

# Remarks on Departure From Belgium.

February 24, 1969

I LEAVE Belgium with great regret. This has been much too short a visit, from my standpoint, but a very pleasant and a very productive one.

I leave more convinced than ever that there at the center of the Western Alliance stands a stout-hearted and illustrious people--worthy descendants of those early Celts who gave Caesar's legions no small amount of trouble.

What is certainly one of my most vivid impressions of Belgium is epitomized by your sovereign--an impression of a nation young in spirit. His Majesty's keen interest in space, his desire to involve young people in the revitalizing of society--these are concerns of the future, and concerns that we share.

I have been greatly pleased, also, by my conversations at NATO Headquarters. Under the wise leadership of Secretary General Brosio, our allied representatives are giving careful and intelligent attention to the future of the Alliance, and to the opportunities that can be opened to make it a more effective instrument for peace as it enters its third decade. I might add that my visit persuaded me of another thing: that NATO is indeed fortunate to have its headquarters here, in so delightful and so cosmopolitan a capital.

Brussels was my first stop on this trip, and I have other capitals yet to visit. But I feel encouraged already in my belief that America can work with its European partners in increasing harmony. My talks with President Rey and the Commission of the European Communities have strengthened my convictions as to the high purpose and indispensability of European economic integration. And in all the talks I have had, from all the people I have met, from the vigor and the energy and the graciousness I have seen displayed here in Brussels, I have drawn increased confidence that free people who work together have a right to be optimists about the future.

*Note: The President spoke at approximately 5 p.m. at Brussels National Airport upon departing for London. During his remarks he referred to King Baudouin of Belgium, Manlio Brosio, Secretary General of NATO and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, and Jean Key, President of the Commission of the European Communities.*

Richard Nixon, Remarks on Departure From Belgium. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/240613>