and trusted partner of the small and medium-sized EU countries in particular. Many such countries are keen to coordinate with this important partner and move forward together. These new members have a good deal to offer the old EU. Yet the SPD and Greens have provoked irritation amongst some of the new members through their talk of building a Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, through anti-American undertones and through the clumsy actions of the German-French tandem. Lithuania and Poland, for example, were offended by the attendance of the German Chancellor, alongside the French President, at Putin’s celebrations commemorating the 750th anniversary of Kaliningrad – celebrations to which they were not themselves invited. More life must be brought to the Weimar triangle with Poland once again. The modern European Union is not only Western Europe. And a Federal Chancellor or Foreign Minister travelling to Moscow should always also stop off en route in Riga, Prague, or Ljubljana, for instance, in order to prevent any suspicions of policy being made over the heads of other countries.

The basis for a good transatlantic partnership is trust.

The transatlantic friendship is also in urgent need of fresh momentum. Europe and North America have a great deal in common. We share the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law and, despite the approach of the Asian century on the horizon, we still today remain linked by the most important trade and investment flows in the world. Our close cooperation, based on trust, is also vital for global stability. The new security policy threats – the spread of weapons of mass destruction, failing states and fundamentalist-Islamistic terrorism – are aimed at the whole of the free world and can only be tackled together. The basis for an effective transatlantic partnership is trust. It is precisely at this level that the relationship between the Bush administration and the German Federal Government has never quite regained its equilibrium since the disruptions over the Iraq war. It is detrimental for German interests for the Federal Chancellor to embrace the Russian President, whilst cold-shouldering the American President. The idea of European integration as a counter model, or even competitor, to North America was flirted with. The SPD/Greens government abandoned the political line which had been so successful over the years – that Germany should never find itself in a situation of having to choose between Paris and Washington.

Naturally, transatlantic differences of opinion do exist. The beginning of the Iraq war without a clear mandate from the Security Council, the atrocious scenes of abuse in Abu Ghraib, the situation in Guantánamo, whose compliance with international law is doubtful, the lack of support for the International Criminal Court – all of these things are worthy of criticism, but this criticism should be expressed as criticism between friends, rather than by Germany turning its back on the USA. The basic consensus of values and the transatlantic friendship are, and will continue to be, independent of changes of government. The Bush administration has now stretched out a hand to Europe. President Bush has already visited Europe four times since his re-election. And his new Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, has assembled a leadership team strongly weighted towards transatlantic relations. We should take the hand being held out. There is every reason to do so and there are enough tasks in the Middle East and elsewhere which must be tackled together. There is no alternative to the worldwide potential of the Euro-Atlantic partnership. And, incidentally, this partnership is more vital to Germany than to any other country.

The institutional framework provided by NATO for the transatlantic partnership is one which has proved its worth over decades, but which remains suitable to deal with the challenges of the future. The USA must be persuaded once again that NATO can be more for it than a toolbox to be used for ad-hoc coalitions. To this end, the Europeans must do everything possible to ensure that they are once again taken more seriously as alliance partners for the USA. The aim should not be for Europe to serve as a counterweight to the USA, but for it to gain greater weight within the Atlantic alliance. This means that, wherever possible, Europe must speak with one voice in order to present its interests and strategic aims more forcefully. If this is to be achieved, the Europeans' military capabilities must also be improved, however. Our security has long since ceased to be guaranteed on Germany's borders. We live in a global village and, like other democracies, we need allies. We cannot shirk from our responsibility. No country can simply be a passive consumer of security provided by others. All countries must respect international law and make their own contribution. Regrettably, law and order and peace do not always grow up of their own accord.

People's will for freedom is the natural enemy of autocracies. Countries where people live in freedom bear a special responsibility to help others achieve the same freedom. People in more and more countries today wish to take their fate into their own hands and demand democratic rights. This was demonstrated in the former Soviet republics – during the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and – though not wholly comparable – the putsch in Kyrgyzstan. The same thing applies in the Middle East, however. In Iraq, millions of people exercised their right to vote in the face of death threats. In the aftermath of Arafat's death, the Palestinians chose a new leadership in truly democratic elections. Following the success of the first democratic presidential elections in Afghanistan, the country is now facing parliamentary elections. And the Lebanese are revolting peacefully against the foreign interference of Syria and have voted in democratic elections for the first time. In Africa too, incidentally, far more states can today be described as democratic than a few years ago.

The citizens' will for freedom is the natural enemy of autocrats and foreign interference by other states. Transformation by its very nature involves ruptures. But stability in dictatorships often means the peace of the grave and this, in any case, is impossible to maintain in the long term. This applies in particular when the will for freedom breaks out in other countries visibly and successfully, thus setting an example. Because more direct communication channels exist today and it is almost impossible to block access to them, people's unconditional will for freedom is increasingly able to spread across the globalised world. Thus, stability should not be seen as the be-all and end-all, to the extent that it impedes transformation and modernisation. Both German and European policy are much too strongly weighted towards the status quo during this period of worldwide impetus for freedom and are not focusing enough on the will for freedom of people the world over.

