

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF from our textual collections.

Collection: Speechwriting, White House
Office of: Speech Drafts, 1981-1989
Folder: Bitburg Air Force Base, Bitburg,
Germany, 05/05/1985 (Gilder/Itchon) (4)
Box: 206

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories
visit: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: reagan.library@nara.gov

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

Ken -
for editing.

2960
(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. ~~As I walked among the graves~~ I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, whose crimes must rank among the most heinous in all human history. ~~But the rest~~ ^{Others} were simply soldiers in the German army. ~~How many~~ ^A How many were fanatical followers of Hitler who willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; ~~yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness, among the graves.~~ ^g Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 ^{Wald} young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today ^{The Fed. Reps} West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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-Mitzvah~~ed~~. She urged me to lay the wreath at Bitburg Cemetery in honor of the future of Germany; and that, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, whose crimes must rank among the most heinous in all human history. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

To the men and women of Bitburg Airforce base, I just want to say that we know your job is not an easy one. You serve day and night on the front lines of freedom. We are very grateful, and very proud of you. And to the people of Bitburg, our hosts.

and the hosts of our servicemen, you make us feel very welcome.
(German word for thank you.)

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

Ken-
for editing.

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. ~~As I walked among the graves~~ I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, ^{she} whose crimes ^{of the SS,} must rank among the most heinous in all human history. But ~~the rest were~~ ^{others were} simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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, ~~yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves.~~ Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young ^{15 year old} soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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} ~~of our soldiers~~ 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. ^{the battle for freedom} But ~~our victory was~~

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

Ken -
for editing.

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, whose crimes must rank among the most heinous in all human history. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. ~~As I walked among the graves~~ I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, ^{The} whose crimes must rank among the most heinous in all human history. ~~But the rest~~ ^{Bill O'Leary} were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; ~~yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves.~~ ^{And} Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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} young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 ^{American soldiers} ~~of our soldiers~~ 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.

To the men and women of Bitburg Air ~~Force~~ ^B Base, I just want to say that we know your job is not an easy one. You serve day and night on the front lines of freedom. We are very grateful, and very proud of you. And to the people of Bitburg, our hosts.

and the hosts of our servicemen, you make us feel very welcome.
(German word for thank you.)

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. ~~But our victory was not complete,~~ for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 ~~the defenders~~ of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than ~~the forces~~ of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. ~~As I walked among the graves I felt a~~ 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.

I know that 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

Never the less, we can't

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. [We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots.] The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. ~~We~~ mourn ~~them~~ today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

*The dead of Bitburg
I guess
was
dead*

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, whose ^{*The*} crimes ^{*of these*} must rank among the most heinous in all human history. ^{*fact*} ^{*Others*} ^{*simply*} ~~But the rest were~~ 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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. ^{*part*} ~~it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves.~~ Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism; and today, in Bitburg cemetery, we commemorated the potential

young 15 year-old

good and humanity that was consumed back then, 40 years ago. Perhaps if that young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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} ~~of our soldiers~~ 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.

To the men and women of Bitburg Air ~~Force~~ ^{Base}, I just want to say that we know your job is not an easy one. You serve day and night on the front lines of freedom. We are very grateful, and very proud of you. And to the people of Bitburg, our hosts

*for a day
hope*

feel d

and the hosts of our servicemen, you make us feel very welcome.

(German word for thank you.) *Danke schoen.*

Fighten {
 Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today ~~West Germany~~ ^{*The Federal Republic,*} Italy, and Japan ~~are~~ ^{*are have*} returned to the community of free nations. But our ^{*hopes and*} victory ~~was~~ ^{*was were*} not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

?
 Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of ~~the Great Leap Forward~~ and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be ~~equal to~~ ^{*equal to*} ~~stronger~~ ^{*stronger*} than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

Ken - here's
the latest Bthing,

Joel

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, whose crimes must rank among the most heinous in all human history. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism; and today, in Bitburg cemetery, we commemorated the potential

and the hosts of our servicemen, you make us feel very welcome.
(German word for thank you.)

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 Afghani and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

Insert p. 3 - Josh
Δ p. 2 - Eliz.

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

X There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are ~~47~~⁴⁹ members of the SS, whose crimes must rank among the most heinous in all human history. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

Insert → Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder/BE)
April 29, 1985
12:00 Noon

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. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, whose crimes must rank among the most heinous in all human history. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, 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 new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder) *BE*
April 29, 1985
9:00 a.m.

