

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Bonn, Germany)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
UNITED STATES  
AND  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY  
TROOP PICNIC

KIRSCHGOENS PICNIC GROUNDS

3:21 P.M. (Bonn Time)

THE PRESIDENT: Colonel Wagner, Minister of Defense Leber, General Haig, members of the Armed Forces and families:

It is a very great privilege and pleasure for me to be with you today, but before I begin I have two questions.

The first question is: Is it true that the tent over there is filled with good old German beer?

Then the second question is: What are we doing out here? (Laughter)

I asked one soldier if he drank a lot of beer, and he said, "Of course not, sir." The only trouble is, then he tried to blow the top off his sauerkraut.

But every one of you is entitled to all the beer, the sauerkraut and anything else provided today, after your two hard months of intensive field training at Grafenwoehr. You deserve this picnic.

As your Commander-in-Chief, I am now issuing orders that tomorrow, Monday, all members of this brigade who participated in the maneuvers will be given an extra day off.

I am very, very proud to be here with the Tankers, Infantry and Artillery, one of the largest and most powerful combat brigades in Europe, and I am also just as pleased to be here with your wonderful families.

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Let me say a very special word of commendation to our German partnership units. I thank you for the cooperation you are extending to the United States and our forces. Together you have developed outstanding skills and qualities that make first-rate fighting men. I am pleased that you are learning from each other, and I am also very pleased to meet your charming wives.

I deeply appreciate the very high standards of performance and morale of our NATO forces as represented by the Germans and Americans here today, and I thank the Federal Republic and the State of Hesse for the warm, warm hospitality extended to me and to all Americans who are stationed here.

There is a very deep satisfaction for me in this meeting with all of you today. It is most rewarding to see first-hand this evidence of our two countries cooperating within NATO and for the common defense. It is you, together with the other forces of the Alliance, who are making our collective security a reality.

As we pursue peace together, I am aware that not all of the problems in Europe and the world have been solved, and I am convinced that under present circumstances the best guarantee for peace is a very, very strong defense.

As President speaking here in the presence of our allies, I affirm today that I will not allow our armed forces to be weakened under any circumstances. You deserve the best. You deserve the very best of equipment and you deserve the strongest support of the citizens that you defend.

Chancellor Schmidt and myself will travel to Helsinki in the next few days to attend the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is not by accident, let me assure you, that I stopped here first to consult with our allies, nor that I now affirm our commitment to Berlin.

I assure the people of Berlin from this military base, which you soldiers call "The Rock," that I stand behind this rock and behind our commitment to the freedom of Berlin.

Secretary Kissinger spoke for me when he affirmed our policy on his recent visit to Berlin. And our national unity and determination in this regard were voiced there earlier this year by Senators Humphrey and Scott.

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Soldiers, of course, do not underestimate the importance of your mission and its meaning for the entire world. You are the defenders of peace and you have my full and unqualified support and respect.

I know that you are doing a great, great job and you, by the demonstrations that you have given in person and by the equipment, have boosted my morale and let me express a deep personal gratitude.

I thank you very, very much for inviting me on this occasion.

END (AT 3:36 P.M. Bonn Time)