Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany and an Exchange With Reporters
March 29, 2001

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the German Chancellor here to the Oval Office. We've just had a very constructive lunch. The briefers told me that the Chancellor is a very straightforward person. They were right, and for that I am grateful, because we were able to get to the point.

And the first point we made—and you'll see this in the joint communique we issued—is that our countries are strong friends. I assured the Chancellor that my administration will work to keep our relations strong. We agree on many, many issues; there's a few we didn't agree on. But as good friends, we can disagree and yet still be friends.

I appreciate the leadership of the Chancellor. I appreciate so very much Germany's role, for example, in trying to keep the peace in Macedonia. By working together, we can stabilize that region. The Government of Macedonia is a government made up of different factions. We, of course, are working together to make sure that the legitimate rights of all people in Macedonia are recognized. Germany has done more than just work the diplomatic side; they've also provided troops in the KFOR, along with the United States, to enforce the border. And as a result of our joint efforts, there is good hope that the region will be stable.

And for that, Mr. Chancellor, thank you for your leadership. It's an honor to welcome you here, sir.

Chancellor Schroeder. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for those very kind words. Ladies and gentlemen, now let me share with you how very pleased, indeed, I am that after having two phone calls so far, I now had an opportunity of finally meeting the President in person.

Let me also share with you that it was a very, very pleasant impression I had, indeed. It was wonderful to see the degree of openness that we had, the frankness we had in the meeting, and also the level of agreement that there was between us.

Mr. President is very right, indeed, when he emphasizes the fact that the ties between the United States of America and Germany are very, very firm. They're very friendly ties which are, in fact, based on joint values that we share and that are deeply rooted in each of our Constitutions, too.

Now, we have obviously addressed a wide range of international topics, questions, and international political affairs. There was a lot of agreement. I can agree with Mr. President; we agreed on practically everything, except, obviously, for one thing, and that was no surprise to you, the Kyoto Protocol.

But here, yet as well, we have different opinions, and we are happy to admit to you that we hold different opinions regarding this. We were also happy to admit to one another that we had different positions on this. But here, too, we very much would like to see to it that we, hopefully, jointly act on other fields in and around—on climate policy. We have addressed the subject of solar energy, for example. We have said that there would be ways of energy efficiency, of more efficient use of energy as such. So we will be conjointly looking at some topics that could all contribute to a better climate in the future.

And to all of that, yet again, we have done on the basis of this very, very friendly spirit that reigned between us; a basis is not only one that can take the strain of this, but it will, indeed, and happily so.

In a nutshell, one last thing I would like to say. We are both firmly convinced that

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it is a prime aspect of both of our jobs to make sure that the economies in our respective countries are going well and strongly, and we have to keep them robust. And where that is not the case, we have to get them back on track.

President Bush. We'll take two questions from the Americans and two questions from the German press, alternating.

Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

Q. Mr. President, on the Kyoto Protocol, the friendly atmosphere here is not matched in some statements in the German Government in Berlin and in other capitals. What's your reaction to the criticism that you've abandoned the effort to contain global warming? And what in particular don't you like about the Kyoto Protocols?

And Mr. Chancellor, what practical, pragmatic effect will this difference of opinion have on the effort against global warming?

President Bush. Well, first, I explained this as clearly as I could to the Chancellor, and I'm glad to do it again to you. I did so earlier in a press conference, as you may remember.

Our economy has slowed down in a country—in our country. We also have an energy crisis. And the idea of placing caps on CO_2 does not make economic sense for America. And while I worry about emissions—and we'll work together to achieve efficiencies through new technologies, and I'm confident we can do that—I'm also worried about the fact that people may not be finding jobs in America.

And I will consult with our friends. We will work together. But it's going to be in what's in the interest of our country, first and foremost, Terry [Terry Moran, ABC News]. And the idea that somehow we're supposed to get enormous amounts of natural gas on line immediately, in order to be able to conform to a treaty that our own Senate sent a very overwhelming message against and many other countries haven't signed, makes no economic sense; it makes no common sense.

So I'm worried about our economy. I'm worried about our own domestic energy situation. But I'm confident we can find new ways to think about reducing greenhouse gases. And I look forward to working with a country like Germany. Germany is on the leading edge of technology. They've got some of the greatest engineers in the world. And together we can work together to come up with new efficiencies.

Chancellor Schroeder. Obviously, those are all the fields of cooperation which the President just mentioned and which I obviously very highly welcome.

Regarding the Kyoto Protocol, we have the pleasure of hosting the successor conference to the one in The Hague, in Germany this year. And, well, when it comes to that, His Excellency the President and his government will be called upon to take a decision as to how they, to put it casually, want to play it with protocol and with the ongoing conference in Germany—whether they will, on the one-hand side, which would be a possibility, give an opportunity to others to still continue with what they think is right by not voting against it, or to not do so.

Now, obviously, this is an issue for the President and his country to decide. But we very strongly have agreed that the conference, as I just said, is going to take place, I think, in June or July, in Germany, that our respective staff are going to get together and talk about the issue.

President Bush. Somebody from the German press?

