

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS  
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
WALTER SCHEEL  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

THE SOUTH GROUNDS

11:25 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a very great honor and personal pleasure, Mr. President, to welcome you here on behalf of the American people. Although this is your first visit as a Federal President, you have been welcomed to our country on many previous occasions. I, therefore, greet you not only as Federal President, but also as an old and very dear friend of America.

Over 17 years have passed since your distinguished predecessor, Theodor Heuss, paid us a State visit. In that year, 1958, the Federal Republic was in the early stages of a remarkable economic recovery and growth, which can now be seen as an economic miracle.

The Federal Republic was on its way to becoming one of our strongest allies, one of our most important trading partners and closest of friends.

We have seen many, many changes since the late 1950s. Mr. President, today we face new challenges of unparalleled complexity, including those of energy and international economics. Yet, the basic principles of our foreign policies and of our relationship remain sound and constant.

We are as strongly committed as we were 17 years ago to safeguarding the freedom of the West. We have remained committed to the freedom and security of Berlin. We see the peace and security of Central Europe as a true test of the process known as detente.

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Only a few days ago I made my first visit to Europe as President of the United States. In Brussels, the heads of Government of the North Atlantic nations met and reaffirmed the continuing solidarity of our Alliance and the continuing strength of our commitment to the goals that unite our peoples.

In the era now before us, I can say with confidence that Americans are committed to this Alliance with renewed dedication, vision and purpose.

It is my intention, Mr. President, to work in close concert with you to serve our peoples' common objectives. Together, our strong, free and prosperous nations can achieve much for our own peoples and for mankind.

Your visit, Mr. President, bears eloquent testimony to the friendship and partnership of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States. In this spirit, I bid you a most cordial welcome on this occasion, and I look forward to our discussions of the problems of mutual interest and concern.

PRESIDENT SCHEEL: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford:

My wife and I should like to express our sincere thanks for your friendly words of welcome.

Today, I come to the White House for the first time as President of the Federal Republic of Germany. What is, after all, the purpose of such a State visit?

Firstly, by its very character, it is intended to mirror the state of mutual relations. These relations are, I know of no doubt about it, excellent. We are showing people both at home and abroad how close are the ties which unite us.

This is a good thing, and important, too. It is something the world should indeed must know.

Such a visit also enables us to take stock. We look back at the past.

The bicentenary of the founding of the United States is near at hand. The 30th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe is just over. Both anniversaries play an important part in our relations.

The United States Constitution gave birth to modern democracies based on freedom, and thus to the democratic family of nations, to which the Federal Republic also belongs.

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For us Germans, the 30th anniversary of the end of the war calls forth ambivalent feelings, but it also reminds us of the debt of gratitude we owe to the people of the United States for the generous help they afforded their former enemy.

I need not press the point that this help will never be forgotten.

We must not only dwell on the past; we must also face up to the present. No one, Mr. President, has a clearer picture than you and the Government you lead of the problems of worldwide dimensions which confront us today.

The free Western world has taken up this historic challenge. I am convinced it has enough courage, perception, imagination and initiative to solve the pending problems.

Of course, this cannot be done unless we join forces. Alone, everyone for himself, we shall not succeed. This means that we need European unification. We need the Atlantic partnership between a united Europe and the United States of America.

This Atlantic partnership must comprise not only our common security policy, which will continue to be vital, but also all political spheres of importance for both sides. In particular, it must include a common approach to the crucial economic and monetary problems facing the world today.

Every step towards more solidarity, I believe, is a step to strengthening our free democratic system.

Your impressive visit to Europe underlines once more these fundamental truths. The countries joined in the Atlantic partnership do not cut themselves off from the outside world. Indeed, one of the reasons for uniting has been to contribute with our combined strengths towards a solution of the global social problem of our time -- that of development.

The chances for the survival of democracy are, as I see it, crucially dependent on the forces of freedom all over the world, finding the right answer to this problem.

Mr. President, I am pleased to feel that I am a welcome guest in your country. Let me say here and now that you, too, would be a highly welcome guest in our country. I do hope that I will be able in the not too distant future to welcome you in Bonn as the guest of the Federal Republic of Germany. But right now, Mr. President, I am looking forward to my talks with you.

Thank you.

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THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I look forward to going there.

END (AT 11:35 A.M. EDT)