
Interview: Col. Jürgen Hübschen

No Future for Europe or America Without Cooperation Between Them

EIR Editor Nancy Spannaus interviewed Col. Jürgen Hübschen (ret.) on March 21, while he was in the United States for meetings, including discussions with EIR (see transcript, above). He served as military attaché at the German Embassy in Baghdad, worked for many years for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and has long-term experience working alongside his NATO colleagues from the United States who were based in Germany.

EIR: Colonel, I'd like to ask you questions in two areas: One has to do with relations between the United States and Europe, in which the second Bush Administration has indicated that they are going to turn over a new leaf; that the charm offensive is on; and that they actually realized that they needed Europe in order to carry out their objectives. And you, as a 40-year veteran of the military, have had a great deal of cooperation with the United States. I'd like to get your reflections on what is actually going on, and what you think about it.

Hübschen: That's a very nice question. First of all, when you ask me, "What's going on?" that *is* the question. What is really going on in America? And first of all, I have a personal—a very personal—position. As you said, working with American friends for decades, and then coming into a country of friends, and they take your fingerprints and they take your picture at the airport, that gives you a feeling of being some kind of criminal, or something like that. And I was close to turning my neck and going back! Because it is something basically you cannot stand, especially if you are a retired officer, and standing for law and order for your whole life.

And that is my very personal impression.

EIR: You're referring to when you recently came into the United States for this visit. Did they know your status, when they did this?

Hübschen: I don't know if they knew or not. But they did the same with the family in front of me, with three little children, and they took even the fingerprints of the lady. So, it was more than strange to me. And this is also not the behavior of a free country, representing the whole Western world.

EIR: Do you see such changes in relations with Americans in Germany itself also?

Hübschen: There's an overall, let me call it a kind of "strange" feeling. The people are not sure any more what's going on with America. America was always a country the Germans were looking at, dreaming about a little bit. And for the kids, a scholarship in America, that was *the* scholarship.

That's over. Five years ago, or let's say six years ago, they lined up for scholarships, and you had to make the decision, who is allowed to go. And now, it's not urgent any more for them. They are looking for scholarships now in South America, or somewhere in Europe, or they are even going into the Asian region. America is not on top of the list, as it was!

And that's just bad: Because, first of all, the Germans have to be very, very grateful to America, because America made us what we are now. And then, we worked together for more than 50 years, such close friends! Not because we *had* to cooperate—we *wanted* to cooperate. And now, there is this big change.

And the critical point is, that, I think in Germany the people are not sure any more, if the "real" America [still exists]. They only see this "new America," or this "other America," or however you call it; and they think, "Okay! That's it!" And when Bush got re-elected, it became worse.

EIR: Despite the fact that the official position was, we're going to be friends, now.

Hübschen: Right! Right! And everybody considers the previous attitude a mistake. You can make a mistake. Everybody's making mistakes every day. So, my friends said, "Okay! For the first four-year period, they were just wrong." Or that there was some kind of cheating, because that's also possible, you know. By TV and radio, and whatever!

EIR: Well, not to mention the Supreme Court.

Hübschen: Right, yes. But then, when Bush got re-elected—nobody was expecting that.

EIR: And I imagine, Colonel, that your friends are not wild-eyed left-wing radicals.

Hübschen: No, not at all! Not at all! We are patriots, in the good meaning of the word.

By the way, to my opinion, that does not mean using the Patriot Act. That's a different story, too. . . .

EIR: To get back to U.S.-European relations: What is your view of what kind of cooperation *should* be going on? Obviously, the German government and a lot of Europe opposed the war. We, at *EIR*, obviously believe this was an illegal war, and so forth. But, that having been done, and putting aside for the moment, the question of holding people responsible for that with potential criminal proceedings, how would you see what the German patriots—in the military, in the government, such as yourself—would be looking to do with the United States?

Hübschen: I think it's very difficult, because the official contacts between the two countries are made by the officials. And my impression is, that they are on a minimum level—it is just what has to be done, not to be impolite.

And what we have to do is, not keep going and complaining about the past. As you said, there were a lot of mistakes. The war was illegal—no doubt about that. But we should look forward, how we can build the future. And how could we reconstruct, so to speak, our relationship and our friendship. And that can only be done, I think, by non-governmental or governmental organizations *besides* the government, between people working for some organizations, that they show up in America, and the Americans show up in Europe.

We have to establish, let's call it, "parallel links" between the countries, so that we still have a chain of information, we can discuss how we can create a better atmosphere, and also how we can promote things in the economic sector (which I'm not an expert in).

