

**Speech Conference 'Power shifts in a changing world order:
The role of the European Union and the position of the Netherlands'
Opening speech by René van der Linden, President of the Senate of the Netherlands, February 4, 2011**

It is a great pleasure to open this conference and to welcome you all in this plenary hall of the Senate of the Netherlands. I especially welcome our reputed key note speakers and I thank them in advance for coming to the Netherlands to contribute to this conference.

I extend my welcome to all of you also on behalf of our partners in organizing this conference: the Scientific Council for Government Policy, the Advisory Council on International Affairs and the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael.

For the Dutch Senate initiating a conference of this nature is logical given its special role in the Dutch constitutional arena. In the Senate the international agenda is tightly interwoven with national issues. In the policy debate we focus on long term developments and visions to the future.

The first decade of the 21st century recently came to an end. It was characterized by an international financial crisis without precedent and a rapid shift in power relations in the world. In the 20th century the core of economic power was in Western Europe and North America. In recent years we have seen a remarkable expansion of economic powers in Asia and South America. The movements that take place, have enormous repercussions to the rest of the world, including Europe and the Netherlands. The signals are clear. China in 2010 replaced Germany as the largest exporter in the world. The combined budgets for research and development of China and India exceeded those of both the United States

and Europe each. The sense of optimism in these countries is remarkable, as compared to the general feeling in Western Europe. While many in Europe are concerned about the sustainability of pensions, these countries invest heavily in education, science and technology. The youth is hungry for knowledge, innovation and future.

In a globalizing world we cannot take our position for granted. Globalisation is an opportunity, a chance, a challenge. The aim of this conference is to get a clearer picture of shifts of power taking place in the world and to discuss how Europe and the Netherlands can take up new roles in the changing world order. How can we meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities of important new networks and partnerships? We want to look at the position of the Netherlands through a 'foreign' mirror.

As a small nation the Netherlands has always been very internationally oriented and in favour of an open economy. In spite of its size it has been able to be productive and innovative, and to engage actively in international trade. The Netherlands as one of the co-founders of the European Union has always profited from open markets. Nevertheless, in this age we share with other countries a certain scepticism on Europe, while the recent crisis has demonstrated that we need more Europe instead of less to effectively solve it. At this very moment the European government leaders meet to come to a total approach of the debts crisis, including the possibility of sanctions against member states that do not meet their obligations. German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke of a 'pact to make Europe more competitive' .

[Sideways I mention the revolution that takes place as we speak in parts of the Arab world. It is hard to estimate what the outcome of these historical developments will be].

With this conference we want to shed a light on the situation of rapid change in which we find ourselves. In focusing from the outside to the inside, we will start from a broad global viewpoint and zoom into the European situation, with a special focus on the position of the Netherlands. We will do this by kicking off our morning session with the speeches of Professor Wei-Wei Zhang and Professor Charles Kupchan on current shifts in power, respectively from the Chinese situation and the point of view from the United States. Our former prime minister, Professor Jan Peter Balkenende, will thereafter reflect on the Dutch situation within these power shifts in the world. Elmar Brok, Member of the European Parliament from Germany, will briefly comment from a European perspective.

In doing so we will follow an approach as advocated in the report of the Scientific Council (WR), which was sent to you together with the invitation for today's conference. The report from the WRR contributes to new orientation towards the outside world and serves as a good foundation for the discussion of today's conference. I expect that we will have a very fruitful and thought provoking conference.

May I now to introduce our first two key note speakers of today:

Mr Wei-Wei Zhang is professor at the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Switzerland, and senior research fellow at Centre for Asian Studies, Geneva. He is also guest professor at Fudan and Tsinghua Universities, and a senior fellow at the Equinox (Chunqiu) Institute in China. He will speak to us on "the Anatomy of a Miracle: the China Model and its Implications".

Our second key note speaker of today is Mr Charles Kupchan. Charles Kupchan is an Associate Professor of International Relations in the School of Foreign Service and

Government Department at Georgetown University. He is also a Senior Fellow and Director of Europe Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. Mr. Kupchan was Director for European Affairs on the National Security Council during the first Clinton administration.

I give the floor to Wei-Wei Zhang.