

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Bonn, Germany)

THE WHITE HOUSE
EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
WALTER SCHEEL
PRESIDENT
OF
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

ON THE RHINE RIVER
M.S. DRACHENFELS

9:15 P.M. (Bonn Time)

PRESIDENT SCHEEL: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, ladies and gentlemen:

A few weeks ago at the splendid reception before the White House in Washington, I expressed the wish to soon be able to greet you here in Germany. To my delight, the international calendar of Conference has helped to make this wish come true so soon.

Today you are here. I bid you, Mrs. Ford and your associates a warm welcome. You do know that you are highly appreciated and highly welcome guests in our country.

We know, ladies and gentlemen, that wherever the President of the United States goes in the world, his office follows him -- the White House. My house has the color in common with yours. It is white, undoubtedly. However, it is too small to accommodate a festive party in your honor. This is why I invited you to this white boat.

Outside the banks are gliding by -- things are in motion like the river. We may have been cruising against the current. We have just turned around. At any rate, the further we go together on this truly European stream, the brighter the views.

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This corresponds to a political hope and to a political goal. It is our hope, it is our goal to create a solidly founded strong Europe which together with the United States of America will secure a future of peace and freedom. The closer we come to Europe, the brighter the prospects.

Much has been achieved. The British people have clearly and for good decided in favor of Europe. European political cooperation has pointed up new possibilities to develop Europe institutionally. Yet much remains to be done.

All Western countries are struggling with economic problems at the present. But more and more the view is gaining ground that individual countries by themselves cannot master these difficulties.

The task which the Federal Government has conducted in the course of these past days makes it clear that the willingness to make common efforts is on the rise.

Europe is moving in the direction of coordinating its different economic policies. This is another important step towards progress. Out of these very difficulties we gain insights and strengths to overcome these difficulties.

Europe, by itself, will not be able to master the economic problems of today. We can only be successful if we coordinate our efforts with those of the United States of America and this cannot but strengthen the awareness of the benefits and the purpose of the Atlantic partnership on both sides of the Atlantic.

From the beginning, Atlantic cooperation was a requirement, as we all realize, for our security policy. Today, it is just as well, and in particular, a requirement for our economic policy.

Mr. President, you have come to our country at a very significant time. In a few days, in Helsinki, the final phase of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe will open. The negotiations in Geneva have set an example of the opportunities for constructive Western cooperation.

The negotiations have also shown, and your presence in Helsinki, Mr. President, will impressively demonstrate to the entire world, that America and Europe are inseparably linked, that one cannot talk about security and cooperation in Europe without including the United States.

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The Atlantic Alliance is part and parcel of Western Europe. The Helsinki Conference should constitute another step towards detente. The documents to be signed provide a frame which needs to be filled in the future by agreements and concrete behavior. Each signatory state will then be able to demonstrate what it understands by detente.

This is the yardstick by which it will be measured. Nobody could wish more fervently than the Germans that the hopes tied to the Conference may be fulfilled.

Yet it is clear to us that no conference can guarantee our security. The Atlantic Alliance remains the foundation of our security.

Mr. President, you have already visited with your compatriots in the Federal Republic. The presence of the American soldiers in the Federal Republic and in Berlin is the clearest and the most important expression of the fact that the security of the United States and of Europe do belong together inseparably.

For the West, there is only one security. The Federal Republic contributes to the best of its ability to safeguard the common security. The American contribution, however, is irreplaceable and will remain so.

Even a comprehensive European union, which is the goal of the member states of the European community, cannot do without this trans-Atlantic link.

We owe thanks to the American Government for having held fast to this policy unwaveringly. This is why over 400,000 American citizens live among us as soldiers, civilian employees, and families.

You can be sure, Mr. President, that we, citizens and authorities alike, do what we can to make your compatriots feel at home with us. They are our friends; they are our guests and the good comrades of the German soldiers.

Nevertheless, they do live in a different country with a different language, and different customs, and over the long run that is not easy.

Therefore, permit me, Mr. President, to say to you, the highest representative of the American people, and to all Americans who are here in Germany for reasons of our common security, very simply and very warmly, thank you.

Mr. President, as you can see, we have many reasons to be glad about your visit. It makes us happy.

Once again, a cordial welcome to the white boat.

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THE PRESIDENT: President Scheel and distinguished guests:

Mr. President, you have spoken most generously and most far-sightedly, as well as most eloquently, and I am pleased and honored to respond to such a gracious Rhinelander on this beautiful river, which has witnessed the growth of German-American cooperation.

I think there is something especially significant that an American President is on this wonderful river that includes from the headwaters in Switzerland, to France, to Germany, the Netherlands and to the Atlantic.

There is something that seems to bind us all together, and I could not help but notice during the day, and as we have been sailing here tonight, many passing ships, some bearing flags of different nations, that this great river, as a result, symbolizes our hope for expanding the flow of peaceful commerce and the exchange throughout the world.

Just as many solid bridges span the majestic Rhine, strong links of friendship unite our two nations. I experienced today, Mr. President, this friendship anew when I met with Chancellor Schmidt and his associates, the distinguished leaders of your Government, and received the very warm welcome of so many citizens of your great country.

As we all know, our relationship is based upon a tradition that is as old as the United States itself, which now approaches its 200th year of freedom and democracy.

Every American schoolchild knows how General Von Steuben came to help George Washington win the American Revolution. All Americans are extremely proud of the infusion of German talents throughout the years into America, a Nation of immigrants.

Today, I had the privilege, as you mentioned, to visit the military forces of our country and of yours, working in partnership, playing in partnership and enjoying a family relationship in partnership.

It was an inspiring afternoon for me to meet the officers, the men, on both sides, the German as well as the American. It is encouraging to me that they are working with a common zeal for a common purpose.

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The commitment and the endeavor are very fundamental, as we know, to the security of the United States, to the Federal Republic and to Berlin and to the entire Atlantic Alliance.

I thank you for the very, very warm welcome which the German people have extended to me, to Mrs. Ford and to our son, Jack, but also to every American stationed here in the German Republic and their families.

Few people are more united than Americans and Germans in their support of the principles of independence, freedom and self-determination.

Today, we speak of both the East as well as the West with new emphasis of a common future. Much effort has gone into increasing contacts and cooperation among the peoples of Europe. We have made some significant advances.

The forthcoming meeting, as you have mentioned, in Helsinki offers hope for future progress. Obviously, we have much further to go.

Americans do look forward to continued cooperation, not only with the Federal Republic, but with the peoples of Europe as a whole.

Mr. President, a little more than a month has passed since we enjoyed you and Mrs. Scheel being in Washington and visiting us at the White House. The spirit prevailing among us today strongly reaffirms the genuine and continuing friendly relationship, the close relationship between our countries, our peoples and our Government.

If you will raise your glass with me, I would like to propose a particularly cordial prosit to President Scheel and to the Federal Republic of Germany.

END (AT 9:32 P.M. BONN TIME)