

Clinton affirms America's partnership with Germany

by Rainer Apel

During his visit to Germany on May 13-14, President Bill Clinton revived his 1994 proposal, that Germany and the United States work most closely together, since "nothing is impossible" if they do so. With this, a monkey wrench has been thrown into the British policy for a "fortress Europe," at loggerheads with the United States.

Clinton's visit has succeeded in sweeping away political misunderstandings and economic tensions between the United States and Germany, before they could muddy the waters of transatlantic relations. The danger that the stubborn commitment on the part of some European elites, to turn the Maastricht Treaty-defined Europe into a euro bloc—as certain geopoliticians in the City of London hope to do, to undermine the dollar and America's leading role—has been eliminated, through the personal agreement between Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Clinton. "I am strictly opposed," Kohl said in a speech at the Berlin Schauspielhaus, "to lifting trade barriers within Europe, in order then to strengthen them on our external borders." He added unequivocally, "With us Germans, there will be no fortress Europe."

Clinton's visit was not in exactly the same spirit as July 1994, when he offered reunified Germany a new strategic partnership with America to develop eastern Europe and the states of the former Soviet Union—which the British media interpreted as Clinton in effect terminating the Anglo-American special relationship (see *Documentation*, p. 46). However, this visit did represent the closest point in the relationship between Washington and Bonn since that time. This is of great importance, because over the last few years, doubts have been raised and, from certain quarters, even deliberately spread, as to whether the postwar friendship of the Americans with the Germans would endure into the 21st century.

Clinton, unfortunately, has had to recognize in the four years since 1994, that Kohl and the German elites are not ready to let their own ties to London be damaged by their

relations with Washington. Kohl was not prepared to sacrifice Maastricht Europe, and he avoided making a clear decision in favor of the United States. However, following the recent debacle in Brussels (where, for example, a luncheon meeting to decide on the head of the European Central Bank broke down into an 11-hour fight), and his disappointment with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Kohl has become more amenable to meeting Clinton halfway. Clinton, for his part, acknowledged the decision of the European Union and of Bonn, for the euro, and now has offered the Germans close collaboration in the context of a "new Euro-Atlantic cooperation." This is supposed to stress America's great interest in Germany, without, however, ruffling the other Europeans. In essence, it remains the case, that Washington will consider Berlin the first address in Europe.

A proud history

It is this context that one should understand the numerous references, in the speeches delivered during Clinton's visits to Berlin, Potsdam, and Eisenach, to the long history of German-American relations: from the first treaty of Prussia with the just-established American Republic more than 200 years ago, through the American recognition of the first republican parliament at the Frankfurt St. Paul's Church in 1848 (which was later defeated), to the Berlin air lift, and the several German-American institutions which have been established since the end of the war, and especially since reunification in 1990. The intervention of American industry in eastern Germany, about 15 billion deutschemarks (almost \$10 billion) worth, for starters, is considerable. And, on the other hand, one out of every 12 U.S. jobs depends on the growing German and other European investments in the United States, in recent years, as Clinton emphasized in his Berlin theater speech. Kohl also reiterated in Berlin that a substantial American military presence should remain stationed in Germany.



President Clinton speaks at the Berlin Schauspielhaus, May 13, 1998. His visit to Germany has created the foundation for closer U.S. strategic cooperation with Europe's most important power—to the dismay of British geopoliticians.

These historical, economic, and military ties are the pillars of the “German-American cooperation in the next century,” Clinton proclaimed in Berlin, Potsdam, and Eisenach. This is something to build on, perhaps not so rapidly as would have been the case had Kohl accepted Clinton’s 1994 offer instead of Maastricht, but nonetheless, it is a foundation for significantly closer strategic cooperation between Berlin, the old and new capital of Germany, and Washington, than has been possible to date. Clinton, in any case, views reunified Germany as the most important economic and military partner of the United States in Europe, and American diplomats, such as U.S. Ambassador John Kornblum, have repeatedly stressed recently, that it is in America’s interests for Germany to be politically and economically even stronger.

