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The Rise of the AfD and the Future of Germany's Culture of Remembrance

Plus: Implications for the Restitution of Nazi-Looted Artworks



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The culture of remembrance is an essential part of the preservation of human dignity in Germany. What do we have to do to protect it against hostility and undermining maneuvers from home and abroad (e.g., from the USA)?

For the sake of transparency, I would like to point out at the outset that I have been personally involved in this issue for over a quarter of a century. On behalf of the U.S. government, in 1998, I negotiated the Washington Principles on Nazi-confiscated Art.

Subsequently, President Clinton appointed me U.S. Ambassador and Special Envoy for Holocaust issues in 1999. I negotiated Agreements on compensation payments for forced labor during World War II, as well as for unpaid insurance policies, Nazi-confiscated Art, property restitution, as well as Holocaust-related education, research, and remembrance, and the establishment of the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ). The agreement for survivors of forced and slave labor awarded six billion US dollars from Germany. Other agreements provided for additional compensation for survivors from Austria and France.

Before this, I also served as Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the Embassy of the United States in East Berlin during the late GDR era and as DCM and Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy Bonn in the mid-1990s. A significant part of my professional career has revolved around how today's Germany has constructively dealt with the dark chapters of its past.

Far more than "just" a state election

That is why I am concerned about the German culture wars, which flared up again in the run-up to the state elections on September 6 in Saxony-Anhalt.

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Note to journalists

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Saxony-Anhalt is only the eleventh-largest state in Germany, with 2.12 million residents. But the fallout from its state election, in which the Alternative for Germany (AfD), a party classified as right-wing extremist, won 43.8 percent of the vote, continues to be followed with great concern nationally and internationally. The AfD fell short of a majority in the state parliament, and it remains to be seen whether the party will be able to organize an effective governing coalition, but the result is widely seen as a catastrophe for Germany's traditional political parties.

In my professional life, I have been able to observe precisely that Germany's handling of the Holocaust is a fundamental moral pillar of German post-war democracy. I have also come to appreciate the fact that the two topics of German reunification and German historical responsibility have always gone hand in hand within the culture of remembrance.

But now these achievements, as well as the necessary and deeply impressive phase of mature social reflection, are suddenly exposed to a growing danger from right-wing extremist political forces.

By trying to dismiss the memory of the Holocaust as a mere "cult of guilt", the AfD is attacking the moral foundations of Germany's post-Holocaust self-image in a direct and elemental way.

The far right's rejection of provenance research

As a former negotiator and staunch supporter of the Washington Principles on Nazi-confiscated art, I am particularly outraged that the AfD aims to undermine the German culture of remembrance in order to justify the non-return of works of art stolen by the Nazis.[1]

A widespread misconception in this context is that historical failures of the post-war period prevent Germany from dealing comprehensively with its past. Dealing with history is certainly not a panacea against National Socialism, and it is not surprising that völkisch-authoritarian racism persists and has resurfaced in the AfD.

However, current demands for an end to the culture of remembrance must not undermine the promise of "never again". Its goal is to counteract the resurgence of right-wing extremist ethnonationalism.

Although the movement to identify and return stolen artworks is gaining momentum nationwide, all indications suggest the AfD is focused on blocking these efforts.

"A regional election could hand the office of state premier to a party that calls Holocaust memory a cult of guilt."

As part of its election campaign in Saxony-Anhalt in the fall, the AfD demanded an end to what it calls the "unfounded general suspicion of all museum holdings"[2] and the "artificial maintenance of feelings of guilt."[3]

As part of this campaign, the Foundation for Lost Art (DZK), which is partly financed by the state government in Saxony-Anhalt, became a target.

While this budget-focused strategy may not come as a surprise, it allows the AfD to signal a far more radical political intent.

[1] This topic is covered in detail in the article "The works of art stolen by the Nazis that are now catching up with Germany again" from the Times of London. Moody, Oliver, "The works of art stolen by the Nazis that are now catching up with Germany again", 23 May 2026. https://www.lootedart.com/news.php?r=XUUKYJ845811

[2] Ibid., "The Times of London"

[3] Ibid., "The Times of London"

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As far as I can tell, the main goal is to perpetuate anti-Semitic stereotypes about wealthy Jews who are supposedly always out to amass wealth (and now want to regain it through restitution). This supposedly amounts to stealing national cultural heritage. In doing so, the AfD is proceeding in a very clever way with its infamous insinuations, which can be denied, at least on a purely rhetorical level.

