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(Gilder/BE/RR)

May 1, 1985

6:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: BITBURG AIR FORCE BASE
BITBURG, GERMANY
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

I have just come from the cemetery where German war dead lay at rest. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. I felt great sadness that history could be filled with such waste, destruction, and evil. But my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope, and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace and freedom -- and reconciliation among our nations.

This visit has stirred many emotions in the American and German people, too. I have received many letters since first deciding to come to Bitburg cemetery, some supportive, others deeply concerned and questioning, others opposed. Some old wounds have been reopened, and this I regret very much, because this should be a time of healing. To the veterans and families of American servicemen who still carry the scars and feel the painful losses of that War, our gesture of reconciliation with the German people today in no way minimizes our love and honor for those who fought and died for our country. They gave their lives to rescue freedom in its darkest hour. The alliance of democratic nations that guards the freedom of millions in Europe and America today stands as living testimony that their noble sacrifice was not in vain.

To the survivors of the Holocaust: your terrible suffering has made you ever vigilant against evil. Many of you are worried that reconciliation means forgetting. I promise you, we will

never forget. I have just come this morning from Bergen-Belsen, where the horror of that momentous crime was forever burned upon my memory. No, we will never forget, and we say with the victims of the Holocaust: "Never again."

The war against one man's totalitarian dictatorship was not like other wars. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. Nevertheless, we can mourn the German war dead today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 49 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS must rank among the most heinous in human history. But others buried here were simply soldiers in the German army. How many were fanatical followers of a dictator who willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the death throes of the Nazi war machine? We do not know. Many, however, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried here who died 2 weeks before his 16th birthday.

There were thousands of such soldiers to whom Nazism meant no more than a brutal end to a short life. We do not believe in collective guilt. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they have been judged by Him. As shall we all.

Our duty today is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism; and today, in Bitburg cemetery, we commemorated the potential good and humanity that was consumed back then, 40 years ago. Perhaps if that 15-year-old soldier had lived, he

would have joined his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom that we celebrate today. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Base, where new generations of Germans and Americans join together in friendship and common cause, dedicating their lives to preserving peace and guarding the security of the free world.

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The hope we see now could sometimes even be glimpsed in the darkest days of the War. I'm thinking of one special story -- that of a mother and her young son living alone in a modest cottage in the middle of the woods. It couldn't have been too far from here. One night as the Battle of the Bulge exploded around them, three young American soldiers arrived at their door -- standing in the snow, lost behind enemy lines. All were

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Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. The woman was afraid, but she quickly said with a firm voice, "There will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their natural suspicion dissolved in the warmth and comfort of the cottage. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

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Twenty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner. Today, freedom-loving people around the world must say, I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian; I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

The one lesson of World War II, the one lesson of Nazism, is that freedom must always be stronger than totalitarianism; that good must always be stronger than evil. The moral measure of our two nations will be found in the resolve we show to preserve liberty, to protect life, and to honor and cherish all God's children.

That is why the free, democratic German nation is such a profound and hopeful testament to the human spirit. We cannot undo the crimes and wars of yesterday, nor call the millions back to life. But we can give meaning to the past by learning its lessons and making a better future. We can let our pain drive us to greater efforts to heal humanity's suffering.

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the slow movement toward peace in the Middle East, and in the strengthening alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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52 July
2:30
WH ADVANCE OFFICE

(Gilder/BE/RR)
April 30, 1985
4:00 p.m.

plans - 1/10/85

51

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ~~LUNCH~~ ⁹ AT BITBURG A.F.B. ^{10:00 AM 9/5/85}
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X
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The hope we see now could sometimes even be glimpsed in the darkest days of the War. I'm thinking of one special story -- that of a mother and her young son living alone in a modest cottage in the middle of the woods. It couldn't have been too far from here. One night as the Battle of the Bulge exploded around them, three young American soldiers arrived at their door -- standing in the snow, lost behind enemy lines. All were

frostbitten and one badly wounded. Even though sheltering the enemy was punishable by death, she took them in and made them a supper with some of her last food.

Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. The woman was afraid, but she quickly said with a firm voice, "There will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their natural suspicion dissolved in the warmth and comfort of the cottage. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

Now, listen to the story through the eyes of one who was there:

"Then mother said grace," remembered the boy. "I noticed there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, 'Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest.' And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home."

That night -- as the storm of war tossed the world -- they had their own private armistice. The next morning the German corporal showed the Americans how to get back behind their own lines. They all shook hands and went their separate ways.

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And to the men and women of Bitburg Air Base, I just want to say that we know that, even with such wonderful hosts, your job is not an easy one. You serve around the clock, far from home, on the frontier of freedom. We are grateful, and very proud of you.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to lift the darkness of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the sunshine of liberty. Our victory was great, and the Federal Republic, Italy, and Japan are now returned to the community of free nations. But the struggle for freedom was not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner. Today, freedom-loving people around the world must say, I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-semitism, I am an Afghanistani, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian; I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

The one lesson of World War II, the one lesson of Nazism, is that freedom must always be stronger than totalitarianism; that good must always be stronger than evil. The moral measure of our two nations will be found in the resolve we show to preserve liberty, to protect life, and to honor and cherish all God's children.

That is why the free, democratic German nation is such a profound and hopeful testament to the human spirit. We cannot undo the crimes and wars of yesterday, nor call the millions back to life. But we can give meaning to the past by learning its lessons and making a better future. We can let our pain drive us to greater efforts to heal humanity's suffering.

Today, I have traveled 250 miles from Bergen-Belsen and, I feel, 40 years in time. With the lessons of the past firmly in our minds, we have turned a new, brighter page in history. One of the many who wrote me about this visit was a young woman who had recently been Bat-Mitzvahed. She urged me to lay the wreath at Bitburg Cemetery in honor of the future of Germany; and that is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary of World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the beginning of the democratic German nation.

There is much to make us hopeful on this historic anniversary. While much of the world still huddles in the darkness of oppression, we can see a new dawn of freedom sweeping the globe. And we can see -- in the new democracies of Latin America, in the new economic freedoms and prosperity in Asia, in

the slow movement toward peace in the Middle East, and in the strengthening alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

Together let us gather in that light, and walk out of the shadow, and let us live in peace.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Rowena Josh

(Gilder/BE/RR)
May 3, 1985
6:00 p.m. (FRG)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: BITBURG AIR BASE
BITBURG, GERMANY
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

I have just come from the cemetery where German war dead lay at rest. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. I felt great sadness that history could be filled with such waste, destruction, and evil. But my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope, and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace and freedom -- and reconciliation among our nations.

This visit has stirred many emotions in the American and German people, too. I have received many letters since first deciding to come to Bitburg cemetery, some supportive, others deeply concerned and questioning, others opposed. Some old wounds have been reopened, and this I regret very much, because this should be a time of healing. To the veterans and families of American servicemen who still carry the scars and feel the painful losses of that War, our gesture of reconciliation with the German people today in no way minimizes our love and honor for those who fought and died for our country. They gave their lives to rescue freedom in its darkest hour. The alliance of democratic nations that guards the freedom of millions in Europe and America today stands as living testimony that their noble sacrifice was not in vain.

To the survivors of the Holocaust: your terrible suffering has made you ever vigilant against evil. Many of you are worried that reconciliation means forgetting. I promise you, we will

never forget. I have just come this morning from Bergen-Belsen, where the horror of that terrible crime, the Holocaust, was forever burned upon my memory. No, we will never forget, and we say with the victims of that Holocaust: "Never again."

The war against one man's totalitarian dictatorship was not like other wars. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. Nevertheless, we can mourn the German war dead today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 48 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS must rank among the most heinous in human history. But others buried there were simply soldiers in the German army. How many were fanatical followers of a dictator and willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the death throes of the Nazi war machine? We do not know. Many, however, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried there who died 2 weeks before his 16th birthday.

