

INTERVIEW WITH A FORMER MEMBER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

17 October 2027

FROM: Thomas Müller, Federal Ministry of Immigration and Resettlement  
TO: Office of the Rector, Friedrich Schiller Universität, Jena  
RE: Frau Professor Doctor Kristen Ghodsee

I have been asked by your office to provide a report on the suitability of Frau Professor Doctor Kristen Ghodsee for employment at the University of Jena in the capacity as visiting lecturer or guest researcher. As you know, I represent the special department within the Federal Ministry of Immigration and Resettlement charged with integrating political refugees with high qualifications into German society. After the passage of the 2024 amendment to the United States constitution allowing President Donald Trump to remain in office indefinitely, the Federal Republic of Germany has granted political asylum to many highly educated Americans fleeing the continued persecution of intellectuals and political dissidents who resisted the constitutional amendment.

Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee is an established scholar, with many publications and years of university teaching experience, and she has expressed interest in finding employment at a German university or research institute. Despite her considerable qualifications, Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee was for many years a registered member of the Democratic Party of the United States, and questions have been raised regarding her suitability for work with young adults. This report is based on two interviews that I conducted with Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee in September and October of this year. Both interviews were recorded and transcribed. Full German translations of these interviews are appended to this report. I base my recommendation to you on these interviews and on my extensive review of Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee's case files.

In late 2023, Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee's life partner was shot and killed when the United States National Guard opened fire on a peaceful demonstration during the so-called December Massacre. Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee survived the violence and managed to avoid arrest for three weeks. She fled the United States after her name was included on a published government list of "state enemies," and she was threatened with imprisonment in one of the political internment camps in Alaska. She escaped into Canada with the assistance of underground operatives in Maine. She spent two months in a refugee facility outside of Quebec City where she applied for political asylum in Germany. Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee lived and worked in Germany for several years over the course of her career, and she has a 26-year-old daughter who is married to a German citizen and lives in Jena. Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee arrived in Germany in May 2025, and spent four months in a refugee settlement facility in Erfurt before the ministry granted her permission to live with her daughter.

My first interview with Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee occurred on 23 September at the Ministry regional office in Erfurt. Our conversation lasted 92 minutes. This was a formal interview where she confirmed basic facts about her biography and previous career in the United States. Prof. Dr. Ghodsee grew up in San Diego, and attended the University of California, Santa Cruz from 1988 to 1993 where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree. According to our records, she participated in political demonstrations against the first Gulf War in 1990, and spent the 1991-1992 academic year as an exchange student at the University of Ghana at Legon. Upon graduation, she lived and worked in Japan from 1993 to 1996 whereupon she returned to California to pursue her Ph.D. degree at Berkeley. Ghodsee confirmed that she received a Fulbright grant from the U.S. federal government to fund her dissertation research in Bulgaria in 1999-2000, but insisted that this grant carried no subsequent work requirements. Our own databases corroborate that unlike the Boren Fellowships of the U.S. National Security Education Program, Fulbright fellowships granted in the 1990s and 2000s did not commit recipients to work for the United States Departments of Defense or State, or any other federal agency.

Although Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee never held an elected office in the United States, she was a registered member of the Democratic Party. Our records show that she made regular financial contributions to Democratic candidates for the last thirty years, and that she actively campaigned for several Democratic presidential candidates. Given the recent transformations within the Democratic Party and its support for the constitutional amendments and innumerable international treaty violations, her continued membership casts grave doubts on the nature of her political and ideological commitments.

After the introductory formalities, I began by asking Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee about the 2000 presidential election. She stated that she was a registered member of the Democratic Party and that she voted for Al Gore, but like many Americans she accepted the Supreme Court decision in *Bush v. Gore* on 12 December 2000. What follows is a partial transcript of our conversation:

THOMAS MÜLLER (TM): Were you not suspicious that the younger brother of George W. Bush governed the contested state? And the father of George W. Bush appointed two of the Supreme Court justices involved in deciding the case?

KRISTEN GHODSEE (KG): Of course, I was suspicious. We were all suspicious at the time, but it was a complicated issue because of the confusing nature of the ballots in Florida. Different versions of the statewide recount produced different outcomes.

TM: But the recount was not allowed to continue.

KG: In our system, at that time, the Supreme Court had the right to make that decision.

TM: And the fact that Al Gore won the popular vote?

KG: [SUBJECT SIGHS] As I'm sure you know, Herr Müller, back then the United States had an electoral college system, and the president was not elected by popular vote. Although I did not like it, I accepted the outcome at the time. Those were the rules.