The future of the German Foundation for Lost Art (DZK)

The campaign in Saxony-Anhalt focused on the future of the German Foundation for Lost Art (DZK), based in Magdeburg, the capital of Saxony-Anhalt. It is responsible for restituting looted cultural assets and recently reached an important milestone: the 10,000th artwork was returned to rightful owners or their descendants.

More than 80 percent of these restitutions have occurred in the last 25 years.

"Blocking restitution lets old anti-Semitic stereotypes about wealthy Jews resurface under the cover of budget politics."

The Nazi art thefts as a violation of international law

The restitution of Nazi-looted art is now recognized as an ongoing problem that goes beyond the context of the post-World War II era.

Recently, three developments have created national dispute settlement mechanisms to not only reaffirm compliance with the 1998 Washington Principles, but to make their implementation more effective.

In the United States, a new U.S. Holocaust Era Art Recovery Act (HEAR Act) classifies Nazi art looting as a violation of international law and extends its scope to collections outside the United States.

And in Germany, the German government has established a new court of arbitration for cultural property stolen by the Nazis to settle disputes over the return of Nazi-looted art.

In the meantime, the Free State of Bavaria has set up an Independent Commission for Nazi-looted Art in Bavaria, which is responsible for determining the focus of Bavarian provenance research.

These new structures are directly directed against the view of the AfD, which tries to defame the overdue legal consolidation of restitution efforts as manifestations of a "cult of guilt".

"Three new legal structures now stand between the AfD and its goal of closing the book on Nazi-looted art."

In any case, the AfD's rejection of provenance research effectively perpetuates National Socialist looting.

The AfD in Putin's footsteps

What makes the AfD's position even more disconcerting is the fact that its strategy in dealing with the dark pages of German history mirrors that of Vladimir Putin and his approach to whitewashing Soviet history.

Both the AfD and Putin firmly reject any confrontation with collective guilt or responsibility for murderous, state-directed actions in the past of their respective countries.

Thus, Putin refuses to engage in any serious way with the commemoration of Stalin's victims. Instead, their suffering is deliberately downplayed, their history manipulated by distorted facts, and their memory suppressed. Memorials are being demolished, and any further work by Memorial, the Russian human rights

organization that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022, was banned in April 2026.

The situation is similar with AfD historical revisionism, as practiced by Björn Höcke and Alexander Gauland, two leading representatives of the AfD.[4] They resolutely reject any discussion of the question of collective guilt for Germany's past. Particularly infamous is the thesis that the Nazi regime is only a "birdshit" in the thousand-year history of Germany.

With such assertions, the AfD is trying to lower public discourse in Germany to the level of more than 40 years ago. In 1985, Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker acknowledged German responsibility for the crimes committed during the Nazi era in a speech that was groundbreaking for Germany's post-war historical remembrance.

"The AfD calls the Nazi era a footnote. Von Weizsäcker called May 8 a liberation. Germany still has to choose between the two."

Von Weizsäcker did so by stating that May 8, 1945 should not be regarded in the history books as the day of Germany's defeat, but as the day of liberation from the Nazi regime.

Joined at the revisionist hip: The AfD and the Trump administration

On the one hand, developments over the past quarter century are positive. The negotiation of the Washington Principles aims to put an end to Nazi looting, so that the stolen works of art do not indirectly perpetuate the crimes of Nazism.

Today, as the right to return looted art to its rightful owners is reaffirmed, it is recognized that Holocaust-era restitution is not yet complete, and that the passage of time must not prevent the pursuit of justice.

However, regarding the parallels between the anti-democratic activities of the AfD and the Trump administration in the USA, the AfD's current campaign against the culture of remembrance has a very disturbing, until recently unimaginable, dimension of transatlantic cooperation.

While some AfD politicians in Germany have long actively questioned whether German identity is still linked to the legacy of the Holocaust[5] and thus want to unhinge German history, the Trump administration has begun a similar project. In its historical revisionism, it seeks to reinterpret the core message of the US Declaration of Independence, according to which all human beings are created equal.