There were thousands of such soldiers to whom Nazism meant no more than a brutal end to a short life. We do not believe in collective guilt. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they have been judged by Him, as we shall all be judged.

Our duty today is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism; and today, in Bitburg cemetery, we commemorated the potential good and humanity that was consumed back then, 40 years ago. Perhaps if that 15-year-old soldier had lived, he

would have joined his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic Federal Republic of Germany devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom that we celebrate today. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Base, where new generations of Germans and Americans join together in friendship and common cause, dedicating their lives to preserving peace and guarding the security of the free world.

Too often in the past, each war only planted the seeds of the next. We celebrate today the reconciliation between our two nations that has liberated us from that cycle of destruction. Look at what together we have accomplished: We who were enemies are now friends; we who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest of allies. In the place of fear we have sown trust, and out of the ruins of war has blossomed an enduring peace. Tens of thousands of Americans have served in this town over the years. As the Mayor of Bitburg has said, in that time there have been some 6,000 marriages between Germans and Americans, and many thousands of children have come from these unions. This is the real symbol of our future together, a future to be filled with hope, friendship, and freedom.

The hope we see now could sometimes even be glimpsed in the darkest days of the War. I'm thinking of one special story -- that of a mother and her young son living alone in a modest cottage in the middle of the woods. One night as the Battle of the Bulge exploded not far away, three young American soldiers arrived at their door -- standing in the snow, lost behind enemy

lines. All were frostbitten and one badly wounded. Even though sheltering the enemy was punishable by death, she took them in and made them a supper with some of her last food.

Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. The woman was afraid, but she quickly said with a firm voice, ". . . there will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their natural suspicion dissolved in the warmth and comfort of the cottage. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

Now, listen to the story through the eyes of one who was there:

"Then Mother said grace," remembered the boy. "I noticed that there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, 'Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest.' And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home."

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Twenty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy went to the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner. Today, freedom-loving people around the world must say, I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-Semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua. I, too am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

The one lesson of World War II, the one lesson of Nazism, is that freedom must always be stronger than totalitarianism; that good must always be stronger than evil. The moral measure of our two nations will be found in the resolve we show to preserve liberty, to protect life, and to honor and cherish all God's children.

That is why the free, democratic Federal Republic of Germany is such a profound and hopeful testament to the human spirit. We cannot undo the crimes and wars of yesterday, nor call the millions back to life. But we can give meaning to the past by learning its lessons and making a better future. We can let our pain drive us to greater efforts to heal humanity's suffering.

Today, I have traveled 220 miles from Bergen-Belsen and, I feel, 40 years in time. With the lessons of the past firmly in our minds, we have turned a new, brighter page in history. One of the many who wrote me about this visit was a young woman who had recently been [BOTT MITTS-vud]. She urged me to lay the wreath at Bitburg Cemetery in honor of the future of Germany; and that is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary of World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the rekindling of the democratic spirit in Germany.

There is much to make us hopeful on this historic anniversary. While much of the world still huddles in the darkness of oppression, we can see a new dawn of freedom sweeping the globe. And we can see -- in the new democracies of Latin

Page 7

America, in the new economic freedoms and prosperity in Asia, in the slow movement toward peace in the Middle East, and in the strengthening alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

Together let us gather in that light, and walk out of the shadow, and let us live in peace.

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder/BE/RR)
April 30, 1985
6:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: LUNCHEON AT BITBURG A.F.B.
BITBURG, GERMANY
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

I have just come from the cemetery where the German war dead lay at rest. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. I felt great sadness that history could be filled with such waste, destruction, and evil. But my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope, and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace and freedom -- and reconciliation among our nations.

This visit has stirred many emotions in the American and German people, too. I have received many letters since first deciding to come to Bitburg cemetery, some supportive, others deeply concerned and questioning, others opposed. Some old wounds have been reopened, and this I regret very much, because this should be a time of healing. To the veterans and families of American servicemen who still carry the scars and feel the painful losses of that War, our gesture of reconciliation with the German people today in no way minimizes our love and honor for those who fought and died for our country. They gave their lives to rescue freedom in its darkest hour. The alliance of democratic nations that guards the freedom of millions in Europe and America today stands as living testimony that their noble sacrifice was not in vain.

