

# Remarks on Arrival at Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin.

February 27, 1969

Mr. Mayor, Mr. Chancellor:

It is a very great honor for me to be welcomed to this great city in such eloquent and generous terms. I respond to this welcome not only for myself but for all of the people of the United States of America and for all of the people of the free world.

Berlin is known as a four-power city. But there is a fifth power in Berlin. That fifth power is the determination of the free people of Berlin to remain free and the determination of free people everywhere to stand by those who desire to remain free.

I stand here today as a symbol of that fifth power, the power which will not be intimidated by any threat, by any pressure from any direction.

A few days ago, when Mayor Brandt, former Mayor Brandt, now Vice Chancellor, introduced General Lucius Clay<sup>1</sup> at a dinner in New York, he referred to the Berlin airlift as the "cradle of American-German friendship." For 20 years that friendship has grown and flowered.

<sup>1</sup>Gen. Lucius D. Clay (USA, Ret.) was commander in chief of U.S. forces in Europe and military governor of the U.S. zone of Germany from 1947 to 1949. When, in April 1948, the Soviet military government imposed a land blockade on West Berlin, General Clay's command instituted an Allied airlift which supplied the city with essential food and fuel until the lifting of the blockade in September 1949.

Today, I declare again that we, the people of the United States, stand with you in the defense of freedom.

That fifth power to which I have referred, the power which is represented by the determination of free men to remain free, is stronger than any other power. It will prevail.

I appreciate the opportunity of visiting Berlin and particularly this special privilege that I have had to review this magnificent contingent of our American Forces in Berlin.

As I speak to you, I only wish that time permitted that I could shake hands with each of you to express the appreciation of your country and my own personal appreciation for the service you are rendering to the country here in this post and in others around the world.

As I am sure you have noted, there have been some changes in Washington in recent months. I will refer briefly to those.

For example, the Washington Redskins have a new coach, Vince Lombardi, and they are looking up. The Washington Senators have a new manager, Ted Williams, and some even believe that they might be going up. And, as you may have noted, there is also a new President in the White House.

There is one thing that I want to assure you that has not changed, and this has been true through the terms of four Presidents. It is true in the term of this President: that is, our pride in the men of our armed services here in Berlin and in Western Europe, around the world, Asia, Vietnam. I have seen the men of our armed services. I know them. I know that whatever we may from time to time read and hear at home about divisions on policy that there is no question about the dedication, the patriotism, the morale of the men who defend the cause of freedom, as you defend it by your presence here.

As I speak to you today, I add one other thought: You are here, it is true, in a land far away from home, but you are also here in a land and in a city which welcomes you and wants you. You are not here as an occupying force. You are not here because the United States of America has designs on any other nation or any other territory.

You are here because of our desire, shared by the people of this country and of this city, to defend their right to be free and that is the American destiny in the world today.

We are a great power. We have obligations around the world. But because of the great changes that have occurred in history, the American mission is different from that of some others who have risen to greatness in their role in the world. We seek no territory. We seek no concessions. All that we want is the right for others that we have for ourselves--the right to be free, the right to choose our own leaders, the right to disagree, and the right to settle our disagreements in a peaceful way.

As I stand here today on one of the first occasions, as a matter of fact the first occasion as the new President of the United States and as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, to review an American force abroad, I want you to know I have never been so proud--proud of you, proud of my country and its role in the world, and humble in the duty that I have to see that the policies that we develop to bring peace are worthy of your dedication to defend peace as demonstrated by your presence here.

Thank you very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. at Tempelhof Airport, West Berlin.*

*An advance text of the President's remarks was also released.*

*The President spoke in response to Mayor Klaus Schuetz' welcoming remarks. The Mayor spoke in German. A translation of his remarks follows:*

*Mr. President, we Berliners are happy to have you here today and to have you with us. The supreme representative of this nation, when coming to Berlin, always comes with friends. We have acquired this friendship in the most difficult situations--during the barricade, during the airlift, during the crucial ultimatum and after that period.*

*This friendship goes to the American people, but today, Mr. President, it goes very particularly to you. You know this city in East and West. You know the truly indivisible Berlin. Feel at home here, because although you are far away from the White House and the 50 United States of America, an American President, and you, President Nixon, are always at home in this city.*

Richard Nixon, Remarks on Arrival at Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project  
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/240688>