

## Interview With Klaus Walther of ZDF German Television July 1, 1994

### *President's Trip to Germany*

*Mr. Walther.* Mr. President, what are your expectations in front of the first trip to the united Germany? You will have a speech in front of the Brandenburg Gate; the Wall has come down. What will your message be?

*The President.* Well, first of all, let me say it's an incredible personal honor for me to be able to go as the first President to a united Germany. One of the formative political images of my childhood was seeing President Kennedy stand there in Berlin at the Wall and give his speech. So, for all of us in America, it's been a source of great joy to see the Wall come down and to see what is happening now in Germany.

My message will be that we've torn down the walls, but now we have to build the bridges. We have to unite Europe, and we have to move forward on security issues, on economic issues to make a better world.

### *U.S. Military in Germany*

*Mr. Walther.* What will be the significance of the remaining troops in Germany for the future?

*The President.* I think it's quite important. I think it's a statement that the United States puts great importance on our relationships with Europe, with NATO, and with Germany, especially, and that we have a common security future with NATO.

One of the great successes, I think, of the last year has been the Partnership For Peace, the establishment of cooperative relationships between NATO and now 21 other countries, 19 from the former Communist bloc and Sweden and Finland. So this is a very exciting time, I think, and the United States, as long as Europe wants to be our partner, should maintain that partnership and should stay in Europe.

### *Germany-U.S. Relations*

*Mr. Walther.* Let me return to Germany. Is Germany still the most important ally of the United States?

*The President.* Germany is a critically important ally, always has been, certainly since the end of the Second World War. And I think that if you look to the future, the kinds of things

we have to work together on, the way our interests tend to converge and the way we see the world, the relationship I have enjoyed with Chancellor Kohl, all the things we work together on, Russian aid, international peacekeeping, a whole range of issues, trying to find a solution in Bosnia, the German people and the American people and their Governments need to work very, very closely together, not only for the well-being of Europe but indeed for the entire world.

### *Central and Eastern Europe*

*Mr. Walther.* America is the last remaining world power, and there is more aid necessary than first expected to build up the East. Is the United States willing to increase their contributions for the East, because Germany and Europe, they have spent billions of dollars?

*The President.* Yes. I think we should do more, and we will. There is a limit to how much we can do. We've been very active in Russia and in other republics of the former Soviet Union. And we are trying to maintain a very vigorous international defense posture as a superpower in the cause of peace. And of course, that costs a lot of money. But I do believe in Central and Eastern Europe, we should be more active, and we will be. There are limits to what we can do, but we will be more active.

*Mr. Walther.* Talking about peace, does it bother you that the old powers in the former Eastern bloc countries are getting back into power again?

*The President.* Well, it depends on what they do. I mean, change is difficult. And the changes that a lot of those former Communist countries are going through are quite painful. And I think it is only predictable that from time to time the election results will vary, depending upon the mood of the people, the level of personal security they feel, the level of results being achieved. That is inevitable.

And as long as there is a continued commitment to openness and democracy and human rights and to working with the West, I don't think we can be deterred from our policies by particular elections. After all, you know, none of us always agree with the outcome of every election in our own countries.

*Bosnia and the United Nations.*

*Mr. Walther.* Mr. President, your administration started to solve a lot of international crises through the United Nations. The strategy failed, obviously, in Bosnia. When is U.S. unilateral action in the future appropriate or necessary?

*The President.* First of all, I don't know that it has failed in Bosnia; it has not yet succeeded. That is, keep in mind, there has been an agreement between the Croats and the Muslims. It is functioning. It has stabilized a lot of the country. There has been much more peace and less slaughter around Sarajevo and some of the other safe areas. So I think the United Nations, the United States working with the U.N. and working through NATO has done a lot there to improve the situation. And of course, we hope that the contact group will come up with a map that will result in a peace settlement.

If you ask me the question, will the United States continue to work through the United Nations, the answer to that is yes, wherever we can. But we must be in a position to act alone when our own vital interests are at stake. That's what we did, for example, when I received proof that there had been an attempt to assassinate former President Bush in Iraq. But I wouldn't give up on the U.N. yet or on multilateral efforts. I still think there's a great deal that can be done there. I also think you're going to see variations of that. Look at Rwanda, where the French got, in effect, permission of the U.N. to lead in an area where they had an historic interest and historic ties. So I think we will be finding new ways for international cooperation for quite some years yet.

*Mr. Walther.* Talking about United Nations, would you support Germany to be a member on the Security Council?

*The President.* Yes. I have been publicly supportive of that for almost 3 years now.

*NATO*

*Mr. Walther.* You talked about NATO, Mr. President. How do you envision NATO's future? There's no more threat coming from the East, and how do you envision NATO's future?

*The President.* Well, right now what we're doing is using NATO to try to build a united Europe from a security point of view and to be available to take actions in Europe out of NATO's area. That's really the significance of

what has happened in Bosnia, where the NATO planes have been involved in enforcing the no-fly zone and trying to enforce the safe area, where NATO planes can be called in if needed to try to preserve agreements and make sure both sides adhere to them. And I don't think there's any question that NATO has made a contribution to the progress that has been made in Bosnia.

And the NATO Partnership For Peace is the most important thing we've done in the last several years, because it gives us the chance to have a united Europe, the chance, really, for the first time since nation states were in existence in Europe.

So that's what I see. I think NATO should be working on integrating Europe from a security point of view; toward looking toward expanding its membership to other countries as appropriate; and toward the use of coordinated action, military capacity, outside its area of membership but within Europe.

*Middle East Peace Process*

*Mr. Walther.* Mr. President, today Mr. Arafat is visiting the Gaza Strip. Is this a milestone in the development in the Middle East?

*The President.* Yes, it's a very important trip because it symbolizes what has happened, which is that the Palestinians are beginning to have control over their own lives and affairs. It is a tribute to the courage of the Israelis and the Palestinians and to their leaders, to Mr. Arafat and to Prime Minister Rabin. And it's also a tribute to the peace process in which the United States, as you know, has been very actively involved.

The only way to settle the problems in the Middle East is to continue the peace process. I saw King Hussein just last week. We are in close touch with President Asad. We are working with Lebanon. We are hoping for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. And I hope this trip today will show that peace can be achieved and what a good thing it will be.

NOTE: The interview began at 12:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.