

# Statements & Speeches



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INTERVIEW WITH HELMUT KOHL  
CHANCELLOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY  
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## Partnership With the United States

I am going to the United States to demonstrate for German-American friendship and partnership. I put it that way purposely because I feel that we have too long let ourselves be deterred from demonstrating for something, because we have always been much too used to demonstrating only against things. I would also like to demonstrate for the shared ideas that connect us in Europe with the United States. NATO is not simply a community of arms, but also a community of ideas consisting of nations with the same types of constitution and with the same conceptions of human rights and civil rights, the same conceptions of the moral norms that determine our personal and public lives. The fact that, without the protection and commitment of the United States of America, the Federal Republic of Germany would not exist in its present form, plays a special role for Germans. The room we are sitting in would not exist. The peace and freedom we have enjoyed for thirty-five years are indissolubly connected with the willingness of the Americans to guarantee these blessings. Partnership and friendship require that we talk to each other and not about each other and that one should not give the other orders. In the German-American relationship there are neither those who take orders nor those who give orders.

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I seek a clarifying, open and constructive dialogue. In this way we can discuss and resolve the differences based on our known standpoints and interests. America is a world power. America is, as it were, a continent. Many Europeans, Germans even more, forget that America has two coasts, Atlantic and Pacific, and that it looks to Asia from its Pacific coast, e.g. to Japan and to the People's Republic of China. Still, this does not change the fact that we have our particular interests to protect in our relationship with the United States. It lies in our interest at the moment, for instance, that our American friends undertake everything they can to bring the negotiations on intermediate-range missiles in Geneva to a successful conclusion. In representing this interest, the Americans can be certain that a government is in office in the Federal Republic for whom both parts of the NATO two-track decision are valid, the part on negotiations, but also our readiness to deploy modern American intermediate-range weapons should the negotiations not produce the desired results.

This view is taken by a broad majority of the population. I feel that it is a good position. A special German-American relationship has emerged from the history of the past thirty-five years. I am referring to Berlin. The freedom of Berlin has been decisively determined by the signatory powers and among them the Americans are the most important power, something that can be said without any adverse reference to the French and English. I would like to add something else to this. I am part of the generation that experienced the end of the war and the arrival of the Americans. We were half starved to death at the time. The Americans were the first to help us with Quaker Hunger Relief, Hoover Hunger Relief and CARE packages. At a time when no one else would help us, the Americans did. That is a fact we should never forget. Even though we may occasionally hear raised voices and disharmonious sounds coming from Washington, we are still part of the same family and as a family we should solve our problems indoors and not engage in loud shouting matches out on the street.

### Gas-Pipeline Deal

Question: Taking up a topical matter, are you willing to agree to a stiffening of credit conditions in trade with the East if, in return, the sanctions are lifted against companies involved in the gas-pipeline deal?

Answer: I didn't invent the gas-pipeline deal. As everyone knows I expressed criticism of this deal in a number of my Bundestag speeches. However, the contracts are signed, contracts to which the Americans long expressed a determined "no." We are reliable partners in all contractual matters. Reliability means that we keep our word once we give it, that we keep our promises. That is my view. Beyond that fact, what I should strongly support now is a clarification of the question as to how we want to act jointly in trading with the East, for instance as concerns the transfer of modern technologies to Eastern Europe. In order to do this, we in NATO and in the European Community will first of all have to come to an agreement with each so that we do not work at cross purposes for reasons

of national egoism. In this respect the Americans are right in their criticism. However, the Americans themselves will have to set a good example. If you consider the delivery made by the Caterpillar Company in this context, a number of questions remain unanswered.

### Strategy of the West Toward Eastern Europe

Question: Do you see eye to eye with French President Francois Mitterrand on the all-Western strategy, which you accept?

Answer: Like ours, French policy must be understood in its historical context. The history of France has always been the history of a great nation. France is a particularly proud country and wishes special consultation in all questions of international cooperation. French relations with the United States have also been shaped by history. The French know, of course, what the Americans did to help them during the war and they also know what the United States means for them now and will mean for them in the future. As such, I consider it thoroughly possible to come to an agreement with France on an overall strategy toward Eastern Europe, with full respect for France's national sovereignty. We may not be able to agree on every detail, but this will also be true for Great Britain and we haven't even begun to speak of Japan in this context.

Question: In the past the United States has often spoken of NATO's global responsibility. The purpose behind this has always been to move the Europeans to enter into a political commitment in other regions, for instance in the Gulf region. Is Bonn willing to assume a certain amount of political responsibility here?

Answer: We will have to be very careful in defining this, since this could easily open the door for nation calumny. The Atlantic Pact has established a clear geographic definition of its region. I would not want to change that in any way. However, a different question is whether we will not have to come to an agreement on task-sharing with the United States in view of worldwide ideological, economic and armed conflict. As a world power, America assumes global responsibility, including in areas in which we are directly or indirectly interested. You need only think of the fact that around sixty percent of the oil used in the Federal Republic has to pass through the Persian Gulf. Sticking with this example, if the Americans commit themselves in the Gulf region, something that would be in our interest as well, then the United States is justified in asking its European NATO partners what we would be willing to do more than in the past within the NATO region to ease the burden on the United States.

