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*KAS Germany Update*  
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I. UN Reform: Germany's Quest for a Permanent Seat in the Security Council

The idea is not a new one. Ever since reunification and **George H. W. Bush's** proclamation of a "New World Order" and a German-American "partnership in leadership" German politicians and diplomats have considered whether Germany's new international role should be accompanied by permanent representation on the Security Council of the United Nations. In 1993, foreign minister **Klaus Kinkel** (FDP) was the first to officially promote this agenda, with little backing from chancellor **Helmut Kohl** (CDU). In his first address to the UN in 1999, foreign minister **Joschka Fischer** (Green Party) picked up the idea, but also with little success. With the diplomatic crisis of the Iraq war 2003, however, the issue of UN reform gained a new dynamism, and the German desire for permanent representation is back on the table, more forcefully than ever.

Germany is in favor of enlarging the Security Council as a whole, in order to more accurately reflect the international political landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This means the inclusion of five more permanent members, namely Germany, Japan, Brazil, India, and an African country such as the one with the highest population, Nigeria. Thus, the different regions of the world would be more evenly represented and two major contributors to the UN, Germany and Japan, would receive the acknowledgement they could not get in 1945. Germany, Japan, Brazil, and India have published a declaration of mutual support in establishing the necessary two-thirds majority in the UN General Assembly. Of the five current permanent members, France and Great Britain strongly support Germany's accession to the council, Russia and China seem indifferent or

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vaguely in favor, while the U.S. signaled discontent with this plan of reform. Strongly opposed is Italy, as well as other European countries such as Spain and Poland. They would prefer a common European seat and a more thorough reform of the UN decision-making system, including the abolishment of the veto right, an extension of the rotation system, and an expansion of the number of non-permanent members. Italian foreign minister **Franco Frattini** admonished that Germany's move would lead to further fraction within the Security Council as well as within the European Union.

This concern is shared by many in Germany. To **Wolfgang Schaeuble**, the vice-chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, the policy of the Red-Green government is sheer "lust for prestige" and "leftist populism," very much in line with **Chancellor Schroeder's** disastrous proclamation of a "German Way" during the Iraq crisis. The CDU in general favors a common European seat instead, although some of the leading conservative foreign policy experts think that a German membership is the next best thing. However, they criticize the administration for a lack of diplomatic skill in pursuing this goal and for seeking a status symbol without being ready for the challenges that come with it. **Friedbert Pflueger**, the foreign policy spokesman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, for instance, supports the idea of permanent German membership but criticizes the vicious German campaign for it: "To team up with Japan, Brazil, and India in such a fashion alienates our friends and might very well create a terrible backlash in the General Assembly." Moreover, Germany's lack of a solid and consistent national security policy makes the country ill-prepared for taking on the many responsibilities that come with permanent membership. **Volker Ruehe** (CDU), former secretary of defense and now chairman of the parliament's foreign relations committee, has said "A permanent seat in the UN security council is desirable, but it would also mean the end of Germany's foreign policy provincialism. Then we finally will have to increase the budget of the diplomatic corps and the military, instead of draining it further and further." Unfortunately, in recent years, the Schroeder administration has been all but willing to put its money where its mouth is.

## II. U.S. Elections: German Reactions

Shortly before the U.S. elections took place, a survey by the respected German broadcasting station ARD revealed that—if they had a say in the matter—only 8% of all Germans would cast their vote for **President Bush**, while 80% said they would vote for his challenger, **Senator John F. Kerry**. Despite such crystal-clear public opinion, German politicians and particularly the Schroeder administration did not voice publicly any preference regarding the outcome of the election. This long-awaited return to diplomatic sensitivity was reinforced when, immediately after Kerry's concession, **Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder** congratulated President

Bush on his reelection. "On the basis of the close friendship between Germany and the United States," Mr. Schroeder said, "let us continue our close and good cooperation." The "great challenges of our time such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional crises, poverty, climate change, and epidemics can only be overcome together." CDU chairwoman **Angela Merkel** also sent her congratulations and hoped for an improvement of the strained German-American relationship of late. "Each side needs to contribute its share," she said.

Many observers argue that the Schroeder government is actually quite pleased with the election results. After all, it was **Mr. Schroeder's** firm stance against **Mr. Bush's** Iraq policy that helped him win his own narrow election in 2002. Thus, a controversial U.S. president might actually make for greater public relations success than a meeker, less confrontational newcomer, who in turn might have had challenged Mr. Schroeder's decision to not and under no circumstances send German soldiers to Iraq.

Accordingly, the first changes in the new Bush cabinet, most notably the change in leadership at the State Department, drew positive reactions from the German administration. **Chancellor Schroeder** and foreign minister **Joschka Fischer** acknowledged outgoing **Secretary Powell's** work. "He was always a reliable partner, and I thank him for that," Fischer said. "Even in difficult situations, our cooperation was always candid and objective, led by professionalism as well as friendship." Nonetheless, there are high expectations for the new secretary, whose special interest in Germany goes back to her days in **George H. W. Bush's** national security council during the time of German reunification. Analysts believe that the diplomatic work with **Ms. Rice** will be more efficient and to-the-point than with Mr. Powell who all too often did not have the necessary backing from the White House. Everybody is willing to look forward, and Mr. Schroeder and Mr. Fischer cite the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where **Yasser Arafat's** death has opened a window of opportunity, as one of the most urgent topics of renewed transatlantic cooperation. Chancellor Schroeder summed it up best, "I will miss Colin Powell, but I am looking forward to working together with Condoleezza Rice."

*Text & Research:*  
*Patrick Keller*

**For comments, please contact:**

**Karl-Heinz Kamp**  
**Security Policy Coordinator**  
**karl-heinz.kamp@kas.de**