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GEORGE C. MARSHALL EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES
"THE HINGE OF HISTORY"
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Thank you Keith, old friend.

Minister von der Leyen, there's probably no one who I would rather be here with today than my esteemed fellow minister, the first minister to call on me after I had the surprise of being assigned to this job, I might add.

Thank you again for making the trip to Washington. But I would also say that there's a connection between us: we did not sit down and write our speeches together, yet as I was listening to her and nodding to myself I thought, 'My gosh, I'm going to bore everybody with the same themes you just heard.'

But Madam Mayor, thank you for all of the hospitality that all of us receive when we come to this beautiful corner of the world. It is absolutely a stunning place to visit.

And Ladies and Gentlemen, it is wonderful to be back in Germany once again:

- To pay my respects to an ally that is 100 percent committed to freedom and to the dignity of human beings; and
- To show America's solidarity with the German people and standing up for Western values for which we are unapologetic.

I cannot come to Germany, however, without expressing my deep respect for this country's troops...for their professionalism, for their courage and for their sacrifices on shared battlefields in Afghanistan and against ISIS or any other agents of terror and all the world.

Because for the German military, and for you here today from the German military, I would just say that your ethical performance is a model for all others and we, in the United States Department of Defense, are grateful for our strong alliance with the German military.

Minister von de Leyen and I just completed the inaugural Strategic Dialogue, as you heard, between Germany and the United States. We charted our shared security priorities for the coming year in this perfect locale for that...in the finest spirit of what George Marshall stood for. We talked about Afghanistan, the enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe, and our national security strategies, and I would just cite that regardless of any news reports to the contrary, the transatlantic bond between our two countries remain strong.

Germany and the United States stand together, allied against threats to the peace and security of this continent, Canada, and the United States...and the disruption of harmony elsewhere.

The U.S. commitment to our NATO Article V security guarantee is ironclad, as demonstrated over decades by our steadfastness and given voice more recently by President Trump before the American people in the Rose Garden with NATO ally, Romanian President Iohannis, standing at his side and certainly, it was given voice by the United States Senate just a short couple of days ago in a unanimous resolution, 100 to zero.

All of this transatlantic bond is represented in this room here today. And 70 years ago, as Minister von de Leyen noted, on a picturesque campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts, an American diplomat gave the commencement address at Harvard University. I need not remind this audience again of what George Marshall said that day, for we can see today across Europe the realization of what became a shared vision – a peaceful, industrious and prosperous continent, free from tyranny, possessing the military strength to defend itself from aggression.

Sometimes, it is necessary to pause and recall first principles. We can kind of take things for granted after a while if we do not. We need to remind ourselves of why we initially embarked on a path...of why free people of Europe, Canada, and the United States made a conscious decision to codify our transatlantic partnership and dare to bind our nations by treaty to collective defense.

All these nations' democracies...anyone of them could have opted out with the wish of avoiding danger, yet they united together:

- In the North Atlantic Treaty Article V, the parties stated that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against all.”
- And in the North Atlantic Article III, we bound ourselves to share the burden of defense saying, “that parties separately and jointly by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid will maintain individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.”

So, ladies and gentlemen, how did a man named George Marshall come to give a speech that so eloquently articulated the principles underpinning today's international order? Why does the international center here today bear his name, still 70 years later?

And the simple answer is that he lived at the hinge of history.

Having joined the Army, George Marshall was sent off to fight in a catastrophic conflict, World War I, in which 1.2 million doughboys came to pay America's debt to Lafayette. He lived war and he lived all of its injustices.

When the armistice came, Marshall went home to America and lived through the Great Depression, seeing grown men and women with despair in their eyes. For 20 years, he learned and he matured, watching the storm clouds gather again over the continent he had left behind.

When the storm broke in 1939, he witnessed the failed peace of 1918: fourteen percent of Europe's pre-war population was killed or displaced during the Second World War.