EIR: So you're really looking at the shifts happening, not so much from government policy—partly because of who the government here is right now, I suppose—but in terms of cultural exchange or change.

Hübschen: Yes. I think it's everything. We have to come back to the point that it is nothing special that the American President is visiting Germany and the other way around. I can barely remember when our Chancellor was here in America the last time. I don't know.

But I have never seen a visit of an American President like the last visit.

You know, I'm almost 60 years old. I saw Presidents come to Germany, like John F. Kennedy; I saw Johnson; I saw Nixon; I saw Clinton; I saw the father of the acting President. I have seen them all! And it was always kind of a festival in Germany, when the American President came in—especially Kennedy, because he was a—

EIR: A show-man, in a certain kind of way. And it was a time of crisis, too.

Hübschen: Yes, but also everybody was looking at him as being tough, you know. He represented somehow a new generation, and it was just great! Also for us. Because, when he came to Germany—it was '61; I was 16 years old, and he was

a symbol for the American dream, definitely.

But now, there's a President coming in, and they *depopulate* an area! When he came to this Mainz area, *nobody* was there! Nobody went on the street—

EIR: Because they weren't permitted to?

Hübschen: They were not permitted. It was a totally restricted zone. And I know, from one of my sons who is in the TV business, that cameramen from his TV station, they stood there, they had an accreditation to do it, and they were asked by American security people to move. And they said, "Why should we move? We want to take pictures of the American President." It was just in front of this Gutenberg Museum, the cultural part of the visit. And so, they said, "You're not supposed to stay here. And if you don't leave, we'll cut your cables." A clear-cut threat!

At the Opel factory, they stopped the production line—totally.

EIR: Because people couldn't get to work, I gather.

Hübschen: No, in advance! They said: "Okay, we stop it, and you have to show up on Saturday and then run your normal shift." Because they didn't like having the people there. And it was so complicated to reach the factory, as you said.

Absolutely strange. And this was the visit of the leader of the biggest friend Germany has. How can that happen?

And then, the next day, or it was even the same day, President Bush flew to Slovakia, and he was in the middle of the crowd. That inflamed me, because, it was possible, demonstratively possible, to be inside the crowd, the fans, obviously without any risk, and yet in my country, they had to depopulate the area, obviously because from the American point of view, it was a risk to be with Germans.

EIR: You're not allowed to disagree with the President of the United States.

Hübschen: I know that they broke into one apartment of a lady. She had a protest banner in her window—and she was not even in the apartment. And the German police broke in and took it off.

EIR: Quite an example of democracy, at the hands of the United States!

Hübschen: The German police, afterwards, got into trouble, because they were not supposed to do it. It was just a misunderstanding on the part of one policeman, that we shouldn't do anything which upsets the visitors. Very strange. That's not democracy. . . .

EIR: It's our intention, of course, to get the American leadership changed, in such a way that that will make a difference in a very rapid way. And we hope to encourage people in Germany, that there is another America, for sure.

Hübschen: There is no future, if I may add that: There is no future for Europe, without America. And there is no future for America, without Europe.

EIR: You know, given that you say that, I want to address something which is a populist line that goes all around the United States: that the foundation of the European Union is—in the eyes of a whole lot of wild fundamentalists—the “Antichrist.” And the EU is established in order to try to destroy the United States, and this is what is “really going on” behind what’s happening in Europe right now.

Hübschen: I don’t agree on that. But what the Europeans are trying is, to become an ally on the same level with the big brother on the other side of the ocean. That’s what they do, and that is also something the Americans were asking for, all the time. They said, “You have to take your responsibility. We have to share the burden.” “Europe”: That means Norway, Spain, Germany, France, Great Britain—which is not so easy, compared with America, which includes Texas, and Virginia, and Alaska, and so on—that is not the same. Because, ultimately, you can kind of give orders, to your own states.

But, in the European Community, you can’t give any orders, you have to find some kind of consensus. And so, sometimes the result is not satisfying. But, I think they have already achieved a lot.

EIR: So, you think actually among the majority of the European population, they still do have not only a desire, but an understanding that they have to find a United States they can cooperate with, as opposed to simply what you might call “*Schadenfreude*” for the situation in the United States?

Hübschen: No, no, definitely not. Where we have to put our effort, is really to make clear that “America” is not the same as the acting government! We made the same mistake with Iraq: Iraq and Saddam Hussein, we didn’t keep them separate. Saddam Hussein was not Iraq. Iraq, that is the people, 25 million people with their dreams and their hopes—as it is in America: *America is not Bush and the neo-cons.*

EIR: So, you got us to Iraq. Let’s do a little bit there. . . . What you see as the possibility of getting out of this quagmire, as someone who has lived in Iraq for a number of years, and knows the culture?

