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### **The Bologna Center**

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## Special Lectures Series

# Quo Vadis Europe?

The Gerold von Braunmühl Lecture Series  
Bologna December 1<sup>st</sup> 2004

**Klaus Kinkel**

n. 12 - Jan 2005

**The Bologna Center**



## **Dr. Klaus Kinkel**

Dr. Klaus Kinkel is the former Deputy Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, a post he held from 1993 to 1998. He also served as the Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs (1992–1998), the Federal Minister of Justice (1991–1992) and as the President of the Federal Intelligence Service (1979–1982). He was Chairman of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) from 1993 to 1995 and a member of the German Bundestag from 1994 to 2002.

Dr. Kinkel is a strong supporter of European integration and unification. He worked towards finding a policy for peace in the Middle East.

Dr. Kinkel studied law at the Universities of Tübingen, Bonn and Cologne and he was awarded his doctorate in law in 1974. He is married with three children. He is currently Chairman of the Deutsche Telekom Foundation.

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## The Gerold von Braunmühl Lecture Series

The German Foreign Ministry established and continues to support the Gerold von Braunmühl Memorial Lecture Series in honor of a SAIS Bologna Center alumnus, who was assassinated by terrorists on Oct. 10, 1986.

Von Braunmühl's career carried him to the most senior positions in his country's foreign ministry. At the time of his death, he was Political Director, working closely with the Foreign Minister.

In the inaugural lecture in 1988, Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans-Dietrich Genscher described von Braunmühl as one of the "architects of German politics," particularly of its Ostpolitik, and "an outstanding example of historical experiences, the spiritual stimuli and the political premise that govern the fate of our nation and the course of German foreign policy."

The ministry also established the Gerold von Braunmühl Memorial Fellowship for a German student at the Bologna Center, which the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst and the Bologna Center administer.

In addition to Hans-Dietrich Genscher, previous speakers and their titles at the time of their lectures were: Alois Mock, Foreign Minister of Austria and Bologna Center alumnus; Gèza Jeszenszky, Foreign Minister of Hungary; Süleyman Demirel, Former Prime Minister and President of Turkey; Douglas Hurd, United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs; Jüri Luik, Foreign Minister of Estonia; Susanna Agnelli, Foreign Minister of Italy; Richard von Weizsäcker, Former President of Germany; Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission; Marjorie Mowlam, M.P., United Kingdom Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; and Miguel Nadal Segalà, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Spain.

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# Quo Vadis Europe?

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Former Deputy Chancellor and Foreign Minister, Federal Republic of Germany

The Gerold von Braunmühl Lecture Series

Bologna December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004

Ladies and gentlemen, this lecture is dedicated to Gerold von Braunmühl, who under former Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was my successor as Head of the Minister's Office. Gerold von Braunmühl was assassinated by the Red Army Faction on 10 October 1986.

These are turbulent times for the European Union. There are certainly hopeful developments and notable advances, yet they are offset by disturbing and even dangerous trends, trends which make the future of European integration difficult to predict. One thing, however, is clear: issues of critical importance for our continent still await decision, and the years ahead will be no less turbulent than the two now behind us.

Let me look first of all at the bright side. Obviously both the accession of ten new member states and the ultimately successful outcome of the Intergovernmental Conference on a new constitution for Europe were milestones for the integration process.

But the political completion of enlargement was the relatively easy part. Now the difficult part needs to be tackled: strengthening the inner fabric of this enlarged Union.

To retain its ability to act and take decisions in the wake of this record enlargement, the EU had set itself an ambitious reform agenda. As matters stand, however, progress in implementing it leaves much to be desired.

Today's enlarged Union is certainly much bigger. Its now 450 million citizens produce a substantial share of global output —a share that increased, however, by a mere 5% on enlargement. But clearly the benefits of enlargement are not simply a matter of scale. At long last the majority of those countries that endured behind the Iron Curtain decades of totalitarianism and economic mismanagement can play their part in making Europe a bastion of peace and liberty. Bulgaria and Romania will be part of this European project shortly.

