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June 22, 1975

RESULTS OF EUROPEAN VISIT

Q: Mr. President, your European visit has generally been reported as a success. Would you give us your assessment of the results of your European meetings?

A: I consider my meetings during my European trip important and successful. As a result of my talks in Brussels, Madrid, Salzburg and Rome we have made real progress on foreign policy issues of importance to all Americans. I also had the welcome opportunity to review these issues with the representatives of the North Atlantic Council on June 19.

We have clearly demonstrated the capacity of the West to deal with common problems. We have reaffirmed our determination to carry on cooperative programs to enhance our own abilities to deal collectively and effectively with the political, economic and defense challenges before us. While in Brussels, I had the opportunity to review current issues with 14 Alliance and European colleagues, and in the span of one week I met with more than 20 foreign leaders.

As I said at Salzburg, my meetings with President Sadat were very valuable and gave us as well the opportunity to establish a personal relationship. We had extensive discussions and these very constructive talks ~~will~~ contribute to the efforts toward a permanent peace in the Middle East based on a fair and equitable settlement.

Q. Mr. President, you have been meeting recently with a number of members of the House who have been active in the Turkish aid cut-off. What are your plans, and what do you think your chances are of success to revoke this ban?

A. As you have observed, we have met with members of both sides of the aisle that are closely associated with this matter.

We are hopeful that we will be able to work the matter out, and come up with an approach that will be favorably acted on by the House.

June 22, 1975

BELGIAN DECISION TO BUY GENERAL DYNAMICS
F-16 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

Q: Mr. President, on Saturday, June 7, the Belgian Government announced its selection of the General Dynamics F-16 fighter aircraft. While I recognize that this is important business for the United States, isn't this shortsighted? Shouldn't we be encouraging Western Europe to increase its strength, to develop its own aircraft-- and thereby become a stronger partner in the NATO Alliance?

A: The issue of maintaining the most effective collective defense capabilities in the NATO Alliance is a matter of great importance to me and, as you may recall, a subject that I addressed in my recent address to the NATO Heads of Government summit in Brussels.

The Belgian Government's decision to select the F-16 fighter aircraft is very much to be welcomed. With this decision, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway have all decided to buy the F-16. This decision was taken following a very thorough selection process; the F-16 was judged by these countries to meet the very demanding technical and military criteria set for their selection of a new fighter aircraft.

This decision to select the F-16 enlarges the area of standardization among NATO Air Forces and it will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these forces. Our commitment to a strong Alliance requires that we give continuing attention to the most modern technologically advanced equipment for our defense forces -- and that we rationalize our collective defense efforts as effectively as possible.

PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO EUROPE -- JULY 26 - AUGUST 4, 1975

(For release July 21, 1975, 12:00 p.m. EST)

President and Mrs. Ford will visit the Federal Republic of Germany from July 26-28, 1975. He will be received by President Scheel and will have talks with Chancellor Schmidt and Foreign Minister Genscher about current international questions.

At the invitation of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, Edward Gierek, President and Mrs. Ford will make an official visit to Poland July 28-29.

At the invitation of the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu and Mrs. Elena Ceausescu, the President and Mrs. Ford will pay an official visit to Romania from August 2-3.

At the invitation of the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, the President and Mrs. Ford will pay an official visit to Yugoslavia from August 3-4.

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Evans and Novack on "Foreign Policy by Feud"

Q: Do you have any comment on Evans and Novack's assertions today that Secretary Schlesinger's secret deployment plans for U. S. forces in Europe are being held up by Secretary Kissinger?

A: This is a total misrepresentation. This subject has been brought to the President's attention from many sources. As it involves the question of nuclear deployments, the President has ordered an NSC meeting on the subject and is holding in abeyance any decisions until this meeting can be held.

FYI. No date has been set for the NSC meeting as yet.

By Barbara Aly for The Washington Post

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Foreign Policy by Feud

U. S. PRESTIGE IN EUROPE

Q: Ron, does the President have any comment on the USIA poll that shows U. S. prestige in Western Europe at its lowest point in 22 years?

A: I have seen the article you are referring to. As I recall, it states that this involves an as yet uncompleted study by USIA which-- as the reporter acknowledges--was made available to the press at this time for partisan political reasons. I don't know what it says because it hasn't even been completed yet. There are other European polls confirming that U. S. prestige in Europe is high.

The fact is that US-European relations have never been better; the NATO Alliance is healthy and respect for the United States is high. Many of you heard the Secretary General of NATO make these very points in his meeting with the White House press on September 15. The record is replete with continuing extremely positive statements about the United States and US-European relations by the leaders of Western Europe throughout this year and last.

EUROPEAN TRIP

Q: Mr. President, you have just returned from a second trip to Europe in two months. What do you think it accomplished?

A: I believe this was a successful trip which served American objectives in Europe in several important ways:

-- First of all, it reinforced our ties with our traditional allies by demonstrating our deep and continued interest in European affairs and our commitment to the maintenance of peace and security, and the advancement of human rights, throughout Europe.

-- Secondly, it helped to place the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe into perspective as an important element in our overall efforts toward a relaxation of tensions in Europe.

-- Thirdly, it graphically illustrated our interest in the well being of the peoples of Eastern Europe, and our support for their efforts to define their own independent role in the affairs of the continent.

