

**Amerika Haus e.V. NRW Speech
at IHK
June 16, 2010, Cologne
Ambassador Philip D. Murphy**

Liebe Jeanie von Oppenheim,

Herr Bruegelmann,

meine Damen und Herren,

vielen Dank für die freundliche Einführung. Ich freue mich, heute Abend hier zu sein.

Gemeinsam wollen wir über Amerika und die deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen sprechen.

Wir sind hier in der Industrie- und Handelskammer zu Köln. Ich möchte den Gastgebern, dem Amerika Haus e.V. NRW, für die Einladung danken. Und danken möchte ich gleich auch dem

Vorstand des Amerika Hauses, den vielen Persönlichkeiten und Mitgliedsfirmen, die die

Grundlage für den Erfolg dieser Institution geschaffen haben. Wie Sie wissen, schätzen wir in

den Vereinigten Staaten die Idee eines „Public-Private Partnership“ sehr. Die Gründung und

Unterstützung des Amerika Hauses durch engagierte Atlantiker, die Landesregierung, die US-

Botschaft und das US-Generalkonsulat betrachte ich als erfolgreiches Beispiel dafür.

Diese Unterstützung wäre allerdings nicht genug, wenn das Amerika Haus nicht eine so

dynamische Direktorin wie Eveline Metzen hätte. Mit ihrer Kollegin Nina Leiendecker und

motivierten Praktikanten hat sie in den vergangenen eineinhalb Jahren viele interessante

Veranstaltungen durchgeführt. Nächstes Jahr steht der Umzug an die Stätte des alten Amerika

Hauses am Apostelnkloster bevor. Damit wird sichergestellt, dass das Amerika Haus eine erste

Adresse als transatlantisches Forum bleiben wird. Ihnen allen einen herzlichen Glückwunsch

und herzlichen Dank für die exzellente Arbeit.

Meinen Damen und Herren, Sie können sich jetzt entspannt zurücklehnen, denn jetzt werde ich auf Englisch weitermachen.

My family and I have been here for almost ten months. I have spent a lot of time on the road. Very often, my wife Tammy, and sometime, the kids have accompanied me. Not a day goes by that we do not notice: first, the high degree of interest, mostly positive, there is for America and for things American, here in Germany; and how that interest can translate into common approaches to the great questions of the day. You may know that I am a big football, or as we say in America, soccer fan. In this one instance, I understand that you are more interested in the German team results in South Africa but do not forget Team USA. Who knows? Maybe there will be a match between our two teams next week.

I will mention just a very few other examples and then, Herr Bruegelmann, I believe we will open for questions.

Let me start with issues concerning the environment and climate change. The news is filled with images of the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico. Since British Petroleum's Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded on April 20, some estimate that over 50 million gallons of crude oil may have already leaked into the Gulf of Mexico. BP continues to report some success in capturing the oil but when Malia Obama asked her father the other week, "Did you plug the hole yet, Daddy?" the answer was no. And it still is no. The hole in the ocean floor is still there. It is still threatening the Gulf Coast and the people who live there. Stopping the oil spill and containing its damage are the top priority right now, but this catastrophe has made it very clear that an America run solely on fossil fuels dare not be the vision we have for our children and our grandchildren.

Yesterday evening, speaking from the Oval Office, President Obama reminded us that for decades we have known that we need to end our addiction to fossil fuels. „Time and time again,“ he said, „the path has been blocked – not only by oil industry lobbyists, but also by a lack of political courage and candor.“ The transition from fossil fuels can no longer be a distant vision. The time is now.

The oil spill is an unprecedented disaster -- an environmental and economic tragedy -- that underscores the urgent need to develop clean, renewable sources of energy. For many, this is a moment of environmental awakening -- a 21st century equivalent of the Rachel Carson's *A Silent Spring*. Carson's bestseller led to the banning of the chemical DDT, the creation of the Clean Water Act and the Environmental Protection Agency, and the birth of the organic food movement. As Al Gore wrote in his forward to the thirtieth anniversary edition of *A Silent Spring* last year, “Without this book, the environmental movement may never have developed at all.”

