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# **GERMANY: LOOKING BEYOND ITS BORDERS**

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**SPEAKER:**

**Frank-Walter Steinmeier**, German federal  
minister for foreign affairs

**MODERATOR:**

**Jan Techau**, director of Carnegie Europe

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**JAN TECHAU:** Welcome to Carnegie Europe. Dear ambassadors and dignitaries, dear representatives of the European institutions and NATO, dear members of the international press corps, colleagues, dear Bundesminister Steinmeier, it's fantastic to have you all here to talk today about one of the big issues on the European agenda. Apart from all of the stuff that comes to us from the outside and inside, of course Germany is always an issue to talk about and has become more of an issue to talk about over the last couple of years and it is, arguably, one of the hot issues of European geopolitics over the last 2,000 years and so we are only standing on the tip of a huge iceberg underneath us of history and tradition of discussion about the role of Germany.

I would like to start with a little bit of an anecdote, as they tell you to do, actually, and this is an anecdote about a person that plays a big role and used to play a big role in German foreign policy and has become a symbol both for good and for bad for many of German foreign policy and that person is Egon Bahr, whom some of you might know, and, of course, who is one of the historically most influential foreign policy advisors in German history and he worked with Willy Brandt at the time of Ostpolitik in the 1970s, of course, and one day Bauer was rushing out of the chancellery to his service car and said to the driver, okay, let's go, and the driver turns around and say, okay, but where to, and Bahr says, doesn't matter, they need me everywhere. That's an old anecdote I guess but I think it's important for us in two ways today because, first of all, it seems to illustrate where German foreign policy stands at the moment. Germany is needed everywhere. It is confident enough to accept that role, it is willing to rush to the scene but it is not always clear where it actually wants to go.

Secondly, this anecdote is important because it helps us understand how different the situation is from back then, especially in terms of confidence. Back then West Germany, a country of limited sovereignty clearly punched above its weight and was very much aware of the fact that it was writing history at the time and even those who were critical of Ostpolitik and didn't like it very much had no illusions about the fact that it was astronomical and super important. Today it's different. Today a fully sovereign reunited country, both multilaterally committed and much in demand is expected to play a role that's commensurate with its new size and its new geographical location in Europe as a united country but it does not always know what that means and how to do it but it is also a country, and this is where the confidence issue comes in here, that has the confidence to do the rarest of things, which is to question itself and this, ladies and gentlemen, what Frank-Walter Steinmeier has done over the last year or so.

Apart from Ukraine and Syria and Iran and ebola and, of course, a little bit of Europe crisis, he also did what no one else has really ever done before and that is to ask the world, as the Foreign Minister, what was wrong with the foreign policy of his own country publicly, with everybody invited to give his or her take. He invited analysts and academics and other statesmen to hand him the report card, essentially, on the foreign policy that he himself had helped to shape in one way or another over a decade.

And then he asked the German public to do the same thing. And then he took it all back home into the German Foreign Ministry to discuss it with his diplomats and this, when you look at it, is actually pretty much unheard of and I don't remember any other Foreign Minister having done such a thing ever and it requires confidence to invite the stones to be thrown on oneself and I think Minister Steinmeier deserves a lot of credit for that. Not only had he the guts to do so but he also actually continued to do so, including all of the numerous townhally things and discussions at universities and speeches and discussions during a time when his schedule was brimful with global crisis management and you all know how easy it would have been for him to just not go to these meetings, to delegate it to somebody and to silently let the process fall asleep, but he didn't do that and Minister Steinmeier deserves the international badge of honour for the fact that he did put all of us in his wonderful

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business consider the thing closest to heaven - he discussed strategy for a full year on taxpayers' money.

