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Thank you, Wolfgang, for your introduction, for your many years of friendship and for your leadership, not only of this conference, where you carry on the work of Baron Ewald Heinrich Von Kleist and Horst Teltschik, but for your lifetime of dedication to the trans-Atlantic partnership. Thank you Wolfgang.

It is a pleasure to share this stage with our partners in European and global security—foreign ministers Westerwelle and Lavrov and High Representative Ashton.

Like many of you, I have been coming to this conference for many years - in my case since 1980. Back then, I was a military aide working for then - Captain John McCain - one of our nation's heroes and distinguished leaders who joins us today. As a young aide, I wasn't allowed in this conference room. I missed out on all the speeches here on the inside, but was happy to take advantage of Munich's fine restaurants and bars.

Some 10 years later, I made it in - as a military assistant to Secretary of Defense Cohen, who also joins us today. And then, as Supreme Allied Commander Europe. I always enjoy the speeches, but realize how much I miss Munich's fine restaurants and bars.

Goethe once observed that "No one would talk much in society if they knew how often they misunderstood others." So I am delighted to return to one of the world's premier conferences on international security - a chance to talk, but more importantly, to truly listen and understand one another as we confront common challenges.

At this conference last year, Vice President Biden and I came here to represent an administration that had been in office less than three weeks. We reaffirmed President Obama's pledge of a new beginning in America's relations with Europe and the world. A new way of conducting foreign policy—not lecturing, but listening; not making decisions unilaterally, but consulting and coordinating with allies and partners. As President Obama said in his State of the Union address last week, "our destiny is connected to those beyond our shores."

I return to Munich today as President Obama begins his second year on office, and I believe - and I hope you agree - that we have begun to fulfill the promise we made here a year ago. Since taking office, the President has committed the United States to a new era of American leadership and comprehensive engagement based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

But engagement is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end - to greater cooperation on common challenges, greater burden-sharing by all, and fulfilling the universal aspirations of people around the world - economic opportunity, education, health, justice and dignity and living in peace and security.

Perhaps nowhere do we see our engagement -and its results - more vividly than in our partnership with Europe. Now, I know it has become fashionable in some quarters to suggest that the United States has somehow neglected the trans-Atlantic partnership. To some extent, this assertion is not surprising. One report noted that "the relationship. . . is in the early stages of what could be a terminal illness." That report was from nearly 30 years ago - in the early 1980s.

Reports of the demise of the Trans-Atlantic partnership have been greatly exaggerated - for decades. But our partnership endures for a simple reason - because it reflects our common values, our shared interests and is the foundation of our collective security and prosperity. Indeed, long gone are the days when Europe was a challenge to be managed by the United States.

Rather, Europe today is our indispensable partner as we confront, together, the whole range of challenges to our common security - from terrorism and proliferation to energy and climate change to the spread of cyber attacks, economic instability and pandemic disease.

We have strengthened our alliances and partnerships, including our bonds with every country in Europe. Building on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary NATO summit at Strasbourg and Kehl, we're moving toward a new Strategic Concept to renew and reform the alliance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And we're deepening our cooperation with the EU - building on the extraordinary U.S-EU summit in Prague, President Obama's summit with the EU leadership in Washington, and, now, as the EU implements the historic Lisbon Treaty.

Indeed, we have listened, consulted and coordinated our actions with allies and partners - and welcomed European leadership - in meeting urgent global challenges.

- Working through the G-8 and G-20, we coordinated our approaches and helped pull the world back from economic catastrophe and agreed a new framework for growth that is both balanced and sustained.
- Our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan is stronger because of the close and daily consultation and coordination with our allies and partners, including 9,000 additional troops from contributing countries. This brings total non-American ISAF troop contributions to nearly 50,000.
- Working through the United Nations, we've confronted urgent challenges, as in strengthening international sanctions against North Korea and ratifying the agenda that President Obama laid out in Prague - strengthening the nonproliferation regime and seeking a world without nuclear weapons.
- And at the climate change conference in Copenhagen, for the first time in history, all the major economies accepted their responsibility to take action, even as we recognize the need to do more.

We are forging new partnerships with key centers of global influence, including, Russia, China, India and Brazil. Indeed, the multiple summits and close working relationship of Presidents Obama and Medvedev, have allowed us to make important progress on areas of mutual interest, even as we deal honestly with issues on which we disagree.

This cooperation and progress - in just one year - underscores what President Obama has called a "fundamental truth" - that "America cannot confront the challenges of this century alone" and that "Europe cannot confront them without America." So, what are these urgent challenges?

We face the common challenge of Afghanistan and Pakistan, where today, the forces of 43 nations are confronting the violent extremists who threaten us all. I want to thank Secretary General Rasmussen, as well as the chairman of NATO's military committee, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and the Supreme Allied Commander - Transformation for their leadership in securing additional forces and for giving new life to this vital mission. And I want to thank our NATO allies and partners for contributing those forces - many without the caveats of the past - and for the continued service and sacrifices of their troops on the ground.

Success will demand the same unity going forward: a unified military effort that targets the insurgency, disrupts, dismantles and defeats al Qaeda, protects the Afghan people and begins the transfer of responsibility to Afghan forces; a unified civilian effort that partners with President Karzai, combats corruption and - as we reaffirmed at the London Conference - promotes good governance and development; and, finally, an effective partnership with Pakistan and its people, recognizing that neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan will find lasting security and prosperity in isolation.