The oil spill is making America and the world once again think very seriously about energy and the environment. Between March and today, Americans' priorities between environmental protection and energy production have shifted from a somewhat pro-energy stance to stronger pro-environment stance. One of the priorities of the Obama administration is indeed a transition to a clean energy economy. We now have the momentum to aggressively accelerate that transition. The House of Representatives has already passed a comprehensive energy and climate bill. There is currently a plan in the Senate -- a plan that was developed with ideas from Democrats and Republicans -- that would achieve the same goals. Congressional Democrats plan an aggressive legislative response to the oil disaster bringing much stricter regulations. One of the most important elements of new climate change legislation will be the incentives that are

put in place for America's inventors, entrepreneurs, and industries to transform how we use and produce energy.

As Energy Secretary Chu, a Nobel Prize winning scientist by the way, says, in order to meet the energy and environmental challenges we face, “we will need nothing less than a second industrial revolution.” Secretary Chu likes to quote hockey player Wayne Gretzky who when asked how he positioned himself on the ice, used to reply: "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it's been." Let me rephrase that comparison since, these days, we are all focusing on other “Torjägern” – Cacau, Schweinsteiger, Podolski; the American top scorers -- Landon Donovan, Clint Dempsey. We need to focus on where the ball is going to be over the next few weeks in South Africa. In the same way, President Obama is committed to comprehensive energy and climate legislation that will position America where the ball is going to be. Under his leadership, the United States has already taken dramatic steps to change the way we use energy. Sharp increases in automobile fuel efficiency have been mandated. The economic stimulus package included more than \$80 billion in clean energy investments designed not only to jump-start the economy, but also to build the clean energy jobs of tomorrow. That will also require full involvement of the private sector.

Earlier this month, Pittsburgh was the North American Host City for the UN’s World Environment Day -- in recognition of its leadership in regional innovation and in its transformation to a greener economy. There were times when Pittsburgh couldn’t imagine life without steel mills. When the steel industry shrank, many jobs were lost. Who could have guessed that Pittsburgh would reemerge as a center for technology and green jobs, health care, and education? Pittsburgh is no longer a blue collar city. It is now one of the top 10 American

cities when it comes to “green” or “green collar” jobs. It is an example of how America's cities are seizing the opportunity afforded by the exploding "green" economic sector to rebuild communities, regional economies -- and people's lives. I know that many German cities, especially here in the Ruhrgebiet, are going through similar transformations.

Concepts like “smart growth” and “new urbanism” both of which promote neighborhoods with a diverse range of housing, businesses and public spaces organized around central areas to avoid urban sprawl and, transit-oriented and walkable land use, are changing some fundamental elements of American society and perhaps even what has come to define the American Dream. Many studies indicate that American preferences are indeed shifting away from the suburbs to walkable urban environments. The “Hör mal wer da hämmert” drivable suburban television of the American Dream is being supplemented by the “Sex and the City” vision. Two-thirds of Americans today live in counties that make up the nation’s largest metropolitan areas; and these urban-centered regions are continuing to grow.

The car culture is another element of society deeply ingrained in the American culture and the American Dream. I don’t think that Americans – like Germans – will ever stop loving their cars – especially if the car industry comes up with clean, green, mean, great 21st century designs. But something is changing. American art and cultural critic Dave Hickey writes about his youth. He was born in 1939 and he says that when he was growing up, and I quote: “Wherever I found myself, kids bought [cars], talked them, drew them, and dreamed them -- hopped them up and dropped them down -- cruised them on the drag and dragged them on the highway, and I did, too. Thus, of necessity, I learned car math and car engineering, car poli-sci and car economics, car anthropology and car beaux-arts.” Is that the case today? I think it might be more accurate that

kids learn web 2.0 math, web 2.0 poli-sci and web 2.0 economics, web 2.0 anthropology and web 2.0 art.

Young people face a radically different world than the one I grew up in. That doesn't mean that I am not trying to be Web 2.0 savvy. Check out my Facebook page. I am learning, or at least trying.

Education has always been a key factor in how successfully societies meet the challenges of a changing world. Education is more important today than it ever was before. In the 19th century, people could get by with a few basic skills, whether they learned them in at school, or picked them up on the job. For much of the 20th century, a high school diploma was a ticket into a solid middle class life in the United States. That is no longer the case. Jobs today often require at least a bachelor's degree. The unemployment rate for those who have never gone to college is over twice as high as for those with a college degree. This is the time of year that American colleges and universities hold graduate ceremonies. Some institutions are fortunate enough to receive a visit from the White House. President Obama is telling graduating classes that they have a responsibility to be role models and mentors. He has re-cast John F. Kennedy's famous inaugural challenge. It's not enough, he says, just to ask what government can do for its citizens. Citizens need to ask what they can do for themselves.

