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ADDRESS BY  
THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BALL  
ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE,  
AT INDEPENDENCE HALL,  
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## Independence and Freedom -- a Continuing Struggle

### I.

Four years ago today, President John F. Kennedy, standing where I am today, delivered an address men will recall for many years. He spoke of two memorable events that had taken place in this Hall -- the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the drafting of the Constitution of the United States -- and he related each to critical problems of the present time.

It was clear to President Kennedy, as it is clear to thoughtful men and women over the world, that those two American documents have been a potent influence on the history of the last two centuries -- extending far beyond our own borders.

The forces unleashed by the Declaration of Independence have inspired a revolution in human affairs that is world-wide. That revolution has brought about the destruction of ancient empires, the dismantling of great colonial systems, and the perilous passage to independence of more than a billion people -- one-third of the earth's population.

A great part of this has occurred within the past two decades of highly concentrated history. Never has there been such a revolutionary shift in power arrangements throughout the world. That it has been largely a peaceful revolution is heartening. It suggests a slowly growing maturity in our human relations. It means that the ringing Declaration signed in this Hall, combining as it did the principles of English law with the precepts of the Age of Reason, is now the guiding principle for a great part of mankind.

During the four years that have passed since President Kennedy spoke, the process he then applauded has continued. Since 1962, more than thirty-six million additional peoples have moved from colonial status to establish eleven new countries. Today, only a handful of people on this side of the Iron Curtain still live under some form of colonial rule. Within the foreseeable future, the entire colonial period will be a closed chapter in the history books.

The Founding Fathers were quite aware that the condition of man was not fulfilled merely by an act of national independence. They did not confuse the independence of nations with the freedom of the individual.

Today, we Americans are at long last beginning to apply in our relations with one another the principles of liberty enunciated so loudly and clearly nineteen decades ago here in Philadelphia. We are working together to correct an ancient injustice of which we ourselves have been the author. We are finally making it possible for the liberty and equality that we endorse as a nation to be available to all Americans, whatever their race or creed.

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The adventurous men who signed the Declaration of Independence -- could they observe today the results of their handiwork -- would be gratified but not complacent. For they were not only men of principle; they were also realists. And they recognized, as Jefferson said, that freedom was never secured once and for all; it was something each generation must win for itself.

Today, we know this to be true in many places of the world. The passing of colonialism, the achievement of juridical independence for a nation and a people, is not the end but the beginning of the struggle.

For wherever men are free there are other men who would destroy their freedom. We Americans have learned that lesson through hard effort. Within the past two decades we have assisted many nations to resist aggression. Today, once again we are fighting in the jungles and rice paddies of Southeast Asia so that the people of South Viet-Nam may enjoy the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We shall continue that fight -- and we shall prevail. North Viet-Nam will learn, as so many other aggressors have learned in the past, that our commitment to the principle of independence is never to be doubted. For as Jefferson said: "Whensoever hostile aggressions ... require a resort to war, we must meet our duty and convince the world that we are just friends and brave enemies."

The war in Viet-Nam is, therefore, another chapter in the attempt of aggressors to destroy the forces let loose by the principles of our Declaration of Independence. For our Forefathers believed, and two hundred years of national experience have proved, that the great revolution in the history of man is the revolution of freedom.

This is the meaning of the changes in the world in this past twenty years. For in their national revolutions, the new statesmen of the new nations have, with very few exceptions, looked to the American revolution -- to Jefferson, not Djzherjinsky, to James Madison and not to Karl Marx.

It was indeed we Americans who fired the shot heard around the world. And, if today it comes back in louder and louder echos (and sometimes in ricochets) most of the new nations are still singing our song. They are closer to Lincoln than to Lenin.

## II.

President Kennedy saw with clarity that the revolution of the new nations was an extension of our revolution, and that their principles were inspired by the great Declaration signed in this Hall. But he did not confine his vision to the emerging countries. He looked also across the Atlantic ocean at those great nations of Western Europe where so much of our civilization began. He saw there, also, a growing recognition of the spirit of the American Constitution as a practical instrument for organizing human affairs. And he made it clear that in this modern age,

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while the human spirit requires the recognition of effective independence, effective human enterprise requires also the recognition of interdependence.

