

Remarks Following Discussions With Chancellor Helmut Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany

May 17, 1990

The President. Chancellor Kohl and I had an opportunity to follow up on our extended discussions at Camp David back in February and review the progress toward German unification and the progress in East-West relations. I'm grateful to the Chancellor, together with Minister Genscher and Minister Stoltenberg, for taking the time to come to Washington today to continue our important dialog on these historic issues before us.

What's clear from all our discussion over the past months, including our extensive talks today, is that the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany share the same approach and have the same goals regarding German unification. We both want a united Germany which enjoys full sovereignty; a united Germany which is a full member of the Western community and of the NATO alliance, including participation in its integrated military structures; a united Germany which is, as the Federal Republic has been for over 40 years, a model of freedom, tolerance, and friendly relations with its neighbors.

During our discussion today, we reviewed the talks in Bonn on May 5th among Foreign Ministers of the two German States, the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union -- those are the two-plus-four talks. Chancellor Kohl and I agreed that these talks should terminate all Four Power rights and responsibilities at the time of German unification. A united Germany should have full control over all of its territory, without any new discriminatory constraints on German sovereignty. Forty-five years after the end of the war, there is no reason that a unified democratic Germany should be in any way singled out for some special status. In keeping with the Helsinki Final Act, Germany should be fully sovereign, free to choose its own alliances and security arrangements. And we agree that U.S. military forces should remain stationed in the united Germany and elsewhere in Europe to continue to promote stability and security.

The Chancellor and I also discussed the broad issues of East-West relations. And I expressed my hope for a successful U.S.-Soviet summit at the end of this month but also reiterated my own concern, which the Chancellor shares, about the situation in Lithuania. We reaffirmed our commitment to the opening of a dialog in good faith between the Soviet leaders and Lithuanian representatives.

We also discussed the forthcoming NATO summit. It will be held in London on July 5th and July 6th. And the Chancellor and I reviewed my proposal that the summit address the political role that NATO can play in the new Europe; the conventional forces the alliance will need in the time ahead and NATO's goals for conventional arms control; the role of nuclear weapons based in Europe and Western objectives in new nuclear arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union; and the alliance's common objectives for strengthening the CSCE, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

At this time of enormous and, I would say, encouraging change in Germany and Europe as a whole, we reaffirm the continuing vital role of the North Atlantic alliance in guaranteeing stability and security. We also want that CSCE to pursue a more ambitious agenda in helping the rising democracies in Eastern Europe join the community of free nations and have a strong voice in the new Europe.

When I visited Germany last May, I spoke of the Federal Republic and the United States as partners in leadership. The remarkable changes that have occurred in this short year since then have fully confirmed that partnership, and we now look together with hope and confidence to a Germany united in peace and freedom and to a Europe whole and free.

Chancellor, thank you very much for coming, sir.

The Chancellor. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to thank you, first of all, very warmly for the warm hospitality with which you have received me here today -- me and the members of my delegation. We had intensive discussions in a very warm and friendly atmosphere.

Allow me to summarize my message in three points. First of all, on behalf of all Germans, I express sincere thanks to the American people, and especially to you, President Bush, for the magnificent support that you have granted from the outset and continue to grant to us Germans during this decade on our path to German unity. The Americans and Germans stood side by side at the time of the Berlin blockade and the erection of the Berlin Wall. And together we championed, not least in the difficult days of the Cold War, our vision of freedom, democracy, and human rights. Now that this vision is becoming a reality in the whole of Europe, that the Berlin Wall is being torn down and sold as souvenirs, that Germany and its former capital, Berlin, are becoming reunited, there is something that is all the more true: The friendship and partnership with the United States continue to be vital to us Germans. Naturally, this also applies to a united Germany.

A united Germany will remain a member of the North Atlantic alliance. But in view of the change occurring in Europe, in view of the triumph of human rights, democracy, pluralism, and a social market economy in the whole of Europe, the alliance must concentrate more on its traditional political role. As the threat is decreasing appreciably, the alliance must keep the initiative in the field of disarmament and arms control and review its strategy and structure accordingly.

I'm extremely grateful to you, Mr. President, for having presented important and forward-looking proposals. Together, with our allies, we shall chart the course at the NATO summit meeting in London early in July.

Mr. President, allow me to state at this opportunity here, once and again, how important it is going to be for the future of Germany and Europe that the United States take their legitimate place in Germany and in Europe as a whole.

You, Mr. President, and I agreed in our talks that in order to achieve this the three anchorages must be strengthened. That means NATO as an indispensable transatlantic security link between the European and North American democracies. Cooperation between the United States and the European Community -- this is going to be of ever-growing importance in view of the completion of the internal market within the European Community by 1992 and also in view of the ever-closer political union within the European Community. What is also important is the expansion of the CSCE into a system of assured human rights, guaranteed security, and comprehensive cooperation for all 35 member countries. We continue to strive for a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe, in which the division of Europe, also as regards the date, is overcome together with the division of Germany.

Mr. President, for many of us in Germany, a dream is coming true now, is becoming reality also for me. German unity and unity of Europe are two sides of the same coin. We have a lot of reason to be grateful with regard to many who have helped us, but particularly towards our American friends. And you, Mr. President, have a very important role in all this.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his opening remarks, he referred to German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Defense Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg. The Chancellor spoke in German, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.