The worldwide triumph of freedom proclaimed by President George W. Bush is received with a great deal of scepticism in Europe, not with regard to the goals pursued, but with regard to its strategic implementation. Friends are entitled to point out that neglect of international law, the United Nations and multilateralism, along with "double standards" in dealings with unfree states on the Arab peninsula, rob the US of credibility and effectiveness. Germany and Europe must therefore develop a joint commitment and their own strategy to actively support worldwide efforts to achieve freedom. This involves more proactive support for modernisation processes and the reinforcement of civil societies in the transition states, and the application of specifically European strengths, i.e. Europe's economic power, its function as a role model with a peaceful order achieved through integration, and the instruments of "soft power".

The battle against terrorism is the most vital transatlantic project.

The most important common transatlantic project at present, and for the foreseeable future, is the fight against terrorism: the new totalitarian threat for the whole of the Western world. The horrific bomb attacks in London have demonstrated anew that this terrorism is not only aimed at the USA, but at the whole of the "free world". The asymmetrical threat posed by fanatical suicide bombers could begin to threaten our very existence, in particular were international terrorists to gain access to weapons of mass destruction. Non-proliferation policy therefore remains a key element in combating terrorism. Western societies must not overreact in the fight against terrorism, they must not make themselves into fortresses and discard the fundamental principles of freedom and tolerance. Instead, the West must do everything possible to support the efforts towards modernisation in many states moulded by Islam. Many critical intellectuals and businesspeople in the Islamic world are prepared to take up the political fight with fundamentalist forces. This is significant, for modernisation cannot be ordered from above or forced on people by outside forces.

Whatever justified criticism there may be of the way in which the last Iraq war began, stabilisation of Iraq is in the interests of the whole of the Western world. We cannot afford to fail, since Iraq already borders a NATO state and may in future also be a direct EU neighbour. The European states, the EU overall and Germany must use their capabilities more effectively, e.g. to reinforce the rule of law and the police and health systems, and must demonstrate greater commitment - which does not mean that they must send troops to Iraq.

Iran must be persuaded to abandon its dangerous nuclear ambitions. To this end, it is important for the Europeans and Americans to move forward hand in hand. The trust which Europe enjoys, coupled with America's strength, must be used intelligently. The aim must be to achieve a result fair to all sides. A country as strategically important and culturally rich as Iran must not remain isolated in the long term, but must be given an opportunity to develop peacefully.

Finally, the fight against terrorism cannot be won without a peaceful solution to the Middle-East conflict. German foreign policy continues to be shaped by the special German responsibility for Israel. The democratic election of a new Palestinian leadership and the Sharon government's courageous initiative for withdrawal from Gaza give grounds for optimism. The vital elements of a lasting peaceful solution remain the same: recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, renunciation of violence and terrorism and concrete realisation of the Palestinians' claims to their own viable state. The peaceful solution must come from within, but the international community can and must provide outside assistance. Europe and the USA must avoid the unfortunate impression that America is on the side of the Israelis and the EU on the side of the Palestinians and must instead endeavour to work together to persuade both sides to take steps towards peace. There is no alternative to peaceful co-existence in two neighbouring states.

The Western world's most important weapon in its fight against terrorism is its credibility, in the area of human rights policy in particular. Unfortunately, Germany has lost ground here. We must once again make human rights the guiding principle of German and European foreign policy. The current German government is only doing so in areas where it is not painful. Calls are made for countries like Togo, Burundi and Zimbabwe to respect human rights and speeches made at international workshops. Yet no sooner are geopolitical and economic interests at stake than human rights are forgotten.

This applies to policy towards Russia, for example. Neither the Chechnya issue nor the dramatically deteriorating civil rights situation in Russia are at the top of the German-Russian agenda.

Liberal foreign policy seeks to engage with Russia as a neighbour and as a large and important country. But it also aims to promote the processes of change and to reinforce civil society in Russia. Points of criticism must be discussed openly. The pattern of violence and counter-violence in

Chechnya, the problems concerning press freedom, the absence of a culture of law in the sentencing of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the constant erection of new hurdles for independent candidates and parties critical of the government – all of this is being swept under the carpet by the SPD and Green government.

If Russia is to have close links to Europe and the West there is no alternative to it moving towards the rule of law and democracy. A reformed Russia will offer better and longer-term opportunities for cooperation in the economic and energy fields. In its approach to the important partner which is Russia, Germany must combine an outstretched hand of friendship with frank words.