Despite the fact that this may create discomfort in other European capitals (especially London), and even in Bonn, Clinton holds to the conviction that Germany’s role in Europe and the world must become much stronger, if the United States is to successfully combat the numerous economic and political global crises—from the Balkans to eastern Europe to Asia. This was stated as such in Berlin. Without an economically powerful and politically stable Germany, there can be no stable Europe, East or West, and, ironically, Germany’s responsibility in an unstable Maastricht Europe will have to grow, in order for a catastrophe to be averted. It is to be hoped, that the German elites see it in this light, particularly since Clinton has thus encouraged them again.

In his Berlin theater speech, Clinton said that now it is a question of accomplishing the unfinished tasks of 1989, especially with reference to eastern Europe. “I call on our

nations to summon the energy and the will to finish the work we have started, to keep at it until every nation on the continent enjoys the security and democracy we do, and all men and women from Seattle to Paris, to Istanbul to St. Petersburg, are able to pursue their dreams in peace and build an even better life for their children. This is the opportunity of generations. Together, we must seize it. We must build a Europe like Germany itself; whole and free, prosperous and peaceful, increasingly integrated and always globally engaged,” Clinton said. He stressed that this task is to be fulfilled through Germany assuming a leading role.

Clinton said he was completely aware, that there were “obstacles” in the rest of Europe, because of the strength of the deutschemark and the German economy. But, if one compares Clinton’s statements with the malice expressed in the British press regarding the economic problems or other weaknesses in Germany, one sees how differently Washington and London view Germany.

Industrial cooperation

While economic issues were on the margins of the diplomatic events in Berlin and Potsdam, which were organized in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Berlin air lift, they were at center stage when Clinton and Kohl visited Eisenach. Both emphasized the importance of the fact that the United States is the biggest industrial investor in the eastern part of Germany, thus securing 60,000 highly skilled jobs, and that the Opel factory in Eisenach is currently the most modern production unit of the parent firm, General Motors, in the world.

Clinton said that the decision to become engaged in West

Germany and Berlin at the end of the war, was the best decision the United States could have made, because thus, those who had been enemies were transformed into friends. Today, the Germans are the best friends of the Americans and vice versa, he said. Kohl picked up on this, recalling once again, that German reunification had been contested by other Western “partners” of Bonn, but that the Americans stood at the Germans’ side, making reunification possible.

The visit to Eisenach was in fact planned to underline the United States’ serious commitment to productive labor in eastern Germany. Kohl said that he had tried in vain to convince then-British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that it was worthwhile to invest in the eastern German labor force, because it, like the German labor force in the West, had been based on the experience of three or four generations of advanced skills. She simply rejected it, Kohl said. Clinton replied, that he had been interested since his tenure as Governor in Arkansas, in industrial concerns, and wanted to speak with the Opel factory workers in Eisenach, because he wanted to gain “a personal impression” of the work spirit and technology, which have been so successful there.

Clinton is very popular among the citizens of eastern Germany, more so, at the moment, than the German Chancellor. The simple fact that a crowd of 30,000 people gathered in the town square of Eisenach, the Marktplatz, in order to catch a glimpse of the American President, shows this. If one takes this, and the positive aspects of German-American relations over the past 200 years, one is reminded of Clinton’s famous words in 1994, at the Brandenburg Gate: that nothing is impossible if Germans and Americans work together forever. Looking at eastern Europe, Russia, Asia, and other parts of the world, whose economies must be built up, Germans and Americans should respond to the impetus given by Clinton, and engage jointly in industrial projects worldwide. This would channel massive amounts of capital into productive projects, and hem in speculation. What is possible in Eisenach, must also be possible elsewhere.

Documentation

Clinton speaks in Berlin on U.S.-German friendship

The following are excerpts from the President’s address at the Schauspielhaus in Berlin on May 13, as transcribed by Federal News Service.