TM: You are aware that conclusive evidence of electoral tampering in Florida was found in 2022. Republican operatives spoiled more than 50,000 ballots in favor of Al Gore.

KG: Yes. The uncounted overvotes. I've read the reports.

TM: Given what you now know about the true circumstances in 2000, do you think you would have acted differently?

KG: Of course I would have acted differently. But none of us had the information at the time.

TM: Can we talk about 11 September 2001 and the subsequent Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001?

KG: The Patriot Act?

TM: Exactly. You are aware that the majority of the elected representatives of your party voted in favor of a drastic decrease in American civil liberties, directly undermining the principles of democracy upon which the United States was founded.

KG: Some democrats voted against it. There were some.

TM: All Democratic Senators excepting Senator Feingold voted in favor. And 123 Members of the Democratic Party voted in favor in the House of Representatives. The vast majority of the elected Democrats supported the Patriot Act.

KG: The legislation was passed right after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. It was rushed through with little time for debate.

TM: I believe the ordinary rules of the House of Representatives were suspended.

KG: Yes, that's right.

TM: Did you agree with this legislation?

KG: No.

TM: Did you take any action against this legislation? Did you protest?

KG: I was eight and a half months pregnant with my daughter when it was passed in October 2001. I lost my best friend on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and my father died unexpectedly two weeks later. You could say that I had other things on my mind.

TM: Did you leave the Democratic Party at that time?

KG: No.

TM: Why not?

KG: I was opposed to Bush, and opposed to the Iraq War. In a two party system, I felt that remaining with the Democratic Party was the only way to effect political change.

TM: You were opposed to the Iraq War?

KG: Yes. I organized demonstrations against the war on my campus. You should have records on that.<sup>1</sup>

TM: You are aware that 58 percent of Democratic senators voted in favor of the Iraq War Resolution? And 82 congressmen and women.

KG: Yes, but there was also Democratic opposition in both houses. Many Democrats spoke out against the War.

TM: Did you take any action in support of these dissenting Democrats?

KG: They were elected representatives, and I felt they represented my interests at the federal level.

TM: Even after it was discovered that there were no “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq?

KG: [SUBJECT SIGHS] Yes. Members of the Democratic Party were increasingly outspoken and critical of the Bush administration’s policies.

TM: You and your husband at that time, a dual Bulgarian-American citizen, worked for the presidential campaign of John Kerry. You contributed both time and money to the Kerry campaign. I am assuming that you voted for Senator Kerry in the 2004 presidential election.

KG: Yes. I was opposed to George W. Bush.

TM: But you knew that Senator Kerry voted in favor of the Iraq War, as did his vice-presidential running mate, Senator John Edwards.

KG: Yes, I knew. I initially caucused for Congressman Dennis Kucinich in Maine, who opposed the Iraq War. But I felt I had little choice but to support Kerry once he won the Democratic nomination. After Ralph Nader's candidacy hurt Gore in the 2000 election, many of us were fearful of being divided. I voted against Bush more than I voted for Kerry. I had few options.

TM: Many Americans abstained from voting.

KG: Kerry was the lesser of two evils.

TM: You were aware that your country acted in blatant violation of international law when it invaded Iraq unilaterally without a second resolution from the United Nations Security Council. Kofi Anan, the UN Secretary General, declared the war illegal and the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva found that the Iraq invasion constituted an illegal war of aggression.

KG: Yes, I was aware of the reports.

TM: Millions of people around the world protested this war, including citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany.

KG: [SUBJECT NODS]

TM: Between 2003 and 2010, many Americans engaged in acts of civil disobedience against the Iraq War. Did you participate in any way?

KG: [SUBJECT SHAKES HER HEAD.]

TM: Why did you not participate? Did you become a supporter of the illegal war and the continued American occupation of Iraq?

KG: Of course not.

TM: But you did not resist in any way. How are we supposed to interpret that?

KG: Herr Müller, it's always easier to see what you should have done in hindsight. But you must understand the circumstances. I was working full

time and had a toddler in the house, with limited support from my husband who was often in Europe for work. When we divorced in the summer of 2005, I became a single mom trying to finish a book and earn tenure. I had financial problems and didn't feel like there was anything I could do to change things after Bush was reelected. I was trying to just get on with life.

TM: And the hundreds of thousands who died in Iraq? Prof. Dr. Ghodsee, your government placed an 18-year-ban on photographs of flag-draped coffins (in direct contravention of the first amendment of your own Constitution) so it could hide from the public the human costs of an illegal war, and you were just trying to get on with your life?

