

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Finance Minister Theo Waigel of Germany

March 26, 1991

The President. I wanted to take this opportunity publicly to thank you for Germany's wonderful cooperation and financial contribution as well as many other things during this Desert Storm. I understood from day one the German position, and we had very close consultations with the Chancellor. I know that you were in touch with Secretary Brady and others, and I am grateful for the financial support, but even more for the understanding. It's not just restricted to Desert Storm; it goes over into the role you all are playing in terms of working out cooperatively the Polish debt. I don't think Germany gets enough credit for having been very, very understanding about that——

Q. Going to get any money back?

The President. ——and other areas of cooperation. So please extend my best to the Chancellor and wish him well.

The Finance Minister. Thank you very

much. And I want to congratulate to the great success not only for your country but for the whole of the world, as it was very important for us. We are very happy with you.

Q. Mr. President, is there going to be any left over from the contributions?

The President. I am confident that the Minister and Secretary Brady have understanding on the costs involved, and I'm very grateful to Germany for their participation in all of this, as I am to other friends and allies. I'm afraid it's not going to be any cheaper, if that's what you mean, than original estimates.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany and Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas F. Brady.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the President's Meeting With Finance Minister Theo Waigel of Germany

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The President met for approximately a half hour today with German Christian Social Union Chairman Theo Waigel in the Oval Office. They discussed the post-war situation in the Middle East, the economic and social dimensions of German unification, and the importance of supporting the new democratic states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Chairman Waigel, who is also German Finance Minister, reaffirmed Germany's commitment to fully honor its pledges of financial assistance for Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The President reiterated his appreciation for Germany's strong financial and other support for the multinational coalition in the Persian Gulf.