

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: sbwhoeop [redacted]
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2010 10:11 AM
To: H
Subject: FYI Kornblum... Sid

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In light of Clegg's rising popularity partly based on his anti-Americanism and Germany's growing hegemony in Europe while becoming more insular, John Kornblum has written this op-ed with reference in last graphs to US policy.



April 23, 2010
 I.H.T. Op-Ed Contributor

Germany in Need of a Dream

By JOHN KORNBLUM

Has Germany abandoned Europe? Do Angela Merkel's tough conditions for aid to Greece mean that Germany is no longer the motor of European integration? Has Frau Merkel in fact morphed from the Miss Europa of 2007 to the Fräulein Germania of 2010, as Germany's own former foreign minister Joschka Fischer has suggested?

As a former American ambassador who has lived and worked the better part of four decades around Germany, my Blackberry often glows red hot with messages from persons asking these questions. My response is always the same: Germany has changed very little, but Europe and the world have changed a lot. Therein lies the dilemma.

Germany has worked hard to dig its way out of the disaster of 1945, but trauma remains a defining issue for German society. Sixty five years later, Germany is still focused on the three essentials of its recovery: stability, respectability and peace. Keep this triangle in mind and lots of things quickly come into focus.

From the first days of the Federal Republic, Germany's leaders emphasized the importance of defining interests solely within a common European and Atlantic vocation. But they also understood that renouncing national ambitions did not remove the responsibility to pursue specific German goals through the common institutions.

Many important postwar accomplishments were conceived and pushed by Germany, sometimes over the opposition of others — including the United States. Ostpolitik was controversial for years, as was NATO enlargement. Germany pushed them with determination.

Helmut Kohl did not consult before promulgating his 10 points on reunification. He agreed to French desires for a common currency, but only if it could be a mirror of the Deutsche mark, for decades the European monetary standard. The euro stability pact, now the object of so much controversy with Greece, was the result. After 1990, the E.U.'s eastward expansion was Germany's way of firming up its Eastern flank.

Slowly and without fanfare, Germany has been remaking the European Union in its image. At each step of the way, Germany made its wishes more palatable by paying more than its share. Part of today's misunderstanding is caused by Germany's success in using its contributions to build an image of selflessness. Germany has been as single-minded in pursuit of its goals as Charles de Gaulle ever was for his, but it almost always left leadership to others.

A new consciousness grew after the costs of reunification began to mount. "Europe" in the institutional sense has become increasingly unpopular. German courts have begun to define German European issues in the context of the German Constitution rather than on the basis of E.U. law. At least some of Ms. Merkel's refusal to allow immediate assistance to Greece was based on her fears that it would fan anti-E.U. sentiment at home. Are these the first signs of a German Tea Party?

Here we find the source of most of the hand wringing about Germany's role as the "motor of Europe." Ms. Merkel's unwillingness to sweeten the financial pot echoed throughout Brussels. To many, it signified the decline of German willingness to "salute the French flag three times before raising the German flag," as Konrad Adenauer used to put it. Germans are not alone in objecting to throwing more money into the E.U. pot, but they happen to be the only ones who can do something about it. Many fear that without German complaisance, the E.U. will stutter to a stop. But such self-

denial could never offer a viable foundation for a new Europe. Neither could the inefficiency and even corruption that characterizes many E.U. programs.

Most maddening for most thinking Europeans is the knowledge that the Germans are right. But to them, the question is whether Germany is remaking the E.U. in a fashion palatable to the majority of other member states. They are not so sure that its focus on stability and accountability is the right way to help such a diverse collection of peoples adjust to a globalized world.

And so when Angela Merkel raps Greek knuckles, she is sending a message most Europeans don't want to hear. Not that Germany is dangerous; even worse, that it is unrelenting. The *Neue Züricher Zeitung* probably spoke for many others when it once accused Germany of wanting Europe to become a large Switzerland.

The growing gap between Germany's aspirations and the perceived needs of other members of the E.U. is beginning to burden both sides. Most Europeans are simply not ready to live up to German standards. Without a more flexible sense of common purpose, the project to build a democratic Europe could stop dead in the water. But as Germans will themselves often tell you: They have forgotten how to dream.

Younger Germans feel this lack of inspiration as well. Dreams were what 200,000 of them were waiting to hear when they rallied to hear Barack Obama in Berlin two summers ago. They wanted more than to "Dare to Hope," which is the characteristically timid German translation of the title of the president's best seller. And they are still waiting. America seems busy elsewhere.

The main conclusion I draw from the debate about Germany is that it is not about Germany at all. The task of building a democratic Europe is far from complete. Most of the foundations have been laid and now the residents are starting to haggle over the design. Weaving today's 27 states into a true trans-Atlantic partnership is a task that is too big for Germany or even Europe to accomplish alone. They desperately need some skilled architectural assistance.

Uniting Europe and North America is the most audacious project ever conceived. If it works, the United States will be joined by nearly 500 million Europeans to form a democratic space, within which modern democratic values will harness more energy than in any single nation on earth. Democracy's future as the operating system for a globalized world will be assured.

European fecklessness seems to worry Washington officials these days. But if Germany has forgotten how to dream and the United States is too busy to try, we will both be guilty of perpetuating the aimlessness we so criticize. To hold up its side of the bargain, Europe needs exactly what Barack Obama originally promised — the audacity of hope.

John Kornblum, senior counselor with the international law firm Noerr LLP in Berlin, served as the U.S. ambassador to Germany from 1997 to 2001.