What the EU has done to help them all make this difficult transition and smooth their path to accession deserves the highest praise. The successful export of democracy, rule-of-law and market-economy principles and not least peace and stability is one of the Union's most impressive achievements to date in shaping our continent's future.

The challenge now is to ensure that this enlarged Union retains the capacity to reach decisions and act on them —and if it does not, to remedy the deficiency.

The draft Constitution finally adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference after much wrangling marks an important step towards achieving that goal. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Constitution still needs to be ratified. In at least ten EU countries that will require a referendum. The successful completion of the

ratification process in all EU countries can by no means be taken for granted. For the progress of integration this will certainly be one of the most critical issues over the next couple of years.

What key changes will the Constitution make to the Union's institutional framework? First of all, majority voting will be extended to a range of new areas. The double majority principle is undoubtedly a significant improvement over the unsatisfactory compromise agreed at Nice. The rights of the European Parliament are to be strengthened. The fact that it will elect the President of the Commission will enhance the President's democratic legitimacy. The rotating Presidency of the European Council is to be abolished and in the various formations of the Council of Ministers modified. A European foreign minister and a new diplomatic service will raise the Union's profile in the wider world and help it make its voice heard more clearly.

All these are significant advances, to be sure. Notably in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, however, the decision to retain the unanimity principle will continue to curtail the Union's ability to act in the international arena. The way the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy has recently been developing in fact gives particular grounds for concern. The Iraq war not only caused one of the most serious transatlantic rifts in decades but also revealed a deep split within the European Union itself. That this will heal any time soon is hardly likely, for given their Cold War experience and perceived security needs, the new EU members will obviously veer much more towards Washington than Brussels on such matters. During the Iraq crisis Germany failed to play its traditional bridge-building role between Europe and North America, Paris and Washington.

It did quite the opposite, in fact. By opting to play the anti-American card in the election campaign, by acting as if its real aim was forging an axis with Paris and Moscow and, most importantly, by scandalously neglecting relations with our

smaller EU partners, Berlin even actively contributed to this split within the Union.

Can this larger Europe indeed aspire to be a global player? Can it in any sense be in the same league as the United States or the tiger economies of Asia (notably China)? Or will the much cited and scarcely flattering view of Europe as an economic giant — at least in terms of its potential —, a political pygmy and a military worm remain valid?

Despite enlargement, the EU is today very far from being a global player, not because it lacks the potential but because the way it operates prevents it from playing such a role. A comparison of the key economic and military data makes it obvious that even with 25 members the EU is no match for the United States in terms of economic performance and in terms of defence expenditure is in a different category entirely. And where global influence is concerned, these are the parameters that count.

In today's global markets Europe has, however, been pretty successful in holding its own against Asian and American competition. On the one side of this competitive triangle is Asia with almost 50% of the world population, one third of world output as well as some 50% of world trade, and on the other North America with almost 400 million consumers, output in the order of 7 trillion dollars and almost a quarter of world trade. Then on our side of the triangle a population of some 450 million — broadly similar to that of North America — a comparable output and an only slightly lower share of world trade.

At this critical juncture we Europeans cannot afford to slacken our efforts: it is vital that we intensify integration and strengthen our international competitive-

ness. If we fail to rise to the challenge of globalization, we will clearly be left behind.

The core problem is this: neither in its foreign and security policy nor in its economic policy has Europe proved capable of exploiting the synergies that should be within grasp. The wider world — America and Asia — is well aware of this and treats us accordingly.

With regard to EU enlargement the question is sometimes raised as to who will ultimately benefit — the new EU members keen to swiftly align their currencies and social systems to Union norms and partake of its prosperity, or the British and the Swiss, who are more sceptical of or even opposed to economic integration.

