



## THE 2022 HENRY A. KISSINGER PRIZE

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### LAUDATION CONDOLEZZZA RICE 66<sup>TH</sup> UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE, 2005-2009

Well, it's really a delight to be here for this very special occasion. I want to first congratulate the American Academy for all of the great work that it does. I don't know if you take yourself seriously or not but people certainly seem to be having fun. It's remarkable what you've achieved in a relatively short period of time to strengthen our ties.

I'm grateful to have a chance to be here to honor my friend and colleague Frank-Walter Steinmeier. As I was looking at the list of those who have won the Kissinger Prize, I noted that among them are George H. W. Bush and Helmut Kohl. I couldn't help but think back to that time, those halcyon days really, of 1989 to 1991, when the unification of Germany, the liberation of Eastern Europe, and it seemed, the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union that might allow the Russian people to find democracy, was right at our fingertips. It was a time when we had a chance to celebrate who we had been, who we were, and who we wanted to be. It took great leadership at that time to fulfill the dream of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. I don't think that in 1990, with the unification of Germany or 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, we could imagine that we would be where we are today. It is a time when again we have to reflect on who we have been, who we are, and who we want to be. And as in those days, the great leadership of the Kohls and the Thatchers and Reagan and Bush, when we delivered on those promises of more than 45 years of faithfulness to our values and faithfulness to our commitment to free peoples, we need leaders who can again bring us to a better place. And I can't think of a better example of that leadership than my friend, President Steinmeier.

President Steinmeier has used the authority of his office to remind us of our commitment, first and foremost, to our values and to our commitment and dedication to those who cannot speak for themselves and need us to stand beside them as they simply seek to have the very rights and the very liberties that we enjoy and that, sometimes, I think we take for granted.

The powerful speech that you gave, President Steinmeier, just a little bit ago, was a stark reminder of the hard work ahead of us, not just in Ukraine, but the hard work of building prosperous economies for our people, and of course, the challenge of protecting this planet as stewards because we are only here for a while and want to pass on to our children a planet that is safe and secure. That speech reminded me, President Steinmeier—Frank-Walter—of why I so valued having you as a friend and colleague for the four years that I was secretary of state and you were foreign minister of Germany.

Those strengths that you showed in that speech is what we celebrate today and what I salute about you: Saluting your commitment to the values of democracy and the transatlantic relationship, recognizing that the transatlantic relationship is an amazing creation and an amazing gift to all of us, but that it isn't self-sustaining—we have to work at it every day. And you and I talked many times about the fact that we were part of the generation that knew the value of that relationship. About the need to pass on to successive generations the importance, the gift, of the



transatlantic relationship, and I salute you for that. I salute you for your compassion and your foresight.

I watched you work in difficult circumstances for humanitarian relief. I watched you work for climate change. I watched you work in the Middle East to try to bring a better life, a safer life, to Israelis and to Palestinians. In fact, as we were doing that work in 2007 and 2008, when we thought we had a chance to deliver a Palestinian state, we burned up the telephone lines trying to find a way to make it happen. So I salute also your skill as a diplomat. We didn't always agree about everything—I know that is shocking—but we never forgot that all that really mattered was that we shared values. And so we could find ways around whatever disagreements there might be, because our disagreements were never ever as large, as important, as consequential as those that we had with people who did not share our values.

People often wonder what it's like to be a diplomat, and I can tell you, yes, sometimes you sit in rooms for extremely long periods of time as Frank-Walter and I did in the P5+1 as we tried to bring an agreement with the Iranians on their nuclear program. We sat in those rooms until late hours of the night trying to decide where to put the comma. Yes, in fact that is sometimes what diplomacy is about. But it's also about the work, Frank-Walter, that you did—that I did with you—in trying to prevent what turned out to be a catastrophe of our time—the Russian invasion of Georgia. In July already of 2007, Frank-Walter and I were at a G8 meeting and he came to my quarters and he said we need to talk about something. He had the foresight to see that the Russians and the Georgians were on a collision course, and indeed a little over a year later, they would collide. But in that period between that conversation and that collision in 2008, Frank-Walter was tireless in trying to find a way that the Georgians would realize that they couldn't let the Russians provoke them and that the Russians would not try to provoke them. I don't know how many trips you made to Tbilisi and to Moscow to try to get that done, Frank-Walter. But even though we weren't able to prevent the war in Georgia, the relationships that were built in trying to prevent it were the relationships that we then were able to draw on to end that war in relatively short order.

We have now before us a very difficult circumstance in Ukraine. And, Frank-Walter, I see your efforts to hold the coalition together in your own country and throughout Europe. I see your compassion for the Ukrainian people as you visited some of the terribly hard-hit parts of Ukraine. I see your fingerprints, again, in trying to use those relationships to get to a better time. But however it all comes to fruition, however it all ends, I can say that today's diplomats would do well to form the kinds of partnerships, friendships, and colleague-ships that we enjoyed in those days. Because ultimately, it is true that you want to work with great diplomats. Ultimately, it is true that you want to work with people who really speak for their country. Ultimately, it is true that you want to work with people who can get things done. But more than anything, you want to work with people who you can trust. Because when times are difficult, the only thing that really matters is trust.

Frank-Walter, I could always trust you and I think you trusted me. And that's why tonight, I'm so glad to be here to talk about your excellence as a diplomat but also to salute you as a valued friend. A kind, generous, tough-minded when necessary, strong, and capable friend. I know that Henry couldn't be here tonight and you heard his wonderful tribute to you. And I know that he thinks the world of you because tonight, as we honor you in the name of one of titans of diplomacy of the twentieth century, we do so because all of us who have been in the trenches know what it means to try to make the world safer, more prosperous, to try to garner respect among those who have differences, to try to make the place that we have inherited a safer and more secure one.



Frank-Walter, you share with Henry love of country, you share with Henry love of freedom, you share many of his skills and his sensibilities—though not quite his accent. But more than anything, you two have worked on behalf of humankind to improve the human condition. And for that I thank you, I honor you, and congratulations on being the recipient of the Kissinger Prize.