We at Carnegie Europe followed this process very closely. We have in parallel hosted a workshop in the German Foreign Ministry at the end of 2013 and some Carnegie from this office and from others were even invited to contribute to the essay series that was published and launched as part of this review process and we are very thankful for the invitations that we receive. And now, just as the rest of this town, we as Carnegie are very curious what came out of this process. What have we learnt? What have been the takeaways? Experts everywhere have been discussing this new German question, as some call it feverishly and every step that you have taken, Minister Steinmeier, and also Chancellor Merkel, of course, has been discussed and interpreted and dissected and you have been, as a result of this, commended and praised but you have also been accused of being too soft to exercise appeasement even and to be naïve.

You have even been personally compared to some very nasty historical figures which I know is something that you don't take very lightly which, by the way, I like that it bothers you still, that you're not that tough and you don't just let it drop off but that it matters to you and I think that is a sign that you care. In any case, today you are here to share with us what your takeaways are and for once in my life as a thinktanker it's no exaggeration when I say that you are exactly the right kind of person that we need to talk about the issue at hand. Minister Steinmeier, thank you very much for coming.

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER:** Lieber Jan Techau, the guests of Carnegie, ladies and gentlemen, thank you, first of all, for this very warm welcome. I'm really grateful for your kind invitation to Carnegie Europe, not only because I look forward to our discussion but also because I'm happy to do more in Brussels than just the usual Council meetings. You would be surprised. I may come to Brussels quite often but the only building I really know is named Justus Lipsius and that's a little bit like saying, yes, I have been to the pyramids but I only saw the parking lot.

When I come to Brussels as the German Foreign Minister there are two basic messages I bring. First, when I think about German foreign policy, I think European. German foreign policy must be European and, second, the other way around, when I think about Europe, I think foreign policy. I think about Europe in the world and let me, in the next 10, 15 minutes, a little bit explain both of these thoughts in turn.

Jan Techau already mentioned my review of German foreign policy. There are two reasons why I started this process now, around about 15 months now. Firstly, the world is changing fundamentally. The tectonic plates of international politics are shifting but, secondly, ladies and gentlemen, at the same time Germany's role in the world is changing. We are faced with big expectations and if you want to hear an example, here is one of them. One expert wrote to us that Germany must, and I quote him, build bridges between north and south, that Germany must europeanise Russia and that Germany must multi-lateralise the United States. Easier said than done, I'm afraid, but guess where the expert was from. Not from France or from Poland, for sure, but from India.

So, we face growing challenges and growing expectations and that's why, when I speak of German responsibility, I don't mean that Germany's searching for more responsibility, I think. We said we had it. Our review process started on a simple question and you quoted it: What is wrong with German foreign policy or, to be honest, the question was what, if anything, was wrong with German foreign policy? We worked through that in three phases. In phase one we asked the experts, academics as well as practitioners from Germany and abroad, including many European friends. In phase two we debated, indeed, with the German public. We tried to reach beyond the usual suspects of foreign

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policy because, let's be honest, those who deal with foreign affairs on a daily basis in Berlin and in Brussels do so in pretty exclusive circles. Our goal is and was to break that up. We're finding that Germany's responsibilities in the world is not something that elites can decide on; it has to be negotiated at the heart of the society.

That's why I personally, and the leadership of the Foreign Office in Germany, went out to listen and to explain. We held more than 60 events throughout Germany and across Europe and we tried new formats, a lot of them online but also in the form of townhall meetings or evening workshops which were very interesting because they were workshops where we simulated real life foreign policy decisions with normal people.

Phase three, finally, meant taking stock within our own organisation. All Foreign Office staff were called on to re-examine their daily routines. Some of them didn't quite believe it. The people at the top want to know what I really think? Yes, we did mean it. We wanted change and we then defined a whole range of measures that we are now going to put into practice. The results of our review printed in this wonderful lovely brochure and I will take the remaining 45 minutes to read it out to you. No, I won't. Anyone who hasn't enough of German foreign policy after tonight can pick one up by the door.