For my part, I am convinced that for everyone in the enlarged Union the economic benefits outweigh the costs, notably for us Germans, who have benefited more than anyone from the events of 1990 and subsequent developments. German unity meant, after all, that the former GDR automatically became part of the EU and NATO.

Europe has now experienced decades of peace and prosperity. Who would ever have thought after 1945 — especially in Germany — that these shattered, divided and feuding nations could ever come together to forge a European Union such as we have today? In Germany — and to some extent also elsewhere in Europe — reactions to the accession of ten new members on 1 May 2004 fell regrettably short of what an event of such historic importance deserved. This was largely the fault of Europe's politicians, who made light of the real problems and failed to take seriously the understandable anxieties and scepticism of people in the "old" EU worried that cheap labour from the East might mean a loss of status and income or a rise in crime.

The respected German newspaper “Süddeutsche Zeitung” has cited three ways in which politicians have tended to distort the truth in their comments on EU enlargement:

Bigger is always better

A strong nation state is compatible with a strong Europe, and Europe can get bigger and bigger — there is no geographical limit.

But of course bigger is not always better.

Of course the relationship between the nation state and a multinational union to which competences must be ceded at times resembles fire and water. Also in a bigger Europe that will still be true.

And of course Europe cannot continue to grow bigger and bigger.

The European Union needs to decide how big it wants to get and who else should be part of it. Bulgaria and Romania have a firm commitment. One issue that over the coming months and years could both at the political level and within our respective societies prove controversial or even divisive is the question of EU membership for Turkey. Not only in Germany the debate on this issue is being conducted in highly ideological terms and opinions are very far apart.

However justified the apprehensions about Turkey’s economic backwardness and sheer size as well as its different culture, there are two aspects here that must not be overlooked. Firstly, since 1963 we have given Turkey repeated assurances that EU membership is a genuine prospect. We have made this prospect contingent on specific conditions being met. Over the past two years Turkey has introduced substantial and very courageous reforms to meet these conditions. In the light of these reform efforts and after four decades of continual promises, we cannot sim-

ply back off now that matters are coming to the crunch. That would be fatal not only for our credibility as Europeans but also for Turkey's reform programme and possibly even its stability. *Pacta sunt servanda*. Even at the risk of losing our geographical and religious bearings. The offer of a "privileged partnership", of which much is heard in the European and German debate, is not a viable alternative, since it could scarcely amount to anything more than the current state of relations between Turkey and the EU. Secondly, it is high time we stopped talking as if Turkish accession to the EU were just about to happen. The issue now is merely when to begin accession negotiations; the accession process itself will take many years, perhaps even a decade or longer. And at the end of the process both Turkey and the EU will have undergone such a transformation that accession will then be viewed in a very different light.

There is no doubt that over the coming years the EU will finally be forced to pay more attention to the question of its external borders. Clearly the enlargement process will still not be at an end even once the issue of Turkish accession has been resolved. In Thessaloniki the countries of the Western Balkans were promised that EU accession was a prospect for them, too. In the medium and long term also Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, the countries of the Caucasus and possibly one day even Belarus will seek EU membership. Given the current domestic situation and economic conditions in these countries, such a prospect may still seem very remote. Yet the time will come when the EU will have to respond to their requests to join the EU. And in doing so it will need to steer a judicious course, balancing the Union's desire to export stability and prosperity, its commitment to Europe as a community of shared values against the danger of territorial over—extension and institutional paralysis. In other words, Europe must not heap onto its plate more than it can digest. Right now it needs to digest the ten new members. And it must find new ways of networking and linking up with other countries.

Deepening the Union versus enlarging the Union — for years the integration process has made manifest the tension between these two goals, which is still far from being resolved. Could the solution lie in a “core Europe” or a “Europe of multiple speeds”? This would certainly put pressure on those who prefer to go more slowly, but it would also seriously increase the risk of a split within Europe. Nevertheless, for the future such an option should not be totally ruled out.

