



The 2023 Henry A. Kissinger Prize

LAUDATION

NANCY PELOSI

SPEAKER EMERITA, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Good evening.

With your permission, I will speak in English. My German isn't what it should be. My grandson told me that, who speaks fluent German, Mr. President. Good evening to all of you. What a great honor it is for us to be here to congratulate and salute Jens.

President Steinmeier. I have a wish for all of you. I wish that you could have all heard the President speak at the observance of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. I wish you could have all heard him speak at the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and Birkenau at Yad Vashem. Imagine, the President of Germany coming into those settings—and just so healing and so winning. People were so ... anyone of the rest of us who would speak, you would expect certain things about ending the war. But to have the President of Germany speak with the eloquence, with the empathy, with the heart, with the understanding that he did? For that, and for your beautiful words this evening, we are all so blessed to be in your company. Thank you, Mr. President.

Let us salute Sandra Peterson and Daniel Benjamin from the American Academy in Berlin for organizing this celebration, strengthening the bonds between our two nations. Thank you so much Sandra and Daniel. And that is an applause line.

I am very honored to be here with the Mayor. I saw him today and I said I have a special place in my heart for mayors because I grew up in the mayor's home. My father was mayor from when I was in first grade and went to college. Mayor of Baltimore. My brother was mayor later. Mayor Wegner, thank you so much for being here tonight. It's always great to be here. There's so much always going on in Berlin. Last year, the G7 meeting of the speakers, well, presidents of whatever the title is, the heads of the parliament met here and the focus under the leadership of Bundestag President Bärbel Bas was all on Ukraine. Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine. So much about that. We have all referenced it—and will.

Over the years I've had the pleasure of visiting, of going to the Munich Security Conference, a great fixture of security and stability here in Europe and all over the world. And Wolfgang Ischinger is here. Wolfgang, where are you? Where did you go? Thank you for being here. And speaking of Wolfgangs, we have Wolfgang Schmidt. Where are you, Wolfgang? Wolfgang Schmidt is here. And oh, there you are. And thank you for your leadership and the leadership of the Chancellor on the subject, many subjects, but the subject of Ukraine as well, Wolfgang Schmidt.

It's an honor to be here with all of you as we honor Jens, but I want to acknowledge our distinguished Ambassador from the United States. We're so proud of Amy Gutmann. Amy, thank you for being here with Michael, your husband. We're so proud of our Ambassador, and we're also very proud of the President who appointed her, President Joe Biden. He made so clear to everyone what America's position was as far as NATO was concerned. Shall we say, a departure from what had briefly gone before. And it was because of the strength of NATO, it was because of the partnership of NATO, but it's also because of the leadership of Jens Stoltenberg. Because of your great leadership, he sends you his regards and congratulations. Recognizing that you kept it unified and enlarged NATO. The President referenced President Truman; I will too. Upon signing the North Atlantic Treaty, which stood for decades, as you know, the bulwark against tyranny and terror, President Harry Truman offered us, I think, an inspiring vision. He said, and I quote, "We believe that it is possible for nations to achieve unity on the great principles of human freedom and justice."

With those words, President Truman was describing the mission and the leadership of tonight's guest of honor. Congratulations, Mr. Secretary General. I'll say that a number of times tonight—in English—on winning this well-deserved prize, the Kissinger Prize, a testament to your towering global leadership. Though he's not here, I'm certain, I don't know for sure, but I think that he probably had some influence as to who would receive this award. I know he would be very, very proud. I'm thrilled to be here with you and, of course, with Ingrid. Ingrid in her own right, the Ambassador from Norway to Belgium. Thank you both for your public service, including, again, that ambassadorship.

Secretary General, when I was invited to give a laudation this evening, especially in the company of the President, I was so overwhelmed, personally and officially. Officially, because of your leadership in the global arena, advancing security, prosperity, and governance. Jens first captured the world's attention when he served as Prime Minister of Norway, where he was brilliant in balancing the need of investing in defense and the importance of diplomacy. Later, he'd reference deterrence, defense, dialogue, one formulation or another, but always about finding a peaceful way. In fact, he was so outstanding in that role and respected by so many around the world that he became the obvious choice to lead our transatlantic alliance.

I'm not telling you anything you don't know. But perhaps it was because of his own experience as a member, a Prime Minister of a country that's part of NATO, that he would be able to come into the role, respectful understanding of how to deal with so many different countries. And personally—I said officially why I was so honored—personally, you may not know this, I'm trying to find something you don't know, because we in San Francisco take pride in the fact that Jens spent part of his childhood in San Francisco, the city by the Bay. And it is clear that I take pride in talking about San Francisco values. St. Francis is our patron saint of our city and his anthem, his song of St. Francis is our anthem: "Where there is darkness, may there be light. Hatred may bring love. Despair may bring hope." We think that the Prime Minister was inspired in his babyhood by that, by those words.