One of President Obama's goals is to maintain a stable middle class and to reach out to those who aspire to rise into the middle class. This raises the question, what does it mean to be middle class? The Department of Commerce has looked at this issue and come to the conclusion that income levels alone do not define the middle class. In fact, most Americans consider themselves

middle class. A 2005 New York Times survey found that only 1% of respondents considered themselves to be ‘upper class’ and only 7% considered themselves part of the ‘lower class.’

What characteristics are shared by so many people? Mostly it is all about common aspirations -- economic stability, a home, decent retirement, economic opportunity and a good education for their children, health care, a car, vacation. When it comes down to it, being middle class is all about being forward-looking, setting goals, and achieve these goals, working hard, and planning ahead. That is also what the American Dream is all about. It promises mobility, movement up the economic ladder. Statistics show, however, that today it is actually harder than ever before to move up that ladder. Americans are more likely than they were 30 years ago to end up in the class into which they were born. Parents with education cultivate in their children the habits that success rewards. I believe there is a similar trend in German society.

The consequences of these changes in our societies are far-reaching. Reality television, for example, seems to trade in a new kind of fantasy. Building on the old game-show formula, winners get a cash jackpot. But they also win instant, if fleeting, celebrity or “promi status.” I am convinced that if Gatsby were to come back today, he would come back as Donald Trump and would want a date with Britney, not with Daisy. Winners are plucked out of ordinary life and become the new top model or superstar. Isn’t Cologne the superstar capital of Germany?

From the arts to social and political change in society and the environment, I see every day that Germany and the United States do indeed have many, many common interests. In the last ten days alone, I have been invited by German partners to attend events on topics ranging from the poetry of William Carlos Williams, to contemporary visual arts, to jazz programs for disadvantaged youth, to climate change, aerospace technology, data privacy, and of course,

football. Within the past ten days, I have also visited a number of German schools, including schools in North Rhine Westphalia. The students ask about President Obama and a variety of different questions regarding life in the United States. But they always ask about the hot topic foreign policy questions of the day – Afghanistan, Iran, the Middle East.

Understanding Afghanistan is indeed an important and fundamental issue in transatlantic diplomacy. It is crucial to see Afghanistan succeed. After so many years of suffering, we want to make possible a future of peace, prosperity and progress for the people of Afghanistan. That is in the best interest of Afghanistan but it is also in the best interest of all of our countries.

Understanding Afghanistan means understanding how these interests converge.

Herr Bruegelmann, I know that you recently participated in a joint U.S. Embassy-NATO tour to Afghanistan. In January, I had the opportunity to visit Afghanistan but as the guest of the Bundeswehr and the German Ministry of Defense. I spoke with dozens of people; soldiers, civilian aid workers, diplomats, and police, from Germany, the United States, other Allies, and Afghanistan who were convinced that the strategy of protecting the population and accelerating the training of the Afghan national security forces has real potential to catalyze success throughout Afghanistan. Implementing this strategy will, however, require greater presence through training, mentoring and partnering. It will also neither be easy nor without its tragic losses.

Within the international community, we have achieved a fundamental convergence of views on the way ahead in Afghanistan. The strategic goal is to disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al-Queda and its extremist allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan to ensure that they never again pose a threat to us or the region. The international community has embraced the counterinsurgency strategy

outlined by ISAF Commander McChrystal. That strategy very clearly puts the Afghan population at the center of gravity. The chief objective of ISAF forces is not to carry out conventional warfare against the insurgents, but rather to protect the Afghan people. The focus is on winning the trust and confidence of the population, protecting the population against insurgent intimidation and violence, convincing the population that the best way to secure their future is to support the government, and building up the Afghan national security forces so that they can provide for Afghanistan's security without international assistance. Herr Bruegelmann, the headline of your two page article in the Kölner Stadt Anzeige says it all, "Taliban bauen keine Straßen oder Schulen."

That is the message I try to communicate to young people when they ask about Afghanistan. The underlying theme of the Obama administration's new National Security Strategy is that, "America believes that we will be safer when our friends are safer; that we will be stronger when the world is more just." That was also the basis of America's partnership with Germany in the postwar period and the long years of the Cold War, a partnership that is now no longer bilateral but global in nature, and a partnership that must be nurtured and developed with strong personal and institutional connections, through strong forward-looking institutions like the Amerika Haus NRW.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.