-- In addition, the trip provided the opportunity for individual meetings with a number of European leaders for discussions on urgent questions in which the United States has a vital interest, such as my meetings with General Secretary Brezhnev and my discussions in Helsinki on the Cyprus and Eastern Mediterranean problems.

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EUROPEAN DEFENSE

Q: Why, 30 years after World War II, does the US still have more than a quarter of a million soldiers in Europe? Are they really necessary? Why can't the Europeans do more for their own defense?

A: A strong and self-confident NATO Alliance remains the cornerstone of our overall defense strategy. In my recent remarks to the NATO leaders in Brussels, I reemphasized the need for all of us to maintain our force levels and to increase our military effectiveness through rationalizing our collective defense.

The US contribution is only a fraction of total Alliance forces. Our European Allies contribute heavily to NATO defense and we continually encourage them to maintain their current force levels despite the increased economic pressure we all face.

We also sponsor and encourage efforts within NATO to achieve greater military capability from existing resources through standardization of equipment, conversion of support forces to combat strength, and other means. Our objective is to obtain the greatest defense capability from the considerable military investments all the NATO members are making in Europe.

EASTERN EUROPE

Q: Mr. President, in your statement to the Americans of East European background on July 25, you reaffirmed the United States support for the aspirations for freedom and national independence of the peoples of Eastern Europe. At the same time, you visited three of those countries, including one of the most repressive internally, and lent the prestige of the American Presidency to the leaders of those closed societies. How do you reconcile these seemingly contradictory aspects of your policy?

A: In considering our attitude toward specific countries, and particularly those with different social and political systems, we must ask what approach is most likely to bring about eased conditions: a policy of confrontation or a policy of easing tensions? We have concluded that a policy which makes an attempt to settle political conflicts stands a better chance of bringing about a peaceful evolution toward more open and humane societies.

I believe that my visits to certain Eastern European countries in connection with my attendance at the meeting in Helsinki helps to demonstrate this policy and thus to encourage the kind of evolution we all would like to see in Eastern Europe.

EUROPEAN TRIP - NATO SUMMIT

Q: Mr. President, what do you hope to accomplish at the NATO Summit meeting in Brussels May 29-30? What is the purpose of the meeting?

A: There are no peoples with whom America's destiny has been more closely linked than those of Western Europe. None of the members of the Atlantic Community can be secure, prosper or advance unless all do so together. At this time in our history, our close collaboration is essential for our common security, to improve East-West relations, and to pool our efforts on the new challenges in the fields of economic policy and energy. I look forward to the meeting in Brussels as an opportunity to take stock, to consult on our future, and to reaffirm our cohesion in a difficult period.

I believe Alliance solidarity today is stronger than at any time in the last decade. The steps we have taken in the energy field are a remarkable success. This is an important example of what can be done in other fields. Maintaining this solidarity is a first priority for me. At the same time, we in the Alliance do have problems and challenges. Close consultations among allies, I am convinced, offer the best avenue to meet these challenges.

EUROPEAN TRIP - NATO SUMMIT

Q: Mr. President, you clearly attach considerable importance to the NATO Summit. Why, then, are some of the Allies -- such as the French -- so lukewarm about the meeting?

A: The decision to hold a summit in Brussels at the end of May was the product of general discussion and agreement among the members of the Alliance. It is very clear, I believe that the allies view the meeting as a welcome opportunity for consultations and a reaffirmation of Alliance solidarity. If France will not be represented at the highest level, this is largely due to French domestic considerations.

NATO SUMMIT: ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS

Q: Mr. President, according to press reports from Brussels, Chancellor Schmidt in his remarks to the NATO leaders emphasized the importance of NATO, a military alliance, also working on economic problems besetting the member nations. Were economic issues addressed and should the Alliance appropriately address such issues?

A: As I have said before, one of the basic reasons we welcomed the NATO Summit was to review in the Atlantic forum issues related to what we call the new agenda: the energy problem and its ramifications, the food problem, and the interaction of the separate national economies. We believe -- with Chancellor Schmidt -- that these problems affect the well-being and future of all the countries of the Alliance as much as would a potential military threat. The NATO Summit provided an excellent and suitable forum in which to have a broad discussion of approaches to dealing with these problems.

The free world must have a healthy economy if we are to sustain an adequate defense stature. It is important, therefore, that we work to move the western nations together out of the recession that has affected us in the last several months. Our exchange of views in Brussels in this area was, in my judgment, helpful in meeting this particular challenge.

RESULTS OF EUROPEAN VISIT

Q: Mr. President, your European visit has generally been reported as a success. Would you give us your assessment of the results of your European meetings?

A: The meetings of the past week were important and successful. As a result of my talks in Brussels, Madrid, Salzburg and Rome we have made real progress on foreign policy issues of importance to all Americans. We have clearly demonstrated the capacity of the West to deal with common problems. We have reaffirmed our determination to carry on cooperative programs to enhance our own abilities to deal collectively and effectively with the political, economic and defense challenges before us. While in Brussels, I had the opportunity to review current issues with 14 Alliance and European colleagues, and in the span of one week, I met with more than 20 foreign leaders.

As I said at Salzburg, my meetings with President Sadat were very valuable. We had extensive discussions and these very constructive talks will contribute, I am sure to the efforts toward a permanent peace in the Middle East based on a fair and equitable settlement. We established a personal relationship. As I have repeatedly stated the United States will not accept a stalemate in the Middle East.