KG: I didn't believe there was anything I could do at the time. When the financial crisis hit, I stopped thinking about the war. There was so much going on in those years. I was working very long hours, and I had limited resources. I know this sounds like I'm making excuses. And when I look back on that time now, I don't know how I could have been so blind to the changes going on around me. But I had classes to teach, a daughter to raise, bills to pay, and personal problems that seemed much more immediate to me than what was happening in Iraq or anywhere else in the world. It was easy to tune it all out, to ignore it, to pretend it wasn't happening, or that it didn't concern me. I was just one person in a country of over three hundred million, and the thing about the system back then was that it made you feel like you couldn't do anything to change it.

At this point I could tell that Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee was growing tired. I asked her some short questions about gun control and the situation of black Americans, and she reiterated that she was always in favor of gun control and opposed to institutionalized racism and state persecution of racial minorities. When I asked how she expressed her political opinions to her government, she insisted that voting in what she considered free and open democratic elections constituted active participation at the time.

I will admit that I find Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee's case perplexing. Since arriving in Germany, she has been a tireless critic of the Trump regime, penning almost daily articles for all of the major German newspapers. With her daughter, she is active in providing legal and material assistance to American refugees, and teaches weekly classes in the resettlement camps outside of Erfurt. Despite her age and ill health, her demeanor is energetic and committed, and I have a difficult time reconciling her current level of political activity with her previous apathy.

When I asked her why she remained a registered member of the United States Democratic Party and continued to vote in what were clearly no longer free and fair elections after the 2010 Supreme Court decision of *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, she gave no answer. Furthermore, at a time when legions of Americans refused to vote in the fraudulent elections of 2020 and 2024, I remain incredulous that a woman of Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee's experience and seeming intelligence continued to legitimate the United States government through her ongoing electoral participation, and

perhaps more worryingly, her continued admonition to her university students to participate in these elections. Either she was incredibly naïve or she tacitly supported the totalitarian drift of her country.

My second interview with Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee occurred on 7 October, once again in the Ministry regional office in Erfurt. The interview lasted 67 minutes. I began the interview by explaining to Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee that German history requires us to be vigilant against those who support state violence by their inaction, and that we must by necessity hold university professors to higher moral standards than ordinary citizens. I reminded her of the twin German totalitarianisms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and she made no protest at my comparison between the politics of the National Socialists and the Socialist Unity Party with the politics of the current regime in the United States. Once again, I pressed her on several key issues relating to the ongoing deterioration of civil rights in her country between 2001 and 2024.

THOMAS MÜLLER (TM): I'd like to discuss the surveillance provisions of the 2001 Patriot Act, which eventually authorized the National Security Agency to conduct illegal electronic surveillance of innocent Americans, surveillance which was later used by federal agents to blackmail or intimidate opponents of the Trump regime. You were aware of the extent of the surveillance?

KRISTEN GHODSEE (KG): Yes, after the Edward Snowden revelations in 2013, I was aware of the full extent of the surveillance.

TM: President Barack Obama, a member of the Democratic Party of the United States, continued to authorize this surveillance, which violated domestic protections of the Fourth Amendment regarding unreasonable searches and seizures. Internationally, the leaders of countries, which were at that time the allies of the United States, including the Chancellor of Germany, had their personal mobile phones tapped by the National Security Agency. You campaigned and voted for President Obama, correct?

KG: That is correct.

TM: Did you support his extension of the Patriot Act?

KG: No, I didn't.

TM: Did you at any time during the Obama administration consider leaving the Democratic Party of the United States of America?

KG: No. I supported President Obama.

TM: The Obama Administration charged Edward Snowden with treason under a 1917 Espionage Act that would limit his access to due process. You supported this?

KG: No.

TM: What about Obama's policy of "regime change" in the Middle East?

KG: In those years, ordinary citizens had no idea of the extent of CIA involvement in the democratic uprisings of the Arab Spring. Had I understood the full extent of American covert operations, I would not have supported this policy.

TM: Frau Professor Ghodsee, you will forgive me if I have a difficult time understanding you. You say that you did not support his policies and yet you continued to support President Obama and the Democratic Party. All of the evidence was there before your eyes and you chose not to act in any way in opposition to the growing surveillance state and the suspension of basic civil liberties. Were you ill? Was there some other personal crisis?

KG: Herr Müller, I don't know what to tell you.