Hübschen: The people in Iraq—you can say, all the Arabs—are very proud. And dignity and honor, these kind of values, they are very, very important to these people. So, if they have the feeling that there is somebody who is dominating them, it is totally unacceptable.

And they got this feeling. The American troops came in, and most of the people I spoke to said, they were welcomed as liberators.

EIR: You still speak to people in Iraq?

Hübschen: Yes. Definitely, they were welcomed as liberators. And now, they are occupiers.

And so, it is urgent to make it very clear that we have, call it now, the American-led multinational forces on the one side, and the independent Iraqi government on the other side. Because they had the election, and they will have their Cabinet sooner or later—and it shouldn’t bother us too much that they opened the Assembly and still don’t have a Cabinet. It takes time, it’s not that easy. There are too many interests. We should support that, very, very strongly. And that means, keep it separate.

We have this so-called Green Zone, and in the Green Zone, we have all these installations situated. There is the so-called American Embassy. I call it “so-called,” because with 3,000 people, it can’t be an “embassy.” And you also have the Iraqi government, the interim government, established there. So, it’s very difficult for the people to see, who is really ruling the country. They are talking about the “brown-eyed Iraqi” and the “blue-eyed Iraqi”: The “blue-eyed Iraqi” is the American. And up to now, it was that way, that you saw first the blue-eyed Iraqi, and next to him, the brown-eyed Iraqi, and everybody was only talking to the Iraqi with blue eyes. And if we turn that around now, that the brown-eyed Iraqi is in front, and behind is the blue-eyed Iraqi, that doesn’t help. That doesn’t help—because, the people see, he’s still sitting behind him, and he’s telling him what he has to say. So, we have to keep that separate.

And that means, different infrastructure. And we have to abandon all these symbols of dictatorship and tyranny, like Abu Ghraib, for example. Remove the prisoners from Abu Ghraib, and blow it up. So that the people in Iraq realize, “Oh, something is changing!” Remove all the Texas barriers and road blocks, even if it implements for a short period of time an additional risk. But it gives the people the impression that a new time has really started. “We can move around for business, as well as for visiting our relatives.”

Give up the checkpoints! We don’t have checkpoints in Germany. You don’t have checkpoints in America. And if Iraq is now a free country, why have them?

That is the one aspect. The other aspect is the American troops in the country. And as a old soldier, I feel, with these American troops, I have so many American comrades—and for me there was never a difference, and for *all* the German officers, there’s no difference whether the one next to you is an American officer or a German officer, or even Turkish or Danish! It’s all NATO, with one mission! No problem. And we have to keep that. That’s very, very important.

But back to Iraq: The American soldiers *can’t win this war, in the way they have to fight it.* One big group is too young, and the other group is not trained at all, the National Guard, the Army Reserve. That’s not fair, to send this kind of troop for a one-year mission to Iraq. They didn’t sign up for that, they definitely did not. And so, that harms their morale



President John F. Kennedy's visit to Berlin in 1961 drew a tremendously warm response from the German population—in stark contrast to Bush's visit this year. On the right, Bush is with Chancellor Schröder at the welcoming ceremony. The public was kept at a distance.

and also their ability to fight this kind of war.

So, my idea is, take the American soldiers, or the multinational forces, to the borders, and protect Iraq from the outer limits, so that no further terrorists can enter the country. That is the one advantage. And, the other advantage is, that the Iraqi people don't see them, every day, everywhere.

EIR: Running their lives, yes.

Hübschen: Right. And I think that is the way to do it.

And for the reconstruction, the rebuilding of the country, I think it is an idea, to create somehow a kind of task force, where different countries of the world take sponsorship for Iraq. For example, the Germans did a lot of infrastructure in the '80s in Iraq. The famous Haifa Street everybody's talking about—I think today in the *New York Times* there's a report about Haifa Street—it was totally constructed by the Germans. So, the Germans could be approached to take care for rebuilding, for example, the railroad system, which was also built by German companies.

EIR: Here, we have to take care of Dick Cheney to do this, because, of course, as I recall, the Japanese for example came in to do things on the electric system, and Halliburton wouldn't let them.

Hübschen: Right, and that has to be stopped. That is the same as the oil industry: There are so many Iraqi engineers, they can rebuild their own industry. The problem is the spare parts—those can be provided, easily, from all of our countries. I think that is a way. . . .