Nowhere is this more true than in the Atlantic World, this heartland of industry and modernity, these nations of North America and Western Europe that face each other across the Northern Ocean. There is in Western Europe today a deep desire to establish some kind of unity as a substitute for corrosive national rivalries. With their colonial systems largely dismantled, they have looked hard at their own history and geography. For 300 years, ever since the Peace of Westphalia, the attempt of one nation state after another to achieve superiority over its neighbors has kept Europe in a state of recurrent civil war.

Jefferson looked out on the national rivalries of his age and saw, in Europe, a "great Mad-House" in which the "law of the hyena and the jackal" operated through war to blast the hopes of men for prosperity and civil tranquillity. He saw in such conflicts the unnatural devastation of a continent torn asunder. Two hundred years later, farseeing European statesmen came together to address themselves to the same problems that had worried Jefferson.

Looking at the ashes of the Second World War they recognized the catastrophic consequences of restoring a fragmented Europe of quarrelling nation states. The alternative was to build common institutions based on equality through which they might subordinate national interests to a larger unity -- just as our Forefathers did in this Hall.

Our European friends have been remarkably successful in uniting the economies of six European states. Few, either in Europe or America, fully realize the extraordinary meaning and implications of the European Economic Community, the Common Market.

Not long ago my attention was drawn to an article that appeared in the London Times just at the turn of the century -- on December 26, 1900. In that article a distinguished French economist argued strongly for the creation of a European common market. But he concluded: It would be chimerical to suppose that it were possible in 100 or in 200 years to abolish all the customs duties between the different European states. . . . And the editors of the London Times, in reprinting his article, stated: ". . . if M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu had time to devote a little more attention to the study of the international political firmament, he would discover that, however desirable may be the project he sets forth. . . its realization must inevitably be put off to the Greek Kalends."

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Yet, as so often occurs, history has proved more venturesome than the prophets. Today six nations of Europe have built a Common Market--and this has not had to wait until the Greek Kalends--as the London Times insisted--or even 100 or 200 years--that reckless optimist, the French Professor, predicted.

They made the decision to establish the Common Market only a half century after the article was published. More than that, they have now moved far down the road toward creating a single European economy.

To be sure, Europe has not made comparable progress toward political unity, but the commitment to unity is growing--particularly among the young--and political unity should hopefully include not only the six present members of the Common Market, but Great Britain and other nations as well.

There is a compelling logic that underlies the movement toward unity today. For the world is marked by an inescapable political fact--the predominance of two nations, the United States and the Soviet Union. Each is organized on a continent-wide basis; each commands vast resources of men and material. The emergence of these two powers reflects the needs and consequences of an age of technology. It has transformed the whole structure of world politics. It has created a new requirement of size for nations that are to play a significant role in world affairs. European states that a quarter of a century ago occupied the center of the stage, now find themselves only medium powers, with a limited capacity to influence world events.

I do not think that the European peoples will be content for long to stand aside from a major participation in world affairs. Yet, if Europeans are to play a role worthy of their resources and their abilities, it is clear what they must do. They must build their political arrangements on a scale commensurate with the requirements of the modern world.

### III.

As Europe has moved toward unity, we Atlantic nations acting together have created the instruments of common defense. We have made a solemn Alliance; we have given effectiveness and reality to that Alliance by creating an integrated defense.

NATO has succeeded brilliantly. It has given security to Europeans and has made it possible for them to enjoy the prosperity resulting from the Common Market. Beyond that, it has tended to alter our relations with the East, by creating conditions of strength to which the Soviet Union has had to adjust.

The common action of the West has blunted Soviet hopes for expansion.

The stability and prosperity that followed economic integration in Western Europe have created new aspirations and have stimulated new thinking in Eastern Europe.

By sublimating nationalistic ambitions, Western cohesion has dampened traditional fears among the Eastern European peoples.

As a consequence the arrangements we have created have produced stability within the West and have opened the path through which an ultimate settlement between East and West may one day be obtained.

This is an achievement of epic dimensions. Yet today there are those who would turn their back on what has been accomplished. Just as those policies have begun to bear fruit they ask paradoxically: why retain them? After all, they contend, Europe has not yet established political unity, and a Europe of nation states has deep historic roots. Moreover, they assert, the world has changed and the dangers from an aggressive Soviet Union are no longer serious. Such sentiments are not surprising. This is not the first time that success has engendered agitation to destroy the institutions that have produced that success.

