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Speech by the Chancellor of the Federal
Republic of Germany, Herr Willy Brandt,
before the Woodrow Wilson International
Center for Scholars, Washington,
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Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most grateful for your invitation and for the opportunity it affords me of commenting on some questions of common interest.

The Federal Republic of Germany pursues its interests like any other country. It knows its responsibilities within the family of nations and its commitments within the Alliance.

The Atlantic Alliance is the basis for our foreign policy because security is the be-all and end-all. I want this to be understood the way I say it, without any ifs and buts. And I would like our American friends - in spite of all the other problems they have to deal with - to be able to subscribe to this sober statement: the Alliance has consolidated itself, and co-operation within the Alliance has become closer. U/

From a political point of view this has been impressively confirmed by the recent NATO Ministerial Conference in Lisbon. But in the military field there have been new developments as well.

Since last year the European partners in the Alliance have been building up a European Defense Improvement Programme involving an amount of one billion dollars. Half of this will be spent on additional national defense contributions whilst the other half will be used to set up a joint fund to improve NATO infrastructure at a faster rate. Further measures are being considered by the European members of the Alliance.

This may seem a modest amount in comparison with the American defense burden. But I have mentioned this to show you that this is an innovation of fundamental and practical significance. And I can say in all modesty that my Government has attached and will continue to attach great importance to the joint responsibility of the European partners within the Alliance being recognized and developed.

As you will know, the Federal Republic of Germany has for a good number of years been trying to offset, within the framework of its possibilities, the burden imposed on this country's balance of payments by the stationing of American troops in Germany. My Government is prepared to continue to make substantial contributions towards achieving this aim in the interest of the common defense effort. Yet we should not overlook the fact that offsetting foreign exchange costs is a bilateral problem while the actual business of burden-sharing within the alliance is multilateral.

On the other hand, we must of course also bear in mind that the American forces in Europe are of great importance not only for the Europeans but for the United States as well. What matters is the security of the Alliance as a whole, and certainly also the special role the United States has to play in world affairs as a superpower.

I wish to emphasize that we in the Federal Republic of Germany realize that the Western Alliance will remain the essential instrument of common security for the unforeseeable future. Allow me to recall a few facts that are sometimes forgotten. Ninety per cent of the ground forces in Europe and seventy-five per cent of the air forces are provided by the European members of the Alliance. So there is no need for an appeal to undertake common efforts in the interest of common defense. We should not view the situation any more unfavourably than it really is.

Let me add, however, that only a strong, united Western Europe can in the long run take over that kind of responsibility in world affairs which will effectively relieve the United States and thus become an adequate partner. Unfortunately, I cannot help gaining the impression that because of their many other problems the Americans hardly notice that what is at stake in these very weeks and months is a breakthrough in the process of enlarging the European Community.

Of course, I can well understand that our American friends have often been disappointed by the sluggishness of this process in the past. But I feel that over the past eighteen months or so success has been achieved - a success which, I might add, has in no small measure been due to German foreign policy - which enabled the work of European unification to advance again after years of stagnation.

The negotiations on Britain's entry to the European Community are drawing to a close. This will open up the way for the accession of the three other applicant countries. So you see, we are in the act of building a community of ten European States. And, naturally, whilst we are about it we must work out sensible arrangements with other European countries to ensure that fresh customs barriers will not arise when EFTA is dissolved.

At the same time and notwithstanding the peculiarities of the current monetary situation, we aim to press on towards economic and monetary union. Its purpose is to see to it that once we enter the next decade there will be a common economic and monetary policy of the Community.

And again at the same time, we are intensifying the political co-ordination so that the countries of Western Europe will be able more and more to speak with one voice in international affairs. In this respect we have come to take a realistic view of future possibilities. The seventies will bring not a West European federation but rather a confederation, if these terms are any help at all in comprehending the situation. For this is a new process in history. It will lead to joint governmental institutions under parliamentary control in the fields for which we shall have a common policy.

In other words, a Europe is taking shape which, unlike the situation in which it finds itself today, will not only be more integrated economically but more capable of political action as well. We in Germany belong to the vanguard of those who insist that the European Community, rather than isolate itself, must be outward-looking, outward-looking, above all, in its relations with the United States. It will not be possible to avoid clashes of economic interests altogether. But feel that, given sufficiently close contact, it will be

possible to provide for common and occasionally divergent interests to be discussed in a spirit of genuine partnership.

Let me return to the question whether and how we can reduce the common defense burden. The solution to this problem will not have any lasting effect unless new elements be come effective in East-West relations and until progress is made towards mutual, balanced force reductions.