To the survivors of the Holocaust: your terrible suffering has made you ever vigilant against evil. Many of you are worried that reconciliation means forgetting. I promise you, we will

never forget. I have just come this morning from Bergen-Belsen, where the horror of that momentous crime was forever burned upon my memory. No, we will never forget, and we say with the victims of the Holocaust: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. Nevertheless, we can mourn the German war dead today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 49 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS must rank among the most heinous in human history. But others buried here were simply soldiers in the German army. How many were fanatical followers of Hitler who willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the death throes of the Nazi war machine? We do not know. Many, however, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried here who died 2 weeks before his 16th birthday.

There were thousands of such soldiers to whom Nazism meant no more than a brutal end to a short life. We do not believe in collective guilt. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they have been judged by Him. As shall we all.

Our duty today is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism; and today, in Bitburg cemetery, we commemorated the potential good and humanity that was consumed back then, 40 years ago. Perhaps if that 15-year-old soldier had lived, he

would have joined his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom that we celebrate today. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Base, where new generations of Germans and Americans join together in friendship and common cause, dedicating their lives to preserving peace and guarding the security of the free world.

Too often in the past, each war only planted the seeds of the next. We celebrate today the reconciliation between our two nations that has liberated us from that cycle of destruction. Look at what together we have accomplished: We who were enemies are now friends; we who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest allies. In the place of fear we have sown trust, and out of the ruins of war has blossomed an enduring peace. More than 100,000 Americans have served in this town over the years. In that time there have been more than 5,000 marriages between Germans and Americans, and many thousands of children have come from these unions. This is the real symbol of our future together, a future to be filled with hope, friendship, and freedom.

The hope we see now could sometimes even be glimpsed in the darkest days of the War. I'm thinking of one special story -- that of a mother and her young son living alone in a modest cottage in the middle of the woods. It couldn't have been too far from here. One night as the Battle of the Bulge exploded around them, three young American soldiers arrived at their door -- standing in the snow, lost behind enemy lines. All were

frostbitten and one badly wounded. Even though sheltering the enemy was punishable by death, she took them in and made them a supper with some of her last food.

Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. The woman was afraid, but she quickly said with a firm voice, "There will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their natural suspicion dissolved in the warmth and comfort of the cottage. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

Now, listen to the story through the eyes of one who was there:

"Then mother said grace," remembered the boy. "I noticed there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, 'Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest.' And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home."

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the slow movement toward peace in the Middle East, and in the strengthening alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

Together let us gather in that light, and walk out of the shadow, and let us live in peace.

Thank you and God bless you all.

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 4/30/85 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: _____

SUBJECT: _____ REMARKS: LUNCHEON AT BITBURG A.F.B.

FINAL DRAFT

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	OGLESBY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
REGAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROLLINS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEAVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPEAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
STOCKMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SVAHN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUCHANAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TUTTLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CHEW	<input type="checkbox"/> P	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SS	VERSTANDIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIELDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WHITTLESEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRIEDERSDORF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>RYAN</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HICKEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>DANIELS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HICKS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>ELLIOTT</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
KINGON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McFARLANE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

The attached version reflects the President's edits.

RESPONSE:

David L. Chew
Staff Secretary
Ext. 2702

(Gilder/BE/RR)
April 30, 1985
4:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: LUNCHEON AT BITBURG A.F.B.
BITBURG, GERMANY
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

I have just come from the cemetery where the German war dead lay at rest. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. I felt great sadness that history could be filled with such waste, destruction, and evil. But my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope, and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace and freedom -- and reconciliation among our nations.

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frostbitten and one badly wounded. Even though sheltering the enemy was punishable by death, she took them in and made them a supper with some of her last food.