"Reframing 'created equal' as 'created in the image of an almighty God' writes secular equality out of the founding promise."

But instead of affirming this core statement, there is now an insidious attempt to religiously charge the main statement and reinterpret it to mean that Americans are "all created in the image of an almighty God". Of course, this sentence is not part of the American Declaration of Independence, but a Bible verse from the Book of Genesis. And above all, it contradicts the country's deliberate constitutional separation of church and state.

That didn't stop Donald Trump from claiming in his speech on the occasion of the recently celebrated 250th anniversary of the USA on July 4: "And as our Declaration of Independence tells us, we are all created in the image of an almighty God. And a communist will never say that. That's for sure."[6]

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[4] Bigalke, Silke, "Russia will suppress the culture of remembrance", Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18 August 2026. https://www.sueddeutsche.de/projekte/artikel/politik/russland-stalin-terror-russland-erinnerung-putin-e894246/

[5] Bohr, Felix, "This is how the AfD makes politics with fake history", Der Spiegel, 16 May 2025. https://www.spiegel.de/geschichte/afd-wie-die-rechtsextreme-partei-mit-fake-geschichte-politik-macht-a-a061dd83-462f-41f9-b56e-1ea6abd69394

[6] Trump, Donald, speech, July 4, 2026.

The purpose of this deliberate misinterpretation is obvious: it detaches the justification of the overriding importance of human rights from the universal, secular equality of all human beings and links it directly to a form of religious nationalism.

The American version of the culture wars as a "cousin" of the AfD

The U.S. version of launching a culture war also appears in official documents such as the Executive Order of March 2025 on the “Restoration of Truth and Reason in American History."[7] In the document, the president laments that "the remarkable achievements of the United States" have been undermined by “putting its founding principles and historical milestones in a negative light."

“The fight is no longer between civilizations. It runs straight through the middle of Western societies.”

Trump also criticizes earlier federal efforts to eliminate systemic inequalities. And he classifies movements that advocate for racial equality and gender justice as “destructive ideologies” and “historical reinterpretations” that divide the nation.

While there have indeed been some exaggerated efforts in recent decades to portray U.S. history as “inherently racist, sexist, oppressive, or otherwise insurmountably flawed,” remarkably, the president’s executive order does not merely express his intention to abandon these efforts.

Instead, Trump is using this recent past to legitimize a broad movement in exactly the opposite direction, calling into question the need for appropriate corrective action.

The definition of culture wars in our societies

As early as the 1990s, Samuel P. Huntington described his concept of a cultural conflict, in which culture would become the main cause of global conflicts, trumping ideology and economics.

In a striking update of this approach, promoted by U.S. Vice President J. D. Vance, the civilizational struggle between Christianity and secularism is now taking place within the West.

The contrast between the two approaches is primarily philosophical and not geographical. The central question is whether societies strive for a liberal, universalist future or pursue an illiberal, ethnonationalist and exclusionary approach.

Universalism vs. ethnonationalism

In fact, the universalism expressed in the American Declaration of Independence is a radical Enlightenment idea. It states that all human beings "are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, including the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In a similarly radical form, the German Basic Law emphasizes the inviolability of human dignity and prescribes that the state must ensure respect for it as a matter of priority. This philosophical concept underlines that human dignity applies equally to all people, regardless of their origin or background. In contrast, ethnonationalism views the nation as a community passed down through family, religion, and cultural customs. It emphasizes the importance of politics in protecting this heritage from supposed civilizational erasure.

[7] Trump, Donald, Executive Order on "Restoring Truth and Reason in American History," March 27, 2025. https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/restoring-truth-and-sanity-to-american-history/

Its appeal lies in fostering a sense of rootedness and ethnic identity, but it tends to limit democracy to individuals who share a certain, often artificial, sense of identity or heritage.

In this sense, important U.S. civil rights laws passed in the 1960s, such as the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act, represent concrete expressions of the specific culture of remembrance in the United States.

Recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions that aim to overturn these laws are not only legally irresponsible and socially destructive. They are also the constitutional implementation of historical revisionism similar to what the AfD is striving for in Germany, in terms of preventing adequate recognition and reappraisal of the dark phase of Germany's past.