... I am delighted to join all of you in the historic heart of free and unified Berlin. Fifty years ago, the United States and its allies made a commitment to the people of Berlin. It began

with the heroic airlift of 1948, continued through the showdown with Soviet tanks at Checkpoint Charlie in 1961 and includes nearly 100,000 American soldiers who defended this city over the course of 40 years and grew to love its people. It lasted until East Germans bravely reached out across the Wall and tore it down, thus freeing all of us to make real a Europe we had only dreamed of, an undivided continent of thriving democracies where states deal with each other not through domination by dialogue; where societies are governed not by repression but by the rule of law; where the only barriers people face are the limits of their own dreams. Today, Berlin is a symbol of what all Europe is striving to become. . . .

In 1994 I came to Europe to support your unity and to set forth a vision of partnership between America and a new Europe rooted in security cooperation, free markets, and vibrant democracies. I asked all our countries to adapt our institutions for the new time, to help the new market economies of Europe’s eastern half to thrive, to support the growth of freedom and the spread of peace, to bring to peoples of the Euro-Atlantic community more closely together.

On all fronts we have made remarkable progress. NATO is taking on new missions and new members, building practical ties with Russia and Ukraine, deepening cooperation among the 44 nations of the Partnership Council. The European Union is growing, and America and the EU are working together to tear down more trade barriers and strengthen new democracies. The OSCE, Europe’s standard bearer for human rights and freedoms, is now helping to make those standards real from supervising elections in Albania to monitoring arms reduction in Bosnia.

With support from America and the European Union and especially with Chancellor Kohl and Germany’s far-sighted leadership, new market economies are taking root all across this continent. Russia has privatized more property than any nation in this century. Poland and Estonia are among Europe’s fastest-growing economies. Since 1991 U.S. and EU investment in Central and Eastern Europe has quadrupled, and trade has doubled. . . .

With all this progress, as the Chancellor noted, many challenges still remain to our common vision: the ongoing struggles of newly freed nations to consolidate their reforms, the unfinished work of bringing Europe’s eastern half fully into our transatlantic community, the fear of those who lack the skills to succeed in the fast-changing global economy; the voices of hatred, intolerance and division, on both sides of the Atlantic, whether masked in patriotism, cloaked in religious fervor, or posing as ethnic pride; Bosnia’s fragile peace, Kosovo’s volatility, Cyprus’s stalemate; the dangers that all our nations face and cannot defeat alone; the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, environmental degradation.

And so, my friends, 1998, no less than 1989, demands our boldness, our will and our unity. Today, I call on our nations to summon the energy and the will to finish the work we have started, to keep at it until every nation on the Continent enjoys

the security and democracy we do, and all men and women from Seattle to Paris, to Istanbul to St. Petersburg, are able to pursue their dreams in peace and build an even better life for their children.

This is the opportunity of generations. Together, we must seize it. We must build a Europe like Germany itself; whole and free, prosperous and peaceful, increasingly integrated and always globally engaged.

If you will forgive me a personal observation, based on my service in the last five and a half years, I must note that this magic moment in history did not simply arrive; it was made, and made largely by the vision and determined leadership of Germany and its Chancellor for nine years.

Consider the historic changes you have wrought. You committed Germany again to lead in a united Europe, this time through cooperation, not conquest. You took the risk of pushing for the European Monetary Union, knowing there would be bumps along the way, especially with the strength of the deutschmark and the power of your own economy. You shouldered the enormous cost of your own reunification to make sure the East is not left behind and to ease as much as possible the unavoidable dislocation and pain that goes along with this process. And you have done this while also taking on the challenge that West Germany must face in making a difficult transition to a global economy, in which preserving opportunity for all and preserving the social contract is a challenge even for the wealthiest nations, as we see in America every day.

All this you have attempted to do, and largely achieved, in nine short years.