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Twenty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner. Today, freedom-loving people around the world must say, I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-semitism, I am an Afghanistani, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian; I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

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There is much to make us hopeful on this historic anniversary. While much of the world still huddles in the darkness of oppression, we can see a new dawn of freedom sweeping the globe. And we can see -- in the new democracies of Latin America, in the new economic freedoms and prosperity in Asia, in

the slow movement toward peace in the Middle East, and in the strengthening alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

Together let us gather in that light, and walk out of the shadow, and let us live in peace.

Thank you and God bless you all.

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(Gilder/BE/RR)
April 30, 1985
4:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: LUNCHEON AT BITBURG A.F.B.
BITBURG, GERMANY
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

I have just come from the cemetery where the German war dead lay at rest. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. I felt great sadness that history could be filled with such waste, destruction, and evil. But my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope, and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace and freedom -- and reconciliation among our nations.

This visit has stirred many emotions in the American and German people, too. I have received many letters since first deciding to come to Bitburg cemetery, some supportive, others deeply concerned and questioning, others opposed. Some old wounds have been reopened, and this I regret very much, because this should be a time of healing. To the veterans and families of American servicemen who still carry the scars and feel the painful losses of that War, our gesture of reconciliation with the German people today in no way minimizes our love and honor for those who fought and died for our country. They gave their lives to rescue freedom in its darkest hour. The alliance of democratic nations that guards the freedom of millions in Europe and America today stands as living testimony that their noble sacrifice was not in vain.

To the survivors of the Holocaust: your terrible suffering has made you ever vigilant against evil. Many of you are worried that reconciliation means forgetting. I promise you, we will

never forget. I have just come this morning from Bergen-Belsen, where the horror of that momentous crime was forever burned upon my memory. No, we will never forget, and we say with the victims of the Holocaust: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. Nevertheless, we can mourn the German war dead today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 49 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS must rank among the most heinous in human history. But others buried here were simply soldiers in the German army. How many were fanatical followers of Hitler who willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the death throes of the Nazi war machine? We do not know. Many, however, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried here who died 2 weeks before his 16th birthday.

There were thousands of such soldiers to whom Nazism meant no more than a brutal end to a short life. We do not believe in collective guilt. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they have been judged by Him. As shall we all.

Our duty today is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism; and today, in Bitburg cemetery, we commemorated the potential good and humanity that was consumed back then, 40 years ago. Perhaps if that 15-year-old soldier had lived, he

would have joined his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom that we celebrate today. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Base, where new generations of Germans and Americans join together in friendship and common cause, dedicating their lives to preserving peace and guarding the security of the free world.

Too often in the past, each war only planted the seeds of the next. We celebrate today the reconciliation between our two nations that has liberated us from that cycle of destruction. Look at what together we have accomplished: We who were enemies are now friends; we who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest allies. In the place of fear we have sown trust, and out of the ruins of war has blossomed an enduring peace. More than 100,000 Americans have served in this town over the years. In that time there have been more than 5,000 marriages between Germans and Americans, and many thousands of children have come from these unions. This is the real symbol of our future together, a future to be filled with hope, friendship, and freedom.

The hope we see now could sometimes even be glimpsed in the darkest days of the War. I'm thinking of one special story -- that of a mother and her young son living alone in a modest cottage in the middle of the woods. It couldn't have been too far from here. One night as the Battle of the Bulge exploded around them, three young soldiers arrived at their door -- standing in the snow, lost behind enemy lines. All were

frostbitten and one badly wounded. Even though sheltering the enemy was punishable by death, she took them in and made them a supper with some of her last food.

Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. The woman was afraid, but she quickly said with a firm voice, "There will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their natural suspicion dissolved in the warmth and comfort of the cottage. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

Now, listen to the story through the eyes of one who was there:

"Then mother said grace," remembered the boy. "I noticed there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, 'Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest.' And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home."

That night -- as the storm of war tossed the world -- they had their own private armistice. The next morning the German corporal showed the Americans how to get back behind their own lines. They all shook hands and went their separate ways.