"Rolling back birthright citizenship and dismissing Holocaust memory as guilt culture draw on the same idea of who really belongs."

The most legally potentially far-reaching part of this ethno-nationalist reinterpretation effort was Donald Trump's vehement effort to repeal the "jus soli" birthright in force in the United States. This principle, that all people born within the U.S. jurisdiction become U.S. citizens, regardless of the nationality of their parents, was recently affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States.

This is particularly pleasing because the court otherwise complies with Trump's legal policy wishes in almost all of its decisions.

The interim conclusion is that while the Trump administration is undermining the principles of the US Declaration of Independence, the far right in Germany is opposing the constitutional commitment to human dignity by dismissing the German culture of remembrance as a "cult of guilt".

Culture of remembrance as a "cult of guilt"?

The German culture wars inspired by the AfD are in line with J.D. Vance's idea of tribal supremacy. The AfD's goal is to reshape German identity in terms of ethnic purity.

The acceptance of the culture of remembrance and the principle of "never again" are both rooted in the belief in universal human dignity. The AfD and its US heroes, Musk and Vance, firmly reject this.

The fact that we are witnessing the erosion of this promise, which was originally made by survivors of Buchenwald and other Nazi concentration camps, who believed in the universality of human dignity, starting from the USA of all places, is as worrying as it is shameful. It is diametrically opposed to the consistent propagation of human rights by the American side, especially at the international level.

"The AfD's rejection of provenance research puts the party in line with National Socialist looting."

The AfD's stance against provenance research and looted art restitution is likely to have an impact on other post-communist countries, as they too increasingly have to deal with looting in connection with the Holocaust and perspectives from the pre-1990s period.

Implementation of the Basic Law and respect for human dignity

The AfD's approach to reshaping German politics not only calls into question Germany's politics of remembrance, but also aims far beyond it.

By restricting the concept of human dignity to "bio-Germans", i.e. mainly white Germans, the party pursues two goals: First, it wants to weaken or devalue the concept of human dignity so that it no longer serves as a cornerstone of the Basic Law.

Second, it aims to undermine the moral foundation of the Western view of the post-Holocaust world legal order, which is fundamentally based on the belief that human dignity is universal and empathy is indispensable.

These basic principles are now under scrutiny, as Elon Musk, for example, questions the value of empathy, claiming that it is the biggest mistake of Western civilization. At the same time, right-wing extremists look at history through a kind of tribal lens and see supporters of universal Human dignity as tyrannical. As regrettable as this view is, it is not unexpected among high-ranking Trump officials.[8]

For example, Vance reinterprets the Christian concept of “ordo amoris” (order of love) and suggests that one’s own group should take precedence over others, which is contrary to traditional Christian teaching.

“Knowing the history of the Holocaust has never been enough by itself to stop it from happening again.”

The “Never Again” and the Memory of the Holocaust

Mere knowledge of the Holocaust does not guarantee that "never again" will occur. A central problem is that many people, especially younger generations worldwide, lack sufficient historical knowledge and are increasingly attracted to ethnic or nationalist policies.

Basically, this illustrates more comprehensive deficits in the education system and problems of social development, also in Germany.

Despite the ongoing political upheaval that is shaking the transatlantic alliance, which is primarily based on values, it is crucial to remember one thing. Most people on both sides of the Atlantic still share fundamental interests rooted in values such as freedom, democracy, economic freedom, the rule of law, and human rights.

Realignment of transatlantic relations?

While political differences in the priorities of the United States and Europe are inevitable, the current disruption of the international order, which is only partly due to rising geopolitical tensions and instability, is self-harming. The simple fact is that, at a time of sustained rise of autocratic regimes, the democratic world cannot afford to be increasingly divided on key issues, especially on issues of values.

Europe continues to recognize the importance of the transatlantic partnership. However, its future prospects should receive greater attention in the American media, which is increasingly focused on purely domestic politics, including scandals and misconduct.

If the West is to have a chance for the future as a community of values, the US media in particular must ensure that they contribute more to a strategic dialogue and a constructive rapprochement in order to counteract Trump's undermining attacks that he is constantly directing against Western democracies.