This subject which now appears to be taking concrete shape, occupied my attention when I was still Foreign Minister. At the NATO conference in Reykjavik three years ago we agreed that we were ready to discuss the question of balanced force reductions with the Soviet Union and its partners in the Warsaw Pact. That "signal" of Reykjavik was repeated in Rome twelve months ago. The response from some members of our Alliance did not at all sound very encouraging. From the East there was no response at all, indeed the Czechoslovak crisis had placed a new strain on relations. But times change, and now we see that the Soviet Union and the United States - and not only they - favour this idea in principle. In fact it has long since been given a name: MBFR.

We in the Federal Republic of Germany are openminded for both bilateral and multilateral discussions on this subject which is as important as it is complex. It touches to a certain degree on the subjects of a conference on security in Europe. But there is basically no reason why we should not discuss this matter before such a conference is taking shape.

The idea, as you all know, is to arrive, step by step, on both sides in Europe, at a balanced reduction of force levels which would make it impossible to launch a surprise attack. This would replace the mere discussion of detente and improving the climate by a new element of security through jointly and mutually verifiable commitments. This is a major objective upon which, I feel, our attention

will be focussed in the years ahead. I am also favourably disposed to the suggestion made by your Secretary of State that a symbolic step might be taken as a beginning.

It must be clear, however, that we shall not neglect our security for a moment and that reductions of burdens will have to be mutual. This means: mutual and balanced not only between East and West but also balanced and jointly on our side in the West. It will not be possible to have just the United States make substantial reductions; rather will it be necessary to see American forces in relation to European forces. There is more than one reason why it will hardly be possible to introduce any major proportional changes with regard to the force levels of the European members of the Alliance. And no matter how serious the West Europeans are about their responsibility, nothing can disguise the fact that in the last resort it is the United States that possesses the military and political strength with which to maintain the balance with the Soviet Union. The great concept of balanced reductions is logically in contradiction to unilateral reductions.

Anyone who studies this setting and adds to it the efforts to limit strategic arms will find that the German "Ostpolitik" fits very well into the picture and that it is by no means as sensational and dramatic as some people thought it was only a year ago.

Our policy is logical. It corresponds to our interests and is embedded in the common policy of the Western Alliance. It starts from the reality of the situation. It expresses our renunciation of force in relation to Eastern Europe after having done the same in our relations with the West as early as 1955. It is the logical complement of our agreements with the West. Moreover, it sets the Germans a task which no one else can fulfil on their behalf.

Those who feared the Alliance would suffer as a result, that it might even end up in reversal of alliances, and that the Soviet Union would receive advantages which would extend its influence as far as the Rhine, were mistaken and should be glad to be able to admit their mistake.

The treaty I signed in Moscow last August is an element of stabilization in Europe. It imposes on both parties the obligation not to alter by force the frontiers that have existed since 1945. But I will say quite openly that those frontiers and the way they came about are not to my liking, nor is the division of Europe and Germany, nor the communist practises of government, and - as far as I am concerned - less so in Germany than anywhere else. Yet none of this can or should keep me and others from realizing that it would be dangerous and foolish to try and change existing frontiers by force on that score.

This also goes for the Oder-Neisse line, which millions of my countrymen find particularly hard to respect because the regions behind it are their homelands and because it appears to them that only the step taken today sets the seal on what has been a fact for the past twenty-five years. A distinguished lady journalist in the Federal Republic described the situation most aptly when she said that the treaty with Poland lays the wreath on Prussia's grave, but the grave has been there for many years.

Truth can hurt,; the division of our country hurts and it has been hurting for a long time. And up to the present day people have died along that unnatural frontier which in Berlin has become a wall. And yet, it could not longer be denied that "East Germany", the GDR, is a State. We have, after all, learned from experience that it possesses the

attributes of State authority. Moreover, we could not stand aside and see the efforts to achieve détente between East and West bypass Germany and Berlin and my country remain an island of a conflict that has no prospect of being solved, or remain a barrier which others step over, or a stumbling-block to détente.

No, we have instead made this particularly difficult point the test of the good will of both sides. There has been the courage to tackle the most difficult, the most delicate, the most emotional problem and the one most susceptible to crisis there is in Europe: Berlin, the city where I gained unforgettable experience. It is at the same time the city which was the cradle of German-American friendship after the war. For Berlin, in particular, a solution will have to be found which will give it stability of unlimited duration and ensure that the countries of the East will at long last recognize its links with the Federal Republic, that the Three Powers will remain there on the same basis as at present, and that the Four Powers will include it in any undertaking to refrain from the use or threat of force.

I do not know whether it will really be possible to achieve a satisfactory Berlin arrangement in the months ahead. But I do know that there is a chance. And I share the confidence which our Allies have spoken of, also with a view to a conference on security and co-operation in Europe.

What is called German "Ostpolitik", makes it easier to pursue the broader objectives I have spoken about. It does not disturb, it rather enhances the prospect of removing confrontations and achieving co-operation between East and West. That we shall attain this aim is a hope cherished not only by our two nations.