That was Christmas day, 41 years ago.

Those boys reconciled briefly in the midst of war. Surely, we allies in peacetime can honor the reconciliation of the last 40 years.

To the people of Bitburg, our hosts and the hosts of our servicemen: like that generous woman 41 years ago, you make us feel very welcome. Vielen dank [VEEL-en donk].

And to the men and women of Bitburg Air Base, I just want to say that we know that, even with such wonderful hosts, your job is not an easy one. You serve around the clock, far from home, on the frontier of freedom. We are grateful, and very proud of you.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to lift the darkness of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the sunshine of liberty. Our victory was great, and the Federal Republic, Italy, and Japan are now returned to the community of free nations. But the struggle for freedom was not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner. Today, freedom-loving people around the world must say, I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-semitism, I am an Afghanistani, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian; I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

The one lesson of World War II, the one lesson of Nazism, is that freedom must always be stronger than totalitarianism; that good must always be stronger than evil. The moral measure of our two nations will be found in the resolve we show to preserve liberty, to protect life, and to honor and cherish all God's children.

That is why the free, democratic German nation is such a profound and hopeful testament to the human spirit. We cannot undo the crimes and wars of yesterday, nor call the millions back to life. But we can give meaning to the past by learning its lessons and making a better future. We can let our pain drive us to greater efforts to heal humanity's suffering.

Today, I have traveled 250 miles from Bergen-Belsen and, I feel, 40 years in time. With the lessons of the past firmly in our minds, we have turned a new, brighter page in history. One of the many who wrote me about this visit was a young woman who had recently been Bat-Mitzvahed. She urged me to lay the wreath at Bitburg Cemetery in honor of the future of Germany; and that is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary of World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the beginning of the democratic German nation.

There is much to make us hopeful on this historic anniversary. While much of the world still huddles in the darkness of oppression, we can see a new dawn of freedom sweeping the globe. And we can see -- in the new democracies of Latin America, in the new economic freedoms and prosperity in Asia, in

the slow movement toward peace in the Middle East, and in the strengthening alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

Together let us gather in that light, and walk out of the shadow, and let us live in peace.

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder/BE)
April 30, 1985
11:30 a.m. KR

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: LUNCHEON AT BITBURG A.F.B.
BITBURG, GERMANY
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

I have just come from the cemetery where the German war dead lay at rest. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. I felt great sadness that history could be filled with such waste, destruction, and evil. But my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope, and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace and freedom -- and reconciliation among our nations.

This visit has stirred many emotions in the American and German people, too. I have received many letters since first deciding to come to Bitburg cemetery, some supportive, others deeply concerned and questioning, others opposed. Some old wounds have been reopened, and this I regret very much, because this should be a time of healing. To the veterans and families of American servicemen who still carry the scars and feel the painful losses of that War, our gesture of reconciliation with the German people today in no way minimizes our love and honor for those who fought and died for our country. They gave their lives to rescue freedom in its darkest hour. The alliance of democratic nations that guards the freedom of millions in Europe and America today stands as living testimony that their noble sacrifice was not in vain.

To the survivors of the Holocaust: your terrible suffering has made you ever vigilant against evil. Many of you are worried that reconciliation means forgetting. I promise you, we will

never forget. I have just come this morning from Bergen-Belsen, where the horror of that momentous crime was forever burned upon my memory. No, we will never forget, and we say with the victims of the Holocaust: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. Nevertheless, we can mourn the German war dead today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 49 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS must rank among the most heinous in human history. But others buried here were simply soldiers in the German army. How many were fanatical followers of Hitler who willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the death throes of the Nazi war machine? We do not know. Many, however, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried here who died 2 weeks before his 16th birthday.

There were thousands of such soldiers to whom Nazism meant no more than a brutal end to a short life. We do not believe in collective guilt. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they have been judged by Him. As shall we all.

