

THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND OF THE UNITED STATES

BRUSSELS FORUM 2009

Opening Dinner

Craig Kennedy

President, GMF

Thank you. For an event that's only four years old we do have a couple of traditions. One is at dinner we honour the main partners that we've had and I'd like to thank again Daimler and the Government of Belgium and also the Czech Republic for their tremendous support of this event. One of the other traditions at dinner though is that we always have one of the founders, one of the people that was at the initial meeting that came up with this idea, make remarks at dinner. It was about five and a half years ago, and not a very happy time in European American relations, when let's see Carl Bildt and Alex Ronders and myself and Bruce Jackson went to see Javier Solana. A sort of diverse and motley crew, I think is the way to say it, and Dr. Solana said, you know there really is a need for something here in Brussels that could bring Americans and Europeans, I'd actually add North Americans and Europeans, together. We're not all white just because we happen to be on that side of the Atlantic and ever since beginning with the very first Brussels forum, Javier Solana has given remarks at dinner. I think the first year it's fair to say that it set the tone better than anything else you could imagine, for those of you that were here. We've decided not to have burning candles like a wedding dinner anymore because we could never replicate the effect again. But, it was a great evening and I now want to invite Javier Solana to come up and make a few remarks. Please.

The Hon. Javier Solana

Secretary General for the Council of the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union

Thank you. Thank you very much I'm grateful for your kind words. Let me start by saying that it's wonderful to be here again in the fourth anniversary of the beginning of this forum. As Craig has said, I think it's very, very important that this forum has grown and the example of tonight is a clear example of how much in quality, in quantity. But, it remains to be an important event in the calendar of Brussels' year. When it comes the European Council of Spring, this time a little bit before the Spring, the day after the start of this forum that takes the weekend debating about one of the most important initiatives for the European Union has been, it is, and will continue to be, the relationship between the European Union and the United States of America. I want to thank everybody who contributes during the year to come to this meeting, to organise it, to support it. I don't want to name anybody but maybe Craig can represent the part that works at the other side of the Atlantic and I think [Ron] can represent the part that works in this side of the Atlantic for the United States. So much to thank.

You know very well that we live in very difficult moments, we are emerged in a very deep economic and financial crisis. All the people here I'm sure work very hard to contribute to the solution of this crisis. We don't know when it's going to end but we know something. We know that it will end and we know very clearly that the world that day will be different to the world of today. Profound changes will take place and with the profound changes in the economics, and profound changes in [politics]. In economics will be a lot of changes in the market place, even in the role of the state in the economy, it will be paradigms that will emerge new, and it will be some paradigms that will try to re-emerge. But, in any case, it will be different, and politically no doubt the world will be very different. And we know that one of the characteristics that will be with us will be a shift in power in the world. It will be change in the relation of forces among different countries, different regions. It will be emerging powers, and I think we have Europeans and Americans together to really try to begin thinking about how to handle this profound changes which are going to take place. There is no doubt that the [table in which the seasons] are taking in the world will have to be different. Different in size. But not only that. I think the people that will be around that table will have to change their mindset. It's not only that we have to enlarge the table with new players but we have to adapt our mindset to really deal with them in a serious manner. It is not enough to take it at the table when the decisions have been already cooked. It is not enough to invite them for dessert. They have to eat from the first plates and participate in the making of the decision and the making of the concept. That it will not be easy. But, it has to be done. And I think it

will be very important that us Europeans and Americans will begin to work together in that direction.

We are facing the G20 in a few days, it will be very important also that that meeting is a meeting with results. And results that cannot be and should not be interpreted by anybody at differences, fundamental differences, between the two sides of the Atlantic. Europeans and Americans, Americans and Europeans, have to go to that meeting with a firm conviction that we have to come with results and results which are compatible, not only compatible but sum up added value Europeans and Americans together. I'm sure that is possible and it will be done. I have to tell you, as probably the President of the Commission has told you already in the previous session, that today we had a very important European Council, many hours working. But, working to see how we can contribute to a success collectively all the Europeans together in the G20 as an important meeting. Let me say that even when we know that the economic crisis is going to take a very important part of our time in our work we cannot forget other issues which are in the economic and international agenda which are fundamental. I like to say that between the Americans and the Europeans we continue to be working in several directions. I think we have to work, and today and tomorrow I hope will be a good example of that, on three lines of action that I will call horizontal. That means that affects everybody.

One is climate change and we have to work together to resolve it. The other is disarmament and we have to work together to resolve it. And the third is poverty, fight against poverty, and we have to work together to resolve it. Three horizontal issues that I hope will be debatable tomorrow, debated tomorrow. But, not only tomorrow, they have to be debated between Europeans and Americans together for the coming period of time. And second not only horizontal issues, which I just mentioned three of them, the most important. But, we have some important geographical regional issues in which without our cooperation would not be resolved. Let's mention some.

Let's mention Afghanistan and we have to deliver, and we have to deliver together. We have to see if we can like the year 2009 make some progress on the Middle East process, and we have to do it together. If we don't do it together it will not be done. We have to tackle the issue of Iran and I'm very pleased, very happy, we talked about this issue today after the very important statement that the President of the United States has done this morning. I had the opportunity to talk with the leaders of the United States very, very early this morning, it was 6 o'clock in the morning here, to tell them how pleased I was that this statement has been made. And I hope very much that a new page will be opened on the relation between the international community and Iran and the bilateral relation between the United States and Iran. I remember three years ago in this forum I had a conversation partly with David Ignatius about Iran. And I said something about how important it would be that the United States of America and Iran will have a channel of communication. Today I think is the first step in that direction. Let's hope that that coagulates in something constructive and

positive. In any case, I am very hopeful. President Obama is the President of the United States for a very short period of time. Sometimes we think that he has been there for years but it's only months and very few. I have to tell you that I'm very proud, very happy, to have hosted here in Brussels for three days the Secretary of State of the United States and when she left last Friday from here she went to Geneva where she met with (inaudible) the Minister for Foreign Affairs from (inaudible) in a very constructive meeting, very positive meeting. And by the way, we started the week on Monday we had on Monday night Vice President Beiden here for another two days. It really couldn't be better. The manner in which we have started this period of time in our bilateral relation is very, very, very impressive.

Now, I don't think it's enough to have lunch together, to have dinner together, we have to do things together, and we have to produce results. Let me tell you that on our side, in the European side, we are determined to produce results. We are prepared not only to give advice, which is very easy, but to give also the cooperation which is needed to resolve some of these issues that without that cooperation between Americans and Europeans will not be possible to be done. So, my dear friends, we have a couple of days in which many of these issues will be discussed. The Brussels forum is not only a place to think, although it is very important that we think together, but to come to conclusions on how to act. From here to next year we have to see how things are moving in the right direction, moving better, so that next year when we get together in this wonderful place in Brussels. The same people, maybe more people, will be in a position to say we did something for the better of our relationship, and for the better for the world.

Thank you very much.

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