



Magnus-Haus Am Kupfergraben 7 D-10117 Berlin-Mitte

ATLANTIK-BRÜCKE E.V.

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Merkel to be Honored with Warburg Award for Strengthening U.S.-Europe Ties**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been selected by Atlantik-Brücke (Atlantic Bridge) to receive the prestigious Eric M. Warburg Award. She is being recognized by the Berlin-based organization for strengthening cooperation between Europe and the United States during her overlapping terms as head of the G-8 and President of the European Union in 2007. The award ceremony will take place on June 25, 2009 in Washington, DC, hosted by Dr. Thomas Enders, Chairman of Atlantik-Brücke and CEO of Airbus. The Honorable Chuck Hagel will deliver the keynote speech in honor of Chancellor Merkel.

The award was named for Eric M. Warburg (1900-1990), a member of a prominent German-Jewish banking family who fled Nazi Germany in 1938 and found refuge in the United States. From there, he worked tirelessly for the liberation of his homeland, returning as a U.S. Army Air Corps Lieutenant Colonel in 1945. In this capacity, he provided wise counsel to Germany's liberators in the immediate postwar period. He then returned to his native Hamburg to manage the family business and in 1952 founded Atlantik-Brücke as a private, nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding between Americans and Germans.

Previous recipients of the Warburg Award include President George H. W. Bush (2002), the veteran pilots of the Berlin Airlift (1998), German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (1996), NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner (1994), former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger (1992) and Condoleezza Rice (2007), and as the first recipient, Eric M. Warburg himself (1988).

Today Atlantik-Brücke has a membership of over 500 leading figures from German public life including businessmen, politicians, professionals and journalists. Over the past 57 years, tens of thousands of Europeans and North Americans have participated in the exchange programs, conferences, seminars and workshops organized by Atlantik-Brücke.

The Chairman of Atlantik-Brücke is Airbus CEO Dr. Thomas Enders; the Honorary Chairman is its longest-serving Chairman Dr. Walther Leisler Kiep; and its Honorary Member is former German Federal President Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker.

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## **Atlantik-Brücke's Eric M. Warburg Award**

Atlantik-Brücke established its most prestigious honor, the Eric M. Warburg Award, in 1988 to recognize distinguished individuals in Germany and the United States who have made outstanding contributions to German-American relations. The prize was first bestowed upon its namesake for his singular vision and accomplishments in the service of the transatlantic partnership. Past recipients have included individuals from a variety of positions: U.S. secretaries of state, a NATO secretary general, a U.S. president, and chancellors of the Federal Republic of Germany, to name a few. Despite their very different experiences and positions, these individuals are all bound together by their shared dedication, in the spirit of Eric Warburg, to bettering German-American friendship. The award ceremonies have been held at several of Germany's most prestigious venues and have often coincided with other significant events, for instance the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift in 1998 and the 50th anniversary of Atlantik-Brücke's founding in 2002.

Atlantik-Brücke is a private, non-partisan organization dedicated to fostering transatlantic understanding and cooperation. Since its founding in 1952 by Eric M. Warburg and several other notable German public figures, Atlantik-Brücke has been among the most important organizations working to promote dialogue and understanding between the United States and Germany. Although it works increasingly to encompass transatlantic relations in a global context, Atlantik-Brücke remains committed to its core vision of strengthening ties between Germany and the United States by cultivating close personal relationships between representatives from the two countries.

Over the span of nearly an entire century, Eric Warburg's dedication shaped the close postwar relationship between the United States and Germany at a fundamental level. Born to a well-off Hamburg banking family in 1900, Warburg was pursued by the Nazis and escaped to the United States in 1938. Rather than swearing revenge or dwelling on Germany's punishment and decimation, Warburg applied himself towards a balanced and respectful reconstruction of his birth country even before the war was over. Upon returning to Germany in 1945, he tirelessly adhered to the maxim that one should "be of some use" and fix whatever has been broken. Atlantik-Brücke stands today as just one of Eric Warburg's many accomplishments, an embodiment of his aspiration to repair the shattered relationship between Germany and the United States.

Berlin, June 15 2009