Just very briefly, the three main areas of our results were the following. The first is expectations. The review revealed a big drift. The world expects a lot of German foreign policy, some... and remember this example with the Indian expert, some of them too much. But if you ask the German public if they want their country to get more involved in the world, 60% of them say, no, thanks. That is the rift that German foreign policy has to overcome and it has a lot to do with improving, for instance, our communication about foreign policy. The second area is crisis and order. The current accumulation of international crisis from Ukraine to ISIS is perhaps not a coincidence. It is symptomatic of a world where these structures of international order are eroding but, as a globally connected society and an export-based economy, Germany, more than others, depends on a functioning rules-based order. That's why we, more than others, need to manage two things at once: improving, on the one side, our crisis resilience and strengthening, on the other side, the international order.

The third question concerns our policy instruments. Far too often people think foreign policy has only two options: either diplomatic chitchat or military intervention. Our review and our current political engagement proved the opposite, that the foreign policy toolbox is much broader and that we need to make use of the whole spectrum, the whole content of this toolbox. These three areas had a lot of debate and controversy but one thing was striking, across all controversies there was one message that everybody agreed on. German foreign policy only works in and through Europe. We saw that in all three areas. First the issue of crisis. If it is true that international crises are going to be the norm rather than the exception, then we need to strengthen Europe's resilience as a whole, especially with regard to our neighbourhood to the east and to the south. The more European our instruments of crisis reaction are, the more effective they will be; and that's not theory, it is tested every day in practice.

Take the Ukraine crisis. Our greatest strength in this crisis has been, and continues to be, our ability to act jointly. Our unified positions and joint declarations led by the higher representatives, our decisions about instruments for increasing political pressure taken by the FAK or the European Council or our negotiations in the Normandy format in close coordination with the EAS - all these steps rest on a European foundation.

Second, ladies and gentlemen, the issue of order. To us the European Union is the first and foremost train of reference for international order. The European Union is the world's most sophisticated

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example of regional order and as such we need to defend it and only as such we can bring our full weight to bear on the global order. In practice that means the United Nations. We should make our European voice heard in the United Nations and its organisations and we must get better at coordinating it. I'll take an example from a very different context. TTIP. If we do it right, then TTIP will not just be a free trade agreement but a major chance for Europe and the United States to set the tone for the future globalisation, to set economic and social standards for an interconnected world.

And, finally, what I call the European reflex. To me that's a key result of the review process. Germany foreign policy needs to strengthen its European reflex on a very practical everyday level. I'm talking about, what we are calling in Germany in the Foreign Ministry, *Ministervorlagen Querschnittsreferenzen Staatssekretärsrunden*. I know this sounds like the deep quagmire of German bureaucracy but it's exactly the bread and butter business where the European reflex must operate. So much about the review process. It confirmed to me once more, when I think about foreign policy, I think about Europe.

But now let me turn it around. When I think about Europe, I think about foreign policy. That seems strange but there is a truth in it. Last year, as a Foreign Minister, I travelled 385, 000 kilometres. That is the exact distance from here to the moon. So, one day when I'm out of this job, maybe I qualify as an astronaut. Anyway, in all my travels as Foreign Minister, I get to feel one real privilege. I get to look at Europe through the eyes of the world and that's a remarkable experience. Last year, for instance, I went to Angola, early in the year, I think around about April, and I met young people there that told me, we want to build a society where education is for everyone, not only for a just few at the top. And when they said that, they said, just like you in Europe.

Only some weeks ago I met students in Tunis who said, we want to build a society where we can say what we want and live like we want and when they said that, they said, Europe. They even said, *balad Euroba*, meaning the country Europe. That means Europe looks far more attractive from the outside than it often feels from the inside in. People inside Europe have come to think of Europe in numbers, like deficits, financial rescues, bond markets. People outside Europe see Europe as a model of society, a society where freedom and solidarity go together. I think we need to find back to that perspective. We need to strengthen the global perspective in European politics because that perspective gives us the strongest argument for a unified Europe. If we want the European model to matter in the world, then we have to stick together. If the 28 states in Europe want to have a weight in the world, then only as one.