But we should not be deflected by these clamorous voices. Those who have absorbed the American experience and the meaning of the drama played in this Hall, will understand the fatuity of these expressions.

For if it is not easy to build a united Europe today, it was also difficult two centuries ago to weld together the thirteen colonies into the United States of America. The common struggle against England that had brought them together had ended. There were many who deplored the whole idea of trying to transform a loose confederation of states into a permanent union. They were emphatic in asserting that it would not work. There were powerful voices for separatism.

But wise men in this Hall knew that the American people could never realize the dream that had brought them across an ocean, could never achieve the security they sought, could never tame a continent and build a nation unless they united under common institutions to express their common will.

Yet they did not achieve this quickly. It took five years from the Declaration of Independence to the Articles of Confederation, six years from the Articles of the Confederation to the signing of the Constitution, and two more years before the Constitution was ratified. Nor was that the end; it took several decades after that until effective Federal institutions could be established.

It is, of course, dangerous to belabor historical analogies. Skeptics continually remind us that the problems of constructing a unified Europe are far more difficult than putting together thirteen colonies of common origin. Yet the logic of unity in Europe is today quite as compelling as that facing the colonies in the late Eighteenth Century. And the next few years may well show that the skeptics are fully as wrong as was the editor of the London Times in 1900 to whom I referred a moment ago .

#### IV.

As Europe moves forward toward unity, we must ourselves move forward-- in company with our European friends--to effect a constructive partnership of equals. Moreover, we must continue to maintain an effective Western defense as we have maintained it for the past eighteen years. For we should be foolish to assume, as some complacently suggest, that because NATO has prevented Europe from being overrun for more than a decade and a half, we no longer need an integrated common defense.

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Those who make this argument overlook the arithmetic of Soviet power. The Soviet Union today has some three million men under arms, most of whom are stationed in western areas of the country. Three hundred thousand Soviet soldiers are stationed in Eastern Europe. In addition, the Eastern European countries have armed forces totalling a half million, making a total of 800,000 men facing NATO in Europe. Also to be taken into account in the overall equation are hundreds of Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles, more than 700 medium-range missiles aimed at Western Europe, squadrons of the most modern bomber and fighter planes, and a constantly growing fleet of submarines, including many armed with nuclear missiles. There is no basis to think that we can safely let down our guard. We must continue in close concert with our allies to deter these forces. The words of the North Atlantic Treaty are as solid as ever--"an attack on one is an attack on all."

Yet, as we continue to maintain and strengthen our defensive efforts to ward off possible danger from the East, we must persist in our constructive efforts to shape a workable world order better than the one that existed before 1914, which was destroyed by a half century of war and revolution. Both are needed. Effective defense without constructive efforts will confine us to an indefinite future of rushing from one fire-fighting exercise to another; constructive efforts without effective defense will not produce lasting results.

Yet, as I have suggested, European unity and Atlantic partnership have a meaning beyond the stability of the West. They are essential for the achievement of a secure settlement of the great unfinished business left over from the war. This point cannot be too strongly emphasized. A permanent East-West settlement will not be achieved by fragmenting Europe or by loosening the institutional bonds that tie the West together, but only if the Western powers, acting from a base of unity, bring about a situation in which a settlement is possible.

We should not, of course, seek a settlement as an end in itself. We must be sure that it creates the conditions that will assure stability and lasting peace for all of Europe. It must be free from built-in stresses and tensions. It must be fair to all. It must embody that same basic principle which is essential to enduring relations within the West--the principle of equality.

This point is central. No secure settlement of Europe can leave the German people divided. Nor can a lasting settlement place the German people under permanent discrimination. This was tried before and, as we all know, it did not work. We must aim for something better and not for improvisations that are inherently unstable.

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This, then, is the task for the Atlantic nations -- to build a strong Western partnership between North America and a Europe moving toward unity -- a task that can assure the end of the rivalries that have produced so many catastrophes in the past, preserve the security of the West, and finally, promote the conditions that will make possible an ultimate settlement between East and West on a sound and lasting basis.

We join in this task with no less determination than we have joined in the struggle in Viet-Nam. We are committed to interdependence in the Atlantic world no less faithfully than to independence for the newly emergent nations.

Today we and our European Allies have built from the ruins of war in Europe and we shall build from the bitter struggles for independence in Asia. But the goal of European unity endures, and it must endure "til hope creates, from its own wreck, the thing it contemplates".

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