Hence a brief review of the state of European integration reveals much that is encouraging but also grounds for concern. The next few years may in fact be dominated by this concern unless a convincing answer is found soon to what is certainly our most pressing problem. Despite the progress and all that has been achieved to date, in many parts of our continent a growing Euro—scepticism is to be found — the citizens of Europe are failing to identify with the institutions of Europe. Vivid proof — if any were still needed — was the disastrously low turnout at the recent elections to the European Parliament. Although practically every area of life and work is profoundly affected by European rules and regulations, the real decision—making in Europe is still by and large not subject to the democratic process. Europe’s citizens find this hotchpotch of national and European competences impenetrable, complex and totally bewildering. They feel they have no control over anything. To this day they do not think of the European Parliament as their parliament. The peace which European integration has helped secure is today taken for granted and its economic benefits are misunderstood due to the current difficulties in this area. Hence in all EU members the foremost task of their policy—making elites is to ensure that Europe is once again firmly anchored in the hearts and minds of its citizens.

Another cause for concern about the health of the European integration project are the signs that the Stability and Growth Pact agreed as part of economic and monetary union is being progressively undermined. If major countries in the EU

bring their influence to bear to prevent the imposition of the sanctions designed to penalize violations of the stability criteria, this jeopardizes not only the stability of the euro but also the credibility of the European institutions as such. So it was to be welcomed that the European Court of Justice quashed the decision of the ECOFIN Council in the summer. However, given the growing number of countries having difficulty complying with these criteria, it remains doubtful whether the ECOFIN Council will take its responsibilities more seriously in future.

Also with regard to the Lisbon process there are grounds for grave concern. The European Union is a long way from realizing its goals on competitiveness, as the former Netherlands Prime Minister bluntly stated in his recent report. At their summit in Lisbon in March 2000 EU heads of state and government had launched a strategy to make the EU the most dynamic knowledge—based economy in the world. In terms of every one of their self—imposed goals, according to the new Lisbon Report, the old EU members lag far behind the United States. Overall, Germany ranks sixth.

Another daunting problem is terrorism. The Spanish elections were won by Bin Laden. Europe, too, faces a growing terrorist threat. It is one that we are insufficiently prepared for — as far as one can be prepared in such cases. The terrorist attacks are coming ever closer — Spain, Morocco, Russia! Germany was once a place where terrorists could go to ground, but now it is a base for planning operations. On that all the security services agree. People in Europe sense this growing threat and do not feel much is being done about it at European level. America is more vigilant and has already acted to deal with this threat. It is to be hoped that events do not teach us a sharp lesson.

But let me return now to the Common Foreign and Security Policy, an area of key

importance both to Europe's future and the future of transatlantic relations.

9/11 and the Iraq war changed the world. The United States is grappling with immense problems. The country that stands for liberty, unity, democracy, and the rule of law, that views fostering these values in the world almost as its vocation is now seeing its true mettle severely tested. We for our part should refrain from any kind of arrogant, I—told—you—so attitudes. However, the danger of growing anti—Americanism all over the world cannot be overlooked. The world's sole remaining superpower must once again learn to be more sensitive, above all vis—à—vis its friends, and return to the values it has always prized so highly. That is in the interest of all of us. We for our part must recognize the realities of the situation:

George Bush won the US elections by a clear margin. Whether we in Germany or Europe like it or not.

So we have to come to terms with it, and if we are wise, we will avoid a repeat of the foreign and security policy mistakes we made during the Iraq crisis.

Things are simply different in America. The conservatives have now won the upper hand.

Europe is not America's main focus, and nor is Germany for that matter. Economically speaking, the United States looks to the Asia—Pacific region — and above all China.

Politically, economically and militarily, the United States is in a league way beyond our reach. Today it is free to conduct its affairs more or less as it likes with scant regard to anyone else. It continues to wield enormous power and we

all need to recognize the fact and act accordingly.