Our duty today is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism; and today, in Bitburg cemetery, we commemorated the potential good and humanity that was consumed back then, 40 years ago. Perhaps if that 15-year-old soldier had lived, he

would have joined his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom that we celebrate today. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Base, where new generations of Germans and Americans join together in friendship and common cause, dedicating their lives to preserving peace and guarding the security of the free world.

Too often in the past, each war only planted the seeds of the next. We celebrate today the reconciliation between our two nations that has liberated us from that cycle of destruction. Look at what together we have accomplished: We who were enemies are now friends; we who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest allies. In the place of fear we have sown trust, and out of the ruins of war has blossomed an enduring peace. More than 100,000 Americans have served in this town over the years. In that time there have been more than 5,000 marriages between Germans and Americans, and many thousands of children have come from these unions. This is the real symbol of our future together, a future to be filled with hope, friendship, and freedom.

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Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder/Khachigian Edits)
April 30, 1985
11:30 a.m.

2

~~A story about a German woman and her boy, alone in a farm house as the Battle of the Bulge raged around them. They heard a knock on the door, there in the snow stood three young American soldiers -- lost behind enemy lines. All were frostbitten and one badly wounded. ^{Even though sheltering,} ~~the~~ the enemy was punishable by death, ^{and} she took them in, made them a supper with some of ^{her} their last food.~~

Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. ^{The woman was} ~~At first~~ ^{but she quickly said with a firm voice} afraid, the ~~woman~~ said, "There will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their ^{mutual suspicion} ~~unconscious~~ dissolved in the warmth and comfort ^{of the cottage.} One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

Now, listen to the story through the eyes of one ^{who} was there:
"Then mother said grace," remembered the boy. "I noticed there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, 'Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest.' And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home."

That night -- as the storm of war ~~raged around them~~ -- they had their own private armistice. The next morning the German corporal showed the Americans how to get back behind their own lines. ^{And} they all shook hands and went their separate ways.

That was Christmas day, 41 years ago.

Those boys reconciled briefly in the midst of war.

Surely, we allies in peacetime can honor the reconciliation
of the last forty years.

(Gilder/Khachigian Edits)
April 30, 1985
11:30 a.m.

A story about a German woman and her boy, alone in a farm house as the Battle of the Bulge raged around them. They heard a knock on the door, there in the snow stood three young American soldiers -- lost behind enemy lines. All were frostbitten and one badly wounded. Harboring the enemy was punishable by death, but she took them in, made them a supper with some of their last food.

Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. At first afraid, the mother said, "There will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their uneasiness dissolved in the warmth and comfort. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

Now, listen to the story through the eyes of one who was there:

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That night -- as the storm of war raged around them -- they had their own private armistice. The next morning the German corporal showed the Americans how to get back behind their own lines; they all shook hands and went their separate ways.

That was Christmas day, 41 years ago.

A story about a German woman and her ~~child~~^{boy,}, alone in a farm house as the Battle of the Bulge raged around them. They heard a knock on the door, and ~~were surprised to find there~~^{There in the snow stood} three

^{young} American soldiers ~~who had become~~^{wounded.} lost behind enemy lines. All were frostbitten and one badly ~~injured~~^{wounded.} Harboring the enemy was punishable by death, but ~~they~~^{she} took them in, made them a supper with some of their last food. ~~Even to the young child,~~^{she} ~~these~~^{child} enemy soldiers looked like boys.

Soon, they heard another knock at the door. This time four German soldiers stood there. At first afraid, the mother said, "There will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only sixteen; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their uneasiness dissolved in the warmth and comfort. One of the Germans, a ^{former} medical student, ~~until a few months before,~~ tended ~~to~~ the wounded American.

"Then mother said grace," remembered the boy. "I noticed there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, "Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest." And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home." ^{as the storm of war raged around them --}

That night, they had their own private armistice. The next morning the German corporal showed the Americans how to get back behind their own lines; they all shook hands and went their separate ways. ^{That} That was Christmas day, Forty-one years ago.

Now, listen to the story ~~from~~^{through} the eyes ~~of the young boy~~ of the woman's young son of me who was there:

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