I see a chance to do it, through the Arab League. And the

leading country in the Arab League, is Egypt. And as far I know, your organization has perfect contacts to the Egyptian government. And that might be an approach. Talk to the Egyptians; the Egyptians are bringing it to the Arab League; the Arab League is bringing it to the Iraqi government, and the Iraqi government puts it into a formal request. And if we agree, and we have a task force, then there should be an office on a permanent basis in Iraq, and we should make it clear, every day, that we are there to support and not to dominate any more.

EIR: The Germans had people in position with the UN associations for Iraq on food and aid before Saddam Hussein was toppled—I think Hans Sponeck was one of them. And I was wondering if you're familiar with these people, and if you have any reading, of your own or from them, on the actual situation with civilians that occurred both over the long-term sanctions regime, or since that time?

Hübschen: Sponeck resigned from the UN; he gave up, because he said, the sanctions committee is an instrument of imperialism. The Iraqi nation was destroyed by military actions on the one hand, but even more, by the sanctions. Because the things they needed haven't been provided, except food, and a little bit of medicine—but not the whole medical sector. I know from Iraqi doctors, that *hundreds* of Iraqis died, because the medical equipment wasn't available. For example, if you have problems with your kidneys, and you need dialysis, they couldn't do it; they couldn't treat cancer patients in a proper way, because they didn't have the chemical ingredients, because the Americans put it in the category

of “dual-use.” And then, *thousands* of kids died in Iraq.

EIR: Did you actually observe this, while you were living there, in '86-'89?

Hübschen: No, in those days, not at all. Not at all! Iraq was on the *top* of the Arab countries. The sheikhs from Saudi Arabia, they flew for medical treatment to Baghdad. Then, they were really on top. They were also on top concerning equality in treating women. In Saudi Arabia, you are not allowed to have a driver's license as a woman, even today. In Iraq, women occupied key positions: 60% of the students at the university had been girls!

It was really totally different. And now, the situation is, as far as I know, that about 60% of the people still rely on state food programs, and about the same amount of people are jobless. You probably might not have an idea, how many people under a dictatorship are working in jobs directly related to the ruling system, that was close to 70%. Incredible.

EIR: I guess you saw that in East Germany, too.

Hübschen: Yes, definitely.

And so, when they decided to disband the armed forces, the border guards, the police, and kicked out all Ba'ath Party members, that was the *end* of Iraq.

EIR: Right, because no one had a job.

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My last question is something that is a little out of place, but you made the point in private discussion here, that the kind of cooperation we need *must* also include Russia. And I wonder if you want to say a few words about that.

Hübschen: Yes, definitely.

I worked for five years for the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] in Vienna, and I monitored on behalf of the OSCE a treaty, or an agreement, between Russia and Latvia. And so, in those five years, I got some ideas about the Russians.

Russia is facing a very tough time, for the time being, because it has the feeling of being pushed back, for more than 12 years now, which represents a real high risk to everybody. Look at the map. Just look at the map: Where Russia is; how large Russia is.

EIR: And how many nuclear weapons Russia has.

Hübschen: Yes, and that's a point: Russia is the only country which is still able to destroy the United States—and the other way around. The principle of Mutual Assured Destruction is still valid. It's still valid.

And so, if you want to implement a new world order, you have to think about Russia, because it is a really important part of it. And see security in a wider way: Security, that means economics; that means social aspects; that means cultural aspects; and military aspects. And all of that, that's security policy. And that's what you need to establish a system which leads our world in the future. And mandatory are: America, Europe, and—I know that Russia is part of Europe, but it has to be mentioned in addition, because it is so big.

EIR: Right, and it is, in a sense, a bridge to Asia.

Hübschen: It is.

EIR: As you were speaking, I was thinking back to the time of Clinton, when, the one thing he did that totally freaked out the British, was saying that he was putting aside the special relationship with Britain, and his real friend was Helmut Kohl, and the German-American relation. But, in a way, he saw the relationship with Germany as a bridge to reestablishing the United States' partnership with Russia.

Hübschen: Which is possible. Definitely possible.

EIR: Which is a historical potential, because it happened from the very time of the founding of the United States. But also, absolutely essential for bringing the world out of the kind of economic and strategic crisis that's it's fallen into now.

Hübschen: Yes, we talked about the atomic weapons in Russia. But, we also should keep in mind what kind of resources are in Russia.

EIR: And that would take us to a whole other discussion. So, I'll thank you right now, for this time.

Hübschen: It was a pleasure; thank you.