

The original documents are located in Box 27, “4/2/76 - The President's Remarks on Eastern Europe, Milwaukee, Wisconsin” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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~~THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID.....~~

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON EASTERN EUROPE

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

APRIL 2, 1976

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LET ME BEGIN BY EXPRESSING MY APPRECIATION

FOR YOUR PRESENCE HERE TODAY.

I AM REMINDED OF A MEETING WE HAD IN THE
CABINET ROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE LAST JULY 25.
SOME 30 LEADERS OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
IN THE UNITED STATES ATTENDED.

I UNDERSTAND THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT A PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES MET WITH LEADERS REPRESENTING
THE INTERESTS OF SO MANY AMERICANS CONCERNED ABOUT
EASTERN EUROPE.

IN OUR BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IT IS
APPROPRIATE TO RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR
CITIZENS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN ORIGIN.

BEFORE DEPARTING FOR THE EUROPEAN SECURITY
CONFERENCE IN HELSINKI LAST JULY, I STATED MY POLICY ON
EASTERN EUROPE.

IT IS A STATEMENT I AM PROUD OF -- AND I REAFFIRM IT TODAY:

"IT IS THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES, / AND IT HAS BEEN MY POLICY

EVER SINCE I ENTERED PUBLIC LIFE, / TO SUPPORT THE ASPIRATIONS

FOR FREEDOM AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEOPLES

OF EASTERN EUROPE -- / WITH WHOM WE HAVE CLOSE TIES

OF CULTURE AND BLOOD -- / BY EVERY PROPER AND PEACEFUL MEANS."

I STATED MY HOPE AND EXPECTATION THAT MY

VISITS TO POLAND, ROMANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA WOULD AGAIN

DEMONSTRATE OUR FRIENDSHIP AND INTEREST IN THE WELFARE

AND PROGRESS OF THE FINE PEOPLE OF EASTERN EUROPE.

THIS REMAINS MY POLICY -- REGARDLESS OF WHAT
ANY WASHINGTON "EXPERTS" OR ANTI-WASHINGTON "EXPERTS"
MAY SAY OR WRITE.

1975

ON JULY 29, IN THE MARKET SQUARE OF KRAKOW,
POLAND, I TOLD THOUSANDS ASSEMBLED THERE THAT I WAS
STANDING ONLY A VERY FEW FEET FROM THE PLAQUE MARKING
(KOS-CHEWS-KO)
WHERE GENERAL KOSCIUSZKO STOOD AND TOOK HIS FAMOUS OATH
TO FIGHT TO REGAIN THE INDEPENDENCE OF POLAND AND THE FREEDOM
OF ALL POLES.

I SAID I WAS VERY PROUD TO BE IN A PLACE
SO RICH IN POLISH HISTORY AND SO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH
THE POLISH HERO IN OUR STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

DURING MY VISIT TO BELGRADE, I SAID THAT
AMERICANS PARTICULARLY ADMIRER YUGOSLAVIA'S INDEPENDENT
SPIRIT.

I SAID: "WHENEVER INDEPENDENCE IS THREATENED,
PEOPLE EVERYWHERE LOOK TO THE EXAMPLE OF THE STRUGGLE
OF THE YUGOSLAVIAN PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THEIR HISTORY.
THEY TAKE STRENGTH AND THEY TAKE INSPIRATION
FROM THAT EXAMPLE.

AMERICA'S INTERESTS IN YUGOSLAVIA'S CONTINUED INDEPENDENCE,
INTEGRITY AND WELL-BEING, EXPRESSED OFTEN IN THE PAST,
REMAINS UNDIMINISHED."

IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU

AND I SIGNED IN ROMANIA WE EMPHASIZED OUR SUPPORT FOR A JUST

AND EQUITABLE INTERNATIONAL ORDER WHICH RESPECTS THE RIGHT

OF EACH COUNTRY, REGARDLESS OF SIZE OR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC

OR SOCIAL SYSTEM, TO CHOOSE ITS OWN DESTINY FREE

FROM THE USE OR THREAT OF FORCE.

WHEN I RETURNED FROM EUROPE, I TOLD THE AMERICAN

PEOPLE THAT I WAS ABLE TO DELIVER IN PERSON A MESSAGE

OF ENORMOUS SIGNIFICANCE TO ALL EUROPEANS. MY MESSAGE

WAS -- AMERICA STILL CARES. THE TORCH IN THE STATUE OF

LIBERTY STILL BURNS BRIGHT.

WE STILL STAND FOR FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE IN 1976

AS WE DID IN 1776•

I HAVE RECALLED THESE EVENTS BECAUSE THEY

UNDERLINE THE FACT THAT MY POLICY - AMERICA'S POLICY -

TOWARD EASTERN EUROPE IS FULLY, CLEARLY, AND FORMALLY

DOCUMENTED• IT IS A CREATIVE AND COOPERATIVE POLICY

TOWARD THE NATIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE•

IT IS A POLICY THAT EMBRACES OUR MOST IMPORTANT IDEALS

AS A NATION. IT IS A POLICY I HAVE REPEATED IN MESSAGES

Tatvan
TO AMERICANS OF ESTONIAN, LITHUANIAN AND UKRAINIAN ANCESTRY.

SO THERE IS NO SECRET WASHINGTON POLICY, NO DOUBLE STANDARD.

THE RECORD IS POSITIVE, CONSISTENT, RESPONSIVE TO

YOUR CONCERNS -- AND INDISPUTABLE.

THE UNITED STATES STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE ASPIRATIONS

FOR FREEDOM AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF PEOPLES EVERYWHERE --

INCLUDING THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN EUROPE.

I HAVE FOLLOWED THIS POLICY IN MY VISITS TO EASTERN
EUROPE AND IN MY MEETINGS WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN LEADERS
HERE.

OUR POLICY IN NO SENSE ACCEPTS SOVIET
"DOMINION" OF EASTERN EUROPE OR ANY KIND OF ORGANIC
UNION.

NOR IS IT IN ANY WAY DESIGNED TO PERMIT THE CONSOLIDATION
FOR SUCH "DOMINION" ON THE CONTRARY, THE UNITED
STATES SEEKS TO BE RESPONSIVE TO, AND TO ENCOURAGE AS
RESPONSIBLY AS POSSIBLE, THE DESIRES OF EAST EUROPEANS
FOR GREATER AUTONOMY, INDEPENDENCE AND MORE NORMAL
RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.

THIS IS A POLICY I WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE
WITH PATIENT PERSISTENCE - A POLICY FROM WHICH THE
UNITED STATES WILL NOT WAIVER.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

I WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS.

END OF TEXT