Q. How are the 14 EU heads of state going to feel about the reaction that you just stated to the Kyoto problem and to the President's attitude about it? I would have so clearly expected you to be against it and speak up against it, obviously, so how are they now going to feel?

Chancellor Schroeder. No, I certainly have no headache about that whatsoever. I have heard what the President has said

regarding this matter. Not only I have heard it, people in Europe have heard it, too. And some of the European governments have heard it and have criticized it, obviously. That is a normal process in politics. And we'll take it on from there. Obviously, we'll continue discussing these issues.

National Missile Defense/European Strike Force

Q. Mr. President, did military matters come up today, specifically, missile defense, European strike force?

President Bush. Missile defense came up, you bet. And we'll talk about the European strike force after you clear the room. But I'm looking forward to it. Our joint communique addresses a lot of these issues.

I explained this to the Chancellor, that we want to help folks think differently about the post-cold-war era and we want to develop defenses that are capable defending ourselves, defenses that are capable of defending others who so choose to, against the true threats of the 21st century. Russia is not our enemy. The true threat of the 21st century is the extremists who can't stand what Germany or America believes in. They resent our freedoms. They resent our successes. They resent our prosperity. And I look forward to working with our friend as we move down the road toward assessing and addressing the true threats that face us.

I'll let the Chancellor speak for himself on his view. But I've found there to be somebody who is at least interested in our point of view, and for that, I'm grateful.

Chancellor Schroeder. Here, too, yet again, I can say that I cannot recommend taking a lump-sum view, a generic view at whatever we're talking about. And we shouldn't have a generic view regarding NMD or missile defense, either.

Now, obviously, I think in assessing such a comprehensive topic we also have to look at things like the defensive potential that lies within a potential system. We have to see the potential upside in terms of disarmament opportunities that might be in there.

Obviously, we'll also have to look into lots of technical aspects, such as the threat scenario that is behind the whole system. Is it technologically feasible? Can we truly implement it? Who is going to be covered under the shelter? Who's going to be invited to be included by the shelter that we're going to build? What are going to be repercussions for the global disarmament process? What are going to be the repercussions on Russia and on China, for example?

Those are all things that I think we need to think about and talk about in an ongoing process. And I can only say how very pleased, indeed, I was to see that the President declared himself ready for an open, ongoing discussion about all of these things.

President Bush. Okay, since Terry asked two questions, it's over. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, were you able—concerning the U.S. defense system, would Europe and Germany, as part of Europe, be able to contribute and to participate in? Was that something you were able to offer and assure the Chancellor of?

And Mr. Chancellor, would you be able to say that you'd be willing to participate when the time comes?

President Bush. Well, first of all, it's my first chance to sit down with the Chancellor and explain our philosophy about how we're trying to shape the thinking in the post-cold-war era.

I did explain to him what I've explained to the American people, that not only do we need to develop defenses, but we're also going to reduce our own offensive capability. And maybe people will follow; maybe they won't. But we're going to move, anyway, once the Defense Department puts a thorough review as to what we need to keep the peace.

In terms of whether or not we develop a technology that will help make Europe more peaceful or America more peaceful

or the Middle East more peaceful, whatever it is, I'd be more than willing to discuss the technologies and share technologies with our friends.

But we haven't gotten—you know, today was the first step toward me making the rationale as to why I took the position I took. And the positive development, I thought, was that the Chancellor was listening and understood—I believe understood the philosophy and the peaceful philosophy inherent in our strategy.

Chancellor Schroeder. I think it would be wrong at this point in time to assume that what we're trying to do here is that we're kick-starting an armament process for the whole of the world. My personal perspective is that I think the contrary will be the case. And I think the debate about involvement and who does what in the process is one that will come subsequent to having discussed the general, basic things. But then, certainly, when it comes to the involvement and also participation in terms of industrial policy, certainly we'll be interested.

President Bush. Nice to see you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:53 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Chancellor Schroeder spoke in German, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Joint Statement With Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on a Transatlantic Vision for the 21st Century
March 29, 2001

The United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany are linked by a deep friendship. Our meeting today opens a new chapter in our close relationship. At the beginning of the 21st century, we reaffirm our common commitment to the lasting principles which are at the basis of the Transatlantic community of values—freedom, democracy and human rights. On this basis, we are resolved to strengthen and further develop the partnership between the United States of America and Europe. In the age of globalization we want to give it a new quality.

We agree that our cooperation within the Atlantic Alliance continues to be of decisive importance for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region and that this includes an adequate military presence of the United States in Europe. The Atlantic Alliance has adapted itself to the historic changes in Europe after the end of the Cold War and today also plays an important role in promoting stability in the states of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. The openness of the Alliance for new members and its offer of a comprehensive partnership to the new democracies on the European continent contribute to peace and security in all of Europe. They are directed against no one.

We share the view that Russia can make an important contribution to maintaining peace and stability in Europe and the world. We encourage the Russian government to further pursue a policy of democratic reforms and offer our cooperation to this end.

We will be partners for the states in Southeastern Europe on their way into a peaceful future. War, aggressive nationalism and extremist acts of violence must belong to the past. We will lend our support to the process of stabilization and democratization in the Balkans, continuing to act in close consultation and jointly. In these efforts, the Stability Pact will continue to play a central role.