But, let's be honest, our instruments and our decision-making processes are far away from that. As a banking union, as a capital markets union, as an economic union Europe has made progress in recent years but not enough as a forum in security. So, we need to add to our toolbox. We need to improve our processes. Above all, we need to align our perspectives on the responsibility we have in this world. For all that the current process leading to a new European foreign and security policy strategy is a perfect opportunity from my point of view. Federica Mogherini saw that from day one and her leadership has my full support. What are the areas we need to work on? You saw that Jean-Claude Juncker, for instance, just renewed the idea of a European army, not for tomorrow but as a vision. Yes, we should exploit the full potential for integration that the responsibility gives us but, to be honest, a vision is not enough. We need step by step progress, so let's improve the state of our institutions as they are now in the fields of common security and defence. Let's improve the planning and the conduct of our missions and operations. For example, by creating a permanent civilian military planning and conduct capability in Brussels.

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However, what I said about our general review also holds on the European level. Foreign and security policy is a lot more than the military aspect. It's a diplomatic toolbox, again. It's crisis prevention, mediation, development and economic cooperation, financial instruments and so on. Making the toolbox bigger and making it better is what the new strategy should do. In short, making the comprehensive approach work. The external action service has already done a lot. Take the early warning system, take the new crisis management structures or take the Algiers talks in Mali where the EAS brings in its expertise in mediation and, most importantly, we are about to reset our neighbourhood policy, making it less bureaucratic, more flexible, more tailored to our neighbours' interest. In short, let's make our neighbourhood policy more political.

And, finally, let me say a word about the Foreign Affairs Council. It should be the place where we develop one common view of our joint responsibility rather than just deliver individual statements of national interest. At the Council the game shouldn't be taking on 27, it should be 28 taking on the world. Responsibility is a key word in all of this and it's a long way on both sides. Yes, national foreign policy, also German foreign policy, must not only think European but be willing to act European. That can only happen when on the European level we are able and willing not just to talk and coordinate but to really define and carry the European responsibility in the world. With that in mind we should think about the issues that are making headlines these days. I see many journalists here in the room and I know what they might ask. Minister, if you were focussing on Europe's foreign policy, does that mean that Europe's internal affairs are less important? Of course not. But my point is let's not think one without the other. Let's remember that foreign policy begins at home. Europe can only be strong on the outside if the inside architecture is solid. The European model of freedom and solidarity can only stand out in the world if it is alive inside. Let's keep that in mind in our current debates.

To take one example, I cannot imagine what the values, the replication and the strength of European foreign policy would come to if Great Britain weren't part of it. And also I cannot imagine what would happen to our outside credibility and outside effectiveness if Greece left the euro. And with these two thoughts I hope we are left with enough things to discuss. Thank you very much.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much, Minister Steinmeier, for running us through the review process but also giving us a couple of bigger thoughts on the future of Europe. I would like to ask a couple of questions myself and maybe open it up to the audience but let me first say that Minister Steinmeier has decided that he will perhaps answer a few questions in English and others in German, depending on the question itself and we have an executive interpretation over here for that purpose.

Let me start with a very basic question. You ran us through that document and you gave us the three fields of change where you think they are most needed and as a conclusion of the debate. Are you now happy with the level of ambition that comes out of that document? Is it the right size? Is it the right size for this Germany that is now in such big demand?

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER [Translation by interpreter]:** Well, two dimensions come into play here, the internal dimension but also an external dimension. As far as the internal dimension is concerned, I must say that I am very satisfied indeed. The process that was started last year has brought about change, change in my history at home in the Foreign Office and it is crucial, in light of the fact that cultures are changing, transborder issues come into play, so with a view of these challenges, I must say this is crucial indeed.