Following Arafat's death and the election of the new American President there may now be a new chance to resolve the conflict in the Middle East. The main parameters of a solution have long been clear to all parties: an end to terror and violence in any form, security for Israel and recognition of its right to exist as a Jewish state, founding of an independent and viable Palestinian state and dismantlement of nearly all Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank. In the end a solution will not be found, I believe, by the regional players acting alone. For both sides are far too entrapped in their own logic. Obviously peace in the Middle East cannot be imposed from outside either, but it will nevertheless require international support, impetus and also pressure. We Europeans certainly have a role to play, yet we must be wary of overestimating what we can accomplish. But one thing is quite clear: in the field of crisis management we cannot carry on with a division of labour that has the United States cleaving to the side of Israel and the Europeans giving the impression that they stand much closer to the Palestinians.

As soon as the new US Administration is firmly in the saddle, the United States and the EU must sit down and reflect together on new initiatives for the Middle East. The Road Map must not be abandoned. For the moment it must remain the basis of all discussion on this issue. It is important to remember that, much as it tried to conduct a common foreign and security policy, the EU was in the Iraq crisis, on the key issue of war and peace, riven with disagreement and unable to act. As far as Iraq is concerned, that is still the case today.

But an EU in disarray is also an EU without influence — as was clearly seen in the case of Iraq. The only way the EU is going to have a role in international crisis management is if it has or succeeds in finding a common European position.

But since in the Common Foreign and Security Policy the unanimity principle still applies, forging this common position is no easy task. Unfortunately, as long as that remains the case and decisions in this area can still not be taken by majority vote, the EU as an organization is likely to have only a limited role and influence in future crises and conflicts.

Especially in this domain — the Common Foreign and Security Policy — Europe must address the fundamental question as to whether it is at all capable of finding appropriate answers to the formidable challenges we face today. These new threats are just as much a challenge to us — if not more so — as to the United States and the rest of the world: international terrorism, Islamist fundamentalism, crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, potentially escalating regional conflicts, refugee flows, endangered trade routes, conflict over ever scarcer resources, destruction of the global environment, worldwide protests against globalization. Today's threats are very different from those of the past, paradoxically more concrete and direct yet at the same time more difficult to pinpoint.

The Americans have come up with their response. In the wake of 9/11 they switched from a policy of deterrence to a policy of preemption. From the viewpoint of international law, a disturbing change. The Bin Ladens and Saddam Husseins of this world are to be put out of mischief — as and when the Americans choose. That is what happened in Iraq.

There can be no doubt: for the whole world this is the beginning of a new era, an era shaped by the realities of American power. The Americans would do well, however, to remember the lessons of history — hegemonic power nearly always spells the downfall of the hegemon. We need only recall the vast empires built by the Persians, Rome, Spain or Napoleon.

And what about us Europeans? During the Cold War we were the top danger and top risk zone, hence at least to some extent one of the major players in the international arena. With the East—West conflict over, we naturally had to concentrate on reunifying our nation and rebuilding our continent. That was certainly of vital importance, also in international and global terms, and it was an immense investment of energy and effort.

However, after decades in which we saw ourselves genuinely threatened, we then acted, as far as foreign and security policy was concerned, as if we were cocooned from any outside threat — in our self—made cocoon we went about our affairs as if there were no real threat to our security at all.

In this we were quite mistaken, as events in the Balkans in the second half of the nineties demonstrated. The end of the Cold War did not put paid to threats and insecurity, violence and war — even in Europe they remained an ugly reality.

With massive help from the Americans — and “help” is almost an understatement — we Europeans have managed to get the problems in the Balkans under some kind of control. This is the case in Afghanistan, too — again and above all thanks to the Americans. Yet we have failed to learn any serious lessons from these experiences — for our security policy, our neglected defence budgets or in terms of effective pooling of our limited national capacities. There has been a great deal of talk about Europe’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, but to this date nothing much has been done to make it a reality.

