

A Broad Consensus on Foreign Policy Is Necessary

Common Position of CDU und CSU on Iraq

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Germany faces a disastrous record after four years of red-green policies by its federal government: the German economy is stagnating, the number of the unemployed persons is rising, the possibilities of the budgets on the federal, the state, and the municipal level become ever smaller despite high taxes and public fees, the social security systems are increasingly distressed, the German Federal Armed Forces, the *Bundeswehr*, are on the verge of breaking down by excessive defence budget cuts and are on the edge of their capacity to fulfil their missions. Germany runs the risk of no longer be able to meet its international obligations.

The German Federal Government sees hardly any way out of this dramatic situation. In view of its obvious negative record it has no more reliable argument, which could justify a re-election for further four years of government. The Federal Chancellor seizes now like a drowning man to the proverbially last straw and brings up for discussion in the election campaign a German contribution to a military campaign against Iraq. Such a contribution was, however, not demanded by anybody. Schroeder plays with the fears of the German people for transparent tactical reasons ahead of the elections.

The position of CDU and CSU is clear:

The priority aim of international politics must be to make Iraq fulfil the resolutions of the UN-Security Council by political means and above all to let return the UN-arms inspectors without any restrictions to Iraq again. The United Nations are now in charge of those next steps. This is the position that Schroeder should represent, instead of reducing the pressure on the Iraqi dictator by tactical manoeuvres before the elections. It is positive for our country that we have achieved a broad consensus among the political parties on the guidelines on foreign policy during the last years. That should remain so. This broad consensus was achieved by the reasonable and responsible attitude of CDU and CSU in the German parliament.

We want by the way a stronger European foreign and security policy, because we can genuinely influence the course of current international affairs only as Europeans together and no longer as individual nation states. Therefore it would be the duty of the German government now to co-operate constructively with our European partners in all important foreign policy issues to achieve a common position instead of taking unilateral decisions ahead of consultations.

Further international missions of the *Bundeswehr* are not on the agenda. It has by the way already contributed 10,000 soldiers to international missions of the UN ranging from Afghanistan to the Balkans, and are already on demand up to their capacity limits.