As far as the external dimension is concerned, well, this is a more difficult question to answer. Let me get back to what I just mentioned in my speech pertaining to the survey that was conducted by a

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foundation and, according to the results of the survey, 70% of Germans are of the opinion that Germany should not engage and shoulder more responsibility. This maybe has historical reasons but may also very well be a reflex to the whole plethora and multitude of crises that people see at home when they watch TV in the evening. They see images that are shocking and worrying.

And I believe this is the biggest challenge and task for practitioners in the field of foreign policy. It is their task to explain to people. Unlike 20 or 30 years ago, the crises and challenges are not far away anymore. They have repercussions at home, here in Europe, and we also must acknowledge the fact that we in Germany, with the ties and networks that we have, we don't live on an island or in isolation.

So, we have to explain that the national and natural reflex to refrain and exclude ourselves from things and will protect us from evil and bad things happening, no, indeed, the other way around; if we don't get involved and we don't get engaged, well, the security situation in Europe will change for the worst and it will deteriorate.

And this just to say that our task is not over. We need to communicate with the public and we need to explain our foreign policy. The process is not finished with the completion of this review process. We have to continue to do that with the instruments that we used in the past year.

**JAN TECHAU:** Minister, you keep on stressing the overwhelming majority of Germans being kind of reluctant, not eager to embrace more responsibility for Germany. Does that mean that the leadership that Germany has exercised in the last couple of years, particularly also on the Ukrainian crisis, and where it has exposed itself in ways that we haven't seen before, that all of this leadership that you're also conducting, and the Chancellor, that this is based on thin ice?

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER [Translation by interpreter]:** Well, it is a big task and a challenge, indeed. Someone once said if I were to have to bridge the divide between those two factions, 30% of Germans in favour of shouldering more responsibility, 70% of Germans against, looking at this very big divide, this big, big gap, an engineer told me I wouldn't build a bridge but, in fact, we cannot choose the things that happen. The world has changed dramatically. We're confronted with a multitude, a plethora of crises and we as policy practitioners have to acknowledge and accept the fact that crises will become the norm, a normal situation. So, yes, we do need leadership and we also need to convince people and use our convincing power.

**JAN TECHAU:** When we are convincing people in Germany to do so, to do more has traditionally been to embed it in the European narrative and you have done that in your speech several times. German foreign policy must be a European exercise, as you said. This comes as a great message to the Brussels audience, obviously, but let me also ask a question here because here in Brussels and then the wider European circles also, outside of Brussels, have in the main a great feeling also that Germany has actually gotten quite happy with the situation of being the big boy in the room that can lead and that can get away with stuff that in the past it didn't dare get in the way with, that it wasn't so much focussed on the institutional approach but much more on the intergovernmental approach and wasn't just as much of a solidarity player in Europe as it used to be in the past. What would be your comment on this?

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER [Translation by interpreter]:** Some time ago I read something by a journalist who talked about a German moment in European politics and I commented on this statement and I said in Germany we shouldn't be happy about this comment. We only are able to exploit our German opportunities if this turns into a European moment.

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A lot of scepticism comes from the acknowledgement that 28 member states are now doing things all at the same time or simultaneously, especially when it comes to the realm of negotiation. The example of Ukraine is used when it comes to this and questions are raised whether this is still European, what we're doing. We are confronted with scepticism when it comes to the Normandy format. People ask us does this suffice, is it enough or shouldn't the format or the setting of negotiations be expanded? There are different views on this. I can only say that I have tried to do all that is possible in the service of European efforts. I inform the higher representative and the respective presidency on my talks and on my negotiations so that the impression does not even arise that Germany would go it alone.

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER [Translation by interpreter]:** Of course, there will be situations where it is necessary for individual actors to act on behalf of the overall European Union. As I look at some of our engagements that take place in Africa, some member states of the European Union are called more into action but they can always rely, of course, on the EU realm and on the EU level, be it, for instance, when it comes to admissions and such.

I just want to say that not always all 28 member states work in cooperation. We always see individual member states acting on behalf of the European Union interests.