Our nations experienced the horrors that can only happen when freedom is imperiled, when peaceful pursuits of civilized life are suspended, when deterrence fails and our societies are engulfed in total war. When at enormous cost, the force of arms had restored peace to this continent, the peoples of our nations gazed on the destruction.

U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, not yet the Secretary, but coming home, a young officer who had served in our World War II Pacific Campaign, he spoke for a generation when he said that they “Looked back on world wars, a generation that saw 61 million killed, that saw the depression and they said to themselves, ‘What a crummy world and we are part of it whether we like it or not.’”

Longing for a safer future, the Greatest Generation, as we call them, saw their own security in the security of others. They had the courage to recognize:

- All collective efforts had to be taken to avoid repeating mistakes that opened the door to war; and
- Should freedom be threatened and war truly unavoidable, then all efforts had to be taken to bring war to a decisive end as swiftly as possible.

They also had the courage to act, not just to look at it, not just to talk about it...to make the necessary sacrifices and to make genuine commitments to keep the peace. That generation, schooled by life's cruelties, by severe economic deprivation and the death of friends and family members, stood face-to-face with the competitive, zero sum side of life.

The vileness of the Second World War, waged on a scale unimagined perhaps other than by those with memories of having lived through it, nevertheless left the generation aware that there is more to life than war and competition alone.

In 1947, Europe lay in ruins...starvation, poverty, desperation and chaos clamored to dictate the future. Enter Marshall, who saw his generation's moment and transcribed its lessons.

"It is logical," he said, "that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist and return of normal economic health in the world. Without which, there can be no political stability and no assured peace."

Under the Marshall Plan, the United States provided billions in aid to Europe after the war, as part of a larger effort to rebuild and secure the continent.

Marshall knew history swings on a hinge. And the Marshall Plan permitted hundreds of millions to keep their humanity, confident of the basic social order: from food to security, rule of law and essential political freedom. Twenty years after the plan took effect, the per capital gross domestic product of UK, France, Italy and Germany had more than doubled.

But to keep the peace, a resuscitated Europe had to become a partner in it. As Marshall said, and as Minister von de Leyen just pointed out, "It is neither fitting nor efficacious for the U.S. government to draw up unilaterally a program to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative must come from Europe."

As Marshall told the UN General Assembly in Paris in 1948, "International organizations cannot take the place of national and personal effort or of local and individual imagination; international action cannot replace self-help."

And so out of destruction and unified by that notion, our peoples built a grand new world, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, the United Nations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Marshall's generation built these tools to help underwrite stability and prosperity. The last seventy years have proven the value of these institutions and the wisdom of that generation.

Europe transformed from a security consumer into a security provider, something Marshall ardently desired for he never envisioned that America would carry the burden alone. He knew from experience it had to be shared, both its benefits and its burdens. Since World War II, European allies have contributed to large scale U.S. led global operations. At peak contributions, 39,000 Allies fought with the United States in Afghanistan and 59,000 Allies fought with us in Iraq.

We must not allow the years passed since 1947 to blind us to the reality of today. For those of us who grew up with freedom from fear, from starvation, and the burden of World War, we cannot turn away from the responsibility to pass these same freedoms intact to the next generation.

Allies stick together, as we did 69 years ago this week when the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin and the United States refused to abandon it.

U.S. Air Force Captain Billy Phelps flew 167 flights into that stranded city, bringing food to save its inhabitants from starvation and bitter cold. Captain Phelps was 26 years old the night his cargo plane crashed a mile from the end of the runway. A German boy named Wolfgang Samuel saw it happen.

Wolf wrote, "They fell like a rock out of the sky. The two pilots were killed." And then the child had a flash of insight. He said, "Only three years ago, they were fighting against my country and now, they were dying for us."

"I wondered," he said, "what made these people do the things they did."