I thought I was going to tell you something you didn't know, but as usual, the President got ahead of me there. I thought, you don't know about the day he came to the Congress of the United States. Says she, self-servingly. I put up that sign. It was the first time a Speaker had invited the Secretary General of NATO to give an address to the Congress. It was so thrilling because the very next day would be the 70th anniversary of NATO. Something strange was going down the street, down Pennsylvania Avenue, and we wanted to make clear to the world where America was on NATO. And so, the Secretary General was a historic first invited to give a joint address. Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate. Full house, overwhelmingly enthusiastic about

receiving Jens even before he spoke. And the President quoted some of his speech, in his magnificent remarks he said, “An alliance of many different nations with different geography, history and political parties, Republican and Democrat, Conservative and Labour, Independents, Greens and many more. This is democracy,” he said. “Open discussion and different views are not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength. This is democracy.” Isn't that beautiful?

What a beautiful and insightful statement about the strength and power of our system of self-governance. For all the differences between our nations, and I said earlier, perhaps because you were Prime Minister, you understood the aspirations, the concerns of individual states more clearly than someone else might. We saw you as a powerful organizing, a powerful unifying force, bringing countries together in pursuit of common priorities and commitments to shared values.

During the speech he said, “It's good to have friends.” It's good to have friends—you remember that, Jens? I thought you would. I think you may have said it before. Listen, this isn't the first time I've heard you speak before such a crowd, because as a member of Congress, maybe there's some other parliamentarians here who may have heard him at the North Atlantic Assemblies, what they call it the inter-parliamentary, it's changed the name since I started going to the meetings. You usually think of him as talking to heads of state, but you should see the response he receives from the members of parliament who are part of that inter-parliamentary group. I've seen him in different countries doing that around the world. And that is really hard. The heads of state, piece of cake. The members of parliament, hundreds of them, that's a different story, right?

His mastery in unifying us springs from his deep understanding and respect for each of the 31 NATO allies. Their stories, their histories, their heritage, their purposes and their perspectives, and their challenges. This has been no small feat. Dictators and autocrats have sought to erode the bonds that bind us. In my country and many across Europe, creeping forces of isolationism have sought to force retreat from the world stage. When history books are written, this will be the central story of our time—the epic battle between democracy and autocracy. Indeed, the foundations of our freedom that we hold dear—the dignity of the individual, the sovereignty of each state, the institutions of self-government, the rule of law—are under siege from appetites and ambitions of the grasping few. I say that with knowledge. And in this battle, the Secretary General's leadership has prevailed.

This is especially true in the fight for freedom in Ukraine. Since day one, the Secretary General has not only forcefully declared, but demonstrated NATO's unwavering support for our fellow democracy as it stared down Putin's brutal invasion. And he has always strongly condemned the appalling war crimes being committed by the Russian forces against the Ukrainian people. And as the President referenced, we will not end until victory is won in Ukraine. That is essential to us.

At the same time, he has rallied our alliance to stand in solidarity with other people facing threats to freedom from, in his words, the bullying and coercion by the Chinese Communist Party in the Indo-Pacific and around the world. To the horrifying terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel. Brutal, barbaric, but at the same time inciting a heartbreaking humanitarian crisis in Gaza for which we have sympathy and want solutions. While different and distinct threats, the forces behind them share a common goal, to stamp out the flame of freedom.

I began my remarks by quoting an architect of NATO, President Truman. And I'll close by quoting another American president. Well, I did two in the beginning, President Biden and President Truman. I'll close by quoting another American president, a great champion of democracy, John F. Kennedy. Whose name comes up now because this is the year of the anniversary. This marks 60 years since President Kennedy came here to Berlin and called on the

world to come together for “the advance of freedom everywhere, beyond the Wall, to the day of peace with justice, beyond yourselves and ourselves, to all mankind. Freedom is indivisible,” he said, “and when one man is enslaved, all are not free.”

This is a noble cause to which Jens Stoltenberg has devoted his entire life. A legacy of leadership we are proud to celebrate tonight. Secretary General, congratulations on earning this prestigious Kissinger Prize. Thank you for your continued leadership. Ingrid, thank you for the extra year. We're all grateful to you for that. Thank you too, Secretary General. Yes, because it is good to have friends. May God bless you and may God continue to bless our mighty transatlantic alliance, NATO.

Thank you.