**JAN TECHAU:** I have one more question from my side and I would like to accept two or three questions from the audience, and perhaps more, if time allows. One of the fields of activity where Germany has traditionally been quite active, and where you personally have been quite active, was the relationship with Russia and what we used to call modernisation partnership. That was a German idea that became a European idea and even European policy. And it seems today that this was not a success but it might have been. And that the idea of modernisation on the other side of the partnership wasn't just quite the same as the one we had. And my question here now is how can you find the right balance between toughness that is not always popular at home and an openness that is equally not always popular with some of the harshest critics of the diplomatic? What's the right approach in this failed modernisation partnership? How can we just turn it into a success in the long term and looking beyond the immediate crisis management?

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER [Translation by interpreter]:** Russia is an example where the modernisation partnership was not successful. There are more recent cases, after the Arab Spring, during also a fostered modernisation...

Europe, fostered modernisation, democratic processes in these countries, or helped to keep the modernisation process alive or make advances in the process, so successes have been moderate. We need to continue to support Tunisia in its efforts. As far as Russia is concerned, you're right, and we shouldn't be happy. We shouldn't rejoice that the modernisation partnership I helped bring about, develop in Germany my first term in office, which also was then, of course, modelled after, on the European level, we shouldn't be happy and rejoice that the modernisation partnership did not work the way we hoped for.

Today we're faced with a situation where it becomes difficult to see if we will have the opportunity again in future. Now we're entering or we are currently in a phase in the Ukrainian conflict where we have to make sure that violence doesn't escalate again. And we need to make sure that the military situation is calming down in order to set the preconditions necessary to bring about a political process which was also stipulated in the Minsk agreements.

We shouldn't fool ourselves; the process indeed will be very long. If we're lucky, if we manage to succeed in calming down the military situation and if we manage to bring about a political process, but

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I don't exaggerate when I say that it could take years or decades or even longer for a political solution to come about.

And as regards our relations to Russia a lot, of course, depends on whether Russia will be steering or disturbing the political processes that I just talked about. The question will be whether we will be able to restore trust that has been shattered and if we can bring about improvements in relations with Russia.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. I would like to open it to the audience. I've had two fingers already and there is a third one. I would like to collect these three, if possible. I'd like to start with Marc Pierini over here in the first row and then to Roland Freudenstein and then a person who had their arm up, somewhere in the middle on the right hand side. Please Marc.

**MARC PIERINI:** Minister, one specific question on Turkey. Turkey used to be wavering European and based in Ankara and something else. You can see that through NATO missile defence. You can see that on the Islamic state, you can see that through the rolling back of the state of the rule of law and yet Turkey is still integrated to the EU through the customs union and is still holding democratic elections. My question is; are you worried about that?

**JAN TECHAU:** The next one is Roland.

**ROLAND FREUDENSTEIN:** Thanks very much, Jan. I'm Roland Freudenstein from the Wilfried Martens Centre, which is a think tank of the European Peoples' Party and, Minister, I wonder what is wrong with calling a spade a spade? You were in the media recently reportedly criticising NATO Supreme Allied Commander Philip Breedlove for having allegedly exaggerated figures of Russia's involvement in Ukraine, so maybe you can help me to understand what is wrong with naming the facts? And the other question, what are we doing, what good are we doing to Ukraine, to Russia, to ourselves by criticising people who are publicly repeating what they have told the foreign ministers and the governments of NATO member states exactly the same message? So I would like to know what is wrong with that. All right, let me explain in more detail. I don't want to use much time but I understand that there was a conflict of opinion between you and General Breedlove about him having reported figures of Russian direct military intervention in Ukraine. If that was completely invented then I withdraw my question, but I think there was a difference. So the question is what is wrong with that?

**JAN TECHAU:** I think we got that one. Yes please.

**GEORGI GOTEV:** Georgi Gotev from Euractiv. Minister, it looks like the United States, there is almost a bipartisan agreement that sending lethal weapons to Ukraine is an option. Is it a good idea today and if not, if the situation deteriorates further, will it be a good idea tomorrow?