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

I have just come from the cemetery ^{where} ~~for~~ the German dead. ^{war,} *lay at last.* No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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 ~~for our nations~~ *among our Nations, - and reconciliation*

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS, ^{whose} ~~the~~ ^{crimes} ~~of the SS shall always~~ ^{must rank among the} ~~most heinous in all human history.~~ ^{most heinous in all human history.} ~~remain beyond the pale of human forgiveness.~~ But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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. X

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 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 of our soldiers 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. ✓

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was ✓

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness. ^A Twenty years ago, ^Y President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human de-struction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children. ?

Good
That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of Democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder)
April 29, 1985
9:00 a.m.

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

I have just come from the cemetery for the German dead. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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 for our nations.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS shall always remain beyond the pale of human forgiveness. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness. Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of Democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder)
April 24, 1985
draft

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

I have just come from the cemetery for the German dead. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. ~~As I walked among the graves~~ I felt a 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 forty years of peace and freedom for our nations.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS shall always remain beyond the pale of human forgiveness. But the rest 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried here who died two weeks before his 16th birthday.

There were, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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, forty years ago. Perhaps if that young ^{15 year old} soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in

totalitarian darkness. Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, forty 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, I feel, is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of Democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

at Bitburg Cemetery in honor of the future of Germany; and that, I feel, is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of Democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder)
April 24, 1985
draft

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

I have just come from the cemetery for the German dead. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. As I walked among the graves I felt a great sadness that history X 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 ~~forty~~⁴⁰ years of peace and freedom for our nations.

X I know that 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. 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.

X 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000^s buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47^s members of the SS. The crimes of the SS shall always remain beyond the pale of human forgiveness. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried here who died ~~two~~² weeks before his 16th^s birthday.

There were, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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~~forty~~ years ago. Perhaps if that young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 [↳] of our soldiers 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our ~~✗~~ victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. ~~✗~~ But our victory was ~~✗~~ not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in

+ totalitarian darkness. Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 War⁵ II, the one lesson of Nazism, is that the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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 250⁰ miles from Bergen-Belsen and, I feel, forty 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, I feel, is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of Democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Gilder)
April 29, 1985
9:00 a.m.

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

I have just come from the cemetery for the German dead. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. As I walked among the graves I felt a 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 for our nations.

I know that 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. 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 the greatest imperative of our time: "Never again."

The war against Hitler was not like other wars. We do not honor the dead today as soldiers, or even as patriots. The evil world of Nazism turned all values upside down. We mourn them today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 47 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS shall always remain beyond the pale of human forgiveness. But the rest were simple 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 final death throes of the Nazi war machine? Many, 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, we know, 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; yet it is beyond our power to parcel out guilt and forgiveness among the graves. Only God can look into the human heart. All these men have now met their Supreme Judge, and they will be judged by Him.

Our duty 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 young soldier had lived, he would have joined with his fellow countrymen in building the new democratic German nation devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom. Or perhaps his children or grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Force 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 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 of our soldiers 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.

Four decades ago, we waged a great war to push back the shadow of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the light of liberty. Our victory was great, and today West Germany, Italy, and Japan are returned to the community of free nations. But our victory was

not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness. Twenty years ago, President John F. Kennedy stood at the Berlin Wall and proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today, all 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 casualty of the Great Leap Forward and I am a refugee in an overcrowded 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 the defenders of democracy and freedom must always be stronger than the forces of totalitarianism and human destruction; 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 human liberty, to protect human life, and to honor and cherish all of God's children.

That is why the most profound and hopeful memorial to the Holocaust is the free, democratic German nation. 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, I feel, is what we have done. On this 40th anniversary World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended, and we commemorate the new beginning of the democratic German nation. We celebrate a land that has become one of the staunchest champions of freedom and one of the most vigilant protectors of human life.

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 alliance of Democratic nations in Europe and America that is today stronger than ever -- that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

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

Thank you and God bless you all.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

April 30, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR KEN KHACHIGIAN

FROM: ROBERT M. KIMMITT *Rmk*
SUBJECT: Presidential Remarks: Bergen-Belsen, May 5, 1985

Bud thinks the Bergen-Belsen remarks are very well done. His few editorial comments are attached.

cc: ~~David Chew~~
Ben Elliott

(Khachigian)
April 29, 1985
4:00 p.m.

3490

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: BERGEN-BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP
BONN, GERMANY
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

Chancellor Kohl and honored guests:

This painful walk into the past has done much more than remind us of the war that consumed the European continent.

What we have seen -- and what we feel -- make unforgettably clear that no one of the rest of us can fully understand the enormity of the feelings carried by the victims of these camps.

The survivors carry a memory beyond anything that we can comprehend.