Captain Phelps knew he owed future generations the same freedom he had. And what young Wolfgang, a little German kid saw that cold December night in 1948, we can see clearly today in 2017:

- We can see foreigners putting their lives on the line for others, whether Captain Billy Phelps or the Berlin Airlift or the men and women of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence under German leadership in the Lithuanian woods right now;**
- We can see U.S. support for NATO's enhanced Forward Presence extended out to 2020 for the security of the United States and all NATO nations; and**
- We can see the \$4.8 billion requested by President Trump last month for the European Reassurance Initiative, an increase over our commitment last year.**

Beyond any words in the newspapers, you can judge America by such actions. This is who we are. America, Germany, Europe, the West. We risk life so a child in Berlin can eat. We hunt terrorists in the dark so that they cannot murder innocent at concerts. And our nations stand together – democratic islands of stability in a world awash with change.

The Marshall Center embodies this cooperative mission. It is the only one of the U.S. Defense Department's five regional centers to operate jointly with a foreign government. It is one of many tangible manifestations of the enduring alliance between Germany and America.

In October last year, Germany and the United States signed a Memorandum of Agreement and reinforced the strong U.S.-German partnership here as Germany assumed an even greater role in the operation of this highly influential security study center.

As the Minister noted, over the years, over 12,000 individuals – civilian and military – from more than 150 countries have come to Garmisch to transcribe the lessons of history and apply them to today's challenges, from organized crime to terrorism, cybersecurity and regional threats.

The Marshall Center alumni comprise a network of thought leaders and practitioners serving as resources to one another and decision makers worldwide recognizing that no nation alone can provide for its security.

In 2014, for example, Romanian and Greek alumni contributed together to one of Europe's largest drug seizures, preventing \$220 million in heroin from poisoning children and families across this continent.

The Marshall Center faculty have also assisted Albania and Moldova in drafting their first ever national security strategy documents, critical for enabling security integration and contributing to regional stability.

The Center's faculty, staff, students, and alumni carry the legacy of this Center's namesake and for you students here today, when you return home, you have a golden opportunity to operate history's hinge, as well, just like George Marshall did...to close the door to war, exercising your moral authority and your generation's responsibility to protect freedom.

Western values, respect for a rules based order and for national sovereignty, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the dignity of the human person, these are values worth defending.

Marshall said, "Ideals have power to inspire," and he also said "Discouraged people are in sore need of the inspiration of great principles" – principles represented today by you in this room.

I will conclude with a message to the nation choosing to challenge this secure and peaceful order.

The United States seeks to engage with Russia and so does the NATO alliance. Russia must know both what we stand for and equally, what we will not tolerate. We stand for freedom and we will never surrender the freedom of our people or the values of our alliance that we hold dear.

I mentioned a moment ago that discouraged people are in need of inspiration and there are millions of people like that who live today in Russia. Their leader making mischief beyond Russian borders will not restore their fortunes or rekindle their hope.

And while we will meet with any aggression with what Danish Defense Minister Claus Hjort Frederiksen said was, "Determination, deterrence and purpose," we will also watch for a Russia that honors its people enough to abide by international law and so wins for them peace the we all offer.

NATO's troops are deployed right now as we speak in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. And they demonstrate NATO's resolve. I am grateful to those host nations as well as to the framework nations, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and of course, Germany for sending their fine troops to lead in this wholly defensive mission, augmented by troops from ten other NATO nations.

This is a profound example of a United NATO. Our alliance has long been a stabilizing force in Europe. It helps preserve the rules based international order today. And it serves again now to keep the peace and defend the shared values that grew out of the enlightenment.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, in 1961, a young academic and German immigrant to America, one who had served in the U.S. Army and was a veteran of World War II, paid a visit to the Missouri home of former President Harry Truman. The president was in his late 70's and long since retired.

The academic was none other than Henry Kissinger and he asked Truman, what in his presidency had made him the most proud. Without a moment's hesitation, President Truman said to him that "we defeated our enemies and then brought them back to the community of nations as equals."

Today, we make our adversaries the same promise. Enemies of freedom will be frustrated or defeated. Supporters of international law will be brought into our community as equals. Our hands rest purposely on history's door and it depends on us to push it in the right direction.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

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