

Johnson's Remarks on 1945 Victory

Here is the text of President Johnson's televised V-E Day statement yesterday:

Twenty years ago the guns fell silent in Europe.

Today we know those who gave their lives in that conflict did not die in vain.

We still live in an uncertain world. Men have not yet stopped war or put an end to poverty. Freedom, as always, demands courage and unyielding vigilance and, occasionally, the life of man. And the alliance of the West is marked by arguments among its members.

But on the whole, this 20 years has been a time of shining achievement, of promises realized, of hopes fulfilled.

Nowhere does this emerge more clearly than in the dramatic contrast between this 20 years, and the 20 years which followed World War I.

On November 11, 1938—the 20th anniversary of the Armistice—Munich was just six weeks old, and war less than a year away. Depression scarred the face of Europe and the Americas.

The League of Nations, hopeful herald of a new era, had dissolved in bitter nationalism, unchangeable suspicion, and endless, useless debate. And when new aggression threatened, Western leaders yielded, to find that weakness only increased the appetite of tyrants.

Europe in Ashes

In all of this America shared, by failing to sup-

port the League and by standing apart from the troubles of Europe.

"And war came." Again the lights went out.

When the dawn arrived, 20 years ago today, it was a gray dawn. Tens of millions were dead and nations were shattered. Almost before the ashes had cooled, the shadow of Soviet ambition fell across the face of Europe.

It was, perhaps, fortunate that new danger came when past failure was fresh.

For we learned from the folly of the past.

First, instead of revenge we sought reconciliation. The result is that Western Germany, Italy and Japan are today trusted and flourishing members of the community of free nations.

Second, the narrow nationalism of rival states was replaced by a drive toward a unified Europe, growing in intimacy and partnership with the United States. The Marshall Plan — history's most generous act by one country towards others—provided the foundation for this unity.

Third, we found policies that replaced the fear of depression with the reality of prosperity. The Common

Market, and closer economic ties between all the nations of the Atlantic, have been the catalysts of abundance. Compared with 1938, America's production has almost tripled. Free Europe's production has doubled. The flow of goods between us has tripled. And, together, we have opened the door to a world without poverty.

Fourth, the Atlantic nations replaced appeasement with firmness. We made it clear, in Greece and Turkey and in Berlin, that we would not yield one inch of European soil to aggression. As a consequence Europe is safer from attack and closer to enduring peace than at any time since VE Day.

These then are the achievements of two decades: In place of depression, abundance; in place of division, unity; in place of isolation, partnership; in place of weakness, strength; in place of retreat, firmness; in place of war, peace.

United Action

We must not forget in success and abundance the lessons we learned in danger and isolation.

None of us has sought—or will seek—domination over others. We have resisted the temptation to serve only our own interests. We have been successful because we have acted in a wider interest than our own alone. Thus, the European nations have found strength and prosperity in building communities that stretch beyond old

frontiers. The United States has committed its resources to European reconstruction; and its military strength to European defense, America has steadily sought the strength of European unity rather than to exploit the weakness of European division. Our policy has had a single aim—to restore the vitality, the safety and the integrity of free Europe. And, with our help, Europe is better able to resist domination—from within or without—than ever before.

There are some efforts today to replace partnership with suspicion, and the drive toward unity with a policy of division.

The peoples of the Atlantic will not return to that narrow nationalism which has torn and bloodied the fabric of our society for generations. Every accomplishment of the past has been built on common action and increasing unity.

Are our people more prosperous?

Is peace nearer?

Is the future brighter?

If so, it is because we have drawn together the strands of union. And there is no problem we now face which will not yield more easily to common and united action. The kind of nationalism which would blight the hopes and destroy the dream

of European unity and Atlantic partnership is in the true interest of no free nation on earth. It is the way back toward the anguish from which we came.

Unfinished Business

Of course there will be differences among us. But they can be resolved through reason founded on respect.

Of course there will be difficulties. But they can be overcome by determination founded on belief.

Of course there will be dangers. But they can be faced by unity founded on experience.

Let us therefore continue the task we have begun, attentive to counsel but unmoved by any who seek to turn us aside. We will go all together if we can. But if one of us cannot join in a common venture, it will not stand in the way of the rest. Each of our nations will, of course, respect and honor the achievements, and the culture, and the dignity of its neighbors. But we do this better joined in common trust than divided by suspicion. For we have a civilization to build.

Here is some of our unfinished and urgent business.

First, we must hasten the slow erosion of the iron curtain. By building bridges between the nations of Eastern Europe and the West we bring closer the day when Europe can be reconstituted within its wide historic boundaries. For our part, after taking counsel with our European allies, I intend to recommend measures to the United States Congress to increase the flow of peaceful trade between Eastern Europe and the United States.

Second, we must work for the reunification of Germany. The people of Germany, East and West, must be allowed freely to choose their own future. The four powers have special responsibilities for Germany and Berlin. The shame of the Eastern Zone must be ended. It serves the real interest of none. We must set the Germans free, while still meeting the history-laden concerns

that all understand. The United States is ready to play its full part in such arrangements.

Third, we have a wide range of economic problems to resolve. Despite obstacles we will continue to press for greater European integration and a freer flow of trade across the Atlantic. We will also devise new proposals to expand world monetary reserves, and modernize the system of international payments.

Fourth, we must begin a new effort to find common instruments for helping the developing world. We are the rich nations in a world

of misery. We are the white nations in a colored world. The treasured values of our civilization tell us it is right—morally right—that we should help others. The lessons of experience and wisdom tell us that if we fail to help now, then some day the tides of unrest will be surging along our own coasts. In fact, they already are there.

Fifth, we must work out more effective forms of common defense. All Atlantic nations who wish to do so have a right to share in collective nuclear defense, while halting the spread of nuclear weapons.

And just as long as they are needed and wanted, strong U.S. forces—backed by strong nuclear power—will remain in Europe.

Sixth, we must work toward agreement with the Soviet Union. Our firmness in danger has shown that the door to conquest in the West is forever closed. Thus, the door to peaceful settlement is now open. It is in the interest of the Soviet Union, and in our own, to seek an end to tensions. I am sure all the nations of the West share our own desire to work together toward any agreement that can hasten lasting peace.

Atlantic Partnership

These are a few, and only a few, of the great issues which face us as we move toward the third decade of increasing European unity—and stronger Atlantic partnership.

My country is engaged in towering and troubling enterprises around this struggling globe. American troops fight to hold back Communist aggression in Viet-Nam. Others try to protect the freedom of the Western Hemisphere. In Africa and the Middle East

our energies are engaged with the responsibility that great power brings. Everywhere we seek to serve the common interests of the free.

But the heartbeat of our policy and our expectations is with the nations of the Atlantic.

We must all—American and Europeans—vow never to repeat the errors which have led to disaster: For America to stand in isolation, or Europe to fall apart in rancor.

But it is not enough to keep from past mistakes. We must build the new achievements of our future: A Europe, one in purpose, hope and temper—reaching across the Atlantic to the civilization which it bred and taught, and which Europe now welcomes in common trust.

An Old Dream

In 1778 the French Government said of the struggling, new United States of America: “. . . the glory, the dignity and essential interest of France demands that she should stretch out her hand to those states . . .”

The Atlantic tides have risen many times since then. Her waters have seen many a great captain, many goods and dozens of armies make the passage. Yet the old dream stays—a great civilization touching both Atlantic shores.

How much grander is that dream than any hope to which a single nation can reach. How much more filled with the prospect of peace and the increasing welfare of man.

The glory, the dignity, and the essential interest of all our states command us to the majesty of that Atlantic civilization.

It shall be ours.