

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the White House Press Secretary
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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am, of course, very glad to be home, but I am also very glad that I went to Europe. By representing the United States of America at the 35-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at Helsinki, I was able to deliver in person a message of enormous significance to all Europeans.

That message was -- America still cares. The torch in the Statue of Liberty still burns bright. We will stand for freedom and independence in 1976 as we did in 1776. The United States of America still believes that all men and women, everywhere, should enjoy the God-given blessings of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in a world of peace.

The reception that I received from the peoples of the five countries I visited - West Germany, Poland, Finland, Romania and Yugoslavia - was not a tribute to me so much as to the ideals and the continuing leadership of the United States in the worldwide effort for peace, progress and prosperity for all nations.

That an American President could receive such warm and hospitable welcomes in the countries of Eastern Europe shows that the message I brought to Helsinki came through loud and clear.

And we will continue to encourage the full implementation of the principles embodied in the C.S.C.E. declarations until the 1977 follow-up meeting to assess how well all the signatory states have translated these principles into concrete action for the benefit of their peoples and the common progress in Europe.

Europeans -- East and West -- will also be watching. If the principles of Helsinki are lived up to, as each leader solemnly pledged, then we can consider the conference a success in which we have played a significant part.

My reception in the Federal Republic of Germany and Finland and the personal talks that I was able to have with the leaders of our NATO Allies and other governments were constructive and greatly gratifying. So were my discussions with General Secretary Brezhnev which I am confident will lead to an accelerated disposition of some of the differences which existed before our meetings.

I believe we are on the right course and the course that offers the best hope for a better world. I will continue to steer that steady course because this experience has further convinced me that millions of hopeful people, in all parts of Europe, still look to the United States of America as the champion of human freedom everywhere and of a just peace among the nations of the world.

I repeat: I am glad that I went; I am happy to be back.

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