Question: In your policy statement you spoke of the "active safeguarding of peace." Will this concept now replace that of detente?

Answer: The concept of detente is ambiguous and you can interpret almost anything into it. I do not want to refer to these interpretations at the moment. The Federal Republic of Germany must contribute to the safeguarding of peace. I mention here, for example, the responsibility we have in the Third World in the fight against hunger. We are limited in this at the moment by financial conditions, but we will always have to do as much as we possibly can. For me another element of peace policy is speaking openly about violations of human rights, no matter who has violated them, be this a red or a brown dictatorship in some parts of the world. It would be pure opportunism and the precise opposite of peace policy if we were to pass silently over the destruction of human rights.

### Relations With the Soviet Union

Question: You speak of partnership in security matters with an eye to our ally, the United States, only. Your predecessor in office included Moscow. How do you define our relationship with the East and what will your policy approach be in terms of the treaties with the East?

Answer: The Soviet Union is our most powerful neighbor. Germany's destiny has been greatly influenced by the existence of Russia and, in the past sixty years, by the existence of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union exerts its power over 17 million of our compatriots. We share the insight with all democratic parties that war and the use of force are not means to a political end. We recognized this long before Willy Brandt and others. We have always spoken of peaceful reunification. Since I am not willing to give up the idea of a German nation, I know that the Soviet Union will be a partner in this effort. It makes good sense to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union, if possible. But not at the price of having the Soviet Union determine what we are to do. As free citizens of a free country, we want to determine for ourselves which way we will take into the future.

We live on the dividing line between the world's two major political systems. It is not just a division, but a division of East and West that cuts through the heart of our country. Just how deep this division is is still not well enough known. I was able to observe the reaction of the British Prime Minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, who saw the Berlin Wall for the first time, the Reichstag and the wooden crosses that mark the places where Germans attempted to cross from Germany to Germany and were murdered for it. I think that all of these problems will have to enter into our medium and long-term relations with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union is, at the same time, the other major world power. It is engaged in a pronounced, indeed unrestrained arms build-up. The experience in Afghanistan, martial law in Poland, the failure to keep the pledges given there and the breaking of treaties, this all makes it clear to everyone how important it is for the Federal Republic to have a firm place in the Western Alliance. However, the fact is that we are predictable partners, and I say this for the government I lead, we are good partners. In the first few weeks of my

government I have only received such signals from Moscow as would indicate that things will by no means grind to a halt between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union, as the Social Democrats tried to make people believe in election campaign speeches. Not at all. We are altogether serious partners for the Soviet Union. A few days ago, an important member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party visited me. My guest stood in front of the portrait of Adenauer in my office and I told him that one of the objectives of my policy is to receive the same kind of obituary in "Pravda" as Konrad Adenauer, who was described as a serious and predictable politician.

Let me now turn to the Eastern treaties. Everyone knows that we would not have concluded them in this form. However, the treaties are there. I am in favor of implementing them in the framework of what is possible. Everything we say about our relations with the Soviet Union brings us back to the relations between the two parts of Germany, to the desire of the people for a German nation. This is an important reason not only for normalizing relations, but also, if possible, for maintaining good relations.

Question: When will you go to Moscow to explain the Federal Government's Eastern policy to the Soviet government?

Answer: I have a number of important engagements this year and then the election campaign will begin. However, needless to say, I am willing to go to Moscow in the near future, after March 6, provided I am reelected. As you know, I have traveled in the Soviet Union and I have availed myself of every opportunity to speak with Soviet representatives in Bonn. This has included two meetings with Leonid Brezhnev.

Question: The Polish crisis broke out when your predecessor went to Wersbellin. The crisis in Poland is apparently approaching a new high point. Has this crisis had an effect on your attitude toward the GDR and the Soviet Union?

Answer: Everything that happens in Poland moves us in Germany. A few days ago, like millions of our fellow countrymen, I watched the television coverage of Pope John Paul II as he pronounced the canonization of Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish martyr. It was symbolic that the President of the German Bishops Conference stood next to his Polish counterpart at the altar. It is not religion, but historical destiny that connects Poles and Germans with each other in a horrible sense, but also in a comforting sense.

I told my visitor from the Soviet Union that Poland is a touchstone for much of what is happening in Europe and in the rest of the world. What is happening in Poland is causing seismographic repercussions, be this in Rome, Washington, Belgrade or Stockholm. Those responsible in Eastern Europe should understand that to sign on the CSCE Final Act and then strike at the heart of an old and proud European people by declaring martial law in Poland is bound to have profound repercussions. Comparing the Europe before martial law in Poland and the Europe after the imposition of martial law and the banning of Solidarity, a definite change has taken place.