Though many German citizens may be uncertain of the outcome and may not yet feel the benefits of your farsighted, courageous course, you are clearly on the right side of history. America honors your vision and your achievements, and we are proud to march with you, shoulder to shoulder, into the new millennium. We thank you. . . .

Second, we must do more to promote prosperity throughout our community. Transatlantic commerce, as the Chancellor said, is already the largest economic relationship in the world, encompassing more than half a trillion U.S. dollars each year, supporting millions of jobs in both America and Europe. . . . Europe's investment in America has now created so many jobs that one of 12 U.S. factory workers is employed by a European-owned firm.

Still, we must face the stark fact that prosperity is not yet everyone's partner. Europe's new democracies confront the daunting challenge of transition to market economies in an age of globalization which, as I have already said, makes it more difficult to preserve a quality of opportunity, a strong social safety net, and a general sense of fairness. We must continue to help these struggling countries, even as those of us in wealthier nations confront our own challenges on these fronts.

America will continue to support Europe's march toward integration. We admire the determination that has made your

economic and monetary union possible, and we will work with you to make it a success. We will continue to encourage your steps to enlarge the EU, as well, eventually to embrace all Central Europe and Turkey.

Our third task is to strengthen the hand and extend the reach of democracy. One important tool is the OSCE. . . .

Now, the secure, the free, the prosperous Atlantic community we envision must include a successful democratic Russia. For most of this century, fear, tyranny, and isolation kept Russia from the European mainstream. But look at the future Russians are now building. And we have an enormous stake in their success.

Russia is literally re-creating itself, using the tools of openness and reform to strengthen new freedom and restrain those who abuse them, to ensure more competition, to collect taxes, fight crime, restructure the military, prevent the spread of sensitive technologies. We must support this Russian revolution.

We will redouble our efforts with Russia to reduce our nuclear arsenals, to lower the limits on conventional forces in Europe, to fight the spread of materials and technology for weapons of mass destruction, to build a partnership with NATO in practical ways that benefit all of us, to develop the ties between our people that are the best antidote to mistrust. And we must not forget Ukraine, for it, too, has the opportunity to reach both east and west and be a great force for Europe's peace, prosperity and stability. We should encourage reform and support it. The moment in Ukraine is historic, and it is not a moment to lose.

Our fourth and final task is strengthening our global cooperation. Let us make common cause of our common concerns: standing together against threats to our security from states that flout international norms to the conflict brewing in Kosovo, from deterring terrorists and organized criminals, to helping Asia restore financial stability, from helping Africa to join the global economy, to combatting global warming. In a world grown smaller, what happens beyond our borders touches our daily lives at home. America and Europe must work together to shape this world.

Now, as we pursue this agenda, there will be times when we disagree. But occasional lack of consensus must never result in lasting cracks in our cohesion, nor should the quest for consensus lure us into the easiest, lowest common denominator solution to difficult, high urgency problems. When the world needs principled, effective, strong leadership, we must rise to the responsibility.

These are our challenges. They are ambitious but attainable. They demand of nations constant unity of purpose and commitment. And they require the support and the courage of our citizens. For without the courage of ordinary people, the Wall would not have come down and the new Europe would not be unfolding. Now it falls to each of us to write the next chapter of this story: to build up from what has been taken down, to cement together what is no longer walled apart, to repair the breaches that still exist among our peoples, to

build a Europe that belongs together and grows together in freedom. Our success in this endeavor will make the new century the greatest that Germany, America, Europe and the world have ever known. This is an effort worthy of the rich legacy of Berlin, the visionary leadership of modern Germany and the enormous obligation we share for our children's future. Let us embrace it with gratitude, joy, and determination.

Clinton's trip in 1994: protests from London

When President Clinton visited Germany in July 1994, EIR reported on his formation of a "unique partnership" with Germany, and on the howls of protest from British commentators about what this signified: a break of the "special relationship" with Great Britain. Here are excerpts from our coverage, and from some British statements.

