

July 11 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994

NOTE: The President's 65th news conference began at 11:49 a.m. at the Chancellory. Chancellor Kohl spoke in German, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany in Bonn

July 11, 1994

Chancellor Kohl, distinguished guests, on behalf of my wife and myself and our entire delegation, let me first thank you for receiving us so warmly, for arranging such wonderful weather and such a wonderful feeling of hospitality.

Let me begin by thanking the Chancellor for his very fine statement. I found myself listening to him describing his vision of the present and the future and imagining what I would say when I stood to speak myself. And it reminded me of what so often happens at the G-7 meetings or NATO meetings. They call on me, and I say, "I agree with Helmut." [*Laughter*]

But let me say that the United States does strongly support the movement toward a more united Europe and understands that Germany's leadership toward a truly united Europe is critical. We see today the growing strength of the European Union and NATO's new Partnership For Peace, which has 21 nations including Russia, the other former republics of the Soviet Union, the former Warsaw Pact countries, and two formerly more neutral countries, Sweden and Finland, all signed up to work with us toward a more secure Europe in which all nations respect each other's borders.

Chancellor, I thank you especially for your kind remarks about the American military and their presence in your country over these last decades.

The thing that is truly unique about this moment in history is that all of us through NATO and the Partnership For Peace are seeking to use our military to do something never before done in the entire history of the nation state on the European Continent: to unify truly free and independent nations of their own free will in a Europe that is truly free together, rather than to have some new and different division of Europe that works to the advantage of some country and to the disadvantage of others.

To be sure, no one knows for sure what the future holds or whether this can be done, but

for the first time ever sensible people believe it is possible and we must try. If we are able to see a united Europe through common democracies, the expansion of trade, and the use of security to protect freedom and independence rather than to restrict it, this would be a truly momentous event in all of human history.

We may all debate and argue about exactly how this might be done and what should be done next and whether the next step should be one of economics, or politics, or strengthening the Partnership For Peace. But there is one thing on which we must all surely agree: The future we dream of cannot be achieved without the continued strong, unified efforts of Germany and the United States.

In closing, I would like to just refer to a bit of American history. What we have done together since the end of the Second World War is familiar to all of you. But some of you may not know that my country, from its very beginning, has been strengthened by people from Germany who came there first primarily to the State of Pennsylvania, known for its tolerance and openness to people of different racial and ethnic and religious groups.

Just one week ago on this day, one week ago today, we celebrated the 218th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence. As soon as the Declaration of Independence was issued, it was immediately reprinted in German so that it could be given to the colonists in our colonies who at that time still only spoke or read German. I might say, today, unfortunately, more of you speak our language than we speak yours, but we're trying to do better. [*Laughter*]

At any rate, down to the present day, after 218 years, there are only two copies of the original German printing of the American Declaration of Independence in existence. And some of your freedom-loving fellow citizens have purchased one of those copies for the German Historical Museum.

And so, Chancellor Kohl, it is here today, and I am honored to be here with it. And I hope all of you will have a chance to view it as a symbol of our unity and our devotion to freedom. Thank you very much.

I would like to now offer a toast to a free, democratic, and unified Germany, with great

thanks for our common heritage and our common future.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. at the Petersburg Guest House.

Remarks to the Citizens of Oggersheim, Germany

July 11, 1994

Thank you, very much, Chancellor Kohl, Mrs. Kohl, Oberbürgermeister Schulte, Mrs. Schulte. How did I do with that? Okay? I said the word almost alright?

Hillary and I are very honored to be here tonight in Chancellor Kohl's hometown. When we were coming here on the bus, of course, I saw much of the unique and rich history of Germany, including the marvelous cathedral at Worms, where Martin Luther tacked his theses to the door, as Chancellor Kohl has said. But I also saw the fields of the farms, which reminded me of my home, and the small towns which made me feel at home. And more importantly, when we got out down the street and began to walk down here, I felt a sense of friendship, a sense of real contact with people that, too often, leaders of great nations don't get in this day and time.

And so, Hillary and I would like to thank you for making us feel at home and for your friendship toward the United States and for reminding us that behind all the decisions that leaders in public life make, there are real people whose lives will be affected, children whose future will be shaped, and our obligation every day is to remember the faces of our homes.

So I thank you for your friendship to my country. I thank you for your outpouring of friendship today. And I thank you for making Hillary and me feel as if we, too, are at home.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 6:40 p.m. in front of the residence of Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. In his remarks, he referred to Hannelore Kohl, wife of the Chancellor, Dr. Wolfgang Schulte, Lord Mayor of Oggersheim, and his wife, Dr. Dorothee Schulte.

Remarks to U.S. Military Personnel at Ramstein Air Base in Ramstein, Germany

July 11, 1994

Thank you. First, let me thank the Air Force Band. They were great. Thank you very much. Thank you, Chief Bailey, General Joulwan, General Oaks. Minister President Scharping, thank you for joining us tonight; Colonel Caine. It is an honor for me to be here with the men, the women, and the families of the magnificent 86th Wing and the KLM community. Thank you for coming out; thank you for serving America; thank you for making us proud. I'm also proud to be here visiting the largest American

community outside of the United States of America. I want to thank the crews who just showed me the C-130 and the F-16 and all of you who serve in any way.

You know, last month I came to Europe for the 50th anniversary of the Italian and Normandy campaigns of World War II to honor the brave airmen, soldiers, and sailors who rescued freedom in its darkest hour in this century. Tonight I come here to honor you who keep the torch of freedom alive. We are in your debt.