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**THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . . .**

**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS**

**MEETING WITH AMERICANS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN**

**BACKGROUND**

**FRIDAY, JULY 25, 1975**

I AM GLAD TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY, BEFORE  
TAKING OFF FOR EUROPE TOMORROW, TO DISCUSS WITH YOU  
FRANKLY HOW I FEEL ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING EUROPEAN  
SECURITY CONFERENCE IN HELSINKI.

I KNOW THERE ARE SOME HONEST DOUBTS AND  
DISAGREEMENTS AMONG GOOD AMERICANS ABOUT THIS MEETING  
WITH THE LEADERS OF EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES  
AND CANADA -- 35 NATIONS ALTOGETHER.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO FEAR THE CONFERENCE WILL PUT  
A SEAL OF APPROVAL ON THE POLITICAL DIVISION OF EUROPE THAT  
HAS EXISTED SINCE THE SOVIET UNION INCORPORATED THE BALTIC  
NATIONS AND SET NEW BOUNDARIES ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE BY  
MILITARY ACTION IN WORLD WAR TWO.

THESE CRITICS CONTEND THAT PARTICIPATION BY THE UNITED STATES  
IN THE HELSINKI UNDERSTANDINGS AMOUNTS TO TACIT RECOGNITION  
OF A STATUS QUO WHICH FAVORS THE SOVIET UNION AND  
PERPETUATES ITS CONTROL OVER COUNTRIES ALLIED WITH IT.

ON THE OTHER EXTREME THERE ARE CRITICS WHO SAY THE MEETING IS A MEANINGLESS EXERCISE BECAUSE THE HELSINKI DECLARATIONS ARE MERELY STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES AND GOOD INTENTIONS WHICH ARE NEITHER LEGALLY BINDING NOR ENFORCEABLE AND CANNOT BE DEPENDED UPON.

THEY EXPRESS CONCERN, HOWEVER, THAT THE RESULT WILL BE TO  
MAKE THE FREE GOVERNMENTS OF WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH  
AMERICA LESS WARY AND LEAD TO A LETTING DOWN OF NATO'S  
POLITICAL GUARD AND MILITARY DEFENSES.



IF I SERIOUSLY SHARED THESE RESERVATIONS I WOULD NOT BE GOING, BUT I CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND THE HISTORICAL REASONS FOR THEM AND, ESPECIALLY, THE ANXIETY OF AMERICANS WHOSE ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS HAVE BEEN AND STILL ARE PROFOUNDLY AFFECTED BY EAST-WEST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE.

I WOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THE DOCUMENT I WILL SIGN  
IS NEITHER A TREATY NOR IS IT LEGALLY BINDING ON ANY  
PARTICIPATING STATE. THE HELSINKI DOCUMENTS INVOLVE  
POLITICAL AND MORAL COMMITMENTS AIMED AT LESSENING TENSIONS  
AND OPENING FURTHER THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE  
PEOPLES OF EAST AND WEST.

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES, AND IT HAS BEEN MY POLICY EVER SINCE I ENTERED PUBLIC LIFE, TO SUPPORT THE ASPIRATIONS FOR FREEDOM AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN EUROPE -- WITH WHOM WE HAVE CLOSE TIES OF CULTURE AND BLOOD -- BY EVERY PROPER AND PEACEFUL MEANS.

I BELIEVE THE OUTCOME OF THIS EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE  
WILL BE A STEP -- HOW LONG A STEP REMAINS TO BE TESTED --  
IN THAT DIRECTION. I HOPE MY VISITS TO POLAND, ROMANIA  
AND YUGOSLAVIA WILL AGAIN DEMONSTRATE OUR CONTINUING  
FRIENDSHIP AND INTEREST IN THE WELFARE AND PROGRESS OF  
THE FINE PEOPLE OF EASTERN EUROPE.

TO KEEP THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE IN PERSPECTIVE,  
WE MUST REMEMBER THAT IT IS NOT SIMPLY ANOTHER SUMMIT  
BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS. ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS PRIMARILY  
A POLITICAL DIALOGUE AMONG THE EUROPEANS, EAST, WEST AND  
NEUTRAL, WITH PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIPS  
RATHER THAN GLOBAL DIFFERENCES.

THE UNITED STATES HAS TAKEN PART, ALONG WITH  
CANADA, TO MAINTAIN THE SOLIDARITY OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE.  
OUR ABSENCE WOULD HAVE CAUSED A SERIOUS IMBALANCE FOR THE  
WEST.

WE HAVE ACTED IN CONCERT WITH OUR FREE AND  
DEMOCRATIC PARTNERS TO PRESERVE OUR INTERESTS IN BERLIN AND  
GERMANY, AND HAVE OBTAINED THE PUBLIC COMMITMENT OF THE  
OF THE WARSAW PACT GOVERNMENTS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF  
PEACEFUL ADJUSTMENT OF FRONTIERS -- A MAJOR CONCESSION  
WHICH RUNS QUITE CONTRARY TO THE ALLEGATION THAT PRESENT  
BORDERS ARE BEING PERMANENTLY FROZEN.

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THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS MET IMPORTANT WESTERN  
PRECONDITIONS -- THE BERLIN AGREEMENT OF 1971, THE FORCE  
REDUCTION TALKS NOW UNDERWAY IN VIENNA -- BEFORE OUR  
AGREEMENT TO GO TO HELSINKI.



SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING THE UNDERSTANDABLE CONCERN ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE HELSINKI DECLARATIONS ON THE BALTIC NATIONS, I CAN ASSURE YOU AS ONE WHO HAS LONG BEEN INTERESTED IN THIS QUESTION THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS NEVER RECOGNIZED THE SOVIET INCORPORATION OF LITHUANIA, LATVIA AND ESTONIA AND IS NOT DOING SO NOW. OUR OFFICIAL POLICY OF NON-RECOGNITION IS NOT AFFECTED BY THE RESULTS OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE.

THERE IS INCLUDED IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY THE PROVISION THAT NO OCCUPATION OR ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS LEGAL. THIS IS NOT TO RAISE THE HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE ANY IMMEDIATE CHANGE IN THE MAP OF EUROPE, BUT THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT ABANDONED AND WILL NOT COMPROMISE THIS LONG-STANDING PRINCIPLE.

THE QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED: WHAT HAVE WE GIVEN  
UP IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS AND WHAT HAVE WE OBTAINED IN RETURN  
FROM THE OTHER SIDE? I HAVE STUDIED THE NEGOTIATIONS AND  
DECLARATIONS CAREFULLY AND WILL DISCUSS THEM EVEN MORE  
INTENSELY WITH OTHER LEADERS IN HELSINKI.

IN MY JUDGEMENT, THE UNITED STATES AND THE OPEN COUNTRIES  
OF THE WEST ALREADY PRACTICE WHAT THE HELSINKI ACCORDS PREACH,  
AND HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING WHAT THEY PROHIBIT -- SUCH AS  
USING FORCE OR RESTRICTING FREEDOMS.

WE ARE NOT COMMITTING OURSELVES TO ANYTHING BEYOND WHAT  
WE ARE ALREADY COMMITTED TO BY OUR OWN MORAL AND LEGAL  
STANDARDS AND BY MORE FORMAL TREATY AGREEMENTS SUCH AS  
THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

WE ARE GETTING A PUBLIC COMMITMENT BY THE LEADERS  
OF THE MORE CLOSED AND CONTROLLED COUNTRIES TO A GREATER  
MEASURE OF FREEDOM AND MOVEMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS,  
INFORMATION AND IDEAS THAN HAS EXISTED THERE IN THE PAST,  
AND ESTABLISHING A YARDSTICK BY WHICH THE WORLD CAN MEASURE  
HOW WELL THEY LIVE UP TO THESE STATED INTENTIONS.

IT IS A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF A GREATER DEGREE OF EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITY, OF EXPANDING EAST-WEST CONTACT, <sup>OF</sup> ~~OR~~ MORE NORMAL  
AND HEALTHIER RELATIONS IN AN AREA WHERE WE HAVE THE CLOSEST  
HISTORIC TIES. SURELY THIS IS <sup>IN</sup> <sub>^</sub> THE BEST INTEREST OF THE  
UNITED STATES AND OF PEACE IN THE WORLD.

I THINK WE ARE ALL AGREED THAT OUR WORLD CANNOT  
BE CHANGED FOR THE BETTER BY WAR; THAT IN THE THERMONUCLEAR  
AGE OUR PRIMARY TASK IS TO REDUCE THE DANGER OF UNPRECEDENTED  
DESTRUCTION. THIS WE ARE DOING THROUGH CONTINUING  
STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND  
THE TALKS ON MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE.



THIS EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE IN HELSINKI, WHILE IT  
CONTAINS SOME MILITARY UNDERSTANDINGS SUCH AS ADVANCE  
NOTICE OF MANUEVERS, SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH EITHER  
THE SALT OR MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. THE HELSINKI SUMMIT  
IS LINKED WITH OUR OVERALL POLICY OF WORKING TO REDUCE  
EAST-WEST TENSIONS AND PURSUING PEACE, BUT IT IS A  
MUCH MORE GENERAL AND MODEST UNDERTAKING.

ITS SUCCESS OR FAILURE DEPENDS NOT ALONE ON THE  
UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION BUT PRIMARILY UPON ITS  
33 EUROPEAN SIGNATORIES, EAST, WEST AND NEUTRAL.

THE FACT THAT EACH OF THEM, LARGE AND SMALL, CAN HAVE  
THEIR VOICES HEARD IS ITSELF A GOOD SIGN.

THE FACT THAT THESE VERY DIFFERENT GOVERNMENTS CAN AGREE,  
EVEN ON PAPER, TO SUCH PRINCIPLES AS GREATER HUMAN CONTACTS  
AND EXCHANGES, IMPROVED CONDITIONS FOR JOURNALISTS,  
REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES AND INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES,  
A FREER FLOW OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS, AND INCREASED  
TOURISM AND TRAVEL, SEEMS TO ME A DEVELOPMENT WELL WORTHY  
OF POSITIVE AND PUBLIC ENCOURAGEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES.

IF IT ALL FAILS, EUROPE WILL BE NO WORSE OFF THAN  
IT IS NOW. IF EVEN A PART OF IT SUCCEEDS, THE LOT OF  
THE PEOPLE IN EASTERN EUROPE WILL BE THAT MUCH BETTER, AND  
THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM WILL ADVANCE AT LEAST THAT FAR.

I SAW AN EDITORIAL THE OTHER DAY ENTITLED:

"JERRY, DON'T GO."

BUT I WOULD RATHER READ THAT THAN HEADLINES ALL  
OVER EUROPE SAYING: "UNITED STATES BOYCOTTS PEACE HOPES."

SO I AM GOING, AND I HOPE YOUR SUPPORT GOES  
WITH ME.

END OF TEXT