

Day of German Unity Special

Realizing strength in global cooperation

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“Unity” is a particularly significant word in these difficult times. Facing a global health crisis, 2020 has shown how crucial it is to stand together and support one another — as

individuals, as communities, but also as nations — now more than ever.

For Germany, 2020 provides two major occasions to reflect upon the meaning of unity beyond the context of the global pandemic: 75 years ago, the signatories of the U.N. Charter were determined “to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.” And 30 years ago, with German reunification on Oct. 3, the Cold War came to an end in 1990. Looking back on three decades of unity, the German people still cherish the courage of the peaceful protesters that took down the Berlin Wall. We are also greatly indebted to the resolution and persistence of former political leaders that made the Two-Plus-Four Agreement possible — without it, there would be no unified Germany today.

As we have learned since, national borders do not define a single country’s well-being, nor can they stop a pandemic from spreading. Diverse challenges that arise globally, like global health care, climate



Heiko Mass, German foreign minister, at a meeting of the German-French initiative “Alliance for Multilateralism” at U.N. headquarters in February DPA

change, migration, digital transformation and cybersecurity, as well as narrowing the gender gap, need to be tackled jointly by the global community. Results in any of these fields rely heavily on multilateral institutions and member states’ efforts to find fair and equitable solutions. In order to build a more resilient, more equal and more sustainable world, it is therefore an inherent necessity to strengthen the rules-based international order — one of the core visions currently guiding our work as a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

Recently, this vision also gave rise to

the establishment of the “Alliance for Multilateralism,” a format jointly led by Germany and France to promote a strong commitment to multilateral efforts. On Sept. 25, the alliance held a ministerial-level meeting within the framework of the U.N. General Assembly and invited every state that shares this vision to join hands. The alliance is committed to advancing a multilateral agenda and acts as a driving force to protect, develop and adapt the rules-based international order. The countries involved work together as a network and build coalitions centered on specific issues and projects.

For Germany, the starting point for joint action is always the European Union. As the current holder of the presidency of the council of the EU, Germany is committed to fighting the coronavirus pandemic and countering its socioeconomic repercussions. We aim for a green recovery of the EU because we firmly believe in green solutions to deal with the climate crisis.

Green technology is available and affordable, and it is a necessary step to modernize our economies. In striving for a global recovery and “building back better,” we are lucky to be able to count on our close friend and partner, Japan, with whom we have been cooperating closely bilaterally, but also in multilateral formats such as the United Nations, G7 or G20.

The German-Japanese friendship is deep and longstanding. In 2021, we will celebrate 160 years of diplomatic rela-

tions. Even though we do not currently know whether and how German-Japanese events planned for this occasion can take place under these unusual circumstances, many resourceful and creative virtual solutions have already been developed. And one certainty remains: the strong connection between our people will continue to thrive despite these times of physical distance. In this spirit, we also look forward to a time when unrestricted travel will once again become possible, as we all know that nothing can replace real human contact.

I very much continue to count on German-Japanese joint efforts to build a better world, a better tomorrow. As for today, I am delighted to celebrate this important German anniversary together with our Japanese friends and I extend my warmest greetings to all readers of The Japan Times.



The reunified German people happily celebrating German unity on Oct. 3, 1990 DPA

Congratulations

to the People of Germany

on the Occasion of

the Anniversary of

the Day of German Unity

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