Chancellor Schröder is backing the lifting of the EU weapons embargo against China, even though the human rights situation remains extremely worrying. This can be seen in the suppression of the Tibetans, the restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and the rights of religious minorities, along with single-party rule, the high execution rate and the existence of administrative custody. Chancellor Schröder may claim that, by lifting the weapons embargo, he is not intending to supply any weapons, but simply wishes to give a signal to the leadership in Peking. Yet he fails to realise that this signal would be misused as a seal of approval in the field of human rights and, incidentally, that it is not only a signal given by Germany to China but would lead to a European-American problem. In economic and political terms, China is a partner of tremendous importance. But the successes in cooperation between the US and China demonstrate that the worrying human rights situation in China does not have to be swept under the carpet to achieve this.

Policy on Asia requires tailored regional approaches. The Japanese economy alone today generates 60% of Asian GDP. Despite this, Japan plays scarcely any role at all in German foreign policy today. The “Germany Year” currently underway in Japan, for example, had to do without the presence of the German Chancellor or Foreign Minister. Japan must once again be taken seriously, as an economic partner, but also, and in particular, as a foreign policy partner particularly close to the West in terms of its ideas and structures. India is the world’s largest democracy; over the last few years it has seen considerable waves of modernisation, is today regarded as the software capital of the world and has considerable influence in South-East and East Asia. We must widen our horizons.

German policy on Asia must involve more balanced cooperation with all important partners, without neglecting China. The waves of modernisation and economic growth seen in large parts of Asia must go hand-in-hand with the development or reinforcement of rule-of-law and democratic structures. This is a continent which houses two-thirds of the world’s population – and, with its economic, demographic, social and political dynamism, definitely the continent of the future. It has long ceased to be merely the scene or object of globalisation, but instead has become the main motor and winner of globalisation. In the foreseeable future, the foundations of our own prosperity will partly be laid in Asia.

Policy on Asia requires tailored regional approaches and constant realignment of our instruments and resources. There is no justification for the fact that we have three-times as many people employed in our diplomatic missions in Europe as in the whole of Asia. In those places where German interests can most effectively be pursued together with our EU partners we should reduce our bilateral commitments in favour of a more efficient division of labour at European level.

Latin America has been almost criminally neglected by German foreign policy over the last few years. Since the formal democratisation processes which took place there in the eighties and nineties, democracy in the Latin American countries has been seen as stable and the continent as largely free of conflict. The most recent developments in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, as well as in Nicaragua, are in sharp contrast to this. At the same time, Latin America is a significant growth market; Mexico today has the world’s eighth largest economy, whilst Brazil has the ninth largest. In addition, Latin

America has exceptionally good chances of catching up with the societies of North America and Europe, due to its linguistic, cultural and religious background. The opportunities for more active European and German policy towards Latin America are excellent, due to the traditional links which exist, the virtual absence of historical burdens and the region's overwhelming interest in counterbalancing US influence through close relations to Europe. This opportunity must be seized. Yet there has been no significant progress in the recent past either in strengthening links between the EU and Mercosur (South America's common market) or in supporting the Latin American process of integration. Germany has more or less completely failed to take advantage of the enormous foreign trade opportunities offered by the liberalisation of the Latin American markets. In the huge growth market of Brazil alone, Germany has fallen back from second to sixth place in terms of foreign investment. The potential for intensifying political, economic and cultural relations is enormous. Latin America must be brought back onto the German foreign policy radar.

Strengthening civil society in Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is today seen by many as a continent without hope. Over 10% of the world's population generate only 2.5% of global GDP. The blame lies on the one hand with flawed decision-making and mismanagement by home-grown elites and on the other with the false incentives set by development aid. Yet Africa's wealth of raw materials is being seen as increasingly important, the process of African integration, with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union or the Southern African Development Community, has gained momentum and, in several countries, successful market economy reforms and democratisation have already generated impressive economic growth.

At the G8 Summit in Scotland in July 2005, agreement on significant increases in funds for Africa was reached and demands for development assistance at the level of 0.7 percent of Western states' GDP were revived. Experience shows, however, that financial transfers alone lead to dependency, impede initiative and block efforts towards reform and development. Development assistance must not degenerate into a system of global welfare payments. The human capital and infrastructure needed to absorb massive sums of money are often not available. Well-intentioned projects run the risk of funds being wasted, seeping into the culture of patronage and corruption.

A moderate increase in funds for Africa can make sense provided we do not, as in the past, distribute funds indiscriminately and if we demand that reform processes be expanded and deepened. International and German assistance should therefore focus on effective sectoral and regional division of labour between all relevant donors, on support for security-sector reforms, for post-conflict peacebuilding and for the training of security forces in conflict resolution, as well as on trade liberalisation measures in the Doha round framework. Opening up the industrialised nations' markets for products from developing countries would be considerably more effective than the total development aid they provide. Debt relief is also justifiable – yet it should take place selectively and on the basis of performance. Any cooperation with Africa, however, must focus on promoting civil society, multiparty politics, the rule of law and reinforcement of the administrative sector. Good governance is critical for development opportunities. The African political elites must not be relieved of this responsibility.