This realignment is essential, especially as Canada is inevitably shifting from its constructive transatlantic bridging function to a stronger focus on European relations. After all, this shift in U.S.-Canadian relations reflects the fact that

[8] Chua, Amy and Vance, J.D., MPR News editorial team, "Amy Chua and J.D. Vance: Can Americans Resist the Pull of Tribalism?", MPR News, August 1, 2018. https://www.mprnews.org/story/2018/08/01/amy-chua-and-jd-vance-can-americans-resist-the-pull-of-tribalism

transatlantic relations are no longer as strongly aligned with the US as they have been for decades.

Moreover, defending common democratic values on the other side of the Atlantic increasingly depends on civil society networks and local engagement, in addition to traditional diplomacy and statecraft.

What is crucial is the courage to maintain relations in a way that supports democracy.

The courage required to defend democracy should be supported by a clear understanding of the global strategic environment, which is changing dramatically. Since we live in a hostile world, military and economic strength is also required to ensure our security.

"If national governments waver on democratic values, city partnerships and civil society may have to carry the relationship instead."

At the same time, rebuilding connections between the U.S. and Europe should focus on local, personal, and community efforts. The future of the transatlantic partnership depends not only on national governments and political leaders, but also more than ever on bilateral relations between State and local officials, sister city programs, and student/labor exchange programs. In cooperation with local foundations, citizens' initiatives and regional actors, the aim is to involve all social forces that value democratic values, have probably already benefited from them and are also fundamentally committed to protecting them.

It is essential to strengthen relations between societies on both sides of the Atlantic through exchanges, civil society, grassroots movements, culture and science. At the same time, we need to improve the resilience of these relationships so that they can withstand potential disruption from political changes.

The simultaneous efforts of the AfD in Germany and the Trump administration in the USA to undermine a shared values consensus are a warning for us.

In Germany, the AfD's action against the culture of remembrance is about no longer relying on continued respect for human dignity. In the United States, the Trump administration is pursuing an ethno-nationalist attempt not only to unhinge the universal character of the American Declaration of Independence, but to deny it through "Christianization."

Ultimately, both are similar forms of historical revisionism that seek to destroy not only their respective national communities of values, but also those of the entire West. All this is taking place at a time when the West is already challenged by autocratic regimes and structural changes in the global economy.

"Some governments that demand the return of their own looted heritage abroad have returned almost none of what they hold at home."

The AfD and the connection to East Central Europe

Today, as the right to return looted art to its rightful owners has been widely reaffirmed internationally, it is also recognized that Holocaust-era restitution is not yet complete and that the quest for justice remains a topical task.

What is particularly worrying about the current situation in Germany is that the attitude of the AfD, which has clearly positioned itself against provenance research and restitution, also has implications for post-communist countries. For they, too, are increasingly confronted with the question of the return of looted art objects in connection with the Holocaust and with the trivializing view that prevailed in these countries before 1990.

The main barrier to returning Nazi-stolen art in Central and Eastern Europe is also political. Restitution, especially when works are held by public museums,

requires governments to confront histories of local collaboration. Several countries, notably Belarus, Hungary, Poland, and Russia, are examples of states that on the one hand advocate the return of national property abroad, but have themselves returned comparatively little property from their national property.

The Soviet Union considered art captured in the Second World War as “spoils of war.” In the 1950s, the Soviets distributed some of them to the satellite states, which considered them public property. Restitution, even when clearly of Nazi-looted art, is a struggle. To give a concrete example: In Hungary, after 1945, David de Csepel’s family began its struggle over 80 years for the return of their historic art collection of paintings, tapestries and Renaissance furniture, which had been stolen by the Nazis. These works are publicly owned by public institutions in Hungary, three museums and a university in Budapest.

Conclusion: What is at stake in the Saxony-Anhalt election

“What happens in Saxony-Anhalt on September 6 will not stay in Saxony-Anhalt.”

Saxony-Anhalt on September 6 did not only decide on a state government. The AfD’s strong performance raises the question of how committed Germany will remain to one of its successful chapters of its democratic history and culture of remembrance, and to what extent it will allow a right-wing extremist party to declare the return of looted art a symbol of alleged "guilt cult" policy. If they succeed in reframing this issue, it will also have negative consequences for the rest of Europe.

