

ADDRESS BY SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER
BEFORE THE BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MAY 21, 1975

It is an honor to be in this city whose fortitude has preserved the peace and whose devotion has inspired all who love freedom.

The people of West Berlin know better than anyone what freedom means.

They know -- and have proven -- that peace requires security as well as conciliation, courage as well as hope.

They have experienced that freedom can be preserved only by those who have faith in themselves and in the dignity of man.

I do not come to Berlin to lecture to you on the requirements of peace and freedom in the modern world. It is we who have learned, and you who have taught.

- You have endured and prevailed during the darkest days of confrontation between East and West.
- You have experienced in the cruel division of your own city the consequences of ideological hostility.
- You survived and prospered because the solidarity of the Western allies has buttressed your security and the security of Western Europe.
- And now, in a new era of eased confrontation in Europe, the fate of Berlin will determine the future of the efforts to insure security through negotiation and cooperation. As Berlin was the greatest symbol of the heroism of the immediate post-war period, it is also the acid test of the period we now hope to enter.

Throughout the post-war era, the United States has stood shoulder to shoulder with this city, in times of crisis and in times of hope. The strength of our commitment thus derives not from formal documents alone, but above all from our perception of our own objective interest and of a generation of shared experiences,

The security of West Berlin remains a vital interest of the United States. For us, much more is at stake here than the security of a city. To us you symbolize man's unquenchable yearning for freedom: you represent the capacity of democracy to summon the strength to defend its values. This is the cement of our tie with you, our sympathy for you, and our admiration for you.

My visit does not come in the midst of crisis; rather it takes place at a moment when this city is enjoying greater security than at any time in the last thirty years. But we shall not slacken our resolve or neglect our security, for we know that it has been our determination and our strength which have made the present opportunity for progress possible. By working to make restraint and negotiation the only realistic option, we have created conditions for a more rational, hopeful and reliable relationship with the East.

In the thermonuclear age, there is no alternative to peace. In the general interest -- most of all of those whose homes would be the focal point of crisis -- we seek just and reasonable solutions to outstanding issues. But America will never seek peace by abandoning principles or sacrificing friends.

In the delicate balance of relations between East and West, Berlin's position is pivotal. Throughout the period of detente the United States and its Western allies have shared the conviction that the hope of wider security and cooperation in Europe had to be vindicated in Berlin above all. We agreed that efforts to normalize relations in Central Europe had to begin with normalizing West Berlin's existence in safety and dignity. Therefore, we pressed for reliable, practical improvements in the conditions of access to Berlin and in life in this city; we made a major effort to remove Berlin as an issue in East-West confrontation. We consider the effectiveness, durability, and scrupulous observance of the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin of September 1971 a crucial test of the process called detente.

Given the complex history of the issue, we cannot expect the Quadripartite Agreement to work every day without flaw. But no one, East or West, can deny the practical benefits which have accrued to both sides from the Agreement and the arrangements which followed.

Before 1972, traffic on the vital access routes between Berlin and the Federal Republic was vulnerable to harassment on a variety of pretexts. The relationship between Bonn and West Berlin was subject to continuing dispute. And cruelly and tragically, the human connections between the people of West Berlin and their friends and families in the surrounding area were being stifled by Eastern controls.

Today by contrast:

- Vital surface access routes are guaranteed in an international agreement; unimpeded and preferential civilian traffic is enshrined in formally agreed procedures.
- Communications between West Berlin and East Berlin, between West Berlin and the German Democratic Republic have been improved. Direct telephone links now exist. Visits to the East now number in the millions annually, nearly 300,000 during the recent Easter holiday alone.
- The Western allies' rights and responsibilities to safeguard the status of the Western sectors of Berlin have been specifically reaffirmed.
- The Soviet Union has formally accepted that the ties between West Berlin and the Federal Republic "will be maintained and developed." It has agreed that Berlin's interests abroad be represented by the Federal Republic, and that the Federal Republic provide consular protection and representation for Berlin in international organizations. Berlin is also included in the increasingly important web of agreements governing intra-German ties.

While these legal guarantees are not necessarily self-implementing, they represent a significant achievement. We shall never relax our efforts to ensure the strict implementation of the Quadripartite Agreement. We shall deal with challenges with the same determination to resist pressures and with the same spirit of readiness to negotiate that produced the Agreement. Thus only if Berlin flourishes will detente flourish; only if you are secure will Europe be secure. This has been America's attitude for thirty years; it has not changed. On behalf of President Ford and the American people I reaffirm our historic relationship today.

Mr. Governing Mayor, Mr. Foreign Minister, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. In this House resides the democratic tradition that gave Berlin the moral strength and resiliency to withstand the hardest trials of the last thirty years. And you embody the democratic ideals which represent Berlin's future.

The tradition of this House began in 1946 with an election which, tragically, remains the only free vote held in all sectors of Berlin since the war. In 1975 you mark the 25th anniversary of the Berlin Constitution which has provided the framework for your growth and progress in freedom.

In the world today, democratic principles are under grave challenge on many continents. Over the next decade we will learn whether, in the face of economic stresses, military peril, and political change, free men have the will and imagination to vindicate the values they believe in. For these values, however vital, do not defend themselves nor do they grow without dedicated effort.

All great achievements were an ideal before they became a reality. What the free societies need above all is the confidence that they can shape their own future. Our material strength is undisputed and unmatched; what is required now is to summon our reserves of faith and dedication. The Atlantic nations have shown in countless endeavors in thirty years the tremendous strength of the free association of free peoples.

At moments of difficulty, it is well to remind ourselves of what we have achieved -- the reality of security and progress to which men and nations have aspired throughout history. The preservation of these achievements, and the world's hope for wider sharing, depend crucially on what we do together.

I have come to Berlin to tell you that America remains committed to the building of a just and peaceful, secure and free world. We know our moral compass. We shall be true to the belief in freedom, progress and human dignity which reflects America's best hopes.

This is why this city means so much to us. For thirty years you have symbolized our challenges; but for thirty years also you have recalled us to our duty. You have been in inspiration to all free men.

As we face a new era, with challenges more subtle and complex, Berlin will continue to be a symbol of freedom. We shall stand with you and we are confident that history will record Berlin not merely as a great city, but as a great principle in the story of man's struggle for freedom.