It would be better to have a joint European seat in the UN Security Council. The United Nations are becoming increasingly important as a global multilateral regulatory framework. The ability to act and the legitimacy of the UN and its regional sub-organisations must be bolstered. The United Nations must be capable of performing its triple role of peacekeeping, encouraging development and promoting human rights. This is what the upcoming UN reforms must concentrate on – rather than pandering to national vanities. The German Federal Government has focused obstinately on gaining a permanent seat in the Security Council and failed to sufficiently support the overall package of

reforms. In addition, tactical mistakes were also made in pursuing this primary aim. The government failed to discuss its position in advance with its most important ally, the USA, and it worked in close cooperation with other hopefuls, which was bound to lead to opposition in the regions concerned - the chances of gaining a permanent seat would undoubtedly be higher if the German government had concentrated on the overall package of reforms and if strategic preparations for a permanent seat to go to one of the most important contributors in financial and other terms had been better. In any case, a European seat would be preferable to a German seat. In order for this to be feasible, however, the EU would first have to develop a degree of integration comparable to that of a nation-state, at least in the area of foreign policy, in order to be suitable for such a seat in international-law and practical terms. Should Germany now receive a permanent seat, it should at least also use this seat in the interests of those EU partners not represented in the Security Council. This would represent an important confidence-building measure for Germany within Europe.

Just as important as the reform of the Security Council is the reform of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR). One of the proposals made by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is to transform the CHR into a smaller standing Human Rights Council on an equal footing with the Security Council and with membership reserved for states meeting certain minimum human rights standards. This proposal deserves unreserved support, as the current CHR, whose members include Sudan, Cuba and Libya, has degenerated into a human rights bazaar.

Fifteen years after reunification, Germany bears increased international responsibility. Worldwide expectations of our country have grown - whether we like it or not. We must not shirk from this responsibility - but equally, we must not go too far and swing from a culture of restraint to a culture of self-importance. This also applies to Bundeswehr deployments abroad. Increasingly frequently over the past few years, our troops have been sent abroad, sometimes to distant parts of the globe. And multilateral demands for German participation in international peace missions are likely to increase further. Germany cannot, and should not, refuse on principle to meet such demands - this would be false, bearing in mind our security interests, our special responsibility for peace and human rights, our active commitment to multilateralism and to strengthening the United Nations and our relatively strong capabilities compared with other countries. In addition, the Bundeswehr's exceptional performance on peace missions has significantly contributed to the increased respect and trust enjoyed by Germany at international level. The Bundeswehr is a positive advertisement for Germany.

At the same time, however, Germany should not wrongly conclude from the success of foreign deployments so far that military deployments ought to be used for political ends. International military missions must, in principle, only serve to set in motion and support peace, stabilisation and reconstruction projects. Military action can never be a panacea; the real peace mission must always be a political one. Bundeswehr troops can only underpin political processes, rather than replace them. Success in a peace mission, such as those in Afghanistan or the Balkans, lies not in bringing temporary calm to a conflict or in patting one another on the back; true success is only achieved when a deployment can be ended as a result of political stabilisation having been achieved.

Military deployments are dangerous for service personnel; every deployment has to be weighed up carefully in the light of the security risks run and the frequently considerable hardships suffered by service personnel. The requirement for parliamentary approval which exists rightly gives the German Bundestag a particular role and responsibility. The Bundeswehr must not find itself overstretched by the scope and regional spread of foreign deployments. Germany cannot and must not give the impression of seeking to shoulder the burden of international conflict resolution alone. The ISAF-PRT concept for Afghanistan, for example, remained an almost solely German affair for far too long; only recently has the international involvement and distribution of burdens envisaged really moved forward.

In pledging involvement in international military missions, Germany should concentrate on cases where tasks are shared between international partners. We do not wish to shy away from global responsibility and must not do so – but we cannot solve the problems of this world by ourselves. Sending German service personnel on foreign deployments should not be used to replace politics, but should only be considered where there is no alternative. Chancellor Schröder once said, in as many words, that German foreign policy would not be made anywhere else but in Berlin. He is undoubtedly right in this. But this does not mean that German foreign policy can be made over the heads of others, without obtaining the views of important partners, or even against these wishes. This is detrimental to German interests. Due to its history, its geographical situation and its position as a medium-sized power and, in particular, its economic dependence on exports, Germany has every interest in being a respected, reliable and integrated partner in world politics.