Appendix: The Washington Principles and their Impact in Practice

The Washington Principles of 1998 are eleven internationally agreed, legally non-binding guidelines for the detection and return of Nazi-looted art.

They build on the history of cultural property confiscation during the Holocaust to prevent similar acts of violence based on identity. Their focus is on the return of artworks stolen by the Nazi regime to their rightful owners.

All signatories to the Washington Principles recognized the Holocaust as one of the most serious crimes of identity-based violence, which included plans to attack the property rights of those who were to be expelled or killed.

“The Nazi looting record was never only about paintings. It reached into kitchens, closets, and family drawers.”

The "Times of London" reports that works of art looted by the Nazis have once again thrown Germany into turmoil. In fact, the looting went far beyond art and included many everyday cultural items such as porcelain, crystal, silver cutlery, jewelry, carpets, and family heirlooms that shaped Jewish culture. This included household items such as clothing, bedding, household appliances, pots, pans, and light bulbs.

Given the scale of the looting, the Washington Principles have always been about more than just the return of cultural property, as a full return to the original owners or families was unlikely for a variety of reasons.

In particular, much of the property was too unspecific to be identified. Nor was European law designed to reverse the consequences of the Holocaust, and postwar governments were generally unwilling to do the arduous work of restitution, even when the facts were still fresh.

In a podcast recorded together with the Münchner Stadtmuseum ("Time Loops: The Restitution Files"), the museum acknowledged the importance of justice for

the rightful owners when returning a silver service. The restitution contributes to Germany's responsibility and culture of remembrance.[9]

Nine Conclusions:

The state elections in Saxony-Anhalt and the preservation of the German culture of remembrance

"Nine conclusions return to one point: a culture of remembrance only works if human dignity is treated as truly universal."

1. The culture of remembrance is an essential part of preserving human dignity in Germany and a fundamental moral pillar of German post-war democracy.

2. The AfD is trying to discredit the German culture of remembrance as a "cult of guilt" and to undermine provenance research and the return of Nazi-looted art.

3. The campaign in Saxony-Anhalt focuses on the future of the German Foundation for Lost Art (DZK) in Magdeburg, which recently returned the 10,000th work of art to its rightful owners.

4. New structures, the US "HEAR Act", the new German arbitration court for Nazi-looted art and the Bavarian Commission, reaffirm the commitment of states to the Washington Principles of 1998.

5. The campaign against commemoration has a transatlantic dimension: In the United States, the Trump administration is pursuing historical revisionism by seeking to reshape the universalist core message of the American Declaration of Independence in favor of religious nationalism.

6. The AfD and the Trump administration are united in their efforts to replace liberal universalism with an illiberal ethnonationalism that seeks to limit human dignity to a particular group.

7. The rejection of the culture of remembrance promoted by the AfD weakens the principle of "never again", which is rooted in the belief in universal human dignity.

8. In the face of these attempts at reinterpretation on both sides of the Atlantic, a realignment of transatlantic relations is essential, supported by attentive political parties of the democratic center, civil society, culture and academia, in order to defend common democratic values in a resilient manner.

9. This is all the more true because this is happening at a time when the West is already more challenged than ever by autocratic regimes and structural changes in the global economy.

[9] Bindenagel, James, in: Prinz, Regina, and Scholz, Anna (moderation), "Time Loops. The Restitution Files", Münchner Stadtmuseum, https://www.muenchner-stadtmuseum.de/muenchner-stadtmuseum/podcast-des-muenchner-stadtmuseums. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0MWgPpDT-w

About the Author

J.D. Bindenagel is a fellow at the Global Ideas Center (GIC) in Berlin. He has been personally involved in restitution for over a quarter of a century.

On behalf of the U.S. government, he negotiated the “Washington Principles on Nazi-confiscated Art” and was appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1999 as U.S. Ambassador and U.S. Government Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues.

In the course of his diplomatic career, Bindenagel was also deputy head of mission at the U.S. embassies in East Berlin and Bonn and U.S. Chargé d’Affaires in Germany in the mid-1990s. He is considered the most accomplished expert on Germany in U.S. diplomacy.

“GIC's Strategic Intervention Papers aim to widen the space of what looks politically possible in a stalled debate.”

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