

THE 2022 HENRY A. KISSINGER PRIZE

WELCOMING REMARKS DANIEL BENJAMIN PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ACADEMY IN BERLIN

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Distinguished Guests

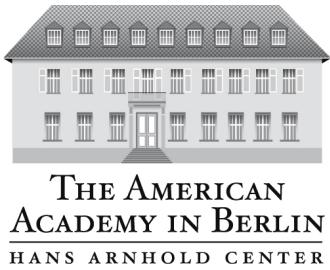
I am Daniel Benjamin, President of the American Academy in Berlin, and I am delighted to welcome you to the 2022 Henry A. Kissinger Prize ceremony. Though this is not the first time that the Academy has hosted a major event in New York, it has been five years and one long pandemic since the last one. This is also the first Kissinger Prize event to be held on this side of the Atlantic. Since it was established in 2007, Dr. Kissinger, whose views of the U.S.-German relationship you just heard in the video, has preferred that the event take place in Berlin, and he has attended every one of those events save for the last, which occurred in less than ideal conditions of November 2021.

We are grateful that he agreed to hold this year's ceremony here because we have been overdue for a return to New York. Unfortunately, I have to report that Dr. Kissinger, who had planned to be here tonight, has had to stay at home on doctor's orders. He has a mild case of COVID, and while he hoped to be liberated by now, I'm afraid we're not so lucky.

He did, however, record his remarks earlier today, and we will show them later.

Since we are reintroducing ourselves to New York, I'd like to pick up where the video you just saw left off.

As you will have gathered, the American Academy in Berlin is an institution dedicated to advanced scholarship and the arts. We are in the business of incubating the very best work across a wide range of disciplines. And I believe the beauty of what we do lies in the fact that as we nurture all this creativity, we are also strengthening the bonds between the United States, Germany, and Europe.



To use a phrase New Yorkers will understand well: We consider ourselves a pretty great twofer.

The heart of our operation is located in a historic villa on the outskirts of the German capital that belonged to the Arnhold family before the Nazis seized it. Our Berlin Prize Fellowship brings roughly a dozen outstanding Americans to what is now known as the Hans Arnhold Center in Berlin each semester to work on a project. Fellowships at the Academy provide critically needed time and space for great ideas to evolve and research to advance. By design, we welcome individuals from a wide mix of disciplines – writers, visual artists, journalists, scholars, historians, political scientists, legal scholars, composers, and others – to live and work together. We live interdisciplinarity like few other institutions.

Though these fellowships are now among the most coveted of their kind, the semester in Berlin is not only a time to advance one's work. Instead, it is also a period for vigorous exchange, as our fellows, who live and dine together at the Hans Arnhold Center, engage with one another *and* with German colleagues and counterparts and the broader public in Berlin and other cities in Germany through lectures, symposia, artist talks, and performances.

Many of our impressive alumni are here tonight, and I hope they will confirm – as those on the screen did – that an Academy fellowship is an experience like few others – one whose benefits for the life of the mind and for exploring and establishing connections in a kindred culture can hardly be calculated.

In addition to our fellowship program, the Academy strives to bring Americans and Germans together to discuss the foremost issues of the day as well as path-breaking work of all kinds. We present a series of events with our Distinguished Visitors and guest lecturers, who stay with us from a few days to a month. Nobel laureate economists, top-ranking diplomats and policymakers, climate experts, world-renowned artists, Supreme Court Justices and many others come to the Arnhold Center. Their expertise deepens the discussion at the Academy and in Germany and increases the connectivity between our societies.

The results of our work are compelling, and we are, I believe, helping knit America and Germany closer together – and more broadly – the U.S. and Europe. This was the vision of our founder, Richard C. Holbrooke, who was convinced that an alliance of democratic peoples would continue to grow stronger not only through our political and military cooperation but by coming together around learning and the arts, the greatest fruits of our common civilization, to help build a bulwark against all the forces of division.

It is particularly appropriate that we convene here now during this tumultuous year in which we have seen what was once unthinkable – war returning to Europe – and only a day's drive from our location in Berlin. There have been few events at the Academy during which the subject of the war has not been raised, and both the footage of the atrocities in Ukraine and the flood of refugees in German cities have made perfectly clear what the stakes are in Europe – and the world – today. But we have also witnessed the potent revival of the U.S.-German relationship as well as the genuinely dramatic reaffirmation of the Atlantic Alliance.



The war in Ukraine may be the most dramatic crisis of the moment, but it is hardly the only one. Climate change, the rise of authoritarianism, democratic decay, a more aggressive China, uncontrolled migration – the challenges at times seem overwhelming, and none of them can be solved by a single nation. But they all demand that people of good will put their heads together, exchange ideas, refine one another's thoughts, put new concepts to the public and pull in the same direction.

That, I hope, is what we are doing at the American Academy in Berlin.

As a journalist who reported on the extraordinary diplomacy that led to German unification and the end of the Cold War, and as someone who worked in the Clinton Administration on adapting NATO for a new era and then in the Obama Administration State Department, where I joined with allies across the Atlantic to counter the terrorist threat, I feel deeply fortunate to lead an institution that is deepening the bonds – political, cultural, and human – between our two nations. And I am delighted that tonight we will celebrate those ties with the presentation of the Henry Kissinger Prize to an individual who has been an incredibly champion over so many years of the bilateral relationship and the values we share.

And now, in a moment, I will let you carry on with your dinner before the main ceremony begins, but before I do, I want to express my thanks to the sponsors who have made this event possible.

We deeply appreciate your support.

The program will resume shortly.

Thank you.