Edward Spannaus, "President Clinton Forms New Partnership with Germany," *EIR*, July 22, 1994:

President Clinton has formed a new partnership with Germany, oriented toward eastern Europe and Russia, and broken the "special relationship" with Great Britain which has dominated U.S. policy, with disastrous effects, for almost half a century. Clinton's formal announcement of the burying of the old special relationship came during the final leg of his European trip which took him from Riga to Warsaw, then to the Group of Seven (G-7) summit of industrial nations in Naples, and then to Bonn and Berlin.

"The relationship between Germany and America in the last several decades has been truly unique in history," Clinton told a press conference following his meeting with Chancellor Helmut Kohl on June 11. "The Chancellor and I both hold our offices at a moment of historic opportunity. The walls between nations are coming down, bridges between nations are coming up. The integration of Europe, strongly supported by the United States, is well under way." . . .

By allying with a reunified Germany, and his strong endorsement of the Delors Plan for infrastructure development, especially railroads reaching into central and eastern Europe, "Clinton is picking up the policy that *should have been* U.S. policy in 1989 [when the Berlin Wall dividing East and West fell in Germany], and he's trying to push it ahead," Lyndon LaRouche said in the radio interview "EIR Talks" on July 13. "And he pulled off, I must say, a glorious foreign policy success. *Nothing comparable to this has happened since Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative on March 23, 1983; no comparable act.* The Presidency has been a disaster since that time until the present; and, suddenly, Clinton has emerged, as a President, as a major policymaking figure on a global scale. It's really a great day for the United States." . . .

Although the U.S. news media suppressed most of these momentous events, the British press was quick to react. A British reporter at Clinton's Bonn press conference told fellow reporters that Clinton had just "killed off the special relationship." The journalist said he expected there to be panic among geopolitical strategists in London, because Clinton had clearly communicated his desire to "break the umbilical cord with the mother country."

"U.S. Cuts British 'Special Link'; Clinton Turns His Eyes to Germany," was the next day's headline in the *London Guardian*. "Links with Britain No Longer So Important," blared the *Daily Express*. "Clinton Ends the Affair with Britain," said the *Glasgow Herald*. The *Guardian* captured the event quite aptly:

"President Clinton yesterday effectively ended the United States 'special relationship' with Britain, instead offering Germany a unique partnership with the world's leading power in forging a united Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. . . . President Clinton, on the first day of a two-day official visit to Germany, reduced the U.S.'s special relationship with Britain to a mere sentimental tie with the Mother Country."

British journalist, in a discussion with *EIR*, July 11, 1994:

"Bill Clinton killed off the special relationship with Britain, during his appearance with Helmut Kohl in Bonn today; the special relationship has now formally come to an end," a left-liberal journalist complained to *EIR*. He said there would probably be "panic" among geopolitical strategists in London, and noted that the entire British press corps was preparing a series of "alarmed" articles about what happened in Bonn. "Watch the Tories, they'll be jumping up and down, now that Clinton has confirmed their worst fears, and certified what they see as German domination over Europe."

The journalist said that Clinton was communicating the idea that "we Americans have grown out of our relationship with Britain," and are now determined to "look toward the future," and to form a "special relationship with Germany in terms of Europe," vis-à-vis East and Central Europe and the complex of institutions such as the European Union, NATO, etc. He said: "Clinton was explicit about this 'unique relationship' with Germany, when he used this expression to talk about how the U.S. and Germany had 'more immediate and tangible concerns' concerning eastern Europe. What Clinton called for, in effect, was a 'joint *Ostpolitik* between the U.S. and Germany. . . . He was saying, in effect, 'Germany is taking over the leadership in Europe, and we Americans want to do business with you.'"

David Howell, chairman of the House of Commons Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, Conservative Party, July 12, 1994:

"An American policy which gives undue weight to the obvious geographical fact of German size and dominance, is unhelpful, and shows no understanding of European history."