The second wake—up call was 9/11. Once again we were forced to realize the end of the Cold War did not mean a safer world — quite the opposite, in fact.

Did we in Europe pay any heed to that call? For a short while we did — but now

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we have more or less retreated into our cocoon again. The Americans see us as wimps. More interested in holidays and a soft life, fond of pacifist talk—and with a definite preference for the spectator role when it comes to really important foreign and security policy issues.

But should Europe even aspire to play a foreign policy role of its own? My answer is “yes”.

Look at our situation.

We are highly developed and interlinked societies, and as such extremely vulnerable to terrorist attacks;

With our heavy reliance on exports, we have a stronger stake than many others in ensuring smooth globalization, free world trade and dependable access to raw materials;

Given our demographic problems and the need to keep a sensitive balance within our own societies, uncontrolled and possibly massive influxes of refugees pose a particular danger, yet at the same time we recognize an increasing need for controlled migration.

In the light of Europe’s colonial past and the historically close ties Germany, for example, has with Israel, we Europeans have a special responsibility for many of the world’s actual or potential hot spots. To be content merely to tend our own garden is totally at odds, after all, with our understanding of Europe as a community of shared values.

As close partners of the Americans we cannot forever pass the buck and expect them to shoulder all international responsibilities. Especially not if we Europeans

still want to be able to criticize the Americans and have them listen to us when our views differ from theirs.

Besides, who apart from the Europeans stands ready to shoulder with the Americans the responsibility for a secure, stable and prosperous world? The Chinese are a rising power — also in military terms — but for the moment anyway are understandably still largely focused on themselves.

The Russians are still a major military player and given their potential will certainly remain a power to be reckoned with, but they need time to deal with their own domestic agenda for change.

The Japanese have their own domestic problems, too, and in international affairs are sticking with their policy of limited engagement.

We Europeans should therefore have a strong interest in not leaving the Americans solely responsible for the world and its affairs. But we lack any sense that we are responsible as well — and so we also fail to see the threats that do exist, we fail to see how urgent it is that at the international level, in the wider world we, too, should shoulder greater responsibility.

In our own interest we must stop looking at the world, its dangers and its problems as from a submarine at the bottom of the Baltic or the Mediterranean. What is needed is a helicopter perspective — a close—up view combined with wide horizons.

What can and what ought we to do?

Firstly, we should not make the mistake now of overestimating our scope for

action — even if this appears to contradict what I have just said. The United States is in a league of its own. Economically, politically and above all militarily there is no way that we can match the world's sole remaining superpower. We — and the Americans — will have to live with this gap for many years to come.

But we should not allow the gap to become any greater or retreat again into our cocoon — for that would bode ill for our long—term future. Especially after Iraq we must prevent NATO becoming totally irrelevant — for the Alliance is and remains our most important link with our transatlantic partners, the guarantor of stability and security in Europe and, most importantly, the world's only operative military alliance.

It is crucial, too, that Europe should take the United Nations very seriously.

We also need — without attempting in any way to duplicate NATO's role — to strengthen and develop European defence policy. On this a start has already been made.

Of course we Europeans have our real differences and sometimes even petty jealousies. When all is said and done, however, our political, cultural and geopolitical interests and also our intensive economic links forge the strongest possible bonds between us. And we would do a great disservice to our common interests and aspirations in the world if we were to engage in endless narrow—minded wrangling over real or perceived particular interests.

To sum up:

The EU remains the most successful multinational organization in the world. Considering our continent's grim past, this is a boon of history. And one that benefits the whole world. The opportunities that beckon for the enlarged EU are greater than ever before. The partition of Europe now belongs to history. With free trade and integrated capital and labour markets, the EU can look forward to a future in which freedom and prosperity for everyone is a realistic prospect.

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