By now, we should all recognize that we face the common challenge of violent extremism beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan. In partnership, we have made progress against the core of al Qaeda. But we simply cannot allow al Qaeda and its affiliates to migrate from Somalia to Sudan to the Sahel and establish new sanctuaries. This requires even better information sharing, even more aggressive law enforcement and working together to build the capacity of partner nations like Yemen to defend themselves and deliver security and prosperity for their people.

It will also require something else - continued cooperation to track and stop the funds that fuel terrorists. This week, the EU Parliament is expected to vote on the agreement that allows us to share critical financial information to investigate terrorist funding. This program has safeguards. It

protects privacy. It has prevented terrorist attacks and saved lives, including here in Europe. And with European Parliament's support for sustaining this important agreement, the United States looks forward to further cooperation in this area with our European partners to protect our citizens on both sides of the ocean through an agreement called the Terrorist Finance Tracking program. We face the common challenge of proliferation - and the United States will continue to play a leadership role. We are completing negotiations with Russia on a new START treaty and I thank Foreign Minister Lavrov for his partnership in this effort. The Nuclear Posture Review that we'll release in the coming weeks will strengthen deterrence as we reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy. At our Nuclear Security Summit in April, we will rally nations behind the President's goal of securing the world's vulnerable nuclear material in four years. We are committed to strengthening the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and negotiating a Fissile Material Cut off Treaty.

Working with our partners in the Security Council and in full agreement with our South Korean and Japanese allies, we will continue our coordinated approach to North Korea - Pyongyang must take concrete and irreversible steps to fulfil its obligations and eliminate its nuclear weapons. If it does, we will support economic assistance that leads to a better life for the North Korean people, and we will lead a comprehensive effort to fully integrate North Korea into the community of nations.

Through the P5+1, the door for diplomacy with Iran remains open—despite Tehran's puzzling defiance, which now compels all of us to work together as allies and partners on a second track of increased pressure. Indeed, the unprecedented level of international consensus and unity on Iran with regard to its nuclear program demonstrates that Tehran must meet its responsibilities or it will face stronger sanctions and perhaps deeper isolation. Hanging in the balance is a nuclear arms race in the Middle East and greater proliferation concerns worldwide. I can think of no issue of greater concern at the moment.

At the same time, we are pursuing a new Phased Adaptive Approach to missile defense in Europe. This proven, more capable and more responsive approach recognizes the growing threat to Europe from short and medium-range ballistic missiles. It is a visible demonstration of our commitment to NATO's Article 5 - that an attack against one is an attack against all, and that potential attacks must therefore be deterred. And it is inherently collaborative - with a role for all allies and an opportunity for cooperation with Russia.

We face the common challenge of forging peace in the Middle East. In concert with our Quartet partners, we continue to work aggressively to restart negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Obviously, we are disappointed that this has not yet occurred. But the United States remains unwavering in our goal—two states living side by side in peace and security: a Jewish state of Israel with true security for all Israelis, and an independent Palestinian state with contiguous territory that ends the occupation and realizes the full aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Finally, I would add that we face the common challenge of swiftly responding to humanitarian crises, such as the terrible earthquake in Haiti. In partnership with the government of Haiti, the United Nations and many other nations, the United States is making significant investments in Haiti's long-term recovery and rebuilding. But this is no substitute for the broader commitment that is needed, especially from our European partners. Haiti's recovery will require additional resources and additional contributions to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, and we urge more nations to join us in this urgent effort.

And as we face these common challenges around the world, we stand by our Vision of a strong, united and peaceful Europe, guided by the following six principles that Secretary of State Clinton laid out on Paris last week.

First, the cornerstone of European security is the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. Rather than spheres of influence, we seek spheres of cooperation that recognizes the fundamental rights of all free nations, including the ability of countries that seek and aspire to join NATO to do so.

Second, security in Europe must be indivisible. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, security is no longer a zero sum

game. President Medvedev's proposals on European security contain important views. The United States welcomes a substantive and constructive dialogue, even as we believe that existing institutions - such as the OSCE, the NATO-Russia Council, the NATO-Ukraine Commission and the NATO-Georgia Commission - provide a sound foundation for even greater security and cooperation in the future.

Third, the commitment to our common security - as enshrined in Article 5 of the NATO treaty - remains sacrosanct. This requires not only a new Strategic Concept for NATO that addresses the new, non-traditional challenges we face now and, increasingly, in the future. It also means - even in a difficult economic climate - making difficult but necessary investments to ensure flexible, deployable forces capable of meeting the full range of missions.

Fourth, we must ensure the transparency that builds trust and confidence among neighbours. This includes greater sharing of military information. It includes the transparency and stability made possible by the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe - transparency and stability that we must strengthen in a 21<sup>st</sup> century security framework.

Fifth, we must reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons—as the United States is working to do - even as we maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to ensure our defense and that of our allies.

And as a final principle of European security, we must ensure the opportunities and rights of all people, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. As President Obama declared in Oslo, “America will always be a voice for those aspirations that are universal.” That includes the aspirations of all Europeans - such as the people of Ukraine, who will choose their next president this weekend. The United States of America will continue to work with partners to expand the sphere of democracy, prosperity and stability, in Europe and beyond.

These are the principles that can guide us in pursuit of greater European security. These are the challenges that the United States will address, in partnership with Europe, in pursuit of greater global security. These are the commitments we must make, to each other, to advance our common interests.

Our century is still young, and none of us can know what the future will bring. As the playwright Brecht once observed, “Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are.” But we do know this: in partnership and common purpose, the Trans-Atlantic relationship that ensured our security and prosperity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will continue to do so in the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Thank you very much.

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**Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!**