The awful evil started by Adolf Hitler -- an evil that victimized all the world with its destruction -- was uniquely destructive to the millions forced into the grim abyss of these camps.

Here lie people whose death was inflicted for no other reason than their very existence. Their pain was borne only because of who they were and because of the God in their prayers.

For year after year, until that man and his evil were destroyed, hell yawned forth its awful contents.

People were brought here -- finally -- for no other purpose but to die. To go unfed when hungry -- uncared for when sick -- tortured when the whim struck -- and left to have misery consume them when all there was around them was misery.

I'm sure we all share similar first thoughts. And that is: what of the youngsters who died at this dark stalag?

All was gone for them -- forever. Not to feel again the warmth of life's sunshine and promise; not the laughter and splendid ache of growing up; nor the consoling embrace of a family. Try to think of being young and never having a day without searing emotional and physical pain -- desolate, unrelieved pain.

Today, we have been grimly reminded why the commandant of this camp was named, "The Beast of Belsen."

depraved
Above all, we are struck by the waste of it all -- the ~~horrible~~, inglorious waste.

That is what we have seen -- but is what we can never understand as the victims did.

This is what we have felt -- but are expressing with words that do not carry the weight of what was endured.

That is why history will forever brand what happened as the Holocaust. *We Americans in our revulsion must acknowledge our own responsibility, for many knew, and did not.*

Here, death ruled. But we have learned something, as well. Because of what happened, we found that death cannot rule forever. And that is why we are here today.

We are here because humanity refuses to accept that freedom or the spirit of man can ever be extinguished. We are here to commemorate that life triumphed over the tragedy and the death -- overcame the suffering, the sickness, the testing, and, yes, the *death itself* ~~gassings~~.

We are here today to confirm that the horror cannot outlast the hope -- and that even from the worst of all things, the best may come forth.

Therefore, even out of this overwhelming sadness, there must be some purpose. And there is. It comes to us through the transforming love of God.

We learn from the Talmud that, "It was only through suffering that [the Children of] Israel obtained three priceless and coveted gifts: The Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come."

Yes, out of this sickness -- as crushing and cruel as it was -- there was hope for the world as well as for the World to Come. Out of the ashes -- hope. From all the pain -- promise.

So much of this is symbolized today by the fact that the entire leadership of free Germany is represented here today. Chancellor Kohl, you and your countrymen have made real the renewal that had to happen. Your nation and the German people have been strong and resolute in your willingness to confront and conquer the acts of a hated regime of the past. This reflects the ^{humility} ~~greatness~~ of your people and their devotion to freedom since the war. ✓

Think how far we have come from that time when despair must have made these tragic victims wonder if anything could survive.

As we flew here from Hannover -- low over the greening farms and the emerging springtime of the lovely German countryside, I ^{reflected} ~~wondered~~: there ^{was} ~~must have been~~ a time when the prisoners at Bergen-Belsen and those of every other camp ~~must have felt~~ ^{surely knew} the springtime was gone forever. ~~from their lives.~~ ^{that}

Surely we can understand ~~how that, could have been,~~ when we see what is around us -- all these children of God, under bleak

and lifeless mounds, the plainness of which does not even hint at the unspeakable acts that created them.

Here they lie. Never to hope. Never to pray. Never to love. Never to heal. Never to laugh. Never to cry.

And too many of them knew that this was their fate.

But that was not the end. Through it all was their strong faith and a conspicuous spirit that moved their faith.

Nothing illustrates this better than the story of a young girl who died here at Bergen-Belsen. For more than 2 years, Anne Frank and her family had hid from the Nazis in a confined attic in Holland, where she kept a remarkably profound diary.

Betrayed by an informant, Anne and her family were sent by freight car first to Auschwitz and finally here to Bergen-Belsen. Just 3 weeks before her capture, little Anne wrote these words:

"It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness; I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too; I can feel the sufferings of millions, and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again."

Eight months later, this sparkling young life ended at Bergen-Belsen.

Somewhere here lies Anne Frank. Everywhere here are memories -- pulling us, touching us, making us understand that they can never be erased.

Such memories take us where God intended ^{human kind} His children to go -- toward learning, toward healing, and, above all, toward redemption. They beckon us through the endless stretch of our heart to the knowing commitment that the life of each individual can change the world and make it better.

We are all witnesses. We share the glistening hope that rests in every human soul. Hope leads us -- if we are prepared to trust it -- toward what our President Lincoln called, "the better angels of our nature."

And then, we can pledge, rising above all this cruelty -- out of this tragic and nightmarish time -- beyond the anguish and the pain and the suffering and for all time . . .

Never again.