TM: Were you aware that you were the subject of ongoing government surveillance?

KG: I assumed that all of my Internet records, email and voice communications, mobile phone location data, and social media accounts were not private, regardless of my privacy settings.

TM: Were you not disturbed by the extent of the surveillance and the threat to your constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of speech and conscience?

KG: Yes, it bothered me sometimes, but mostly I didn't think about it. I didn't think I had anything to hide. I wasn't doing anything wrong.

TM: Did you begin to censor yourself?

KG: Sure. It wasn't intentional at first, but I definitely thought twice about everything I wrote electronically. Of course, I feared the Internet Twitter mobs before I feared the government. The witch-hunts started from the grassroots. Only later did the government start manipulating them.

TM: Did you resist in any way?

KG: The surveillance?

TM: Yes.

KG: I suppose not. Like I said I didn't think I had anything to hide. They say that if you throw a frog into a pot of boiling water, it will jump out. But if you put a frog in a pot of tepid water and heat the water to a boil, the frog will not move. The gradual change is the hardest to perceive. I was just living an ordinary life – work, family, friends. I don't know. After the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, I felt scared, and maybe I believed that the extra surveillance measures were actually there to protect ordinary people from terrorists. I know that sounds stupid, but it's hard to explain what it was like back then.

TM: I know these things are easier to see in hindsight, but if you could go back in time now, knowing what you know about the 2024 Amendment and the collapse of American democracy, what do you think you would have done differently?

KG: [LONG PAUSE] I'd like to say that I would do everything differently, and I know that's what I should tell you. Of course if I could have seen the future, maybe I would have fought harder, maybe I would have more actively protested the things I saw going wrong. But people were protesting, people were out on the streets, and it made no difference. The truth is that I was complacent because everyone else was complacent and we never imagined things would get as bad as they did. Maybe I should've known better, knowing what I know about European history, but I just didn't think it could happen in the United States. Certainly, I'm glad my daughter left when she did, and I wish I'd left sooner, too. My partner would still be alive if I'd made that decision before it was too late.

But to be truthful, and I want to be truthful here, Herr Müller, because I understand that you are using this interview to make a decision about my suitability to teach in the university classroom. The truth is that things never felt that bad. No matter what was happening in Washington, the grind of my ordinary life just went on. There were more wars and there was more surveillance and I understood that our democracy was threatened, but in those early years it was just easy to ignore because it didn't directly impact me. It's not that I supported the government; I was too damn busy to support anything really. I just plodded through life like I thought I was supposed to. I'm certainly no hero, but I also don't think that people like me can be held accountable for the things our government did while we were busy living our lives. Maybe that's the wrong answer, but it's the truth, Herr Müller. I don't know what else to say.

At this point I had no further questions for Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee. We exchanged pleasantries, and she inquired how long it might be before an official decision was reached. I informed her that the decision rested with the university and that I had no clear timeline for her case.

Overall, I had hoped that my conversations with Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee would be less confrontational. But given the ongoing violence in the United States, and the fact that both interviews were conducted at a time of increasing anxiety among the German people about the influx of American refugees, I felt obliged to challenge her directly. In particular, there are concerns that libertarian terrorists may be entering our country under the guise of political asylum seekers.

Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee is not a terrorist, nor do I believe that she poses any threat to the German nation or its people. She has clearly been persecuted by her government for her recent political activities, and there remains no doubt that she should be granted full political asylum if she does not pursue a family reunification permit through her daughter. Her current journalistic writing is of great value to the public, but I understand that it provides no financial remuneration, and that she desires to find some form of employment.

Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee is a highly qualified and experienced scholar, but I maintain reservations about her political commitments and her suitability for university teaching. It is my firm belief that her long association with the Democratic Party of the United States will compromise her effectiveness in the classroom. No educators tainted with this previous ideology should have an opportunity to corrupt the minds of the young.

Although we have no evidence that Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee was a direct collaborator with the American government, she clearly suffers psychological damage from the long years she lived in the United States of America. Given the many challenges facing the Federal Republic of Germany today, our educators must be men and women willing to question authority and resist tyranny in all its forms. It is therefore my official recommendation that Frau Prof. Dr. Ghodsee be denied a position at F. Schiller Universität Jena, and indeed, at any other German university.

Yours respectfully,

THOMAS MÜLLER

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT

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<sup>1</sup> Conor Williams, "Students participate in Iraq talk" December 6, 2002. Online: <http://bowdoinorient.com/legacy/2002-12-06/news04.htm>. Accessed: March 11, 2016