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you. Minister Steinmeier, this is why I took Marc Pierini first because I wanted to start with the Turkey question rather than the Ukraine question.

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER [Translation by interpreter]:** To answer the question on Turkey, first we had long discussions in the past on the question pertaining to how do we deal with ISIS. I believe that it is not conducive to actually continue to debate who in the past was not taking that and not resolute enough stance against ISIS or not. You all know the debates and you all know who was blamed. It's crucial now that things have changed in the past months. I tried to forge an anti-ISIS alliance and I believe that over the course of the debates and now that we have received more

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and more information on ISIS we, including Turkey, we all see the danger and the threat posed by ISIS by way of its fundamentalism, by way of its medieval style, barbaric acts and these dangers are seen by all of us and Turkey as well.

I can only hope that Turkey will make a contribution and that also the expectations on the Turkish side to open further chapters, as far as the accession process is concerned that Turkey will continue on the path towards modernisation.

With regards to the second question pertaining to the figures in Ukraine conflict, we're not talking about opinions here, we're talking about facts. The facts are an issue here. We asked twice NATO, the reason being that our sources on the ground, US OCE have provided us with rather different figures than the figures we have received from NATO and of course this gave us, well, reason for asking how these diverging figures came about ten days after the Minsk agreement was signed. We have the impression and the impression was confirmed by OCE figures that violence has and violent acts have decreased. However, the figures we received by Breedlove have given reason to believe that violence has increased significantly.

And as regards your question pertaining to the attitudes in the United States, I have just returned from my visit to the United States on Saturday. I spent three days in America and held intense talks on the one hand side with the administration but also a very intensive debate on The Hill with Senators of various political parties.

And as far as the attitudes in the US you mentioned, you also have to take them with a grain of salt. I met with Republicans and Democrats alike but the attitudes that you described are not the attitude of the positions held by the national government. And Secretary of State Kerry said in his press conference that the position of the government is as follows: The government wants to continue to monitor the process after the Minsk agreements and see whether there is progress. But at present there is no decision to supply these weapons.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you. I have a final question before you've got to run and that is a question that has to do with a year in which Europe entered into German federal politics. You have been involved at the state level for a long time but in 1998 when Chancellor Schroder got into office you entered the federal state level in foreign policy and politics in general. In that year between 80 and 100 million people were born on planet earth. They are now 16-17 years old which means that they can start to vote and actively start to think about the prospects of their lives I guess. What kind of leadership can Germany offer those 80-100 million people in various parts of the world?

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER [Translation by interpreter]:** I am not in a position to speak for the millions of young people of our globe and various countries and continents. As far as Germany is concerned, not enough children are being born into our country. Secondly, looking at our country, one also must bear in mind that we have initiated a process of reforms shortly after 1998. I can say that the ground is prepared for a youth, a young generation which has more opportunities than previous generations.

And as regards to foreign policy issues, I would like to protect the young people from an erroneous presumption in light of a world that is not without dangerous risks. It often seems that the world was easier in former times. We must protect our youth from believing that. Of course the risks and the threats and the challenges are different challenges that we need to deal with today but it is a delusion to think that the world was more secure or better or easier previously.

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**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you, Minister Steinmeier. I have between 80 and 100 million questions left but unfortunately we've only got 80 seconds before you've got to go. Thank you very much for coming over here, for making this one of the pit stops in your review of 2014 process and for giving us your time. I hope that we can invite you back and discuss some of the tougher issues also that are lined up for us, I guess, in the future. But in the meantime travel safely wherever you're travelling; enjoy the Belgian chocolates that we got for you of course as a thank you...

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER:** I am staying here in Brussels for dealing with Iran.

**JAN TECHAU:** All right, wonderful. I guess we can't match that one so I hope you enjoy that one as well. Thank you very much for coming.